To Psychological Consultation Center (PCC) clients,

YOUR PRIVACY IS IMPORTANT…

Safeguarding your personal health information is extremely important to us. At the PCC, we have established several practices that help us protect your health information. This letter provides you with a summary of some of the steps we take to ensure that your health records are protected. In general, our Privacy Practices are twofold. First, they describe when, how, why, and to whom we may use and disclose your health information. Additionally, they discuss your rights with regard to your health information.

HOW WE SAFEGUARD YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION…

As a Psychology training clinic, the PCC has traditionally maintained a strong commitment to the American Psychological Association’s Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct and to Nebraska law, which safeguards communications between psychologists and clients as privileged and confidential. In 2003, healthcare providers were required to come into compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (referred to as “HIPAA”). HIPAA is a federal law that was established to ensure the protection of your personal health information. In keeping with our ethical and legal obligations as a clinic, we pledge to uphold your privacy in the following ways:

- **Confidentiality**: We will not release any of your personal psychological or health information without your written consent or as required by law (e.g., legal situations include reports of child or elder abuse or neglect, per a judge’s order, or immediate risks of harm to yourself or another person).

- **Release of Information**: If we obtain your consent to release information, we will clearly specify the parameters of the release on the document you sign. Specifically, the agreement will authorize us to release only for a particular need and to a particular individual or agency.

- **Access to Information**: HIPAA specifies that your protected health records may be used for the following purposes. First, we may use your information to inform our planning of diagnostic assessments and therapies and to treat and care for you. For this, clinical supervisors, your therapist, or other clinic personnel (e.g., the PCC Director) may need to discuss your difficulties in order to best carry out your treatment and measure your progress. Secondly, your records may be used for PCC operations, with authorized staff looking at portions of your record to implement administrative duties (e.g., tracking payments). In addition, your health information may be used to
**contact you** (e.g., to schedule an appointment, collect payments). With your permission and consent, your information may be included in **archival research studies**. Finally, when the **law requires**, such as court orders or instances of child abuse, your information may be used if necessary to protect client and public safety.

- **Physical Security**: To maintain physical security of PCC files, several safeguards are in place. First, the PCC is secured at all times during working hours. When the PCC is closed, access to the main entrance is limited to staff only; further, the files are locked in an office that requires a separate key for access. All computer records are stored in a password/firewall protected database on an independent safeguarded server. Social Security numbers are kept only in physical files, not on computers, and used only for insurance submissions. Finally, all files are maintained in locked, steel filing cabinets.

Given that the PCC has always dealt with safeguarding private and sensitive information that has required special consent, our staff is well-trained in maintaining your confidentiality. All PCC therapists adhere to strict ethical rules set forth by the governing board of Nebraska psychologists, the American Psychological Association, and state and federal law.

Sincerely,

PCC Staff