**UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO**

**CENTRE FOR MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH AND TREATMENT (CMHRT)**

 **LETTER OF INFORMATION**

***Goals of the Centre for Mental Health Research and Treatment at the University of Waterloo***

The primary goals of the Centre for Mental Health Research and Treatment (CMHRT) are to:

1. provide optimum psychological assessment and treatment services;
2. provide an optimum training facility for students in our Clinical Psychology Ph.D. training program; and
3. conduct innovative research that, in turn, informs the services we provide.
4. ***Assessment and Treatment at the CMHRT***

The CMHRT offers both psychological assessment and treatment services. Psychological assessments typically involve an initial interview and four to six testing sessions. At the conclusion, you will be provided with verbal and written feedback.

Everyone who is requesting treatment services receives a comprehensive assessment for the purposes of treatment planning. This assessment for treatment typically involves several interviews and the completion of a number of psychological measures. We offer a number of treatment services at the Centre and, based on the results of your assessment, we will recommend treatment options.

Whether you are requesting psychological assessment or treatment services, we will help you determine if our services are appropriate to your needs. If they are not, we will provide you with information about appropriate community resources that will better meet your needs.

During the course of your assessment or treatment services, we may ask you to complete standardized questionnaires. We may also gather information from relevant sources once we obtain informed consent from you to do this (e.g., spouse, parent, teachers). All of this information will be stored in your client file at the CMHRT.

1. ***Training at the CMHRT***

The CMHRT is a teaching clinic and the psychological services we offer are provided by graduate students in the University of Waterloo Clinical Psychology training program and residents working at the Centre as part of the Waterloo Region Psychology Consortium, under the direct supervision of registered clinical psychologists.

In order to ensure that you receive the best possible care, information that you provide will be shared between your clinician and the registered clinical psychologist supervising his/her work. The supervisor will observe your sessions, either live or from the video- or audio-recording. All sessions are audio/video recorded for training purposes, are stored securely, and are only accessible to appropriate CMHRT faculty, staff, and trainees. With your consent, we will store these videos for a minimum of 10 years on an encrypted hard drive in the CMHRT so that they may be accessed by trained and authorized CMHRT personnel for training and research purposes. These recordings will be deleted when they are no longer needed for supervision, training, or research purposes.

As part of their graduate training, the CMHRT holds case conferences during which your student clinician may present aspects of her/his work with you. This may include showing a brief segment of a session or talking about your case. The purpose of these case conferences is for the student clinician to receive suggestions for improving care and for students to learn from each other’s experiences. During these case conferences, all personal identifying information is omitted. Only graduate students in the Clinical Psychology training program, psychology residents, and their clinical supervisors attend the case conferences.

1. ***Research at the CMHRT***

CMHRT student clinicians and their supervisors are involved in researching the nature and treatment of psychological difficulties. We are also interested in evaluating the effectiveness of the services we provide. We will seek your consent to permit us to store and analyze, for research purposes, various types of information that we will collect as part of the standard and routine assessment and therapy processes you will undergo at the CMHRT. We will also seek your consent to allow CMHRT researchers to contact you in the future to invite you to participate in specific research studies at the Centre for which you may be eligible but for which data are not collected as a routine part of the services you receive here. Please be advised that researchers shall use your personal health information only for the purpose set out in the research plan, cannot publish information in a form that could identify you, and cannot contact you without your prior permission. We would like to assure you that all of our research protocols have been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. Their review involves careful assessment of the goals and benefits of the research in relation to risks associated with the procedures; ensuring safeguards are in place to mitigate the risks; determining how the consent process is to occur (which includes considering whether obtaining consent directly is impracticable); confirming that the informed consent document (as applicable) is complete and understandable; and determining whether adequate safeguards are in place to protect the privacy of individuals and the confidentiality of their personal health information. However, the final decision about participation is yours. This project has been reviewed by and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. In the event that you have any comments or concerns for the Committee, contact the Chief Ethics Officer, Office of Research Ethics, at 519-888-4567, ext. 36005 or ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca. For all other questions, please contact the CMHRT Director at 519-888-4567, ext. 33171.

***4. Privacy at the CMHRT***

Every effort will be made by all CMHRT personnel to ensure the privacy of the personal health information you share. The fact that you are seeking services is itself private. The client file which includes basic information including reports, questionnaires, and collateral documents, is kept in a hard file in a locked filing cabinet, which is located in a secure room in the CMHRT to which only core CMHRT faculty, residents, and students and the CMHRT Director and Administrative Coordinator have access.

In accordance with Standards of Professional Conduct of the College of Psychologists of Ontario, your Health Record at the Centre for Mental Health Research and Treatment will be destroyed after 10 years following your last contact with us. If the person receiving services from the Centre is less than eighteen years of age at the time of his/her last contact, the file will be destroyed 10 years following the day the person became or will have become 18. The exception to these procedures is when there is a case of known or suspected physical or sexual abuse. In such situations, the files will be securely stored indefinitely.

Additional information including appointment information, payment information, and session notes, is stored in our client information system. The client information system resides in encrypted form (SSL - secure sockets layer) at an offsite data storage facility managed in accordance with Personal Information Protection and Electronic Document Act (PIPEDA) guidelines. The client information is considered to be “highly restricted” under the University of Waterloo’s Information Systems and Technology (IST) Data Security policy. This policy can be reviewed at http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-8. Access to this information is restricted to CMHRT administration as well as designated student clinicians and supervisors.

All clients have the right to see and get a copy of the personal health information that the CMHRT has in their health file. However, you should know there are a few limited situations in which we are unable to provide access to some or all of the file, such as when the personal health information relates to another individual, or when someone requests copies of standardized psychological test material.

***5. Limits to Your Privacy at the CMHRT***

No information we have about you (including all information contained in your clinical file) will be communicated directly or indirectly to any third party without your explicit consent, except when we have the following obligations to release confidential information:

1. if your clinician believes that you are an imminent danger to yourself or to someone else, he or she is required to contact the authorities or others who can intervene to help prevent harm to you or others, and any intended victims of harm;
2. if your clinician learns that you have been sexually abused by another registered health provider (e.g., doctor, dentist, psychologist) he or she is required to contact that person’s College and report what he or she knows; however, the clinician will not give your name without your written permission;
3. if your clinician suspects or is informed that a child is at risk of being harmed in any way (e.g., sexual or physical abuse, negligence) he or she must contact Child and Family Services and report all relevant information;
4. if the contents of your CMHRT Health Record are ordered by a court of law, the Centre is required to release the file to the court;
5. if the College of Psychologists of Ontario, as part of a random review, requests access to the Health Records for the purposes of assuring quality of care, we are obligated to allow them that access; or
6. if your clinician becomes aware of abuse (including financial abuse) of someone in care at a long-term care facility (e.g., nursing home) or retirement home, he or she is required to contact the Ministry of Health.

**Please add your initials at the bottom of each page on this form to indicate that you have read the information provided and that you have had an opportunity to ask any questions you might have.**