

Accountability with Discretion for Families and Couples

This written policy is intended to inform you, the participants in family therapy or couple therapy, that when I agree to work with a couple or a family, I consider that couple or family (the treatment unit) to be the client. For instance, if there is a request for the treatment records of the couple or the family, I will seek the authorization of all members of the treatment unit before I release confidential information to third parties. Also, if my records are subpoenaed, I will assert the therapist-client privilege on behalf of the client (the treatment unit).

During the course of my work with a couple or a family, I may see a smaller part of the treatment unit (e.g., an individual or two siblings) for one or more sessions. These sessions should be seen by you as a part of the work that I am doing with the family or the couple, unless otherwise indicated. If you are involved in one or more of such sessions with me, please understand that generally these sessions are confidential in the sense that I will not release any confidential information to a third party unless I am required by law to do so or unless I have your written authorization. In fact, since these sessions can and should be considered a part of the family or couple therapy, I would also seek the authorization of the other individuals in the treatment unit before releasing confidential information to a third party.

While treating couple or family as the client I maintain all information (except the one stated in the Informed Consent) that you tell me through whatever means in confidence. However, if you tell me something in an individual session, or through some other means, that I think will impede the progress of your family or couple therapy, I will ask you to take responsibility for it. This might mean individual sessions for one or both of you and a limited time period during which certain problems are stopped. You may or may not wish to tell me secrets and I will tell you whether I think it is important for your family or partner to know. If I think your family or partner should know, then I will suggest you tell them and coach you about how to do it. If there is an ongoing secret behavior I will help you to stop it in a given period before asking you to tell your family or partner. I will never reveal the nature of the secret, but if it interferes with your stated goal of doing family or couple therapy I may terminate therapy by saying that you have not fulfilled this agreement.

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 Valeriya Cotten, MA, LPC, and that we enter into couples counseling and/or family therapy in agreement with this policy.

Client's Signature

Date

Client's Signature

Date

Therapist's Signature

Date