

### **CONFIDENTIALITY AND SECURITY OUTSIDE OF SESSIONS**

Dr. Richard Federici, LLC (hereafter referred to as Dr. Federici), is an advocate for preserving patient privacy and will protect your confidentiality and security. Confidentiality refers to the principal that information is not disclosed to unauthorized people. Information that you confide to Dr. Federici is recognized by law as privileged information, and is confidential. Security refers to the means of protecting your private information to assure that it remains confidential. This practice does not fall under the criteria for HIPAA, and though Dr. Federici is not obliged by law to follow HIPAA protocols, this practice is committed to protecting your confidentiality. Dr. Federici will not disclose any information about you, without your consent, or acknowledgment, which may be via signed forms, or by other acceptable means. The exception to confidentiality is if you are a danger to yourself or others, or in cases of abuse. If you are involved in a life-threatening emergency and Dr. Federici cannot ask your permission, Dr. Federici will share information if he believes you would have wanted him to do so, or if he believes it will be helpful to you. Dr. Federici will take precautions to minimize the risk of disclosing any information about you that you do not want disclosed.

To insure confidentiality, clinical matters should wait to be discussed during therapy sessions. If, however, you need to consult with Dr. Federici between sessions, you need to weigh the security risks involved with communications outside of the office. Communication refers to any contact outside of a session, such as by telephone, cell phone, text message, or email. Any communication with Dr. Federici which is not in-person increases the chance of intrusion of your privacy. New vulnerabilities arise and new threats are always being detected. New operating systems, and updates, may close security loops, but they too are open to new security breaches. It is prudent to keep the devices that you communicate with Dr. Federici current the latest updates. Providers and manufacturers have begun providing encryption to protect text messages, however, not every provider provides the same degree security.

To address potential threats, Dr. Federici has designed a plan to help secure your privacy. It is Dr. Federici's intention to set up protocols that make each person feel comfortable, secure, and adequately protected. Certain principles will be adhered to for everyone. There are components to communications outside of the office which you will be allowed to choose your level of comfort. *Communications* include phone calls, messages, text messaging, and emails. The price for safer communication, is more stringent security measures, which may be burdensome to those who do not require it. You can decide the level of confidentiality you want, and Dr. Federici will do his utmost to honor that. Human error is always a potential occurrence, no matter what safeguards are implemented, and should take that into consideration. You can decide if speaking on a landline, or on a cell phone is secure enough for you. You can decide if texting or email communications are secure enough for you. You can also decide if telephones, cell phones, texting, or emails are secure enough to discuss very personal

matters which should normally only be discussed in therapy sessions. There are many factors to consider including what the nature of the communication is, what method of communication will you be using, the device or devices being used, the service provider of those devices, what risks will you be taking including human error should your communications be erroneously sent to the wrong person, what are the consequences if your communications are compromised, to name a few. These factors should then be weighed against the urgency of the communications, and the benefit factors.

Dr. Federici does not accept '*friend requests*' from patients or former patients on social network sites such as Facebook, or LinkedIn, nor will he contact you in that manner. Never divulge any information to anyone claiming to be Dr. Federici on any social media site. Psychologist's ethics code prohibits psychologists from soliciting reviews from clients, nor should psychologists respond to them. You may find Dr. Federici's practice on such sites as Yelp, Healthgrades, or other places that list businesses. Some of these sites include reviews where users rate providers. Dr. Federici is not encouraging or discouraging you from doing so, however, you should be aware that using your own name could compromise your privacy, and it would be prudent if you do use those sites, to create a separate email account, and a pseudonym, so your identity is not associated with Dr. Federici. Dr. Federici will never contact you on those sites, or on any social media. The only way Dr. Federici will communicate with you is via phone, text or email, depending on how you consented to communicate with Dr. Federici.

When communicating with you, Dr. Federici will only discuss matters that will not need to be entered in his psychotherapy notes. Generally, the details of texts will not be put in his notes unless it is a "**notable event**" which is information Dr. Federici would use in whole or in part to make decisions on how to treat you. Usually these would suggest a higher level of confidentiality as well. Dr. Federici keeps records on each patient as well as his own separate psychotherapy notes for each person he sees. Dr. Federici does not keep copies of any texts or emails in your records file, however, if there is a significant discussion, Dr. Federici may need to make note of it. If the Communication goes towards a topic that needs to be documented, under most circumstances, Dr. Federici will stop the conversation and advise you to continue the discussion in the office at the next session. If you want to continue the discussion, and Dr. Federici has the ability to do so, and if he thinks it is in your best interest to continue, the conversation will then be considered an "**impromptu session**" which triggers Dr. Federici to take certain actions and you will be charged a pro-rated amount for the conversation. Once it is an impromptu session, you will be responsible for these charges. The only rare circumstance where Dr. Federici will not stop the discussion to remind you of this, is if he feels it would be harmful to you. For those occurrences, he will however take the highest level of security he is able to take under the circumstances. Some examples would be if you were suicidal, if you just experienced a major life trauma, or if in Dr. Federici's professional opinion it would be detrimental to you, if he interrupted you, or did not let you continue.

If you require high levels of security, or are not sure if the measures of security of Dr. Federici's practice are sufficient for your needs, you should discuss this with Dr. Federici. Dr. Federici will do his best to advise you how to preserve your privacy within the parameters of security measures set up for his practice.