



Understanding Therapy & Adolescent Assent to Participate

I want to welcome you to Elevate Therapy. Participating in therapy is an important process and I want to give you some information on what therapy is about, and what you can expect. The success of therapy depends on a high degree of trust between you and your therapist.

What to expect

The purpose of meeting with a therapist is to get help with problems in your life that are bothering you or that are keeping you from being successful in important areas of your life. You may be here because you wanted to talk to a therapist about these problems. Or, you may be here because your parent, guardian, doctor or teacher had concerns about you.

When we meet, I will ask questions, listen to you and try to understand more about what is bothering you. Together, we will discuss possible solutions to your problems and how to communicate differently with those around you.

The relationship between you and your therapist is special and unique. You will probably share information with your therapist that you might not feel comfortable sharing with anyone else. It is not your therapist's job to make judgments or give advice. Rather, the therapist's role is to be a guide and support you in the decisions that seem right for you.

You have the right to:

- Be honest with your therapist about your feelings, not only about others, but also about your therapist. It is okay to ask for what you need, and express any fears, anger or annoyances that your therapist may trigger in you
- Question whether or not you want to continue with therapy – just let your therapist, and your parent(s) know
- Ask questions at any time. Your therapist might have an idea of how to help, and you have a right to understand the process

Know the risks

It is important for you to know that there can be discomfort involved in participating in therapy. You may remember unpleasant events, or have feelings of anger, fear, worry, sadness, frustration, or loneliness. If these difficult emotions arise for you, talk to me about your feelings. I will help you learn how to manage them and identify support systems to help you feel better.

Confidentiality & Your Privacy

It is important that you feel comfortable talking to me about whatever is bothering you. Sometimes you might want to discuss something that you don't want your parents or guardians to know about. You have the expectation of privacy in our sessions. *As a general rule, I will keep the information you share with me in our sessions confidential, unless I have your written consent to disclose certain information.*

There are, however, important exceptions to this rule that are important for you to understand before you share personal information with me in a therapy session. In some situations, I am required by law or by the guidelines of my profession to disclose information whether or not I have your permission. I have listed some of these situations below:

- You tell me you plan to cause serious harm or death to yourself, and I believe you have the intent and ability to carry out this threat in the very near future. I must take steps to inform a parent or guardian of what you have told me and how serious I believe this threat to be. I must make sure that you are protected from harming yourself.
- You tell me you plan to cause serious harm or death to someone else who can be identified, and I believe you have the intent and ability to carry out this threat in the very near future. In this situation, I must inform your parent or guardian, and I must inform the person who you intend to harm.
- You are doing things that could cause serious harm to you or someone else, even if you do not *intend* to harm yourself or another person. In these situations, I will need to use my professional judgment to decide whether a parent or guardian should be informed.
- You tell me you are being abused-physically, sexually or emotionally, or that you have been abused in the past. In this situation, I am required by law to report the abuse.
- You tell me of any instance when material has been accessed, streamed, or downloaded in which a child is engaged in an obscene sexual act. I am required by law to report electronic images of children that depict obscene sexual conduct.
- You are involved in a court case and a request is made for information about your counseling or therapy. If this happens, I will not disclose information without your written agreement *unless* the court requires me to. I will do all I can within the law to protect your confidentiality, and if I am required to disclose information to the court, I will inform you and your parents that this is happening.

Communicating with your parents/guardians and other adults

As we begin therapy I will specifically request that your parents honor the privacy of our work. During our time together, however, I will invite your parents to a conversation about how you are doing. You are welcome to be involved in this meeting, or I can meet with your parent(s) alone.

When meeting with your parent(s), you and I will prepare for the meeting together, coming to an agreement/understanding of what will be shared. I usually describe problems in general terms, without using specifics, in order to help them know how to be more helpful to you. Even if I have agreed to keep what you say private, there may come a time when I believe that it is important for them to know what is going on in your life. In these situations, I will encourage you to tell your parent(s) and I will help you find the best way to tell them.

I will not share any information with your school, medical doctors, other family members or friends without your permission and permission from your parents. Sometimes I may request to speak to someone outside of the family to find out how things are going for you. Also, it may be helpful for me to give suggestions. A very unlikely situation might come up if I do not have your permission but both I and your parent(s) believe that it is very important for me to be able to share certain information with someone. In this situation, I will use my professional judgment to decide whether to share any information.

Emergencies

If you need to contact me, you can either call me at the office at 858-987-8055 and leave a message; *please do not email or text* as neither is completely confidential. I can typically be reached during normal business hours, and may not be immediately available to handle emergency situations. *If you are in need of urgent help, please tell your parent(s), or another adult, call '911' or the Access & Crisis Line at 1-888-724-7240.*

Your agreement

Please talk this over with your parents before you decide whether or not to participate in therapy. Your parents will be asked to give their permission, as well.

By signing below you are indicating that you have decided to participate in therapy and that your questions have been answered.

Date: _____

Adolescent Client Name: _____

Adolescent Client Signature: _____