Policy: Informed Consent for Clinical Services

1. Purpose & Philosophy

At Collingwood Psychotherapy & Yoga Centre (CPYC), we exist to ignite collective healing by guiding people back to emotional depth and meaningful relationships. Informed consent is an ongoing relational process that ensures you are an active partner in your healing journey. This policy outlines your rights and the ethical framework of our work, in alignment with the expectations of the **College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO)** and the **Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW)**.

2. The Nature of the Therapeutic Relationship

- **A Relational Approach:** Our core value is to "Be With, Not Above," meeting you with presence, humility, and mutual respect.
- **The Process of Change:** Therapy involves "Looking Inside with Courage." We trust that transformation begins when we meet ourselves fully, and we are committed to guiding you through difficult emotions toward integration and freedom.
- **Professional Boundaries:** To preserve your privacy and the integrity of the therapeutic relationship, we do not accept "friend" or "follow" requests from current or former clients on personal social media platforms.
- In addition, when we see you in person outside of the therapeutic environment (therapeutic environment could include office, walk and talk sessions, group or class that you attend that is facilitated by your therapist or a therapist at CPYC), we will make every effort to maintain your confidentiality by not acknowledging you or saying hello to you. If you would like to say hello to us, we are open to responding briefly and appropriately, however, we will keep the conversation short and maintain the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship.

3. Obtaining Informed Consent

- **Initial Consent:** Before services begin, you will complete an intake form via our secure Jane system that outlines clinical approaches and specific consents.

- **Ongoing Dialogue:** Consent is dynamic. If a new modality is introduced, such as Walk & Talk sessions or Yoga Therapy, your therapist will discuss the specific nature, risks, and benefits with you.
- **Capacity to Consent:** For children 13yrs and under, a parent or legal guardian must provide consent for treatment.

4. Confidentiality and Its Limits

Your privacy is foundational. We adhere to the **Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA)** and the **Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA)**. We will not release information without your written permission, except in the following legal circumstances:

- **Harm to Self or Others:** If there is a disclosure of serious intent to do harm to yourself or others.
- **Abuse of a Minor/Vulnerable Person:** If there is a disclosure or serious suspicion of child abuse, elder abuse, or dependent adult abuse.
- **Court Order:** If a court of law orders the release of specific information.
- **Professional Consultation:** CPYC therapists regularly consult in a group format to maintain high standards of care. Confidentiality remains within the therapy team.

5. Risks and Benefits of Clinical Services

- **Benefits:** Therapy can restore a sense of wholeness and help you live with self-worth, truth, and purpose.
- **Risks:** Facing "hidden fears" or uncomfortable emotions is a part of growth but can cause temporary distress.
- **Virtual Care Risks:** Online therapy has limitations, such as a reduced ability to read body language. You are responsible for ensuring a private and secure environment for these sessions.

6. Your Rights as a Client

You have the right to:

- Know what personal and health data we collect and why.
- Access your personal health information upon request.
- Withdraw consent at any time.
- Refuse any specific intervention or request a change in the therapeutic approach.

7. CPYC Related Policies

Please see

- Booking Policy
- Privacy & Confidentiality Policy
- Client Intake Form in Jane App

Reference Links

- **CPYC Website:** https://cpyc.ca/
- **College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO):** https://www.crpo.ca/
- **Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW):** https://www.ocswssw.org/
- **Jane App Security & Privacy:** https://jane.app/guide/basics/security-faq
- **Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA):** https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/04p03
- **CMPA Record Retention Guidelines:** https://www.cmpa-acpm.ca/en/advice-publications/browse-articles/2003/a-matter-of-records-retention-and-transfer-of-clinical-records

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