

Confidentiality Agreement and Information

Psychological Assessment is a complex task that requires information to be collected from a variety of sources. Data from psychological tests must be analyzed in context, which requires the assembling of both current and historical information.

Understanding the context of a person may include information about development, health, education, family, personal interests and relationships. **Information collected as part of the assessment process is confidential**, that is, information is shared only with those who are authorized to have access. The assessment process almost always includes the production of a written report which documents test data and places it in context. A written report includes historical and background information so that test data may be understood in context. Reports written for this purpose are marked as confidential and will only be released to the individual tested (or parents, if the examinee is a minor child), and other individuals authorized by the client or parents.

All the information collected in the assessment process is kept secure. Reasonable attempts are made to protect the security of test data and reports. Test reports and test data is released only with your authorization or in response to a subpoena. Ideally, written consent is obtained before a report is released. There may be times, however, when a report will be sent with your verbal approval obtained over the phone or by electronic mail.

There are exceptions to confidentiality that are recognized by law:

Risk to Self or Others. If I believe you are threatening serious harm to another person, I am required to try to protect the other person or persons. In that case, I may have to tell the intended victim and the police and/or seek your hospitalization. Similarly, if you threaten or act in a way that is very likely to harm yourself, I may have to seek hospitalization for you, or call your family members or others who can help to protect you. If such a situation arises, I will discuss the situation with you before I contact anyone else, unless safety overrules such a discussion.

Risk of Abuse. If I believe or suspect that a child, an elderly person, a disabled person or anyone else is being abused (by your neglect, assault, battery or sexual molestation), I must file a report with the appropriate agency. I do not have any authority to further investigate the situation after it is reported (the agency will investigate).

There are additional ways confidentiality may be limited:

It may be necessary to talk about your treatment with other professionals. Your name will not be revealed and the other professional is also legally bound to maintain the confidentiality of your information. Psychological evaluations are confidential, yet can become quasi-public documents. It is understood that parents will see and read the report of their minor child's evaluation. Often, other professionals or doctors will obtain a copy of the report. Sometimes the report is sent on to a school. In this way, many individuals may know the results of psychological testing. I will always attempt to be discreet and maintain confidentiality within the limits of the nature of this testing arrangement. However, once a report is released, I will have no control over its use or dissemination from that point forward.

Confidentiality

Children who are under the age of 12 (approximately), have limited legal rights to keep what they tell me from their parents. However, as a person becomes better able to understand and choose (typically between the ages of 12 and 18), he or she assumes legal rights. In the process of collecting information from an adolescent, there are gray areas. Some teens may not share certain information without a promise of complete confidentiality. In an effort to better understand the dynamics of this individual, I may choose to leave data out of a final report. A common area of difficulty is drug use. Teens may have denied aspects of their use to their parents, but may be more forthcoming in the evaluation. I will use clinical judgment to decide the importance of specific information and its inclusion in the report. Clearly, there are times where a decision is made to inform parents and others about information obtained from an evaluation that this adolescent would rather remain confidential.

Other issues such as pregnancy, abortion, illegal activities and sexual orientation represent gray areas where a clear-cut set of rules does not always apply. However, the discussion of whether or not to divulge a specific circumstance remains confidential. It is always my intent to persuade an adolescent to not keep secrets.

Once a person has reached their 18th birthday, even if they are in high school and still live at home, they may evoke complete confidentiality over any element of an evaluation.

If your account with Dr. Sorci is unpaid and overdue and there is no arranged payment plan, legal means may be used to obtain payment. The only information given to the court, a collection agency, or a lawyer would be your name, address, the dates of professional services, and the amount due.

Complaint procedures

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of the assessment process, please discuss any issues with Dr. Sorci immediately. If you feel that you have been treated unfairly or even unethically and cannot resolve a problem, you can contact the state Board of Psychology at (916-920-6383) from whom Dr. Sorci receives her license to practice as a Psychologist.

By my signature below I am certifying that I have read and agree to the above contents:

Signature	Relationship to Client	Date
-----------	------------------------	------

Melissa Procker Sorci, Ph.D.
51 East Campbell Ave., Suite 170
Campbell, CA 95008
408-782-9538 voice
408-370-6196 fax
mpsorci@d@gmail.com