

EC: 12 LIMITS TO CONFIDENTIALITY

1. You sign a release allowing disclosure, for example, to an insurance company or a managed-care provider.
2. A court subpoena is received for your records and-or for testimony from your counselor about your time in counseling.
3. You are a danger to yourself or others: serious suicidal or homicidal thinking and-or planning.
4. You may have abused a minor and a report to Child Protective Services (CPS) is mandated (required) by law.
5. You are a minor or have a guardian who is responsible for your care and you report some form of self-abuse or self-harm.
6. Counselors are ethically bound to seek supervision of their cases as required by law, ethics, and-or clinical need.
7. Support staff or a billing service processes your records for billing, collections, mailing, transcribing, scheduling, phone calls, and-or record keeping activities. They are also required to keep the information confidential or should be fired.
8. You are receiving services with other people present, for example, in a couple, family, or group setting. Confidentiality can then only be stressed by your counselor and never guaranteed.
9. You were NOT self-referred, but, instead, came to counseling through a referral source. In which case, the referral source has a right to know if you came to counseling and if you are continuing in counseling, but NOT much more than that.
10. Trained state, accrediting, insurance, or managed-care personnel review clinical/counseling records to verify that they are maintained properly and-or according to standards.
11. Researchers, by permission, review files at the clinic, center, or agency for ethically conducted research projects.
12. The state where you live has laws regarding mandatory reporting of certain forms of abuse. For example, the state of Iowa requires the reporting of elder abuse and the chemical abuse of minors. Other states may include severe property damage or threats to commit severe property damage.