



NOTICE OF HIPAA AND PRIVACY PRACTICES

Effective March 1, 2022

This document contains summary information about the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA, also known as Public Law 104-191) that provides privacy protections and patient rights about using and disclosing your Protected Health Information (PHI). When you sign this document, it will also represent an agreement between us. Please ask about any questions you have when you sign this form or any time in the future.

Notice of Privacy Rights Under HIPAA Regulations

1. Chris Jones and Associates, LLC is required by law to maintain your protected health information (i.e., the information in your health record that could identify you) and provide you with a notice of all legal duties and privacy practices concerning this information. This section describes how your personal psychological and medical information may be used and disclosed, as well as how you can gain access to this information.
 - a. With your written authorization, Chris Jones and Associates, LLC, may use or disclose your protected health information for **treatment, payment, and health care operations purposes**. Chris Jones and Associates, LLC also needs to obtain approval from you before releasing your psychotherapy notes. Federal law (45 CFR § 164.501) requires us to create psychotherapy notes about conversations during counseling sessions and are part of your medical record. These notes deserve a higher degree of protection than other protected health information. In all cases, Chris Jones and Associates, LLC is committed to using the "minimum necessary disclosure" principle. A "minimum necessary disclosure" means that we will release the least amount of information possible to meet the request for your protected health information.
 - i. Treatment is when Chris Jones and Associates, LLC provides, coordinates, or manages your health care and other services related to your health care. An example of treatment would be contacting and consulting with another healthcare provider (e.g., your family physician or psychiatrist). Chris Jones and Associates, LLC, is a group psychotherapy practice, and your therapist may consult with other Chris Jones and Associates, LLC clinicians regarding your treatment (i.e., during supervision meetings). Other Chris Jones and Associates, LLC clinicians will have the ability to view your protected health information, as well as our non-clinical billing specialists. We train all business associates of Chris Jones and Associates, LLC (i.e., any entity or persons contracted with the practice that uses or access your protected health information) to comply with these privacy rules. All business associates of Chris Jones and Associates, LLC, have agreed to abide by all the provisions of the HIPAA laws at the risk of sanction should they be found in noncompliance. Chris Jones and Associates, LLC, must keep appropriate records of the psychological services that we provide. We keep brief records, which include:
 - Noting that we met and the topics we discussed,
 - Your reasons for seeking therapy,
 - The goals and progress we set for treatment,
 - Your diagnosis,
 - Your medical, social, and history of therapy,
 - Records we receive from other providers and copies of records we send to others,
 - Your billing records.



- ii. Payment is when Chris Jones and Associates, LLC obtains reimbursement for your healthcare. An example of payment would be when we disclose your protected health information to your health insurer to receive compensation for your health care or resolve issues related to your eligibility or coverage.
- iii. Health Care Operations are activities that relate to the performance and operation of our practice. Examples of this are quality assessment and improvement activities and business-related matters such as audits and administrative services.

Use or Disclosure of Protected Health Information

2. There are several instances where Chris Jones and Associates, LLC, may use or disclose protected health information without your consent or authorization. **Please make sure you read and understand the following legal exceptions to your confidentiality regarding your protected health information.**
- a. Mandated Reporting - Chris Jones and Associates, LLC clinicians are mandated reporters in the state of Maryland. They are ethically obligated to report suspected abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation of children and vulnerable adults. Reporting does **not require proof** that abuse or neglect has occurred, and we report incidents (to either Child Protective Services or Adult Protective Services) **as soon as they are suspected**. There are two Maryland laws (Health General Article 4-306 and Family Law Article 5-711) about the disclosure of medical records, including mental health records, to local departments of social services:
 - i. Health General Article 4-306 mandates that health care providers disclose information from medical records concerning any person (child or adult) assessed as part of a protective services response or to who receives services. We share information upon request to the local department of social services representatives providing protective services. The law governs medical records, including mental health records.
 - ii. Family Law Article 5-711 mandates access to copies of the child's medical records upon request from any medical care provider. The local department may do this as part of its child protective services response or for the department to provide appropriate services in the child's best interests, who is the subject of a suspected report of child abuse or neglect.
 - b. Threats to Self or Others - Chris Jones, and Associates, LLC may make disclosures we believe are necessary to protect you and other individuals from harm. If you communicate to Chris Jones and Associates, LLC, we will disclose the information a specific, feasible, and imminent plan that threatens your safety (e.g., trying to complete suicide). We will also reveal the information if a clear, imminent risk of physical or mental injury against another individual. These disclosures may include reaching out to an emergency contact or contacting the police.
 - c. Health Oversight Activities - If Chris Jones and Associates, LLC, receives a subpoena from a Maryland State Board that governs psychotherapy practice because of an investigation, we must legally and ethically disclose any protected health information requested by the Board. We may also disclose information about your medical record when ordered under state or federal laws, including to state and federal agencies charged with oversight or compliance with privacy laws.
 - d. Judicial and Administrative Proceedings - Records about your diagnosis and treatment are privileged. If you are involved in a court proceeding, and someone requests information about your diagnosis and treatment, Chris Jones and Associates, LLC will not release information without your written authorization or court order. The privilege does not apply when a third party is evaluating you or where the evaluation is court-ordered. We will inform you in advance if this is the case.

Notice of Client Rights Under HIPAA Regulations

3. You have the right to request restrictions on specific uses and disclosures of protected health information about you. You also have the right to request a limit on the medical information we disclose about you to someone involved in your care or the payment for your care. However, Chris Jones and Associates, LLC is not required to agree to a restriction you request. To request restrictions, you must make your request in writing, including what information you want to limit if you wish to restrict the use, disclosure, or both; and to whom you want the limits to apply. You have the following rights to:
- a. Receive Confidential Communications by Alternative Means and at Alternative Locations. You have the right to request and receive confidential communications of protected health information by alternative means and at alternative locations. For example, you may ask that we contact you only at work or that we do not leave voicemail messages. To request alternative communication, you must request in writing and specify how or where we may contact you. You may make changes to your contact information in the Chris Jones and Associates, LLC client portal (Simple Practice) and then make your request in writing to change your preferred method or location of contact.
 - b. An Accounting of Disclosures – You generally have the right to receive an accounting of disclosures of protected health information for which you have neither provided consent nor authorization. Chris Jones and Associates, LLC, will discuss the accounting process upon your written request.
 - c. Inspect and Copy – In most cases, you have the right to inspect and copy your medical and billing records. To do this, you must submit your request in writing. We may charge a fee if you request a copy of the information. Chris Jones and Associates, LLC, may deny and refuse to provide you access to specific psychotherapy notes or information compiled in reasonable anticipation of, or use in, a civil criminal or administrative proceeding.
 - d. Amend – If you feel that the protected health information about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask to amend the information. To do so, you must make your request in writing. Also, you must provide a reason that supports your request. Chris Jones and Associates, LLC may deny your request if you ask to amend information that:
 - i. Chris Jones and Associates, LLC did not create the original record (we will add your request to the information record);
 - ii. Is not part of the medical information kept by Chris Jones and Associates, LLC;
 - iii. Is not part of the information which you would be permitted to inspect and copy;
 - iv. The information in the record is accurate and complete.
 - e. Choose Someone to Act for You – If you give someone medical power of attorney or if someone is your legal guardian, that person can exercise your rights and make choices about your health information.
 - f. Revoke Consent - You may revoke all such authorizations (of protected health information or psychotherapy notes) at any time, provided each revocation is in writing.
 - g. A Copy of This Notice – You have the right to a paper copy of this notice at any time. Chris Jones and Associates, LLC, reserves the right to change policies and make the revised notice effective for medical information already obtained about you and any information received in the future. If this happens, we will notify you of any such revisions in writing containing the effective date. A new copy will be given to you or posted in the waiting area. Unless well tell you of such changes, Chris Jones and Associates, LLC must abide by the terms currently described in this document.
4. If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint. To do this, you can:
- a. Submit your request in writing to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at 200 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20201. You may also file a complaint on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights website <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/filing-a-complaint/index.html>.
 - b. Under HIPAA, Chris Jones and Associates, LLC cannot retaliate against you for filing a complaint. You have the right to notify the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights immediately in the event of any retaliatory action.

If you have questions about this notice or want to exercise your privacy rights, please contact the Privacy Officer for Chris Jones and Associates, LLC, at 240-559-8110.

