



Confidentiality Policy

All information concerning clients, former clients, our staff, volunteers, financial data, and business records of Main Street Ministries Houston (MSM) is confidential. "Confidential" means that you are free to talk about MSM and about our programs and your position, but you are not permitted to disclose clients' names or talk about them in ways that will make their identity known. No information may be released without appropriate authorization. This is a basic component of client care and business ethics.

In addition, to protect our clients' privacy and security, photography, video or audio recording is not permitted without written consent. This includes cellular camera, digital camera, video camera or any other form of recording device. The board of directors, staff and our clients rely on paid and volunteer staff to conform to this rule of confidentiality.

MSM expects you to respect the privacy of clients and to maintain their personal and financial information as confidential. All records dealing with specific clients must be treated as confidential. General information, policy statements or statistical material that is not identified with any individual or family is not classified as confidential. Staff members are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of information relating to other staff members and volunteers, in addition to clients. This policy is intended to protect you as well as MSM because in extreme cases, violations of this policy also may result in personal liability. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination.

Rationale

Confidentiality is the preservation of privileged information. By necessity, personal and private information is disclosed in a professional working relationship. Part of what you learn is necessary to provide services to the applicant or client; other information is shared within the development of a helping, trusting relationship. Therefore, most information gained about individual clients through an assignment is confidential in terms of the law, and disclosure could make you legally liable. Disclosure could also damage your relationship with the client and make it difficult to help the person. Before you begin your assignment as a staff member/volunteer, you should be aware of the laws and penalties for breaching confidentiality. Although the organization is liable for your acts within the scope of your duty, giving information to an unauthorized person could result in the organization's refusal to support you in the event of legal action. Violation of the state statutes regarding confidentiality of records is punishable upon conviction by fines or by imprisonment or by both.

Certification

I have read Main Street Ministries Houston's policy on confidentiality and the Statement of Confidentiality presented above. I agree to abide by the requirements of the policy and inform my supervisor immediately if I believe any violation (unintentional or otherwise) of the policy has occurred. I understand that violation of this policy will lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of my service with Main Street Ministries Houston.

Policy approved by the Board of Directors on _____.

Signature _____ Name _____ Date _____