

Recent Update on Treating Minors

1. Any child age 12 or older may present on their own for psychotherapy.
2. The child may present an insurance card if valid and he/she is a named-insured on a family health plan. If there is a copayment, the child is responsible for the payment and the parents are not to be billed unless that is agreed upon.
3. Children from birth enjoy “Psychotherapist-Patient Privilege,” therefore, parents may not waive any child’s privilege just because they are the parent. Privilege also can not be waived by the child because they are not an adult. Privilege can only be waived if the court appoints a *guardian ad litem*, or a child’s representative (attorney) to evaluate the merits of the waiver request. Even if a child wishes to waive privilege, they are not of age to do so, hence they may not waive “Psychotherapist-Patient Privilege.”
4. If parents are involved with their child’s treatment at all, the rules should be made clear “up front” to avoid confusion. Parents don’t care for the notion that they have no authority to waive privilege on behalf of their child. Tell parents that you may elect to speak to them in generalities so as not to violate the child’s rights, and you may seek their assistance to help on issues should it be warranted.