



Dear Soon-To-Be Young Adult Patient,

Turning 18 is a big deal, not just from an emotional perspective, but legally, too. It is natural for you to get excited and we're excited for you! But this milestone carries big legal changes in many arenas of your life, as well as in our Practice. When you turn 18 years old, seeking behavioral health care (counseling) and medical care is a new responsibility. Your parents/guardian can help guide you in obtaining your care, however, as an adult you have the right and responsibility for your own behavioral/mental health care. This means that you may now obtain counseling and mental health care without your parent's consent and you will coordinate your own care, such as making and/or changing your appointments.

We are here to help you make a smooth transition from pediatric counseling care to adult care. We will guide you through the process of registering with our Practice including completing:

- Enrollment in Patient Ally patient portal
- Patient Information
- Financial Agreement
- Letter of Understanding and Informed Consent
- Telehealth Informed Consent
- Credit Card Consent and Authorization

Additional information may also be requested and/or required such as:

- Authorization to Release Confidential Information
- Informed Consent for In-Person Services During Public Health Crisis

Think about it, when you turn 18 the same federal privacy laws (Federal Health and Information Portability and Accountability Act, HIPAA) that protect your parents/guardians will protect you as a young adult. Making sure we have strong privacy protections is critical to maintaining your trust in your behavioral health care provider and your willingness to obtain needed counseling services, and these protections are especially important where extremely sensitive information is concerned, such as your mental health information. Please have candid conversations with your parent/guardian about how medical privacy changes after your 18th birthday. You may want to have an *Authorization to Release Confidential Information* form signed and ready so that in the event of an emergency, or in the case of routine coordination of care, important behavioral health information can be released to them. Without signed authorization from you to release information, we will not be able to give information, unless:

- In the provider's professional judgment, releasing the information is in your best interest. However, our providers often err on the side of patient privacy, especially if they do not know your parents.
- The provider feels there are signs of abuse and/or negligence
- If you may cause harm to yourself and/or if you may cause harm to others

There are a few more things for you to know that change when you turn 18:

- You will be responsible for making/scheduling, changing/rescheduling, and attending your counseling sessions.
- You will need to check yourself in at the reception window upon arrival to the office, or in your provider's virtual waiting room for telehealth.
- You will be responsible for any payment that needs to be made to our Practice.
- You will need to pay for any co-payments or billing portions required at the time of service.
- Your parent/guardian may come to the appointment with you if you'd like, let your counselor know.
- You will need to have a signed *Authorization to Release Confidential Information* form on file for any individual/organization in which you want our Practice to share your information.
- You have the right to be informed of your care and treatment and you also have the right to refuse treatment if you so wish.

Please call our office when you turn 18 years old and speak to a member of our Patient Care Team so you can begin this transition. Again, we're excited for you and are here to help.

Sincerely,

## The True Joy Counseling Patient Care Team

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