

Center for Therapy & Mediation Confidentiality and Minors

DATE: _____

MINOR NAME: _____ **DOB:** _____

Center for Therapy & Mediation believes that therapy can be highly beneficial to the overall development of children and adolescents. Sometimes it is best to see them with parents and other family members; while in other situations, they are best seen alone. We will assess which might be best for your child and make recommendations to you. Obviously, the support of all of the child's caregivers is essential, as well as their understanding of the basic procedures involved in counseling children.

This general goal of involving children in therapy is to foster their development at all levels. At times, it may seem that a specific behavior is needed, such as to get the child to obey or reveal certain information. Although those objectives may be part of the overall development, they may not be the best goals for therapy. Again, we will evaluate and we will discuss these goals together.

The issue of confidentiality is critical in treating children. When children are seen with adults, what is discussed is known to those present and should be kept confidential except by mutual agreement. Children seen in individual sessions (except under certain conditions) are not legally entitled to confidentiality (also called privilege); their parents have this right. However, unless children feel they have some privacy in speaking with a therapist, the benefits of therapy may be lost. Therefore, it is necessary to work out an arrangement in which children feel that their privacy is generally being respected, while at the same time the parents have access to critical information. This agreement must have the understanding and approval of the parents or other responsible adults and of the child in therapy.

This agreement regarding treatment of minors has provisions for inserting details, which can be supplied by both the child and the adults involved. However, it is first important to point out the exceptions to this general agreement. The following circumstances override the general policy that children are entitled to privacy while parent or guardians have a legal right to information:

- Confidentiality and privilege are limited in cases involving child abuse, neglect, molestation, or danger to self or others. In these cases, the therapist is required to make an official report to the appropriate agency and will attempt to involve parents as much as possible.
- Minors may independently enter into therapy and claim the privilege of confidentiality in cases involving abuse or severe neglect, molestation, pregnancy, or communicable diseases, and when they are on active military duty, married, or officially emancipated. They may seek therapy independently for substance abuse, danger to self or others, or a mental disorder, but parents must be involved unless doing so would harm the child.
- Any evaluation, treatment, or reports ordered by, or done for submission to a third party such as a court or a school is not entirely confidential and will be shared with that agency with your specific written permission. Please also note that we do not have control over information once it is released to a third party.

I will do my best to ensure that sessions with the Center for Therapy & Mediation (CTM), are attended, and will not inquire about the content of sessions. If my child prefers/children prefer not to volunteer information about the sessions, I will respect his/her/their right not to disclose details.

The normal procedure for discussing issues that are in my child's/ children's therapy will be joint sessions including my child/children, the therapist, myself and perhaps other appropriate adults. If I believe there is a significant health or safety issue that I need to know about, I will contact CTM and attempt to arrange a session with my child/children present. Similarly, when CTM determines that there are significant issues that should be discussed with me present every effort will be made to schedule a session involving myself and my child/children. I understand that if information becomes known to the therapist at CTM and has a significant bearing on my child's/children's well-being, the therapist will work

with the person providing the information to ensure that I am aware of it. In other words, CTM will not divulge secrets except as mandated by law, but may encourage the individual who has the information to disclose it for therapy to continue effectively.

CUSTODIAL RIGHTS:

MINOR NAME: _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____

I have custodial rights to my child(ren) and do not have to seek consent from another parent or guardian.

I have joint/shared custody with my child(ren)'s _____ (father/mother/guardian).

You may contact _____

at _____ (telephone) to receive consent.

NAME OF PARENT: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

NAME OF PARENT: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

_____ Date: ____/____/____

THERAPIST: JOY QUANRUD GRIMSLEY, MFT, EMDR