



## Informed Consent Form (Adult)

### *Privacy of Information Shared in Counseling/Therapy: Your Rights and MySpectrum's Policies*

**Client's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

What to expect:

The purpose of meeting with a counselor or 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 counselor or Therapist about these problems. Or, you may be here because you were referred by the court, your employer, or someone else. When we meet, we will discuss these problems. I will ask questions, listen to you and suggest a plan for improving these problems. It is important that you feel comfortable talking to me about the issues that are bothering you. Sometimes these issues will include things you don't want others to know about. For most people, knowing that what they say will be kept private helps them feel more comfortable and have more trust in their counselor or Therapist. Privacy, also called confidentiality, is an important and necessary part of good counseling.

*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.

Confidentiality cannot be maintained when:

>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 ensure your safety. 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 the person who you intend to harm and take steps to ensure everyone's safety.

>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 ensure safety.

>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 to the Virginia Department of Social Services and/or law enforcement.

>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 that this is happening.

Communicating with others:

Employment: I will not share any information with your employer unless I have your permission, or if you are seeing me as part of a work-required obligation through an Employee Assistance Program. Sometimes it may be helpful for me to communicate with your employer if you are seeing me for work-related matters, or if you are missing work to meet with me. If there seems to be good reason to communicate with your employer, I will discuss it with you and ask for your written permission.

Doctors: Sometimes your doctor and I may need to work together; for example, if you need to take medication in addition to seeing a counselor or Therapist. I will get your written permission in advance to share information with your doctor. The only time I will share information with your doctor even if I don't have your permission is if you are doing something that puts you at risk for serious and immediate physical/medical harm.

Client Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:\_\_\_\_\_