

Limitations on Confidentiality in Couple's Therapy

This written policy is intended to inform you, the participants in couple's therapy, that when I agree to work with a couple, I consider the couple to be the treatment unit and the client. This means that if there is a request for treatment records I will seek the authorization of both parties in the treatment unit before I release confidential information to third parties. Also, if my records are subpoenaed, I will assert the psychotherapist-patient privilege on behalf of the client (treatment unit).

During the course of my work with a couple, I may see a smaller part of the treatment unit, an individual, for one or more sessions. These sessions should be seen by you as part of the work I am doing with the couple, unless otherwise indicated. If you are involved in an individual session, please understand that generally these sessions are confidential in the sense that I will not release any confidential information to a third party unless I am required by law to do so or unless I have your written authorization. In fact, since these sessions are considered part of the couple's therapy, I would also seek the authorization of the other individual before releasing confidential information to a third party.

There may be times when it is necessary to share information learned in an individual session in the couple's session, if I am to effectively serve the unit being treated. I will use my best judgment as to whether, when, and to what extent I will make disclosures to the treatment unit, and will also, if appropriate, first give the individual the opportunity to make the disclosure. Thus, if you feel it necessary to talk about matters that you absolutely want to be shared with no one, you might want to consult an individual therapist who can treat you individually.

This "no secrets" policy is intended to allow me to continue to treat the couple by preventing, to the extent possible, a conflict of interest to arise where an individual's interests may not be consistent with the interests of the treatment unit. For instance, information learned in the course of an individual session may be relevant or even essential to the proper treatment of the couple or the family. If I am not free to exercise my clinical judgment regarding the need to bring this information to the couple, I might be placed in a situation where I will have to terminate treatment of the couple. This policy is intended to prevent the need for such termination.

We, the members of the couple acknowledge by our individual signatures below, that each of us has read this policy, that we understand it, that we have had the opportunity to discuss its contents with our therapist, and that we enter couple's therapy in agreement with this policy.

Signatures: _____ Date: _____
_____ Date: _____