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Notice of Privacy Policy

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION.

PLEASE CAREFULLY REVIEW THIS NOTICE

This Notice of Privacy Rights will tell you how Hillside Psychology, P.L.L.C. handles your medical information. It tells how we use this information within this office, how we share it with other professionals and organizations, and how you can gain access to it.

WHAT WE MEAN BY YOUR MEDICAL INFORMATION

Each time you visit Barbara Meehan, Ph.D., information is collected about you and your physical and/or mental health. It may be information about your past, present or future health or conditions, or the treatment or tests you received from us or from others, or about your payments for healthcare.

The information we collect is called, in the law, Protected Health information or PHI. This information goes into your treatment record or file at our office.

PHI is likely to include these kinds of information:

- Your history. (Your history may include information about your childhood, work, marriage, and personal experiences)
- Reasons you came to Dr. Meehan for treatment (Your problems, complaints, symptoms or needs).
- Diagnoses (medical terms for your problems and symptoms)
- Treatment Plan (list of the treatments and other services that will be best to help you)
- Progress Notes (At each meeting, Dr. Meehan documents how you are doing)
- Records we get from others who treated you or evaluated you
- Psychological test scores, school records and other similar reports
- Information about the medications you are taking or took in the past
- Legal matters
- Billing and insurance information

This list is just to give you an idea of what your PHI contains. However, there may be other kinds of information that goes into your health care record with Dr. Meehan.

We use this information for many purposes. For example, we may use it:

- To plan your treatment
- To decide how well your treatment is working for you
- When we talk to other healthcare professionals who are treating you, such as your family doctor or the professional who referred you to us
- To document that you actually received the services from us which we billed to you or your health insurance company
- For teaching and training of healthcare professionals
- For psychological research
- For public health officials trying to improve health care

When you understand what is in your record and what it is used for, you can make better decisions about whom, when and why others should have this information.

Although your healthcare record is the physical property of Barbara Meehan, Ph.D./Hillside Psychology, P.L.L.C., the information belongs to you. You can read it, and, if you want a copy, we can make one for you. If you request a copy, there will be a charge for the costs of copying (\$0.75 per page), and postage, if you want the records mailed to you.

In some rare situations you will not be able to see all of what is in your records. You may discuss with Dr. Meehan any possible limitations to your ability to see all of her notes.

If you find anything in your records that you think is incorrect or believe that something important is missing you can ask Dr. Meehan to amend or add information to your record. In some rare situations, we do not have to agree to do that but we will inform you in writing of the reasons. If you request, our Privacy Officer, whose name appears at the end of this notice, can explain more about this.

PRIVACY AND THE LAW

Barbara Meehan, Ph.D. is required to inform you about your privacy rights in conformity with the privacy regulations issued by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, which is also known as HIPPA. HIPPA requires us to keep your Personal Healthcare Information (or PHI) private and to give you notice about our legal duties and our privacy practices in a Notice of Privacy Practices (or NPP).

Dr. Meehan is committed to obeying the letter and spirit of HIPPA as evidenced in this Notice of Privacy Practices. We will follow HIPPA rules and these privacy practices as long as they are in effect. If we make any changes in our privacy practices, a new Notice of Privacy Practices will be published and posted at the offices of Barbara Meehan, Ph.D./Hillside Psychology, P.L.L.C. You or anyone else can get a copy of our Notice of Privacy Practices from our Privacy Officer at any time.

HOW YOUR PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION CAN BE USED AND SHARED

When your PHI is read by Dr. Meehan that act is called, in the law, "USE." If the information is shared with or sent to others outside of Dr. Meehan, that is called in the law, "DISCLOSURE." Except in some circumstances, when we use your PHI here or disclose it to others we share only the minimum necessary PHI needed for those people to do their jobs. The law gives you the right to know about your PHI, how it is used and to have a say in how it is disclosed.

Dr. Meehan uses and discloses Personal Health Information for several reasons. Mainly we use and disclose PHI for routine purposes described below. For other uses we must tell you about them and receive a written authorization from you, unless the law specifically allows the disclosure without your authorization. These exclusions are also described below.

USES AND DISCLOSURES OF YOUR PHI IN HEALTHCARE THAT REQUIRE YOUR WRITTEN CONSENT

We need information about you and your condition to provide care to you. Unless you agree to let us collect this information and to use it and share it to care for you properly, we will be unable to treat you. Therefore, we must have your written Agreement (Psychotherapy Services Contract) before we begin treatment.

After you have read this notice and had your questions answered you will be asked to sign a separate Psychotherapy Services contract. The Psychotherapy Services Contract allows Barbara Meehan, Ph.D./Hillside Psychology, P.L.L.C. to use and share your PHI with other people or organizations who provide treatment to you, arrange for payment of our services, or some other business functions called healthcare operations. Together these routine functions are called TPO and the Psychotherapy Services Contract allows Dr. Meehan to use and disclose your PHI for TPO.

TPO functions include:

- Treatment: Dr. Meehan will use your personal and medical information to provide you with treatment services. These might include individual, family or group therapy, developing treatment plans, or measuring progress or the benefits of our services. Therefore, we may share or disclose your PHI to others

who provide treatment to you, such as your personal physician. Dr. Meehan may refer you to other professionals or consultants for services Dr. Meehan cannot provide. When Dr. Meehan does this she needs to share some information about you and your conditions. Dr. Meehan will receive from them their findings and opinions and those will be entered into your records. If you receive treatment in the future from other professionals we can also share your PHI with them. These are some examples of how we use and disclose your PHI to optimize your treatment.

- **Payment:** We may use your information to bill you so we can be paid for the treatment we provide to you. We may contact your insurance company to check on exactly what your insurance covers. We may have to tell them about your diagnoses, what treatments you have received and the changes we expect in your conditions. We will need to tell them about when we provided services, your progress and other similar things.
- **Healthcare Operations:** We may use your PHI to see where we can make improvements in the care and services we provide. We may be required to supply some information to some governmental health agencies so they can study disorders and treatment and to make plans for services that are needed. If we do, your name and personal information will be removed from the information we provide.

OTHER USES OF YOUR PHI COVERED BY THE WRITTEN CONSENT FORM

- **Appointment Reminders:** We may use and disclose contents of your PHI to reschedule or remind you of appointments for treatments or other services.
- **Treatment Alternatives:** Barbara Meehan, Ph.D. may use and disclose your PHI to inform you or recommend possible treatments or alternatives that may be of help to you.
- **Other Benefits and Services:** We may use and disclose your PHI to tell you about health-related benefits or services that may be of interest to you.
- **Research:** We may share or use your information to do research to improve treatment. For example, we may compare two treatment modalities for the same disorder to see which works better or faster or costs less. In all cases, when such research is conducted, your name, address, and other personal information will be removed from the information given to researchers. If they need to know who you are we will discuss the research project with you and have you sign a special Authorization form before any information is shared.
- **Business Associates:** There are some jobs we may hire outside contractors or other businesses to do for us. In the law, these entities are called Business Associates. Business Associates might include a billing service or a medical transcription service. To do their jobs properly, Business Associates need to receive some information from your PHI. To protect your privacy, each Business Associate must agree within their contract with us to safeguard all personal information they receive from Hillside Psychology/Barbara Meehan, Ph.D.

USES AND DISCLOSURES OF YOUR PHI THAT REQUIRE YOUR WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION

If Barbara Meehan, Ph.D. wants to use your Personal Health Information for any purpose besides TPO or those other uses described above, we need your written permission on an authorization form. We do not expect to need this very often.

If you do authorize us to disclose your PHI, you can revoke that permission, in writing, at any time. Once a cancellation of your authorization is received, no further disclosures of your PHI for that purpose will be made. Of course, we cannot take back any information disclosed prior to the receipt of your revocation of Authorization.

USES AND DISCLOSURES OF YOUR PHI THAT DO NOT REQUIRE A WRITTEN CONSENT OR AUTHORIZATION

In some cases HIPPA allows us to use and disclose some of your PHI without your consent or authorization. The following are some examples:

- **When Required By Law:** There are some federal, state or local laws that require us to disclose personal information:
 - We are mandated to report suspected child abuse; If you are involved in a lawsuit or legal proceeding and we receive a subpoena, request for discovery or other lawful process we may have

to release your PHI. Dr. Meehan is required to disclose some information to government agencies which are charged with enforcing compliance with privacy laws.

- For Law Enforcement Purposes: We may release personal information to law enforcement officials on receipt of a subpoena or court order as part of an investigation of a crime or criminals.
- For Public Health Activities: We might disclose some of your PHI to agencies that investigate diseases or injuries.
- For Specific Government Functions: Dr. Meehan may disclose PHI of military personnel and veterans to federal benefit programs relating to eligibility and enrollment. We also may disclose your PHI to New York State Workers Compensation and Disability programs, to correctional facilities if you are an inmate, and for national security reasons.
- Prevent A Serious Threat To Health And Safety: If we come to believe that there is a serious threat to your health or safety or that of another person or the public we can disclose some of your PHI. We will only do this to persons who can prevent the danger.

USES AND DISCLOSURES OF PHI WHERE YOU HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO OBJECT

Dr. Meehan can share some information about you with your family or close others. However, we will only share information with those involved with your care and anyone else you choose such as close friends or clergy. We will ask you about who you want us to tell what information about your condition or treatment. You can tell us what you want and we will honor your request as long it is not against the law.

If it is an emergency, and we are unable to ask you if you disagree, we can share information if we believe it is what you would have wanted and if we believe it will help you if we do share the information. If we do share information in an emergency situation, we will inform you in writing as soon as we can. Should you not approve we will immediately cease the disclosure, as long as it is not against the law.

ACCOUNTING OF DISCLOSURES

When we disclose your PHI, we will keep a detailed record of the action. You can get an accounting (list) of many of these disclosures. The accounting will include, to whom we disclosed, what was disclosed and when the disclosure was made.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS RELATING TO HILLSIDE PSYCHOLOGY'S PRIVACY PRACTICES

If you need more information or have questions about the privacy practices described above, you may ask Dr. Meehan.

If you have a problem with how your PHI has been handled or if you believe your privacy rights have been violated, immediately contact the Privacy Officer. You have a right to file a complaint with us and with the Secretary of the Federal Department Of Health and Human Services in Washington, DC. We promise you that we will not in any way limit your care at Hillside Psychology, P.L.L.C. or take any actions against you if you complain.

Privacy Officer: Barbara Meehan, Ph.D.

Again, if you have any questions regarding this notice or our health information privacy policies, please contact Dr. Barbara Meehan at (914) 401-0215.