



Strong as Stone Counseling Services, PLLC

Notice of Privacy Practices (HIPPA)

(Effective Date: April 1, 2023)

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH INFORMATION MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

Purpose of this Notice

This Notice explains how Strong as Stone Counseling (“SAS”) may use and disclose your Protected Health Information (PHI), as well as your rights regarding that information. PHI includes any information that identifies you and relates to your physical or mental health, treatment, or payment for services.

SAS is required by law to:

- Protect the privacy and security of your health information
- Provide you with this Notice of Privacy Practices
- Follow the terms outlined in this Notice
- Notify you in the event of a breach of your unsecured protected health information

SAS reserves the right to revise this Notice at any time. Any updates will apply to all information maintained by SAS and will be available upon request.

How Your Information May Be Used and Disclosed

SAS may use or share your health information for the purposes listed below, as permitted by law.

Treatment:

- Your information may be used to provide, coordinate, or manage your care.
 - o This may include:
 - Communicating with other healthcare providers involved in your treatment
 - Coordinating services or referrals
 - Consulting with other professionals for clinical support

Payment:

- Your information may be used to bill and collect payment for services.
 - o This may include:
 - Submitting claims to your insurance provider
 - Verifying benefits or coverage
 - Collecting unpaid balances

Healthcare Operations:

- Your information may be used to support the operation of the practice.
 - o This may include:
 - Clinical supervision or consultation
 - Quality improvement activities
 - Training, auditing, or administrative functions

Additional Routine Uses:

- Unless you request otherwise, SAS may also use your information for:
 - o Appointment reminders (via phone, text, email, or portal)
 - o Communication related to scheduling or services
 - o Coordination within the practice to ensure continuity of care

- Referrals to other providers when appropriate

Electronic communication (such as text or email) may carry some risk to privacy despite reasonable safeguards.

Uses and Disclosures Permitted or Required by Law

- In certain situations, SAS may be required or permitted to disclose your information without your written authorization. These situations include, but are not limited to:
 - To prevent or reduce a serious threat to your health or safety or that of another person
 - Reporting suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation
 - Responding to court orders, subpoenas, or legal proceedings
 - Complying with health oversight activities (such as licensing boards or audits)
 - Assisting law enforcement, when legally appropriate
 - Public health reporting requirements
 - Workers' compensation claims
 - Government or national security functions
 - Disclosures required under federal or Texas law

SAS may share your information with third-party service providers ("business associates") who perform functions on behalf of the practice (such as billing, electronic health record systems, or administrative services). These entities are required to protect your information in accordance with applicable privacy laws.

(SAS will make reasonable efforts to limit disclosures to the minimum necessary to accomplish the intended purpose, except where full access is required for treatment.)

Uses That Require Your Authorization

Any use or disclosure of your information not described in this Notice will require your written authorization.

- You have the right to:
 - Decline to authorize a disclosure
 - Revoke an authorization at any time in writing

Revocation will not apply to actions already taken based on prior authorization.

Special Protections for Mental Health Information

Certain records, including psychotherapy notes, are provided with additional protections under federal and Texas law and are generally not released without specific written authorization, except in limited circumstances.

Your Rights Regarding Your Information

You have the following rights regarding your health information:

- **Right to Access:** You may request a copy of your medical record in paper or electronic format, except where restricted by law.
- **Right to Request Amendment:** If you believe your record is incorrect or incomplete, you may request that it be updated.
- **Right to Request Restrictions:** You may request limits on how your information is used or disclosed. While SAS will consider all requests, not all requests can be granted.
- **Right to Confidential Communication:** You may request that SAS contact you in a specific way or at a specific location. Reasonable requests will be accommodated.
- **Right to an Accounting of Disclosures:** You may request a list of certain disclosures of your information made within the past six (6) years, excluding those related to treatment, payment, or operations.
- **Right to a Copy of This Notice:** You may request a copy of this Notice at any time, even if you previously received it electronically.
- **Right to Restrict Disclosures to Health Plans:** You have the right to request that SAS not disclose information about services you have paid for out-of-pocket in full to your health plan. SAS will honor this request unless disclosure is otherwise required by law.

Questions or Complaints

If you have questions about this Notice or believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may contact SAS directly. SAS will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint. You may also file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

