

Privacy Notice

Notification of Privacy as Required by the
Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

***“This notice describes how medical information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information.
Please review it carefully”***

In the course of your treatment, *Tina Lightner-Morris, MS, LCPC*, will be collecting the following information: name, social security number, name of guardian if appropriate, phone number, address including zip code, birth date, gender, ethnicity, payer source, including insurance companies or Medicaid or Medicare information, admission, discharge and service dates, diagnoses, health history and aspects of your personal history that relate to your condition, including your past and current use of substances, and prescribed medications you are taking or may be prescribed.

Also, *Tina Lightner-Morris, MS, LCPC*, will be collecting the following information: date of the meeting, the place of the meeting, as well as the type of service provided to you. Your counselor will document the content of your discussions and service as appropriate.

This information, often referred to as your behavioral health record, serves as a:

- Basis for planning your care and treatment.
- Means of communication among the many health professionals who may contribute to your care.
- Legal document describing the care you received.
- Means by which you or a third-party can verify that you actually received the service billed for.

How is your information Used?

The above listed information is used to provide appropriate treatment services to you. Financial information is used to set your fees, send bills to insurance or other third party payers, and send bills to you.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The information you provide is confidential and private within the requirements of various state and federal laws. Release of this information for purposes other than conducting business or providing treatment within this center requires that you sign an authorization for the release of information form. We cannot and will not release any information without such a release.

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Rights

Tina Lightner-Morris, MS, LCPC recognizes consumers have certain rights regarding the personal health information contained in their case record. It shall be the policy that all consumers shall have the following rights regarding their personal health information.

- The right to privacy and confidentiality of their personal health information is outlined in the various state and federal laws.
- The right to have no personal health information released without a duly signed authorization to release information, unless allowed by law. Release of personal health information without an authorization that does not meet the legal circumstances that allow such release shall result in disciplinary action with sanctions.
- The right to restrict to whom information is disclosed, as allowed by Federal Law (164.512). This request must be in writing.
- The right to inspect and copy your health information upon request. Again, this right is not absolute. In certain situations, such as if access would cause harm, we can deny access. You do not have a right of access to the following.
 - Psychotherapy notes. Such notes comprise those that are recorded in any medium by conversation during a private counseling session, a group, joint, or family counseling session and that are separated from the rest of your medical record.
 - Information compiled in reasonable anticipation of or for use in civil, criminal, or administrative actions or proceedings.
 - Information obtained from someone other than a healthcare provider under a promise of confidentiality and the access request would be reasonably likely to reveal the source of the information.

In other situations, the provider may deny you access, but if so the provider must provide you with a review of the decision denying access.

If we grant access, we will tell you what, if anything, you have to do to get access. Maryland law permits me to reserve the right to charge a reasonable, cost-based fee for making copies.

- The right to request that information in the case record be amended or corrected. This request must be in writing. The request to amend or correct will be considered by *Tina Lightner-Morris, MS, LCPC* in consultation with her supervisor. Requests for modification do not have to be allowed, but there must be clear documentation why the request was denied. If the modification is allowed, the amendment will be placed with the original information, but will not replace the information. The consumer will be notified of the decision in writing, including justification as to denial, or a copy of the amendment to the case record.

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- The right to request a disclosure of where the consumer's personal health information has been released. This applies to information that the consumer has signed an authorization for. Such a request for disclosure will be made in writing and will apply to information released following April 14, 2003. Disclosure records will be kept for a period of six years. The request for accounting must be delivered to the consumer within 60 days of their request for accounting must be delivered to the consumer within 60 days of their request. The accounting shall be made by sending a copy of the Disclosure form along with a copy of each authorization indicated on the form.
- All consumers shall receive this "Notification of Privacy" statement that outlines the consumer's rights. The notification shall be distributed to all consumers from April 14, 2003, and henceforth.

A minor's right to privacy is based on Maryland Law and the professional discretion about what is in the best interest of the minor. Maryland law permits 16 and 17 year olds to consent to mental health treatment and thus they have the same right to privacy as do adults. In limited instances prescribed within the law, minors can seek counseling without their parent's knowledge.

When an Authorization is not Required

Under certain instances, danger of harm to yourself or others, abuse or neglect of a child, threats to the President of the United States, and under certain conditions, subpoenas, such an authorization is not needed.

Complaints

Complaints about any of the above processes should initially be addressed verbally with your counselor. If you believe that your private information has been incorrectly released, that is without an authorization, you may address your concerns to The Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors at the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Tina Lightner-Morris, MS, LCPC
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www.lightbalancecounseling.org

Privacy Notice

My signature documents that I have received a copy of this Privacy Notice and that it has been explained to me.

_____ Date _____
Consumer Signature

_____ Date _____

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