



## For Parents/Guardians of Adolescents: Additional Info and Policies

Prior to beginning treatment, it is important for you to understand my approach to adolescent therapy and agree to some rules about your child's confidentiality during the course of his/her treatment. Thus, this Addendum provides you with additional information to supplement the document "Client Information and Policies." Under HIPAA and the American Psychological Association Ethics Code, I am legally and ethically responsible to provide you with informed consent. As we go forward, I will try to remind you of important issues as they arise.

### A Potential Risk of Your Adolescent Getting Psychotherapy

One risk of adolescent therapy involves disagreement among parents and/or disagreement between parents and therapist regarding the best interests of the child. If such disagreements occur, I will strive to carefully listen so that I can understand your perspectives and fully explain my perspective. We can resolve such disagreements or we can agree to disagree, so long as this enables your teenager's therapeutic progress. Ultimately, you will decide whether therapy will continue. If either of you decides that therapy should end, I will honor that decision, however I ask that you allow me the option of having a few closing sessions to appropriately end the treatment relationship.

### Your Teen's Privacy and Informing You about Your Teen's Progress

Therapy is most effective when a trusting relationship exists between the psychologist and the client. Privacy is especially important in securing and maintaining that trust. One goal of treatment is to promote a stronger and better relationship between young people and their parents. However, it is often necessary for children to develop a "zone of privacy" whereby they feel free to discuss personal matters with greater freedom. This is particularly true for adolescents who are naturally developing a greater sense of independence and autonomy.

Thus, it is my policy to provide you with only general information about your teen's treatment status. For example, I will tell you if he or she does not attend sessions, and if I find it necessary to refer your child to another mental health professional with more specialized skills, I will share that information with you. However, I will not share with you specifics about what your child has disclosed to me without your child's consent. If you wish, at the end of your teenager's treatment, I will provide you with a treatment summary that will describe what issues were discussed, what progress was made, and what areas are likely to require intervention in the future.

I ask you to agree not to regularly exercise your right of access to your child's treatment records, and to refrain from asking me for detailed reports of your child's therapy sessions.

Since your child is an adolescent, it is possible that he/she will reveal sensitive information regarding sexual contact, alcohol and drug use, or other potentially problematic behaviors. Sometimes these behaviors are within the range of normal adolescent experimentation, but at other times they may require parental intervention. We must carefully and directly discuss your feelings and opinions regarding acceptable behavior. If I ever believe that your child is at serious risk of harming him/herself or another, I will inform you.



## In Case of Conflict between Parents

Although my responsibility to your child may require my involvement in conflicts between the two of you parents, I need your agreement that my involvement will be strictly limited to that which will benefit your child. This means, among other things, that you will treat anything that is said in session with me as confidential. Neither of you will attempt to gain advantage in any legal proceeding between the two of you from my involvement with your children. In particular, I need your agreement that in any such proceedings, neither of you will ask me to testify in court, whether in person, or by affidavit. You also agree to instruct your attorneys not to subpoena me or to refer in any court filing to anything I have said or done.

Note that such agreement may not prevent a judge from requiring my testimony, even though I will work to prevent such an event. If I am required to testify, I am ethically bound not to give my opinion about either parent's custody or visitation suitability. If the court appoints a custody evaluator, legal advocate for the child, or parenting coordinator, I will provide information as needed (if appropriate releases are signed or a court order is provided), but I will not make any recommendations about the final decision. Furthermore, if I am required to appear as a witness, the party responsible for my participation agrees to reimburse me at the rate of \$200/hour for time spent traveling, preparing reports, testifying, being in attendance, and any other case-related costs.