

Privacy Policy

Last Updated: 09/15/2024

Discovering Hope Counseling and Psychological Services, PLLC, is committed to protecting your privacy. To better protect your privacy, we provide this notice explaining our online information practices. To make this notice easy to find, we make it available on our website.

1. INFORMATION COLLECTION AND USE

We collect information about visitors to our Site so that we can provide an experience that is responsive to our users 'and customers' needs. We do not collect medical information or credit card information through our Site. Our Site may use forms in which you give us contact information (including your name, telephone number, and email address) so you can request information or support. We receive and store any information you enter on our Site, or give us in any other way, including through email, telephone, or other communications within our administrative department. You do not need to give us any personal information in order to use our Site.

We will not sell, share, trade or otherwise use any information you provide unless you expressly provide in writing permission for such use. We collect this information to improve our service, and to help us determine your individual needs so we may serve you better individually, as well as collectively.

We will not sell, share, trade or otherwise use any medical information under any circumstances. If you require medical information, you must request it from us directly via a Medical Release form.

We may also collect non-personally identifiable information about you, such as your use of our web sites, communication preferences, aggregated data relative to your Services, and responses to promotional offers and surveys. We may use or disclose aggregate information only where no individual is identified for a number of purposes, including:

- (a) Compiling aggregate statistics of usage for improving the web site;
- (b) Developing, maintaining and administering the web site; and
- (c) Following up on comments and other messages that you submit to us through the web site.

Please note, to better safeguard your information, please do not include any credit card information in your electronic communication unless it is specifically required by us as part of Services or transaction fulfillment process sites, or our customer contact process.

This Site and our Services may contain links to other websites. Unfortunately, we are not responsible for the privacy practices or the content of such sites.

2. SECURITY

This Site has security measures in place to protect against the loss, misuse, or alteration of the information under our control. If our site allows you to enter sensitive information (such as a credit card number) on order forms, we encrypt the transmission of that information using secure socket layer technology (SSL).

We may also at times provide information about you to third parties to provide various services on our behalf, such as providers who process credit card payments. We will only share information about you that is necessary for the third party to provide the requested service. These companies are prohibited from retaining, sharing, buying, selling, storing, or using your personally identifiable information for any secondary purposes. We follow generally accepted standards to protect the personal information submitted to us, both during transmission and once we receive it. No method of transmission over the Internet, or method of electronic storage, is one hundred percent (100%) secure, however. Therefore, we cannot guarantee its absolute security.

3. GOOGLE ANALYTICS AND COOKIES

We may use a tool called “Google Analytics” to collect information about use of this Site, such as how often users visit the Site, what pages they visit when they do so, and what other sites they used prior to coming to this Site. Google Analytics collects only the IP address assigned to you on the date you visit this Site, rather than your name or other identifying information.

Google Analytics plants a permanent cookie on your web browser to identify you as a unique user the next time you visit this Site. This cookie cannot be used by anyone but Google, Inc. The information generated by the cookie will be transmitted to and stored by Google on servers in the United States.

We use the information received from Google Analytics only to improve services on this Site. We do not combine the information collected through the use of Google Analytics with personally identifiable information. Google’s ability to use and share information collected by Google Analytics about your visits to this Site is restricted by the Google Privacy Policy <http://www.google.com/policies/privacy>. You can prevent Google Analytics from recognizing you on return visits to this Site by disabling the Google Analytics cookie on your browser.

4. COLLECTION AND USE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 13

We are committed to protecting the online privacy of children. In accordance with the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (“COPPA”), we will not knowingly collect any personally identifiable information from children under the age of thirteen (13) without first obtaining parental consent. Prior to providing any personally identifiable information (your name, email address, phone number etc.), children under the age of thirteen (13) must have a parent or legal guardian complete and return (by email) a Release of Information Form to tgatewood@discovering-hope.com or

Discovering Hope Counseling and Psychological Services, PLLC
13420 Reese Blvd W
Huntersville, North Carolina 28078.

The consent form states that the child’s “Parent” or “Legal Guardian”, by his or her signature, consents to the collection and transfer of the child’s personally identifiable information. Consent may be revoked by completing a “Revocation of Release of Information Form” and sending it to the email or physical mailing address above.

In compliance with COPPA, We are sensitive about children consulting with parents or guardians before furnishing personal information or ordering anything online.

It is also our intention to adhere to the Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU) Guidelines on Internet advertising with its special sensitivities regarding solicitations to children under thirteen (13). We encourage parents/guardians to supervise and join their children in exploring cyberspace.

5. TRANSFER OF DATA ABROAD

If you are visiting this Site from a country other than the country in which our servers are located, your communications with us may result in the transfer of information across international boundaries. By visiting this Site and communicating electronically with us, you consent to such transfers.

6. COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

We cooperate with government and law enforcement officials and private parties to enforce and comply with the law. We will disclose any information about you to government or law enforcement officials or private parties as we, in our sole discretion, believe necessary or appropriate to respond to claims and legal process (including without limitation subpoenas), to protect our property and rights or the property and rights of a third party, to protect the safety of the public or any person, or to prevent or stop activity we consider to be illegal or unethical. We will also share your information to the extent necessary to comply with ICANN's rules, regulations and policies.

To the extent we are legally permitted to do so, we will take reasonable steps to notify you in the event that we are required to provide your personal information to third parties as part of legal process.

7. CHANGES IN OUR PRACTICES

We reserve the right to modify this Privacy Policy at any time. If we decide to change our Privacy Policy, we will post those changes to this Privacy Policy and any other places we deem appropriate, so that you are aware of what information we collect, how we use it, and under what circumstances, if any, we disclose it.

If we make material changes to this Policy, we will notify you here, by email, or by means of a notice on our home page, at least thirty (30) days prior to the implementation of the changes.

8. CORRECTING, UPDATING AND REMOVING PERSONAL INFORMATION

You may alter, update or deactivate your account information or opt out of receiving communications from us at any time. You may send an email to tgatewood@discovering-hope.com. Or you may send mail to Discovering Hope Counseling and Psychological Services, PLLC at

Discovering Hope Counseling and Psychological Services, PLLC
13420 Reese Blvd W
Huntersville, North Carolina 28078.

We will respond to your request for access or to modify or deactivate your information within thirty (30) days.

9. MEDICAL PRIVACY NOTICE

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

(a) Who Will Follow This Notice?

Health care practitioners who treat you at any of our locations, including employees, volunteers, and members of our, all departments and operating units of our organization, and all medical practices operated us, other members of our workforce, and our business associates.

(b) Your Medical Information

This Section refers to your “medical information.” This means all information that identifies you and relates to your past, present or future physical or mental health or condition including information about payment and billing for the health care services you receive.

(c) Our Pledge Regarding Medical Information

Discovering Hope Counseling and Psychological Services, PLLC(the “Practice”) is committed to protecting your privacy. The Practice is required by federal law to maintain the privacy of Protected Health Information (“PHI”), which is information that identifies or could be used to identify you. This notice applies to all your medical information that we maintain, whether created by our staff or others.

The Practice is required by law to provide you with this Notice of Privacy Practices (this “Notice”),which explains the Practice’s legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your PHI that we collect and maintain and to notify you following a breach of the privacy or security of your unsecured medical information.

YOUR RIGHTS

Your rights regarding PHI are explained below. To exercise these rights, please submit a written request to the Practice at the address noted below.

To inspect and copy PHI.

- You can ask for an electronic or paper copy of PHI. The Practice may charge you a reasonable fee.
- The Practice may deny your request if it believes the disclosure will endanger your life or another person’s life. You may have a right to have this decision reviewed.

To amend PHI.

- You can ask to correct PHI you believe is incorrect or incomplete. The Practice may require you to make your request in writing and provide a reason for the request.
- The Practice may deny your request. The Practice will send a written explanation for the
- denial and allow you to submit a written statement of disagreement.

To request confidential communications.

- You can ask the Practice to contact you in a specific way.

To limit what is used or shared.

- You can ask the Practice not to use or share PHI for treatment, payment, or business operations. The Practice is not required to agree if it would affect your care.
- If you pay for a service or health care item out-of-pocket in full, you can ask the Practice not to share PHI with your health insurer.
- You can ask for the Practice not to share your PHI with family members or friends by stating the specific restriction requested and to whom you want the restriction to apply.

To obtain a list of those with whom your PHI has been shared.

- You can ask for a list, called an accounting, of the times your health information has been shared. You can receive one accounting every 12 months at no charge, but you may be charged a reasonable fee if you ask for one more frequently.

To receive a copy of this Notice.

- You can ask for a paper copy of this Notice, even if you agreed to receive the Notice electronically.

To choose someone to act for you.

- If you have given someone medical power of attorney or if someone is your legal guardian, that person can exercise your rights.

To file a complaint if you feel your rights are violated.

- You can file a complaint by contacting the Practice using the following information: Discovering Hope Counseling and Psychological Services, PLLC 13420 Reese Blvd W Huntersville, NC 28078 ; Tiffany Gatewood, NCC,LCMHC , Owner & mental health provider: (980) 247-0682
- You can file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights by sending a letter to 200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201, calling 1-877-696-6775, or visiting www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/.
- The Practice will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

How We May Use and Disclose Medical Information About You

1. Routine Uses and Disclosures of PHI

The Practice is permitted under federal law to use and disclose PHI, without your written authorization, for certain routine uses and disclosures, such as those made for treatment, payment, and the operation of our business. The Practice typically uses or shares your health information in the following ways:

For Treatment.

- The Practice can use and share PHI with other professionals within the practice who are treating you. Example: Your primary therapist (individual therapist) consults with your group therapist about your mental health treatment.
- Different health professionals may also share your medical information in order to coordinate the different services you need. We may disclose your medical information to people outside our offices and/or locations who may be involved in your medical care after you leave our care.

To run the health care operations.

- The Practice can use and share PHI to run the business, improve your care, and contact you. Example: The Practice uses PHI to send you appointment reminders if you choose.
- We may use and disclose your medical information for our internal operations, such as business management, and administrative activities, legal and auditing functions, and insurance-related activities. We may use medical information to make sure that all of our patients receive quality care, such as reviewing our processes or to evaluate the performance of those caring for you. We may also disclose information to interns and trainees for review and learning purposes. We may remove information that identifies you from this set of information so others may use it to study healthcare and healthcare delivery without learning a specific patient's identity. Under certain circumstances, we may disclose your medical information for the health care operations of other health care providers.

To bill for your services.

- The Practice can use and share PHI to bill and get payment from health plans or other entities. Example: The Practice gives PHI to your health insurance plan so it will pay for your services. We may also disclose your medical insurance information to obtain prior approval from your health plan. Individuals Involved In Your Care or Payment of Your Care.

Notification.

- We may release your medical information to notify a family member, personal representative or another person responsible for your care of your location, general condition, or death. We also may release your medical information for certain disaster relief purposes.

Contacts.

- We may contact you to provide appointment reminders, information about treatment alternatives,

or other health related benefits and services that may be of interest to you.

Mental Health Information.

- State laws create specific requirements for the release of mental health records. We will obtain your specific authorization to release mental medical information when required by these laws

2. Uses and Disclosures of PHI That May Be Made Without Your Authorization or Opportunity to Object. The Practice may use or disclose PHI without your authorization or an opportunity for you to object, including:

To help with public health and safety issues

- Public health: To prevent the spread of disease, assist in product recalls, and report adverse reactions to medication.
- Required by the Secretary of Health and Human Services: We may be required to disclose your PHI to the Secretary of Health and Human Services to investigate or determine our compliance with the requirements of the final rule on Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information.
- Health oversight: For audits, investigations, and inspections by government agencies that oversee the health care system, government benefit programs, other government regulatory programs, and civil rights laws.
- Serious threat to health or safety: To prevent a serious and imminent threat.
- Abuse or Neglect: To report abuse, neglect, or domestic violence.

To comply with law, law enforcement, or other government requests

- Required by law: If required by federal, state or local law.
- Judicial and administrative proceedings: To respond to a court order, subpoena, or discovery request.
- Law enforcement: For law locate and identify you or disclose information about a victim of a crime.
- Specialized Government Functions: For military or national security concerns, including intelligence, protective services for heads of state, or your security clearance.
- National security and intelligence activities: For intelligence, counterintelligence, protection of the President, other authorized persons or foreign heads of state, for purpose of determining your own security clearance and other national security activities authorized by law.
- Workers' Compensation: To comply with workers' compensation laws or support claims.

To comply with other requests

- Coroners and Funeral Directors: To perform their legally authorized duties.
- Business Associates: To organizations that perform functions, activities or services on our behalf.

3. Uses and Disclosures of PHI That May Be Made With Your Authorization or Opportunity to Object.
Unless you object, the Practice may disclose PHI:

- To your family, friends, or others if PHI directly relates to that person's involvement in your care.
- If it is in your best interest because you are unable to state your preference.

4. Uses and Disclosures of PHI Based Upon Your Written Authorization

The Practice must obtain your written authorization to use and/or disclose PHI for the following purposes:
Marketing, sale of PHI, and psychotherapy notes.

You may revoke your authorization, at any time, by contacting the Practice in writing, using the information above. The Practice will not use or share PHI other than as described in Notice unless you give your permission in writing.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Practice is required by law to maintain the privacy and security of PHI.
- The Practice is required to abide by the terms of this Notice currently in effect. Where more stringent state or federal law governs PHI, the Practice will abide by the more stringent law.
- The Practice reserves the right to amend Notice. All changes are applicable to PHI collected and maintained by the Practice. Should the Practice make changes, you may obtain a revised Notice by requesting a copy from the Practice, using the information above, or by viewing a copy on the website www.discovering-hope.com.

This Notice is effective on 09/15/2024.