

Privacy Policy for New Brunswick & Burlington Counseling Center (NBCC)

Last Updated: July 24, 2025

New Brunswick Counseling Center (“NBCC,” “we,” “us,” or “our”) is committed to protecting your privacy. This Privacy Policy explains how we collect, use, disclose, and safeguard personal information when you use our website www.nbcounselingcenter.org (“Website”). It also outlines our practices in compliance with applicable laws, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). By using our Website, you agree to the terms of this Privacy Policy. Please read it carefully.

Information We Collect

We only collect personal information that you voluntarily provide to us (for example, by filling out forms on our Website or contacting us via email). You can generally visit our Website without providing personal details, but certain features (like appointment requests) may require information. The types of information we may collect include:

- **Personal Information:** This is information you provide directly, such as:
 - **Contact details:** Name, email address, and phone number.
 - **Appointment information:** Any details you provide when requesting an appointment or submitting an inquiry (e.g. preferred appointment dates, the reason for seeking counseling or services, etc.).
 - **Insurance information:** Insurance provider name, policy number, or related details if you choose to provide it for billing/eligibility purposes.
 - **Other voluntarily provided info:** Any other personal details you send to us (for example, in a “Send Us a Message” form or via email), which could include health-related information if you choose to share it.
- **Sensitive Health Information:** If you provide health or medical information (for instance, describing your symptoms, history, or treatment preferences), we will treat it as **Protected Health Information (PHI)** and handle it in accordance with HIPAA. We are **required by law to maintain the privacy of your PHI** and we implement appropriate safeguards to protect sensitive health information from unauthorized disclosure. (See the “**Health Information & HIPAA**” section below for more details.)
- **Non-Personal Information (Usage Data):** When you use our Website, we may automatically collect certain technical information that does not directly identify you. This can include:
 - **IP address and device information:** Your computer or mobile device’s IP address, operating system, browser type, and device type.
 - **Website usage data:** Details about how you navigate and use our site, such as pages viewed, the date/time of visits, and the length of time spent on pages.

- **Cookies and tracking:** Our Website may use cookies or similar technologies to ensure proper functionality and to analyze general usage patterns. These cookies typically collect non-personal data and help us improve user experience (for example, by remembering your preferences). We do **not** use cookies for advertising purposes or to collect sensitive information. You can set your browser to refuse cookies or alert you when cookies are being sent. If you disable cookies, please note some parts of the site might not function optimally.

Note: We do *not* require you to create an account or login to use our Website. We do not knowingly collect any login credentials or passwords, as no user accounts are offered on our site.

How We Use Your Information

We use the information we collect for the following purposes:

- **To Provide Services:** We use your information to schedule and provide counseling services or other resources you request. For example, if you submit an appointment request or inquiry, we will use that information to contact you and arrange services.
- **To Communicate with You:** We may contact you using the information you provided to respond to your questions, confirm appointment details, provide updates related to your care, or inform you of relevant services. (We will not send you marketing emails unless you have explicitly opted in to such communications, and you can opt out at any time.)
- **To Process Payments and Insurance:** If you engage our services and provide insurance or billing information, we will use your personal and insurance details to verify coverage and process payments or claims as needed. This may include contacting your insurance provider to confirm benefits or submit claims on your behalf, in accordance with applicable laws and healthcare regulations.
- **To Improve Our Website and Services:** Non-personal usage data (e.g. site traffic analytics) may be used to better understand how our Website is used and to improve its design, content, and functionality. This helps us enhance user experience and tailor our services to better meet client needs.
- **To Comply with Legal Obligations:** We may use and retain your information as necessary to comply with applicable laws and regulations. For example, healthcare providers are often required to maintain certain records for a period of time, and we must adhere to those requirements. We also use information to enforce our policies and to protect our rights or the rights and safety of others (for instance, to prevent fraud or abuse of our services).

How We Share Your Information

We do **NOT** sell, rent, or trade your personal information to any third parties for their own marketing or other independent use. Your information is used solely for NBCC's operational purposes as described in this Policy. We only share personal information in a few specific situations, outlined below:

- **Service Providers (Business Associates):** We may share your information with trusted third-party service providers who help us run our operations or Website. For example, we use certain providers for website hosting, email communication, or appointment scheduling tools. These service providers will only access the information necessary to perform their functions and are contractually obligated to protect your information and use it only for our specified purposes. (In healthcare terms, some of these providers may be “business associates” under HIPAA, and we have agreements in place to safeguard your PHI.)
- **Insurance and Billing:** If you provide insurance information and we bill your insurance for services, we will share the necessary information with your **insurance company** or third-party billing processor to process claims and payments. This might include your identifying details and relevant treatment or appointment information required for billing. We will only disclose the minimum necessary information and will do so in accordance with HIPAA’s privacy rules.
- **Legal Requirements and Safety:** We may disclose your information if required by law or when we believe disclosure is necessary to comply with a legal obligation. For example, we might have to release information in response to a court order, subpoena, or other legal process. Additionally, if in the course of providing services we become aware of information that we are legally mandated to report (such as imminent threats of harm, suspected abuse, or other situations where law requires reporting), we will comply with those laws. We may also disclose information as necessary to protect and defend our rights, to safeguard the safety of our clients or others, or to investigate and address violations of our policies or the law.
- **Business Transfers:** In the unlikely event that NBCC undergoes a major business transaction such as a merger, acquisition, reorganization, or sale of assets, the personal information we have may be transferred to the successor entity as part of that transaction. If such a transfer occurs, your information would remain subject to the promises made in this Privacy Policy (unless you consent otherwise).
- **With Your Consent or Direction:** In all other cases not covered above, we will not share your personal information without obtaining your explicit consent. For instance, if you request that we coordinate with another healthcare provider (such as your primary care physician or a specialist) and share relevant information, we will do so only with your permission.

Aside from the scenarios above, **we will not disclose your personal information for any other purpose unless you have given us your permission to do so.** In other words, uses or disclosures of your information outside of treatment, payment, healthcare operations, or legal requirements will be made only with your authorization, which you have the right to refuse or revoke at any time.

Data Security

We take **reasonable and appropriate security measures** to protect the information you submit to us, both during transmission and once it is received. This includes administrative, technical, and physical safeguards designed to protect against unauthorized access, alteration, loss, or disclosure of your personal data. For example, our website is encrypted using HTTPS, which

helps protect information you enter online. We also utilize secure systems and protocols to store health records and other sensitive data (in compliance with HIPAA's Security Rule).

While we strive to use commercially acceptable means to protect your personal information (including encryption and secure storage solutions), please be aware that **no method of transmission over the Internet or method of electronic storage is 100% secure**. Therefore, we cannot guarantee absolute security of information. You share information with us at your own risk, but be assured that we are continually working to update and improve our security practices. If we ever identify a security breach that compromises your personal data, we will notify you as required by applicable law.

Data Retention

We will retain your personal information only for as long as necessary to fulfill the purposes outlined in this Privacy Policy or as required by law. For example, if you send us an inquiry but do not become a client, we will keep your contact information only as long as needed to respond and follow up, then delete it from active systems. If you do become a client, certain information (especially health records) may be kept for a longer period to comply with legal record-keeping obligations for medical records. Healthcare providers are often required by state and federal law to maintain treatment records for a minimum number of years. We adhere to these requirements and securely dispose of or archive data when it is no longer needed.

When personal information is no longer required, we will ensure it is either deleted or anonymized in a secure manner. If you wish to request that we delete information you have provided through the Website, you may contact us (see **Contact Us** below) and we will honor such requests to the extent possible. Please note that we may be unable to delete certain records if we are legally required to retain them (for instance, clinical records that must be kept for compliance or audit purposes), but we will inform you if that is the case.

Your Rights and Choices

You have certain rights regarding your personal information and how we handle it. We strive to respect and facilitate these rights as part of our commitment to privacy:

- **Access and Portability:** You have the right to request a copy of the personal information we hold about you. This includes the right, under HIPAA, to access your health records. We will provide you with access to such information in a reasonable time frame. For health records, you may request either an electronic or paper copy and we will accommodate reasonable requests as required by law.
- **Correction/Amendment:** If any of your personal information we have is inaccurate or incomplete, you have the right to request that we correct or update it. For example, if your contact information changes or you notice an error in your record, you can ask us to fix it. In the case of health records, HIPAA gives you the right to request an amendment to your record if you believe something is incorrect or missing.

- **Deletion (Right to Erasure):** You can request that we delete personal information we have collected from you through the Website (such as contact form submissions), provided we are not required to retain it by law or for legitimate business purposes. We will make a good faith effort to erase or anonymize your information upon request. However, please understand that certain data (especially related to health services you received) may need to be retained for a specified period by law and cannot be deleted immediately. We will inform you if that is the case and will delete such data once the retention period expires.
- **Restrictions on Use/Disclosure:** You have the right to request restrictions on certain uses or disclosures of your health information. For instance, if you pay out-of-pocket in full for a service, you can request that we do not share information about that service with your health insurer. We will accommodate such requests when feasible and in accordance with legal requirements.
- **Opt-Out of Communications:** If you have subscribed to any optional communications (for example, a newsletter or email updates), you can opt out at any time. Simply follow the unsubscribe instructions provided in those communications or contact us to be removed from the list. (Note: We do not currently send mass marketing emails, so this mainly applies to any informational mailing lists you might join in the future.)
- **Withdraw Consent:** If we are processing your information based on your consent (for any purpose that isn't otherwise covered by law), you have the right to withdraw that consent at any time. For example, if you gave consent for us to use a testimonial or to share information with a family member, you can revoke it going forward. This will not affect any use of your information that has already occurred, but we will honor your request on a forward-going basis.

To exercise any of these rights, please contact us using the information in the **Contact Us** section below. We may need to verify your identity before fulfilling certain requests (for your protection, to ensure we do not disclose data to an unauthorized person). We will respond to your inquiry or request as promptly as possible and in accordance with applicable law.

Note: If you are a resident of certain regions (such as California or the European Union), you may have additional privacy rights under laws like the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) or the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). While our services are primarily aimed at clients in New Jersey (USA), we will endeavor to honor any applicable rights under those laws as relevant. For example, California residents can request a notice of what categories of personal information we collect and for what purpose, even though we do not sell data. If you have specific questions about your privacy rights under any particular law, feel free to reach out to us.

Third-Party Links and Services

Our Website may contain links to third-party websites or incorporate content from third-party services. For example, we have links to our official pages on social media platforms (like Facebook, Twitter, etc.), and our site may reference resources or partner organizations in the community. Additionally, our online appointment scheduling or forms might be facilitated through a trusted third-party platform (such as Microsoft's Office 365 booking system, as indicated on our site).

Please be aware that we do not control the privacy practices of external websites or services. If you click on a link to an external site or interact with a third-party service (for instance, by using a scheduling form hosted outside our domain), any information you provide will be subject to that third party's privacy policy, not ours. We encourage you to review the privacy policies of any website or service you visit via links from our site, especially before providing any personal information to them. NBCC is not responsible for the content, security, or privacy practices of other companies or organizations.

Children's Privacy

Our Website and services are **not directed to children under the age of 13**, nor do we knowingly collect personal information from anyone under 13 years old, in compliance with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). If you are under 13, please do not submit any personal information on our Website. We ask that parents or guardians assist and supervise their children when they wish to use online resources.

If we discover that we have unintentionally collected personal information from a child under 13, we will delete that information as soon as possible. **Parents:** If you believe your child under 13 may have provided us with personal information, please contact us immediately (see **Contact Us** below) so that we can take appropriate action to remove the data.

For minors aged 13 to 17: Our services (including our Adolescent Program for ages 13–17) involve the collection of personal and health information with appropriate consent of a parent or legal guardian. While teenagers may visit our Website to learn about our services, any personal information related to treatment must be provided by or with the consent of their parent/guardian. We prioritize protecting the privacy of all our clients, including minors, in accordance with applicable laws and ethical guidelines. If you are under 18, you should only use our services with involvement of a parent or guardian.

Health Information & HIPAA Compliance

As a licensed behavioral health and substance use treatment provider, NBCC is considered a **covered entity** under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). This means we **follow strict federal standards to protect your health information** and maintain medical privacy. In particular, we want you to know the following:

- **Protection of Health Information:** We handle all Protected Health Information (PHI) in accordance with the HIPAA Privacy Rule, which establishes national standards to prevent unauthorized disclosure of sensitive health data. We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your PHI and to provide you with notice of our privacy practices. Any identifiable health information you provide through our Website (or in the course of treatment) is kept confidential. We have internal policies and security measures in place to safeguard your medical information whether it's in electronic, paper, or verbal form.

- **Uses and Disclosures of PHI:** Under HIPAA, we may use or disclose your health information **without your separate authorization** for certain key purposes: **Treatment, Payment, and Health Care Operations.**
 - **Treatment:** We can use your information to provide you with medical care and counseling services, and we may share relevant information with other professionals who are treating you (for example, if we need to consult with another therapist or doctor, or refer you to a specialist) in order to coordinate your care.
 - **Payment:** We use and disclose PHI as needed to bill and obtain payment for the services we provide. For instance, we will share necessary information with your insurance plan to get approval for treatment or to process claims for reimbursement (as described earlier in the “Insurance and Billing” section).
 - **Health Care Operations:** We may use PHI for our internal operations that are necessary to run our practice and ensure quality care. This includes activities like quality assessment, staff training, licensing, accreditation, audits, and administrative tasks. Any such use of your information is done in compliance with privacy regulations and, when possible, with information that does not directly identify you.

Beyond these core purposes, HIPAA permits certain other uses/disclosures of PHI without your authorization, such as when required by law, for public health and safety, for research under specific conditions, or to avert a serious threat to health or safety. NBCC will only make such disclosures in strict accordance with the law and ethical standards. For example, if a court order requires us to release records, or if a medical emergency endangers your life, we may share information as allowed by HIPAA and other laws.

- **Written Authorization for Other Uses:** Any use or disclosure of your health information **outside** of the situations above will require your written **Authorization**. For instance, we will **not** share your counseling session notes with your employer, use your information in marketing materials, or disclose any details of your treatment to unrelated parties **unless** you give us permission to do so (or unless law explicitly allows it in a specific circumstance). You have the right to refuse or revoke any such authorization at any time. Revoking authorization will not affect uses/disclosures already made, but we will honor your request going forward.
- **42 CFR Part 2 (Substance Use Treatment Records):** In addition to HIPAA, records related to **substance use disorder treatment** at NBCC are protected by a federal confidentiality law (42 CFR Part 2). This law provides **even stricter** privacy for any information that would identify you as someone seeking or receiving substance abuse treatment. In general, we **cannot** disclose any information about your substance use treatment to anyone — not even to confirm that you are a client — without your written consent, except in a few limited situations (such as medical emergencies, certain court orders, or as otherwise mandated by law). We want you to feel safe seeking help for addiction; your privacy will be fiercely protected. Any disclosures we make of substance use treatment information will comply with both HIPAA and 42 CFR Part 2 requirements.

- **Notice of Privacy Practices:** In accordance with HIPAA, we have a formal **Notice of Privacy Practices** that provides a detailed explanation of how we use and disclose patients' health information, and describes your rights under HIPAA (such as the right to access your records, request an accounting of disclosures, etc.). We will provide you a copy of this Notice when you become a client, and it is available upon request at any time. We also make our Notice of Privacy Practices available on our website or at our offices, as required by law. We encourage you to review that Notice for comprehensive information on our health information practices. If you have any questions about our privacy practices or your HIPAA rights, you can always contact us for more information.

In summary, **your confidentiality is of utmost importance to us.** We follow all applicable federal and state laws to protect your privacy, especially when it comes to your mental health and medical information. Our staff are trained on privacy procedures, and we take privacy breaches very seriously. If you ever feel that your privacy rights have been violated, please notify us immediately. You also have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Civil Rights if you believe we have not upheld our legal duties (filing a complaint will not affect your right to services or how we treat you). We are committed to complying with our legal obligations and to earning your trust by keeping your information secure and confidential.

Changes to This Privacy Policy

We may update or revise this Privacy Policy from time to time to reflect changes in our practices, to incorporate new security measures, or to ensure compliance with new laws or regulations. If we make changes, we will post the updated policy on this page and update the "Last Updated" date at the top. **Significant changes** may also be communicated through other channels if appropriate (for example, we might announce updates via email or on our social media page).

We encourage you to review this Privacy Policy periodically to stay informed about how we are protecting your information. Your continued use of the Website after any changes to this Policy constitutes your acceptance of the updated terms.

Contact Us

If you have any questions, concerns, or requests regarding this Privacy Policy or our data practices, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are here to address your concerns and ensure your information is handled properly.

New Brunswick Counseling Center (NBCC)

Address: 320 Suydam Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901, USA (

Serving central New Jersey; also operating Burlington Comprehensive Counseling at 605 High Street, Mount Holly, NJ 08060)

Phone: 732-246-4025 (New Brunswick) or 609-267-3610 (Mount Holly)

Email: info@nbcounselingcenter.org

When contacting us with a privacy question or request, please include sufficient detail for us to assist you (for example, your name and the nature of your inquiry). For sensitive inquiries about your health information, you may wish to call us rather than email, for added security.

Thank you for trusting New Brunswick Counseling Center. We are dedicated not only to your well-being and recovery, but also to protecting your privacy every step of the way.