

## PROTECTING YOUR PRIVACY

### To increase your privacy, confidentiality and security:

The therapy relationship is a very personal one. By discussing very private and often sensitive issues with a trusted professional in a confidential setting, people are often able to free themselves from the difficulties that have inhibited their abilities for joy, happiness and success. The freedom to be open and honest about such difficulties is essential for therapeutic progress. For that reason, it is important that you are aware that every other person or entity that becomes involved in your treatment may put you at greater risk for having your privacy and confidentiality breached. These may include (but are not limited to) your insurance company, medical personnel, disability care managers, Workman's Compensation, or attorneys. Risks may include:

- Your diagnosis impacting future insurance coverage should you change insurance carriers voluntarily or via job change;
- Increased potential for identity theft through the sharing of social security numbers or other personal information;
- Computer or other errors resulting in accidental release of information.

You are always welcome to use your insurance, sign Releases of Information, and/or ask for assistance in working with disability claims or Workman's Compensation paperwork. However, when you pay privately for therapy and/or leave other entities out of the therapeutic relationship, you eliminate or significantly reduce these risks. When only you and your therapist are involved in your treatment the situation is simplified: your therapist is legally and ethically bound to maintain confidentiality laws and you are in charge of with whom you choose to share information. (An exception would be legally mandated reporting of child/elder abuse, threats to harm self, or threats to harm others.)

The difference between the costs to you of using your insurance versus maintaining the most privacy possible through paying privately may not be significant. Talk with your provider for more information regarding reducing your risks.