



Aligned Clinical & Educational Services (ACES), PLC
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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES INFORMED CONSENT

Client Name: _____

Date of Birth _____

Behavioral health services are provided by board-certified behavior analysts, psychologists, psychiatrists, and clinical social workers. Sometimes other professionals such as teachers or physicians recommend behavioral health services for children, adolescents or young adults. Even though someone has made this recommendation, you have the individual right to accept or refuse clinical services, which may include:

Review of the Request or Medical Records: If you want other people to share information with Aligned Clinical & Educational Services, PLC, you will need to sign a Release-Exchange of Confidential Information form. Other people might include family members, teachers, physicians, psychiatrists, college disability offices, counselors, speech language pathologists and occupational therapists. Aligned Clinical & Educational Services, PLC staff will review all available information to support service delivery. Information about your services will not be shared without explicit written permission of the legal guardian. In the case of young adults ages 18 and over with full legal rights, information cannot be shared with family members such as parents without the explicit, written permission of the young adult.

Diagnostic Clinical Interview(s): Aligned Clinical & Educational Services, PLC staff often conduct a structured interview with clients and family members to collect information about early development, medical history, family history, educational background, mental health, overall functioning and concerns. Children may also participate in a separate interview. A child interview may include questions about perceptions of school, family, health, future goals, emotional and behavioral functioning, friendships, any exposure to abuse or neglect, any thoughts of harming self or others, as well as hobbies and interests.

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA): ABA services apply Behavior Analysis theory to modify behaviors, such as behavior actions and functional skills, and to understand how behavior is affected by the environment. Using data to track behaviors and measure improvement, ABA practice includes parents and caregivers in a collaborative team to improve the quality of life for the client. Aligned Clinical & Educational Services, PLC staff are available to provide community based interventions to promote skill generalization in the natural environment.

Psychological Assessment: Psychological assessments are designed to meet the needs of individual clients by systematically collecting data regarding important areas of psychological functioning (i.e., cognitive, emotional, academic achievement, behavioral regulation, personality). Assessments include rating scales completed by family, teachers and/or job coaches, as well as direct activities completed by the client. The activities in psychological assessment typically span hands-on puzzles, making judgments about shapes and patterns, defining words or concepts, making comparisons, and tasks that require attention and memory. Once all the testing is completed and all rating scales are returned, a testing feedback meeting is scheduled to review results. Following the feedback meeting, a written report will be completed.

Psychotherapy can address a variety of interpersonal and mental health challenges, as well as supplement personal growth. Aligned Clinical & Educational Services, PLC staff offer cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) for underlying anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorders and mood disorders such as depression. Psychotherapy based in interpersonal theory and family systems is also available for families and clients who are deaf or hard of hearing.

CONFIDENTIALITY - LIMITS OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Information about your behavioral health services is kept confidential or private unless you sign explicit consent to release your medical records. Many families are surprised to learn that as soon as a young adult turns 18, parents no longer have an automatic right to access the medical or behavioral health records for their child. An adult student must sign explicit permission for Aligned Clinical & Educational Services, PLC staff to discuss information with parents before that communication can occur (even if parents are paying for the services). There are also ethical and legal situations that **REQUIRE** the behavioral health provider disclose information about children, adolescents and adults to various agencies. Some of these situations are summarized below.

Under Virginia Law, we may be required to breach confidentiality in circumstances such as the following:

- **Child Abuse:** If we have reason to suspect that a child is abused or neglected, we are required by law to report the matter to the Virginia Department of Social Services.
- **Adult Abuse:** If we have reason to suspect that an elderly or incapacitated adult is abused, neglected or exploited, we are required by law to immediately make a report and provide relevant information to the Virginia Department of Welfare or Social Services.
- **Court Proceedings:** If you or your child becomes involved in a court proceeding, or in a custody dispute, we could receive a subpoena for records or testimony. If that happens, we will notify you. If you wish, we will cooperate with you or your attorney in filing a motion asking the judge to quash (block) the subpoena, requesting that the information and/or records be protected. However, while awaiting the judge's decision, we may be required to turn the records over to the court clerk.
- **Serious Threat to Health or Safety of Another:** If you or your child communicate to us a specific and immediate threat to cause serious bodily injury or death to an identified or identifiable person, and we believe there is the intent and ability to carry out that threat immediately or imminently, we are legally required to take steps to protect third parties. These precautions may include 1) warning the potential victim(s), or the parent or guardian of the potential victim(s), if under age 18; 2) notifying a law enforcement officer, or 3) seeking hospitalization.
- **Serious Suicidal or Self-harmful Threat:** By our policy, if you or your child communicates to us there is a threat that your child may be considering harming himself or herself in the immediate future, we will disclose this information in order to seek a mental health assessment to determine what follow up action is required.

Other potential breaches to confidentiality:

- **Health Oversight:** Virginia law requires that licensed psychologists report misconduct by a health care provider of their own profession. By law, if you describe unprofessional conduct by another mental health provider of any profession, licensed psychologists are required to explain to you how to make such a report.
- **Complaints:** If you file a complaint or lawsuit against us, we may disclose relevant information regarding your treatment in order to defend ourselves.
- **Electronic Transmission:** We will, at times, share personal information about you with school personnel, or other entities with whom you authorize us to share information via electronic transmission, including fax machines, e-mail, or cellular telephones. Despite our efforts, these transmissions cannot be guaranteed to be secure.
- **Consultation:** At times we will consult with professional colleagues about aspects of the clinical services. Name and unique identifying characteristics will not be disclosed during any case consultations. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential.

Note regarding guardianship/shared custody: Many children and adolescents have parents, family members, or legal guardians that share custody and visitation in a variety of formats. By policy, Aligned Clinical and Educational Services, PLC prefers to have written consent from all parents and legal guardians involved in a child's life before starting behavioral health services. If only one legal guardian consents, it is assumed they represent all legally interested parties unless we are notified differently. If there are any existing court orders to prohibit information about a child to be shared with any former guardian or other adult, you are responsible for providing a copy of that court order to Aligned Clinical and Educational Services, PLC for the record. Having a copy on file will ensure that information regarding your child is kept secure. If securing written consent from all legally interested parties is not feasible due to geographic or logistical issues (such as military deployment), please discuss alternatives such as consent via fax, email and/or phone.

By signing below, you are indicating that you have been informed about these policies and have been given the opportunity to ask questions about them, that you understand them, and that you consent to accept them as a condition of receiving behavioral health services.

I CONSENT to the behavioral health services and I understand the limits of confidentiality.
Signature of Client or Legal Representative:

Signature

Printed Name of Client or Legal Representative Date:

If signed by a Legal Representative, please indicate your relationship to the client:

Parent Legal Guardian Other : _____