

Confidentiality Facts for Teens (12-17 years OLD)

► Confidentiality means keeping your information as Private & Safe as Possible.

It means that when you talk with your therapist, psychiatrist, psychologist, or social worker, he/she will not tell your parents or guardians what you say unless you give your permission. However, California laws let behavioral health providers make decisions about what information they will share. You should not assume your provider will keep your information private from your parents or guardians.

► HOW Can I have Confidentiality with my Behavioral health Provider?

If you don't want your parents or guardians involved in your mental health or substance use treatment, you must explain that to your provider. In some situations, you may be required to have your parents involved.

► What if I need care for a mental health or Drug/alcohol related Crisis?

Teens in crisis can get help without their parents knowing about it. But providers and insurance plans have different definitions of what is a crisis. Check with your provider or health plan for more information. If you need medications or admission to a hospital, your parent/guardian must be contacted.

TIPS for Teens!

- ★ Ask questions about consent and confidentiality. Find out who your provider will share your information and records with. Don't stop asking until you understand the confidentiality rules.
- ★ If you feel that you need confidential services, make sure you tell your provider.
- ★ Read and understand written documents before signing them.
- ★ Know your rights in the behavioral health care system and speak up for your rights.

For your safety, Some things Cannot stay Confidential...

Your provider will need to contact someone or your parents/ guardians to help if you say...

- **YOU were or are Being Physically or sexually abused.**
- **YOU are at serious risk of hurting yourself or another Person.**
- **YOU are UNABLE to function Due to a mental health condition.**

Even if you don't have to ask your parents for permission to see a behavioral health provider, it's a good idea to talk with them or a trusted adult about the help you need.

Resource:

- ◆ California Minor Consent Laws pocket card for youth and health care providers. 2007, Adolescent Health Working Group: www.ahwg.net/resources/resources.htm

Do you have any comments or questions about this handout? Please contact Adolescent Health Working Group by emailing feedback@ahwg.net or calling (415) 554-8429. Thank you.

Sources:

- 1) Adolescent Health Working Group. The Truth about Confidentiality. *H.E.A.L.T.H. Curriculum*. 2005, <http://www.ahwg.net/projects/health.htm>
- 2) National Center for Youth Law. Which Minors Can Consent for What Services and Providers™ Confidentiality Obligations, revised. Nov 2006, <http://www.youthlaw.org>