



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RISK-- E-MAIL EXCHANGE POLICY  
NORTHWEST COUNSELING**

My signature on the document verifies that I am aware of the policies and warnings of Northwest Counseling with regard to the use of e-mail as a means of communication. I understand that:

Upon initial intake Northwest Counseling Clinicians must have a signed E-Mail Exchange Policy to continue to communicate by e-mail.

Northwest Counseling identifies several risks and concerns regarding the routine use of e-mail as a means of communicating with clients, and clients communicating with clinicians:

- 1) E-mail cannot be relied upon to contact a counselor in a timely fashion.
  - a) Clinician availability, computer concerns, internet problems may result in information not being read by the recipient in a timely fashion.
  - b) Do not consider appointments canceled through e-mail unless you get an e-mail confirmation from your clinician.
  - c) Do not communicate time-sensitive information through e-mail.
  - d) Do not use e-mail for any form of emergency communication.
  
- 2) While we follow all HIPPA Guidelines, due to the nature of the internet there is no guarantee that your e-mail will remain confidential outside the bounds of Northwest Counseling and the individual clinicians. The client takes full responsibility for the confidentiality and security of any e-mails that they send or receive at their location.
  - a) Access by others to personal e-mails on home and work computers is a very real concern. Absolute privacy of e-mails from/to the client's location is assumed to be impossible. Consequently, no information should be sent that might endanger the client.
  - b) Northwest Counseling discourages the use of e-mails to communicate sensitive information due to the permanency and accessibility of electronic communications.
  - c) Northwest Counseling may elect to not respond to e-mails due to safety or confidentiality concerns.
  
- 3) E-mail will not be used as a substitute for counseling or a therapy session.
  - a) Although the content of e-mails may be used in counseling sessions, they cannot be a substitute for counseling. Face to face human interaction is a critical part of the counseling process.
  - b) The use of e-mail as a therapeutic tool may be used by individual clinicians on a case-by-case basis.

Acknowledgement valid until \_\_\_\_\_

Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_