# About Services Provided by Velles Counseling Services LLC.

Updated September 2023

**Duty To Warn & Protect & Mandated Reporting**

Velles Counseling Services LLC. (VCS) is legally and ethically obligated to report when someone makes a threat to harm another and/or when someone threatens to harm themselves. These threats do not need to be explicit but can be the result of the totality of someone's behaviors and actions. Similarly, VCS is legally and ethically obligated to report when a person is being abused by another person. The abuse can be emotional, physical, psychological, financial, some other type, or any combination thereof.

## Confidentiality and Your Health Record

All issues discussed in the course of therapy are strictly confidential, including the fact that you are seeing a therapist. We will not disclose any information to others unless you tell us to do so, or unless compelled to do so by law.

**For children under 13**, we do not need the child's permission to talk with you about their sessions, however, please understand that sometimes children may need to express their thoughts and feelings without about having everything available to you. **Teens 13 years and older have the same confidentiality rights as adults have under Washington State Law.** The teen must give their permission to us to communicate with outside parties, including the parent/guardian, unless there is an imminent risk to self or others. We do make every effort to keep parents informed of what is happening in their teen’s counseling, whenever possible, and most teens agree with us giving at least a progress report.

**In summary**, information about your medical treatment may be released to other persons under the following circumstances only:

* When a release of information is signed by you; or if under age 13 by a parent/ legal guardian.
* To a parent or legal guardian, when the patient is under the age of 13.
* When abuse or neglect must be reported by law.
* When you are a danger to yourself or someone else, or are gravely disabled.
* When your behavioral health provider deems it necessary or appropriate to disclose information to another physician or health provider.
* When your behavioral health provider deems it in accordance with good professional practice to disclose information to a family member, unless you specifically instruct the provider in writing not to do so.
* When it is necessary to provide information in a legal proceeding/disciplinary action.
* When your insurance company requests your record in order to process your insurance claim. L&I patient records are accessed by many; please see the separate handout *Industrial Injury Program.*
* When your spouse, family member, or significant other attends a therapy session with you we make every effort to maintain privacy, but their communication is not privileged or protected by law and can be released without their permission.
* We may resist releasing info to others or to you if we believe that the release would cause imminent harm.

**Emergencies**

In an immediate life or death situation call 911. If you are having a less severe psychiatric emergency involving feeling suicidal, at risk of hospitalization, or other serious symptoms please call 911 or your local hospital, police station, fire department, or other emergency service.

**Custody and Parental/Guardian Fitness**

VCS LLC does not mediate custody disputes, evaluate parental fitness, or provide custody evaluations, or otherwise get involved in legal disputes between parents. Custody evaluations are a forensic procedure requiring specialized training, and they are not covered by health insurance. Secondly, children may feel uncomfortable sharing feelings with a counselor if they worry that what they say will be used against one of the parents.

**Other Services Not Provided**

At this time, VCS LLC does not provider Group Therapy, Substance Abuse/Use Treatment, treatment for Eating Disorders, Psychological/Psychiatric assessments or prescription of any kind, Autism evaluations, neurological/-cognitive evaluations, sleep evaluations, or other similar specialized treatment or assessment unless specifically listed. Court-ordered therapy/evaluations not provided.

## Cancelled and Missed Appointments

Your appointment is held exclusively for you. If for some reason you can’t keep your appointment, please give us as much notice as possible so we can make your appointment available to someone else. If you don't give us at least 4 hours’ notice (except in case of an emergency), you may be charged a fee that is not covered by insurance. Do not hesitate to call, there is no need to worry!

**Missed (No Call/No Show) Appointments - $125/75**

Why do we have this policy? Even if you cancel with a 8-hour notice, someone else cannot always use that time. If missed appointments begin to happen regularly, you may be denied services with VCS and given information for another provider.

**Outcome Questionnaires**

You may be asked to fill out a brief questionnaire to help you and your provider see your progress and to improve our services.

**Do You Have a Concern?**

If you have a concern about your treatment, medical record, or any of our office functions, please talk first to your provider. When the provider is aware of an issue, often something can be changed or worked out..

**Benefit Exclusions**

Marriage or family counseling and other conditions may be specifically excluded on your certificate of coverage. It is your responsibility to call your insurance company to see what is covered and what services you are responsible for. Similarly, Employee Assistance Program referrals are not always covered by insurance - please allow VCS time to check coverage before trying to make appointments.