

NEWTOWN YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES OPERATIONS POLICY

Client Rights and Responsibilities

Date of Issue: July 2008

Client's rights are established by Section 17a-540, Connecticut General Statutes. Drug and alcohol client information is protected by federal confidentiality regulations (42 CFR Part 2). The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), P.L. 104-191 establishes rights regarding the privacy and security of health information. NYFS protects the legal and ethical rights of all clients by informing them of their rights and responsibilities along with information to make informed choices about their treatment. All clients are informed of their rights in a manner in which they can best understand given any special individual needs.

CLIENT'S RIGHTS

Quality Care – NYFS provides mental health outpatient services to adults, children, and families with a wide range of issues including life transitions and psychiatric disorders. Requests for service are met with a prompt response and provided by competent and qualified personnel. When NYFS cannot provide the needed service, the client will be assisted in locating the appropriate service.

Non-discrimination – Service are to be provided without discrimination as to race, color, religion, creed, age, marital status, financial status, national origin, ancestry, sex, mental retardation, mental disability, learning disability, lawful source of income, sexual orientation or physical disability. Every client is to be treated safely, equitably, fairly and with respect for personal dignity by all agency personnel in the least restrictive environment. All services are respectful of and responsive to cultural and linguistic diversity.

Accommodations Needed – Clients who are visually impaired, hearing impaired or have other disabilities will be asked what accommodations they would prefer, depending on the type of services are going to receive. Accommodations may include utilizing a Telecommunications Relay Service, adjustments in physical space such as lighting for lip reading, assistance with navigating around NYFS facility, paperwork read out loud, including a client selected aide or sign language interpreter and possible referrals to additional services including to CT DMHAS Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services as it may be more beneficial for the client to receive services directly in American Sign Language if that is their most understood language. All NYFS clients are asked about their cultural and spiritual backgrounds to incorporate their values and beliefs into their treatment/services. NYFS complies with all federal Limited-English Proficiency (LEP) requirements. NYFS will take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to LEP clients. Clients who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English will be eligible to receive language assistance with respect to the particular service needed. NYFS is prepared to utilize phone interpretation services if needed, although this resource is best utilized for limited interactions so referrals for counseling in other languages will be made to other local providers to best serve the client. NYFS has staff fluent in Spanish, the most frequent non-English language spoken in our service area. All vital documentation for clients (such as HIPPA acknowledgement, Client Rights and Responsibilities and Grievance Procedure) is explained in a manner and language in which they understand, either verbally or has been translated into Spanish.

Privacy and Confidentiality – NYFS staff maintains client confidentiality as required by law and professional ethics. Federal confidentiality laws and regulations prohibit compliance with any request for information or identification of current or former clients unless client or their guardian provides written consent. The following exceptions apply:

- acute risk of homicidal or suicidal behavior
- court order or subpoena with written authorization from client

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- suspicion of physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect involving a child under 18, adult over 65, or disabled person as NYFS is mandated by law to report to the State of Connecticut and the Department of Children and Families under Connecticut General Statute 17a-101.

According to CT General Statute Chapter 368a Sec 19a-14c, a client under the age of 18-years old seeking drug or alcohol abuse treatment or mental health treatment has the right to seek treatment without parents knowledge or permission.

Access to Records – A client may inspect records of service, treatment, and/or billing during regular business hours and with reasonable notice given to the agency. Procedures governing client access to information must be followed and a member of the professional staff will remain with the client during this process. A client has the right to examine their account regardless of their source of payment.

Self-determination – A client has the right to participate in all service decisions to retain the fullest possible control over their individual course of treatment. This includes participation in development of treatment plan and treatment goals, a client's individual and changing needs will be recognized and addressed as necessary. Clients are informed of the benefits, risks, side effects and alternatives to services, and have the right to refuse any services or medications free of harassment or coercion. Clients will be informed if any consequences to such refusal.

Safe Environment – NYFS staff and Board of Directors promote a safe and therapeutic environment with behavior support and management policies and practices that encourage positive behavior and protect the safety of service recipients and staff. NYFS does not use any restrictive behavior management techniques. All staff receives training in recognizing situations that may lead to a crisis and appropriate methods for de-escalating volatile situations, including verbal techniques, mediation, and other non-restrictive ways of dealing with aggressive or out-of-control behavior. NYFS staff promote positive behavior by developing positive relationships with clients, recognizing signs of trauma, and incorporating trauma-informed practices, identifying and promoting client's strengths and reinforcing positive behavior. See Behavior Support and Management Policy.

Disagreement – If a client decides that services provided by NYFS are unsatisfactory, the client or their guardian has a right to complain and/or recommend changes to the employee who is responsible for providing their service. This right to complain is free from restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination or reprisal. If the disagreement is not resolved to the client's satisfaction, the client has the right to file a grievance. (Refer to grievance procedure).

Information – A client has the right to receive a copy of the Client Rights and Responsibilities at the time service begins. A client has the right to know the name, title, and professional credentials of the NYFS staff member who is responsible for providing their service. A client has the right to be fully informed about any treatment or service that is being provided to them. A client has the right to information regarding agency policies such as eligibility for service, behavior support and management, agency regulations, and charges and billing procedures. NYFS hours of clinical service are: Monday-Thursday 9:00am-8:00pm, Friday 9:00am-5:00pm, and Saturday 8:00am-1:00pm.

CLIENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Participation - A client is responsible for working with their therapist in the development of their treatment plan and establishing goals and objectives of treatment. A client has the responsibility to work toward achieving these goals. It is the client's responsibility to accept or refuse any service offered.

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Communication - A client is responsible for providing accurate information, asking questions if he/she does not understand something, and/or complaining if service is unsatisfactory.

Respect - A client is responsible for respectful and considerate behavior toward agency personnel without discrimination. The parent or guardian of a child service recipient will be immediately notified if their child has demonstrated violent or threatening behavior.

Smoke Free Agency – NYFS does not allow smoking inside or on agency property.

Supervision of Children and Adolescents – All children who are seen for treatment at the agency must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Parents are responsible for supervision of children in the waiting room. At the discretion and agreement of their parent or guardian and NYFS, adolescents may be able to attend sessions without their parents being present. This agreement will regularly be re-evaluated to ensure this arrangement is appropriate.

Medical Incidents – In case of a medical or psychiatric emergency, NYFS staff will call 911 for assistance. In the case of a minor injury, NYFS has several first aid kits available, to be used by adult clients, parent/guardians of minors, or First Aid trained NYFS staff. NYFS does not store, dispense or administer medication of any kind.

Appointments - A client is responsible to keep all scheduled appointments. NYFS does not provide transportation to appointments. If you are having difficulty keeping appointments due to transportation problems, please speak with your therapist or our case manager. If it is necessary to cancel you must call 24 hours in advance or you may be charged the session fee. If you have 2 consecutive no shows or a pattern of cancellations and no shows, you will lose your appointment time and be discharged from treatment.

Fee Agreement – A client is responsible for providing accurate financial and insurance information when setting the session fee with agency personnel. A client is responsible for payment for services according to the signed agreement. Payment is expected at the time of service. (Refer to Payment and Cancellation Policy).

Termination – A client may be terminated from agency services under the following circumstances:

- Use of violent, harassing, threatening, or discriminatory behavior towards other clients or staff.
- Non-compliance with or refusal to follow recommended treatment plan
- Repeated use of alcohol or drugs which interfere with client's ability to participate in session
- Failing to keep appointments and/or excessive delinquency of fee payments