

# CONFIDENTIALITY



SELF  
CARE  
ISN'T  
SELFISH

Individuals aged 13-17 in the state of Georgia have legal rights to *mental health treatment* and over *what information is shared*. This handout is designed to inform you about some of those rights, such as:

- What your parents / guardians can do *with* and *without* your consent
- *When* and *how* your providers can access your records and share your information.

**Without Parental Consent:** Anyone 13 and older in the state of Georgia may consent to mental health treatment without parent or guardian consent.

**Without Your Consent:** Parents and guardians of minors (13-17) may consent to mental health treatment without the minors' — *your* — consent.

## 01 When can providers share information?

Your provider can share information without your consent if you share:

- You *currently* harm yourself or others, or *have a plan to do so*
- Another child or elderly person is being abused

**They may also share information:**

- To refer you to a new provider
- If they believe it is in your best interest to tell your parent/guardian

## 02 What information can providers share?

If your therapist wants to share information with your parent or legal guardian, they will talk with you about it *first*. They may share:

- Diagnosis and treatment recommendations (including medication)
- Your progress in treatment
- Referrals to helpful services

*Confused or want to know more?  
Talk with your treatment provider or reach out to The EMPOWER Lab with your questions!*



# 01

## When can providers share information?

In most cases, notes from your mental health visits are added in our electronic medical record *which can viewed by the medical providers in our network*. **If all your providers have the same information about any conditions (medical or mental), you can get the best treatment and care for you.** Your providers can access your mental health records by reviewing all notes that are in the electronic medical record. Outside providers can access your mental health records by fax, mail, or electronic record (if they have access). *Ask your mental health provider about who can access information* about your visit, problems you are having, and/or diagnoses. Let them know any providers with whom you wish to coordinate care.

State law also requires or allows your providers to share mental health information without your consent in some instances. Your provider can:

- Talk with others when you tell them **you may hurt yourself or others, or if you have been a victim of child abuse**. Your provider may also talk with others if you tell them about *another child or elder being abused*.
- Share with your parents and legal guardians, if the provider believes **that sharing is in your best interest**. *Your provider will talk with you about what they want to share as well as your concerns. They may still choose to share information and will explain their reasons for doing so. Your provider also will write down your concerns in the medical record.*
- **Share with your other mental health and medical providers** outside of our network. They can access your mental health records for treatment and to coordinate care.
- Share information by **making a referral to new providers or agencies** that are recommended to provide you with care.

It is important that you feel comfortable sharing private information with your therapist. If your therapist wants to share information with your parent or legal guardian, **they will talk with you about it**. Here are some examples of the type of information that might be shared even if you have consented to your own treatment:

- Diagnosis and recommendations for treatment
- Progress in treatment
- Medications that are recommended, included risks and benefits, how often and how much of the medication you should take, and side effects to look for
- Crisis prevention and safety planning
- Referrals for other services in the community that may be helpful to you and your family
- Changes your parent may need to make to help you. *This is sometimes called “parent training” or “parent coaching”.*

# 02

## What information can providers share?