

Anne Johnson, LPC-Associate
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**Notice of Privacy Practices Policy:
Privacy and Security Officer Designation**

Confidentiality and privacy are the cornerstones of the mental health professions. Clients have an expectation that their communications with therapists, and their treatment records, will generally be kept confidential and will not be released to others without the written authorization of the client. One of the purposes of the Notice of Privacy Practices (NOPP) is to inform and educate clients about the fact that there are exceptions to the general rule of confidentiality. Many of these exceptions have existed for years, and many of them are the result of laws and regulations being passed by state legislatures and by the federal government. These laws and regulations are essentially statements of public policy. Our office policies and procedures (including this NOPP Policy), as well as the ethical standards of our profession, are intended to shape our practices so that privacy and confidentiality are maintained, consistent with Texas law and the federal "Privacy Rule."

1. Privacy and Security Officer: Anne Johnson is the Privacy and Security Officer for this practice. The Privacy and Security Officer is responsible for developing and implementing these policies and procedures.
2. Contact Person: Anne Johnson is the contact person for this practice. If a client needs or desires further information related to the NOPP, or if the client has a complaint regarding these policies and procedures or our compliance with them, Anne should be contacted.
3. The effective date of this policy is November 2019.
4. The Privacy and Security Officer will maintain documentation of all consents, authorizations, Notices of Privacy Practices, office policies and procedures, trainings, and client requests for records or for amendments to records. The Privacy and Security Officer will also document complaints received and their disposition.
5. The Privacy and Security Officer will train all employees and independent contractors of the practice regarding the importance of privacy and confidentiality. At a minimum, this NOPP policy will be reviewed and discussed, as will the content of the NOPP. The training will take place as soon as possible for existing employees and independent contractors, and for new hires and new contractors, as soon as possible after the person is hired or begins working on behalf of the practice.
6. Anne Johnson's practice will not maintain or use client sign-in sheets.

7. Conversations regarding confidential material or information will take place in an area and in a manner where they will not be easily overheard. Office doors must be closed, and sound masking must be used.
8. Client records will be kept in locked file cabinets within therapists' offices. Individual offices are also locked when therapists are not there. Client records will not be left in places where others are able to see the contents.
9. Computers, printers, and fax machines will be placed appropriately so that access is limited to office personnel and so that confidential information transmitted or received is not seen by others. Materials will not be left on printers or fax machines.
10. Employees or contractors who leave the practice must return all practice materials to the Privacy and Security Officer, and must not retain any client information on computers or any other electronic devices.
11. With respect to office keys, terminated employees and contractors will be required to return all keys to the office that they may possess. We also realize that it may be necessary to change one or more locks within the office, depending on circumstances.
12. For those employees or contractors in the practice who violate these policies and procedures or who compromise the confidentiality or privacy of a client, the Privacy and Security Officer will take such actions as he believes are warranted by the situation. We will act in good faith and will do our best to correct errors or deficiencies that become known to the Privacy and Security Officer.
13. Information and records concerning a client may be disclosed as described in the NOPP and in accordance with applicable law or regulation. Generally, we will obtain a written authorization from the client before releasing information to third parties for purposes other than treatment payment, and health care operations, unless disclosure is required by law or permitted by law.
14. If mental health records are subpoenaed by an adverse party, we will assert the psychotherapist-client privilege on behalf of the client and will thereafter act according to the wishes of the client and the client's attorney, unless we are ordered by a Court or other lawful authority to release records or portions thereof.
15. To the extent that we keep client records electronically (e.g. on a computer), the computer will be password protected, the computer storage drive will be encrypted, and we will backup the computer files on a daily basis to an encrypted storage drive and will store the backup in two locations. By doing so, we will be prepared in the case of an incident of some kind that causes destruction, deletion, or damage to electronically stored client records.
16. We keep client records for at least five years from the date of last treatment. With respect to the records of a minor, those records are kept for five years past the minor's 18th birthday. Thereafter, we may destroy client records. When records are destroyed, they will be destroyed in a manner that protects client privacy and confidentiality.

17. We will follow client requests regarding where to send correspondence.

18. If we share protected health information about a client with third party business associates as part of health care operations (e.g. a billing or transcription service), we will have a written contract with that business associate that contains terms that will protect the privacy of the client's protected health information.

19. The duty of confidentiality and the psychotherapist-client privilege survive the death of a client.

20. With respect to our office Wi-Fi network, only employees and therapists working in the offices of Anne Johnson are permitted to join the network, and the Wi-Fi network is encrypted and password protected with a password that is not easily guessed. Clients and others outside of the practice are not allowed on our Wi-Fi network, and employees and therapists are not allowed to share the Wi-Fi password.

21. We will do our best to ensure that electronic information, such as billing records and correspondence, is protected from computer viruses and unauthorized intruders, encryption, firewalls, and virus protection will be used as necessary to protect electronic information.

22. Other office policies and procedures that are established to protect privacy will automatically become part of this privacy (NOPP) policy.