**HANDLING SENSITIVE CLIENT DATA POLICY AND FORM**

While you are enrolled in the Ohio University Social Work Program, there will be assignments and class discussions that ask you to reflect upon and/or analyze sensitive client or agency information. **In order to maintain the confidentiality of your clients, you are required to adhere to all pertinent agency confidentiality policies as well as to comply with the following program requirements:**

**Course Assignments**

In all written and oral presentation assignments requiring the disclosure of your work with clients, it is required that you specify what will be done to protect client confidentiality and avoid the sharing of non- essential information. It is not enough to cross out or change clients’ names. In this rural environment, other demographic information should be disguised as well. It is required that you change one or more of the following:

• Give the client a fictitious name, age, address, and a change of marital status; modify the number and ages of children; and modify the occupation, etc. Also, note that this information has been altered.

• Label any written project as having “modified client data.”

In addition, the course instructor may request that you seek oral or written permission from clients to share this modified client data.

When writing about a particular client in repeated assignments, such as in your integrative journal, it is beneficial for the reader to know that you are referring to a previously mentioned client. At these times, follow the guidelines outlined above and then be consistent in using the same fictitious name and other disguised identifiers in each subsequent entry or assignment.

**Non-planned Oral Disclosure**

There will be occasions when you will wish to bring up aspects of your work with your clients in class discussions where it is unrealistic to expect that you will have had the opportunity to obtain the client’s permission first. When information is shared without written or oral permission, it is absolutely essential that you make every effort to protect the client’s identity. If shared orally, tell your audience that you are disguising information and follow the criteria for disguising identities stated above.

**Photos and Videos of Clients**

Written permission by the client or guardian is required before you share photos, videotapes, or other images of clients. Even with written permission to use the image, disguise the name and demographic data of these individuals unless given written permission to do otherwise. Some agencies absolutely prohibit photos or images of clients.

**Computers, Cell Phones, and Other Technology**

Protect all sensitive client information while working on an assignment by making sure you use a password and other protective devices. Cell phones are not secure. Follow agency policies when using them to conduct agency business. It is your responsibility to be aware of and to use the most current and/or effective technology for disguising and/or deleting sensitive client data.

**Shredding, Deleting, Overwriting, and Destroying Files**

Destroy all written materials, disks, and files containing identifying client data that you have used in preparing all reports and presentations.

**I have read and agree to comply with the requirements of this policy:**

**STUDENT’S SIGNATURE/DATE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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