# Guardian (Youth or Family Counseling) Consent

Consent Addendum

## COUNSELING SERVICES

Participating in counseling services for your family (with a minor present) and/or youth individually will require awareness about the rights and privacy of you and the youth. The purpose of meeting with a counselor or therapist is to get help with problems in life that are bothering you or your youth/family or that are keeping you/them from being successful in important areas of life. When we meet with the family and/or the youth individually, we will ask questions, listen to them (or the whole family) and suggest a plan for improving these problems.

It is important that the youth and/or whole family feel comfortable talking to us about the issues that are bothering them and maintaining privacy within family systems and working with youth requires extra attention to trust and information management. Sometimes the issues discussed in sessions will include things that someone doesn’t want other family members to know about and (for most people) knowing sessions will be kept private helps everyone feel more comfortable and have more trust in the counselor. Privacy (confidentiality) is an important and necessary part of good counseling.

## PRIVACY (CONFIDENTIALITY)

The information shared in counseling sessions is considered confidential and private. Counseling content will not be shared outside of counseling sessions except in a few exceptional cases. In Texas law, the exceptions to the confidentiality of counseling include: *1) Where there is a reasonable suspicion of child abuse or elder adult abuse. 2) Where there is a reasonable suspicion that a client may present a danger of violence to others. 3) Where there is a reasonable suspicion that a client is likely to harm themselves unless protective measures are taken.* In all of the above cases, the counselor is required by law to break confidentiality in order to protect the client(s) or someone they might endanger, from harm. Also, the general information of a session may be discussed in a one-on-one or group consultation but in this setting, confidentiality is maintained because all identifying information about you will be removed in order to maintain your anonymity.

### Communicating with Parent(s) or Guardian(s) and other members of family therapy

Except for situations such as those listed above, we will not tell parent(s) or guardian(s) specific things shared in a private session with youth. This includes activities and behavior that a parent/guardian would not approve of — or would be upset by — but that do not put the youth at risk of serious and immediate harm. However, if a youth’s risk-taking behavior becomes more serious, then we will need to use professional judgment to decide whether the youth is in serious and immediate danger of being harmed. If we feel that a youth is in immediate danger, we will communicate this information to the parent(s) or guardian(s).

In order to maintain trust and safety in the therapy relationship within family counseling and specifically with youth in individual counseling, it is imperative that guardians practice discretion with requesting information from providers about their youth’s counseling. In individual counseling with a youth, the counselor will provide periodic updates about general progress, and/or family may be asked to participate in counseling sessions as needed. Although guardians have the legal right to request written records/session notes of a youth, it is strongly recommended that guardians refrain from requesting these records in order to respect the confidentiality of the youth’s treatment. The counselor will ALWAYS inform guardians about situations that could seriously endanger a youth but this decision to breach confidentiality in these circumstances is up to the counselor’s professional judgment.

If you have any questions about this form, you may email the director at info@discoverycounselingaustin.com

Discovery Counseling Austin

www.discoverycounselingaustin.com