



NEW FOCUS

Marriage & Family Counseling Inc

“No Secrets” Policy for Family Therapy and Couple Therapy

This written policy is intended to inform you, the participants in family therapy or couple therapy, that when a New Focus therapist agrees to work with a couple or a family, the therapist considers that couple or family, (the treatment unit), to be the patient. It is important to your therapy that the therapist not keep secrets from any member of the treatment unit, and not be put into a situation of keeping secrets for any one member of that unit. Your therapist is there to support you all equally.

During the course of treatment with a couple or a family, the therapist may see a smaller part of the treatment unit (e.g., an individual, siblings, parents) for one or more sessions. These sessions should be seen as a part of the work that the therapist is doing with the entire treatment unit, family or the couple, unless otherwise indicated. If you are involved in one or more of such sessions with your therapist, please understand that generally these sessions are confidential in the sense that your therapist will not release any confidential information to a third party unless required to do so by law or unless the therapist has your written authorization. In fact, since these sessions can and should be considered a part of the family or couple therapy, the therapist would also seek the authorization of the other individuals in the treatment unit before releasing confidential information to a third party. However, the therapist may need to share information learned in an individual session (or a session with only a portion of the treatment unit being present) with the entire treatment unit — that is, the family or the couple, if the therapist is to effectively serve the unit being treated. The therapist will use her/his best clinical judgment as to whether, when, and to what extent disclosures are made to the treatment unit, and will also, if appropriate, first give the individual or the smaller part of the treatment unit being seen the opportunity to make the disclosure him/herself. Thus, if you feel it necessary to talk about matters that you absolutely do not want to be shared with the entire unit of treatment, you might want to consult with an individual therapist who can treat you individually.

This “no secrets” policy is intended to allow your therapist to continue to treat the entire treatment unit (the couple or family unit) by preventing, to the extent possible, a conflict of interest to arise where an individual’s interests may not be consistent with the interests of the unit being treated. For instance, information learned in the course of an individual session may be relevant or even essential to the proper treatment of the couple or the family. If your therapist is not free to exercise her/his clinical judgment regarding the need to bring this information to the family or the couple during their therapy, the therapist might be placed in a situation where s/he is expected to hold secrets, which s/he will not do for the health of the treatment unit. This may mean that s/he will have to terminate treatment of the couple or the family. This policy is intended to prevent the need for such a termination.

We, the members of the _____ (couple/family or other unit) being seen, acknowledge by our individual signatures below, that each of us has read this policy, that we understand it, that we have had an opportunity to discuss its contents with our therapist: _____ and that we enter couple/family therapy in agreement with this policy.

Dated: _____ Signature _____ Signature _____

Dated: _____ Signature _____ Signature _____