

Healing Grace Counseling Services

Adolescent Informed Consent Form

Privacy of Information Shared in Counseling/Therapy: Your Rights and Our Policies

What to Expect

More than likely, you are a client with Healing Grace Counseling Services because: (a) you've had some issues in your life that you wanted to talk with a counselor about; or (b) your parent(s), guardian(s), doctor, teacher or youth pastor has been concerned and insisted on your seeing a counselor. Whatever your reasons for being here, Rob desires to provide a safe environment where you feel open and comfortable in discussing things that are bothering you. When an adolescent sees a counselor, the issues usually revolve around academic performance, peer relationships, siblings and disagreements with parents. Sometimes, counseling might address things you would rather not talk about with parents or other authority figures. Knowing that what you say will remain private can build trust between you and your counselor. Your right to privacy is often referred to as **Confidentiality**.

Exceptions to Confidentiality

Information shared in counseling will remain confidential, except in the following instances:

- You mention intentions of harming yourself or another person, and Rob has reason to believe you have the intent and means to carry out such threats.
- You report physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect of any kind, either presently or in the past. **In these cases, Rob is required by law to report the abuse or neglect to the Virginia Department of Social Services.**
- 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 this situation, Rob will use his professional judgment to determine if a parent or guardian should be informed.**
- You are involved in a court case and a request is made for information about your counseling or therapy. In such instances, Rob will not disclose information without your written agreement unless the court (i.e., a judge) orders him to do so. If he is required to disclose information to the court, he will inform you beforehand.

In all of these situations, Rob is required by law and his profession to break confidentiality.

Outside of these exceptions, you have the right to privacy unless you provide written consent to have personal information disclosed to a third party.

Communicating With Parent(s) or Guardian(s)

Except for the situations above, Rob will not tell your parent or guardian specific things you share in your private sessions. This includes activities and behavior they would not approve of but would not put you or others at risk. However, if your behavior reaches the point of putting your or another's wellbeing in jeopardy, he will use his professional judgment to determine if the nature of your behavior should be disclosed to a parent or guardian.

Example: If you have experimented with drugs or alcohol in the past, this information would remain confidential. However, if you were to tell Rob that you have been operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs or alcohol, he would not keep this information confidential.

Moreover, if he came to believe that you have a drug or alcohol addiction, he would not remain silent when consulting with your parent(s) or guardian.

Example: If you are having protected sex with a boyfriend or girlfriend, Rob would keep this information confidential. If you mention that, on several occasions, you have engaged in unprotected sex with people you do not know he will not keep this information confidential.

You may ask Rob what situations would make it more likely for him to disclose information.

Even if Rob agrees to keep information confidential, it is important for your parents to know what is going on in your life. In these situations, he will encourage you to tell them and will help you find the best way to tell them. When meeting with your parents, he may sometimes describe problems in general terms in order to help them know how to be more helpful to you.

You should also know that, by law in Virginia, your parent or guardian has the right to see any written records of your sessions. It is rare for a parent or guardian makes this request.

Communicating With Other Adults

School: Rob will not share information with your school unless he has both your permission and that of your parent(s) or guardian. Sometimes he may request to speak to someone at your school to find out how things are going for you. It may also sometimes be helpful for him to give suggestions to your teacher or guidance counselor. If he wants to contact your school, or if someone at your school wants to contact him, he will discuss it with you and ask for your written permission. An unlikely situation might come up in which he does not have your permission but both he and your parent(s) or guardian believe it is essential for him to share certain information with someone at your school. In these situations, he will use his professional judgment.

Doctors and Other Health Professionals: Sometimes your doctor and counselor may need to work together; for example, if you need to take medication. There are also times when Rob refers clients to another mental health professional for an examination or collaborative forms of treatment. In these cases, it is common practice to request a written release of information to communicate with other health professionals. In such instances, he will request your written permission and the permission of your parent or guardian first. The only time he will share information without your permission is if you are at risk for serious and immediate harm.

Adolescent's Signature _____ Date _____

Adolescent's Printed Name _____ Date _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Parent's Printed Name _____ Date _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Parent's Printed Name _____ Date _____