

Area: Program Services  
Subject: Confidentiality of Client Records  
Policy No.: 150

### **Policy**

It is the policy of the Center for Communication Disorders to secure all client records and to follow a code of confidentiality in the treatment of all clients.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all clients have the right to privacy protected during their course of service at the Center for Communication Disorders.

### **Procedures**

#### Release of Information:

- Information regarding the status of any individual as a client of the Center will not be provided to any individual outside the Center staff unless written permission to do so is provided by the client or responsible party.
- All information contained in a client's file or other Clinic records is considered confidential, and not to be shared with anyone other than those authorized to receive or review it.
- Written release must be signed by the client or responsible party for each written report that the Center requests from another agency or person.
- A written release must be signed by the client or responsible party for each written report that is sent by the Center to another agency or person. The release form must specify the particular contact person within the agency to which the report is being sent.
- Information contained in a client's file that was provided by sources outside the Center may not be released to outside parties under any circumstances.
- Telephone contacts regarding consultation involving a client must be verbally approved by the client or responsible party. A dated note documenting such approval must be entered into the Chronological Note sheet of a client's file before such contacts are made.

#### Protection of Client Identity:

- There will be no client identifying information posted or otherwise evident in any area of the Center accessible by the general public.
- No client identifying information (names, client initials, birth dates, case numbers, etc.) will be included on working copies of client specific documents (SOAP Notes, Session Plans, Client Progress Summaries, Diagnostic Reports, etc.).
- No client identifying information will be mentioned during educational activities within the Center or Department.
- No conferences or discussions with clients, accompanying parties, professionals or other parties regarding Center clients may take place in any of the public areas of the Center.
- Observers of diagnostic and treatment sessions are limited to faculty, clinical staff, individuals accompanying clients, and students in training within the Center. Student observers will be informed that no client identifying information may be requested or included in any reports they may write of their observations.
- Any other persons wishing to observe may do so only with the expressed permission of the specific client or guardian.

**Clinic Files:**

- All client files are to be kept locked in the appropriate file cabinets in the Clinic File Room (Davis Hall 012C) or in the Inactive File Storage Room when not in use. Both file rooms must be kept locked at all times when not directly supervised by a member of the CCD clinic staff. Access to both rooms are limited to authorized clinic personnel only.
- Student clinicians may review client files in the Clinic File Room. Any file taken for review must be signed out on the client file sign-out sheet, and signed back in when returned to the appropriate file draw.
- No file may be removed from the client file room without direct permission of the Case Supervisor or Clinic Director.
- Files taken from the file room may not be removed from the Department under any circumstances.
- Files may never be left unattended in any unsecured area.
- Files may never be placed in student or faculty mailboxes.
- Supervisors must return client files to the locked file cabinets immediately after use. If a supervisor must keep a file in his/her office for an extended period of time, that file must be kept in a secure, locked area such as a file or desk draw, and may at no time be left in view of other people entering the office.

**Electronic Transmission of Client-Related Data:**

- Client-related documents that contain identifying information may not be transmitted by fax, E-mail message or attachment, or other electronic means unless authorized in writing by the client or his/her guardian. Identifying information includes:
  - Names and initials of clients, guardians and significant others
  - addresses
  - telephone numbers
  - client file numbers
  - any and all other information that would reveal the identify of an individual
- Client-related documents transmitted electronically between student clinicians and clinical supervisors must have all identifying information deleted before transmission.
- Client-related documents may not be stored on personal or Departmental computer hard drives, floppy disks, or CDs, or included in any personal or academic portfolios, unless all identifying information has been deleted.

**Audio/Video Recordings:**

- Clients of the Center will not be audio or video recorded unless they have given written permission to do so (*Authorization to use Clinic Material form*).
- All audio and video recordings are considered confidential information, and are not to be listened to or viewed by anyone not immediately involved with evaluation or treatment of the client, without written permission of the client (*Authorization to use Clinic Material form*).
- Audio and video recordings may be archived for instructional purposes only with the explicit written permission of the individual(s) recorded (*Authorization to use Clinic Material form*). In those cases, recordings will not be labeled with any identifying client information, and will be stored in a locked area in an instructor's office or other non-public area.