

## Electronic Communication Policy

In order to maintain clarity regarding our use of electronic modes of communication during your treatment at the Cognitive Behavior Institute, the following policy has been prepared for your review. Various types of electronic communications are common in our society. Many of these common modes of communication, however, put your privacy at risk and can be inconsistent with the law and with the standards of professional practice in the field of behavioral health. Consequently, this policy has been prepared to assure the security and confidentiality of your treatment and to assure that it is consistent with ethics and the law.

### **Communication About Administrative Issues**

Administrative staff are available by phone (724-609-5002) to address client needs. If you need to reschedule an appointment, please call our staff. Our staff have access to each clinician's schedule and can easily schedule in real-time as scheduling over email is not feasible. This eliminates any confusion that could potentially impact your care. If you call and are unable to reach a live staff member, please leave a voicemail on one of our dedicated extensions so a member of our team can return your call.

- Extension 1 – Current Patient General Inquiries
- Extension 2 – New Patient Inquiries
- Extension 3 – Medication Refill Requests
- Extension 4 – Cancellation/Rescheduling Requests
- Extension 5 – Billing/Insurance Questions
- Extension 6 – Virtual Appointment Assistance
- Extension 7 – Credit Card Update Line

Other administrative communication can be relayed via email. This includes communication about issues such as billing, medication refills, records requests, requests to cancel appointments, and requests to update insurance or pharmacy information. For issues outside of scheduling, please feel free to email our administrative staff at [staff@cbipsychotherapy.org](mailto:staff@cbipsychotherapy.org) requesting that we get in touch with you.

You may need to fax information to our office. Faxes may be sent to the Cognitive Behavior Institute at 724-299-8964. All fax communications should include a cover page indicating the following: 1) name of the recipient 2) name of the sender 3) contact information of the sender and 4) confidential information disclosure (if appropriate). If you have questions regarding faxing information, please contact the main office or discuss with your clinician.

Cognitive Behavior Institute may send texts, phone calls, or emails for administrative purposes, including automated appointment confirmations and announcements. By signing, you agree to receive these types of communications.

### **Communication About Clinical Issues**

For issues related to mental health treatment, communication with providers during scheduled appointments is the most appropriate method of communication. Please do not email clinicians regarding clinical matters because email is not a secure method of contact.

Non-clinical matters can also be relayed to your provider through our HIPAA-compliant email: [staff@cbipsychotherapy.org](mailto:staff@cbipsychotherapy.org). Admin staff are unable to provide personal staff email addresses or phone numbers to clients.

## **Emergency Communication**

Cognitive Behavior Institute is an out-patient level of care provider and has no on-call providers or ability to address mental or physical health emergencies. All of our methods of communication, including phone and email, are monitored during regular business hours only. Therefore, these are not appropriate places to seek emergency support. If you have an emergency, we advise clients to please contact 911, go to the nearest emergency room, contact your county crisis network, or follow your crisis plan as prescribed.

## **Social Media**

Clinicians do not communicate with, or contact, any clients through social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram or Facebook. Clinicians may participate on various social networks, but not in a professional capacity. If you as a client have an online presence, there is a possibility that you may encounter a clinician by accident. If that occurs, do not attempt to contact or communicate with clinicians in this way. Clinicians will not respond to these types of requests and will terminate these types of contacts. Instead, discuss it with your clinician at your upcoming appointment. Our professional staff at the Cognitive Behavior Institute believe that any communications with clients online has the potential to compromise the professional relationship and therefore advocate for open communication regarding such dynamics in the therapeutic relationship.

## **Web Searches**

Clinicians will not use web searches to gather information about you. At Cognitive Behavior Institute, we feel this type of information gathering violates your privacy rights; however, we understand that you might choose to gather information about your clinician in this way. We are aware that there is an incredible amount of information available about individuals on the internet, which may be inaccurate or unknown. If you encounter any information about your clinician through web searches, or in any other fashion for that matter, please discuss this with your clinician so that they may address it and its potential impact on your treatment.

It has become commonplace for clients to review their health care provider on various websites. Unfortunately, clinicians cannot respond to such comments and related errors because of confidentiality restrictions. If you encounter such reviews, please discuss this with your clinician so that they may address it and its potential impact on your treatment. We ask that you please do not review your clinician while in treatment on any of these websites. This is because it has the potential to damage the therapeutic relationship.