

CHILD & ADULT PSYCHIATRISTS OF THE PENINSULA (CAPP)
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A Statement About Privacy/Confidentiality from CAPP

The federal government has enacted a very broad and complicated collection of regulations under the title of HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act). A major part of this legislation, the Privacy Act, addresses privacy and confidentiality of patient medical information.

HIPAA requires us to give all patients a notice of health information privacy practices, which you have received. We are happy to comply with the law in distributing this notice. In our opinion, however, the new law can be confusing and overly complicated. Therefore, CAPP is also issuing a statement about our own policy regarding privacy and confidentiality.

CAPP's Longstanding Policy Regarding Patient Privacy and Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an essential cornerstone of psychotherapy and mental health treatment. CAPP has always maintained the highest standards and safeguards of patient privacy and confidentiality. Our policy is straightforward: We will not release information about treatment to anyone without specific permission of the patient/client unless required by law. There are some situations, not related to HIPAA, which have always mandated a breach of confidentiality. For example, if a therapist believes there is serious danger of patient self-harm, danger to a third person, or if there may be abuse of an elder or child, then the appropriate authorities must be informed.

CAPP will continue to hold the highest standards of patient privacy and confidentiality. The Privacy Act, in fact, permits disclosure of some information *without the permission of the patient*. However, CAPP will not release that information even though the new Privacy Act permits.

Each CAPP therapist will continue to talk to a patient/client any time there is a new request for information about diagnosis or treatment. Each request will be discussed with the individual and permission obtained before disclosure is made. Even in cases where records are ordered by a court, it is sometimes possible for the therapist to negotiate a compromise so that the court decides only what minimal information is required. Much personal and private information can still be safeguarded in this way.

Please feel free to ask your therapist if you have any questions or concerns.