

Soul Expressions

COUNSELING & WELLNESS CAFÉ PLLC

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

Effective Date: September 29, 2026

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED, HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION, AND YOUR PRIVACY RIGHTS. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

Soul Expressions Counseling & Wellness Café PLLC ("Soul Expressions," "we," "our," or "the Practice") provides behavioral health services in person and by telehealth. We are committed to protecting the privacy and security of your protected health information (PHI). This Notice explains our privacy practices and applies to clinicians, contractors, trainees, and workforce members who are authorized to use PHI on behalf of the Practice.

Your Rights

Get an electronic or paper copy of your record

You may ask to inspect or obtain an electronic or paper copy of the health information we maintain about you. We will respond within the time required by law. We may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee when permitted by law.

Ask us to correct your record

You may ask us to amend information you believe is incorrect or incomplete. We may deny the request in certain circumstances and will explain a denial as required by law.

Request confidential communications

You may ask us to contact you in a particular way or at a particular location. We will accommodate reasonable requests as required by law.

Ask us to limit what we use or share

You may request restrictions on certain uses or disclosures for treatment, payment, or health care operations. We are not always required to agree. If you pay in full out of pocket for a service, you may ask us not to disclose information about that service to your health plan for payment or health care operations when the law requires us to honor that request.

Get a list of certain disclosures

You may request an accounting of certain disclosures of your PHI. Some disclosures, including many for treatment, payment, or health care operations, are not included.

Get a copy of this Notice

You may request a paper or electronic copy of this Notice at any time.

Choose someone to act for you

A legally authorized personal representative may exercise your rights when permitted by law. We may ask for documentation of that authority.

File a complaint

You may complain to our Privacy Officer or to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights. We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

How We Typically Use and Share PHI

Treatment

We may use and share PHI to provide, coordinate, or manage your counseling and related health care. When appropriate and permitted by law, this can include communication with other treating professionals.

Health care operations

We may use and share PHI to operate the Practice, supervise and train authorized workforce members, conduct quality and compliance activities, credential clinicians, manage services, and improve care.

Payment, insurance, and EAP services

When you ask us to bill an insurer, managed-care organization, employee assistance program (EAP), or other payer, we may disclose information needed to verify eligibility, obtain authorization, submit claims, support medical necessity, coordinate benefits, or receive payment. Depending on the payer, this can include diagnoses, dates of service, procedure codes, treatment information, or other information the payer requires. EAP sponsors or vendors may receive information allowed by your authorization, contract, or applicable law. We do not promise that use of insurance or an EAP will keep all treatment information from the payer.

Business associates and service vendors

We may use vendors that support scheduling, electronic health records, billing, communications, telehealth, secure storage, and other Practice functions. When HIPAA requires it, these vendors are subject to agreements requiring appropriate safeguards for PHI.

Telehealth, Portal, Texting, Email, and Electronic Communications

Telehealth

We provide telehealth services using technology selected for clinical care. Telehealth may involve electronic transmission of audio, video, messages, and clinical information. We use reasonable administrative, technical, and physical safeguards, but no electronic system can be guaranteed to be risk-free.

Client portal

When available, the client portal is the preferred method for exchanging sensitive clinical documents and messages. Portal activity becomes part of the Practice's electronic systems and may be retained as required for treatment, operations, or law.

Text messages and email

We may use text or email for scheduling, reminders, administrative questions, links, forms, or other communications consistent with your preferences and our policies. Standard text and email may carry privacy risks, including access by other people with access to your device, account, phone plan, or email system. We limit sensitive clinical information in ordinary messages when practical and may redirect clinical discussions to a secure portal, telehealth session, or telephone call.

Emergency use

Electronic messaging and the client portal are not emergency services and may not be reviewed immediately. If you are experiencing an emergency, use emergency or crisis resources appropriate to your situation.

Behavioral Health and Psychotherapy Records

Mental health information

Behavioral health information can be especially sensitive. We use and disclose mental health information only as permitted by HIPAA and other applicable federal and North Carolina law. When another law gives your information greater protection than HIPAA, we follow the more protective requirement.

Psychotherapy notes

HIPAA gives special protection to psychotherapy notes, meaning notes recorded by a mental health professional documenting or analyzing the contents of a counseling conversation that are maintained separately from the medical record. In most circumstances, we must obtain your written authorization before using or disclosing psychotherapy notes, except for limited uses or disclosures permitted by law. Psychotherapy notes are different from progress notes, diagnoses, treatment plans, medication information, session times, test results, and other information kept in the clinical record.

Substance Use Disorder Information

SUD information generally

Information about substance use may be part of a behavioral health record and is protected by HIPAA and other applicable law.

42 CFR Part 2 records

If Soul Expressions creates, receives, or maintains records that are protected by 42 CFR Part 2, those records receive additional federal confidentiality protections. To the extent Part 2 applies, we will follow its consent, redisclosure, complaint, breach, and legal-process requirements. Part 2 records generally may not be used or disclosed in civil, criminal, administrative, or legislative proceedings against a patient without the patient's specific written consent or a qualifying court order and subpoena. SUD counseling notes maintained separately from the treatment record receive additional protection when Part 2 applies.

Children, Adolescents, Parents, and Guardians

Minor clients

For clients under age 18, a parent, guardian, custodian, or other legally authorized representative may generally exercise privacy rights and may have access to information when permitted by law. There are important exceptions. A minor may have independent confidentiality rights in circumstances recognized by federal or North Carolina law, and access may also be limited when another law prohibits disclosure or when a legally recognized exception applies.

Therapeutic privacy

Because effective therapy often depends on a young person having an appropriate degree of privacy, clinicians may discuss with the minor and parent/guardian what types of information will ordinarily be shared, while preserving the Practice's ability to disclose information when required or permitted by law for safety, consent, payment, custody, or other legal reasons.

Custody and legal authority

When parents are separated, divorced, or involved in custody proceedings, we may request custody orders or other documentation before determining who can consent to treatment or access records. The Practice does not determine legal custody rights and will follow controlling legal documents and applicable law.

Veterans, Third-Party Payers, and Care Coordination

Veteran and community care services

When services are authorized or paid for through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, a VA community-care arrangement, or another third-party program, we may disclose information needed for authorization, coordination, claims, documentation, quality review, or payment as permitted by law and the applicable program requirements.

Other third parties

We do not disclose PHI to employers, schools, attorneys, family members, or other third parties merely because they request it. Disclosure generally requires your authorization or another legal basis.

Other Uses and Disclosures Allowed or Required by Law

Public health and safety

We may use or disclose PHI for legally authorized public-health activities or to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to health or safety when applicable law permits.

Abuse, neglect, exploitation, or domestic violence

Mental health professionals may have reporting duties under applicable law. We may disclose information to appropriate authorities when a report is required or permitted.

Health oversight and licensing

We may disclose information to authorized oversight agencies for audits, investigations, inspections, licensure, or disciplinary activities as permitted by law.

Court orders, subpoenas, and legal proceedings

We respond to legal demands for records only as permitted or required by applicable law. Mental health, psychotherapy-note, and Part 2 protections may impose additional requirements beyond an ordinary subpoena.

Law enforcement and other government requests

We may disclose PHI to law enforcement or government agencies only in circumstances permitted or required by law.

Workers' compensation

We may disclose PHI as authorized by and necessary to comply with workers' compensation or similar laws.

Medical examiners and funeral directors

We may disclose information to coroners, medical examiners, or funeral directors when permitted or required by law.

Uses Requiring Your Authorization or Choice

Other uses

Uses or disclosures not described in this Notice generally require your written authorization unless another law permits or requires them. You may revoke an authorization in writing, subject to legal limitations and actions already taken in reliance on it.

Marketing, sale of PHI, and fundraising

We do not sell PHI. We will obtain authorization when HIPAA requires authorization for marketing or sale of PHI. If we conduct fundraising communications permitted by law, you have the right to opt out. If Part 2 information is involved, we will provide the additional notice and choice required by Part 2.

Our Responsibilities

Privacy and security

We are required by law to maintain the privacy and security of PHI, provide this Notice, and follow the privacy practices described in the Notice currently in effect.

Breach notification

We will notify affected individuals following a breach of unsecured PHI when notification is required by law. When Part 2 applies, we will also follow applicable Part 2 breach requirements.

More protective laws

If federal or North Carolina law provides greater privacy protection than HIPAA for particular information, we will follow the more protective law.

Changes to This Notice

Revisions

We may change this Notice and our privacy practices as permitted by law. A revised Notice may apply to information we already have as well as information we receive in the future. The current Notice will be available upon request, at our service location as required, and on our website.

Questions, Requests, or Complaints

Privacy Officer	Tonia Locklear, LCSW
Practice	Soul Expressions Counseling & Wellness Café PLLC
Address	997 South McPherson Church Rd Fayetteville, NC 28306
Phone	910-379-0582
Email	tonia.locklear@soulexpressionscounseling.com

You may also file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights. Information about filing a HIPAA or Part 2 complaint is available at www.hhs.gov/ocr. We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

Important: This Notice describes privacy practices. It does not replace separate informed-consent, telehealth-consent, financial-policy, electronic-communications, records-release, or minor-treatment forms used by the Practice.