**SERVICES TO CHILDREN**

The involvement of children and adolescents in therapy can be highly beneficial to their overall development. Very often, it is best to see them with parents and other family members; sometimes, they are best seen alone. The therapists at Pride Mental Health will assess which might be best for your child and make recommendations to you. Obviously, the support of all the child’s caregivers is essential, as well as their understanding of the basic procedures involved in counseling children.

The 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 overall development, they may not be the best goals for therapy. Again, the therapists at Pride Mental Health will evaluate and discuss these goals with you.

Because Pride Mental Health’s role is that of the child’s helper, I will not become involved in legal disputes or other official proceedings unless compelled to do so by a court of law. Matters involving custody and mediation are best handled by another professional who is specially trained in those areas rather than by the child’s therapist.

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 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. It is important to point out the exceptions to this general agreement. The following circumstances override the general policy that children are entitled to privacy while parents 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 over the age of 14 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 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 I do not have control over information once it is released to a third party.

I agree my child should have privacy in his/her/their therapy sessions, and I agree to allow this privacy except in extreme situations, which I will discuss with the therapist. At the same time, except under unusual circumstances, I understand that I have a legal right to obtain this information.

I will do my best to ensure that therapy sessions are attended and will not inquire about the content of sessions. If my child prefers not to volunteer information about the sessions, I will respect his/her right not to disclose details. Basically, unless my child has been abused or is a clear danger to self or others, the therapist will normally tell me only the following:

* whether sessions are attended
* whether or not my child is generally participating
* whether or not progress is generally being made

If the parent or child in therapy wishes to make a specific agreement regarding the privacy of their information, this agreement will be created between the parent, child, and therapist and will be kept on file at Pride Mental Health.

The normal procedure for discussing issues that are in my child’s therapy will be joint sessions including my child, the therapist, and me and perhaps other appropriate adults. If I believe there is significant health or safety issues that I need to know about, I will contact the therapist and attempt to arrange a session with my child present. Similarly, when the therapist determines that there are significant issues that should be discussed with parents; every effort will be made to schedule a session involving the parents and the child. I understand that if information becomes known to the therapist and has a significant bearing on the child’s well-being, the therapist will work with the person providing the information to ensure that both parents are aware of it. In other words, the therapist 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.

I verify that I am the legal parent, legal guardian, managing conservator, or a person designated by the court to have the authority to consent to provide clinical, CBRS, TCM services and/or Medication Management for the child listed below. I represent that I am authorized to grant this consent for professional services and request that Pride Mental Health, LLC provide clinical, CBRS, TCM services and or Medication Management clinical services for the child.

I also agree to be present (if age 12 and under) and work closely and in conjuncture with my child’s therapist, CBRW and TCM worker towards the goals we set forth on the treatment plan. (Per Optum Requirement)

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**Parent/Guardian Name (Print) Child’s Name (Print)**

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**Parent/Guardian Signature Date**