

# Privacy Policy

## Information Practices

During the course of your assessment and treatment personal health information is collected about you. This information is regulated provincially under the Personal Health Information Act, 2004 (PHIPA) and federally under the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, 2004 (PIPED).

Under these two Acts your consent to collect and use personal health information to provide psychological services to you is implied by your presence and provision of such information. Your consent is also assumed for the disclosure of personal health information to other health service providers for the purpose of ensuring a stable standard of care. Your consent is not assumed for the disclosure of personal health information to any person or organization other than a formal Custodian of Health Information under PHIPA. This means that formal written or verbal consent must be obtained by clients or their substitute decision-makers before any information can be disclosed.

Current laws allow for the disclosure of personal information without consent in situations where health and safety is believed to be at imminent risk. The psychologists at Shift Cognitive Therapy are obliged to disclose information when we suspect or are informed that:

- You or a member of your family pose an imminent danger to yourselves or someone else,
- You or a member of your family are in imminent danger because of someone else,
- A child under the age of 16 years is at risk of harm or neglect,
- You or a member of your family has been sexually

assaulted by a registered health provider.

If our files or personnel are subpoenaed by a court of law, then we must present ourselves to testify or deliver our files, as ordered.

Health information may also be seen in the process of a formal audit by the government or The College of Psychologists of Ontario. These audits are strictly confidential and a record of the audit will be inserted into any file reviewed by the auditors.

Some of your personal information, consisting of your name, dates of visits and amounts paid for service may also be seen by accounting and legal professionals whom we consult to assist with the operations of this practice. Such professionals are mandated by their own regulatory bodies to maintain in confidence any personal information they access through the course of their duties. Finally, in the rare case where clients persistently fail to pay for services rendered, information sufficient to collect the debt (consisting only of name, address and contact information) may be released to a professional collections service.

## **Safeguards of the Privacy of Your Information**

All client files are stored in a locked and secure area when not in use by our clinical staff. Client files and information are shredded and destroyed 10 years after the date of your last contact with us or, in the case of child clients, 10 years after the date of the child's 18th birthday. These durations are mandated by The College of Psychologists of Ontario.

Under current law, you will be notified of any known breaches of your personal information outside of the situations already

noted.

The Information Officer for Shift Cognitive Therapy is Dr. Ian D. Shulman (Tel. 905-849-1288). Please direct any questions or concerns about the privacy of your personal health information to that person.