

MELISSA PLESS COUNSELING - NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN ACCESS IT. PLEASE REVIEW CAREFULLY.

MY COMMITMENT TO YOUR PRIVACY

Your health information is personal, and I am committed to protecting it. I create and maintain records of your care to provide quality services and to comply with legal requirements.

I am required by law to:

- Keep your protected health information (PHI) private
- Provide you with this notice of my legal duties and privacy practices
- Follow the terms of this notice
- Notify you following a breach of unsecured PHI when required by applicable law.

This notice applies to all records of your care created or maintained by this practice.

If your treatment includes services related to a substance use disorder, certain records may be subject to additional federal confidentiality protections under 42 CFR Part 2, which may provide greater privacy safeguards than those provided by HIPAA. When applicable, I will comply with these additional legal requirements.

HOW YOUR INFORMATION MAY BE USED & DISCLOSED

For Treatment, Payment, and Healthcare Operations

I may use or share your information to:

- Provide, coordinate, or manage your care
- Process billing and insurance claims
- Conduct practice operations (such as quality improvement, professional consultation, or administrative activities)

Certain substance use disorder treatment records protected under federal law (42 CFR Part 2) may be subject to additional restrictions regarding their use and disclosure. When those protections apply, I will follow the more restrictive legal requirements.

Other Situations Where Disclosure May Be Required or Permitted

I may disclose your information without your written authorization when required by law, including:

- Reporting suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation
- Preventing a serious threat to your safety or the safety of others
- Complying with court orders, subpoenas, or legal proceedings
- Responding to law enforcement or government requests
- Supporting health oversight activities (audits, investigations)
- Workers' compensation claims

USES AND DISCLOSURES THAT REQUIRE YOUR WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION

I will obtain your written permission before:

- Releasing psychotherapy notes (except as permitted or required by law)
- Releasing substance use disorder counseling notes when separate authorization is required by applicable federal law

- Using or disclosing your information for marketing purposes
- Selling your protected health information (which I do not do)

You may revoke your authorization at any time by providing written notice, except to the extent that action has already been taken in reliance on your authorization.

YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING YOUR INFORMATION

You have the right to:

- Access your records (with some limitations, such as psychotherapy notes)
- Request corrections to your records
- Request limits on how your information is used or shared
- Request confidential communication methods (e.g., specific phone or email)
- Request a list of disclosures made outside of treatment, payment, or operations.
- Receive a copy of this notice at any time
- Request your records in paper or electronic format when readily producible.

If your records include substance use disorder treatment information protected by federal law, you may also have additional rights regarding the accounting of certain disclosures of those records.

I will respond to requests within the timeframes required by law.

QUESTIONS OR COMPLAINTS

If you have questions about this Notice or believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may contact:

Melissa Pless, LPC, LCDC

Email: melissa@melissaplesscounseling.com

Phone: (281) 305-9356

You may also file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights. You will not be retaliated against for filing a complaint or exercising your privacy rights.

CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE

I may update this notice as needed. Any changes will apply to all information I maintain and will be available upon request and on my website.

Effective Date: June 18, 2026