Impact Letter

Purpose and Setting:

The impact letter is a crucial tool early in your child's development at Evoke Cascades. It describes the events that led to your decision to enroll your child in the program. It will often contain powerful emotional content. Even in cases where your child has heard the information before, the structure and format of the impact letter and impact letter group will have a profound *impact* on your child.

The impact letter is read by your child in a group therapy meeting before they have had the opportunity to read the letter privately. This venue creates a powerful, raw (unrehearsed) emotional experience. It allows students and staff to hear the parent's perspective. It also provides information for group members leading them to give feedback about similarities between patterns at home and patterns in the program.

Peers may confront student on his/her report of events leading to admission to Evoke Therapy Programs at Cascades. The therapist and staff may have the student read their own version of a "Personal Story," an assignment they finished during the Earth Phase (first two days in the program) describing the events that lead to enrolling at Evoke at Cascades. The student reading their impact letter is not permitted to justify, rationalize, or defend self, but rather is directed to focus on the effects or impact of his/her behavior on family members. Emphasis is on empathy and emotional responses.

Who writes the letters and how many?

Usually both or (all) parents will write an impact letter separately. In some cases, other family members or caregivers may want to write a letter. The decision regarding who writes the letter and whether or not parents write a letter together may be discussed with your Evoke at Cascades therapist.

Often when parents are split, it may be a useful activity to write the letter together because this will provide the parents with a good exercise in unification and the child will perceive the parents' unity suggesting a stable and secure parenting system. However, when the child tends to see one of the parents as the "bad guy" and the other as the "good guy" (or in any other rigid roles), then it might help if both write a letter with each parent taking on the role of the other (i.e., in the strict vs. liberal roles the parent that has traditionally been seen as the "nice guy" would take the hard line, with powerful confrontation).

Guidelines:

Parameters.

- Label "IMPACT LETTER" clearly on cover page: including "Attention to:" with Evoke at Cascades therapist name.
- Average length of letters should be **about 2-5 pages**, single space.

Beginning.

- Take responsibility for sending your child to Evoke Therapy Programs. Avoid phrases like "we had no other choice." Or "we did not want you to go." Such passive language disrespects your child and leaves them wondering *who* did send them to

Evoke at Cascades. Give them permission to be angry with you…this is a great gift and lets them know you are not dependent on them for your self-esteem.

Be Specific.

- Begin your letter with accounts of specific incidences, which characterize the problems that led to your decision to send your child to Evoke at Cascades.
- Be specific as possible referring to events, not just specifically describing the problem. For instance don't only talk about how "you steal" but state it as "the time you were caught shoplifting at Nordstrom's'." This tends to bring vivid memories and associated emotions to the child.
- Include acute events, such as one that may have had the most influence precipitating your decision to utilize the wilderness intervention.
- You may choose to cite experiences from the both the recent and not so recent past.

The Impact on You.

- Talk about how these events impacted you in two ways: first, your emotional reactions such as "…and I was hurt or scared or sad…" and second, the practical impact in your life such as "and I lost time at work" or "I hid my wallet" or "all the money I spent…"

Expectations.

- Talk next about what you want your child to gain from this experience. Speak of the skills, lessons and characteristics you hope will be developed at Evoke at Cascades.

The Positive.

- Address your child's strengths and positive qualities. Tell them what you admire about them. Cite specific instances when you felt especially proud or happy for them and their accomplishments.

Memories.

- Close the letter with any special memories you have of the child. This section tends to prepare the child to open up and reminds them that this letter and this intervention is borne out of a love for them.

Things to Avoid.

- Avoid the following words or phrases:
- Good, bad, evil, right, wrong, ought to, have to, must, need to, got to.
- Replace these imperatives with phrases such as:
- "I hope you understand that…..,"
    - "I believe….."
    - "I think that if you……you will be happier,"
    - "I want you to….."
- By speaking in these more relative terms you become more powerful. Relative language leaves the other person without the ability to argue or appeal to another argument. It avoids the power struggle.
- Although it is appropriate to briefly mention that you admit that you need to work on issues, do not go into great detail about your faults. This letter is the venue to focus on your child's issues. There may be other

assignments where you will be asked to talk about your shortcomings at length.

Special Notes and Circumstances.

- Special note: feel free to be provocative. Do not be gentle or treat your child as fragile. Being straight forward respects your child and will often lead to their increased self confidence. The implied message of tough love is that "I know you can handle it and figure it out yourself." This is often much more influential in increasing self-esteem than simple praise. You may talk about how much better the home environment feels, or how relieved you are that they are safe.
- In cases where the child came to the program willingly, you may want to mention that you would have sent
  them even if they did not want to go. This will often help the child become much more engaged in the program, helping them realize that they may experience an aversion to some of the emotional challenges of the program and that going through these experiences (regardless of comfort level) may be fundamental to their change process.
- <u>With this letter and all other letters. Please avoid telling your child of future plans, events and information</u>. A fundamental element of the program is to avoid discussing future information (the kids call it "F.I.") in order to encourage students to let go of what they cannot control and live in the present.

Conclusion.

Fax your impact letter(s) with a clearly identified cover page to the Evoke at Cascades office at 541-382-1817. Please include your child's therapist's name on the cover sheet. Your child's therapist will review it and may call you back or fax back suggested revisions. The letter will be read with the therapist or the staff when it is determined to be most clinically useful. Ideally, these letters should be sent to the office near the end of the first week of enrollment.

Your Evoke at Cascades therapist will gladly answer any other questions.

Thanks,
Evoke at Cascades Clinical Staff

Evoke at Cascades Parent Resources

While your child is at Evoke at Cascades, we feel that this is a valuable time for parents to gain more insight and understanding of the dynamics in the family system. Becoming more educated about your parenting and your child's particular issues will better prepare you for the course of your child's treatment both at Evoke at Cascades and beyond. Your therapist may assign you readings and assignments from the list below.

Highly Recommended Reading:
What Now? How Teen Therapeutic Programs Could Save Your Troubled Child
By Dr. Paul Case

Program Reading: (This book is required reading for your child in the program)
Man's Search for Meaning By Victor E. Frankl.

Wilderness Treatment: (Story-teller's perspective of a similar wilderness program)
Shouting at the Sky: Troubled Teens and the Promise of the Wild by Gary Ferguson.

Depression:
Feeling Good by David Burns.
How Good Do We Have to Be*?* by Harold Kushner.
Meeting the Shadow: The Hidden Power of the Dark Side of Human Nature by Connie Zweig and Jeremiah Abrams.

Oppositional Behavior:
Tough Love by Phyllis York and David and Ted Wachtel
Treating the Tough Adolescent by Scott Sells

Substance Abuse/Dependence:
Understanding and Treating Adolescent Substance Abuse by Philip Muisener.
Chemical Dependency: Theoretical Approaches and Strategies Working with Individuals and Families by Eileen B. Isaacson.
The Recovery Book by Al J. Mooney and Arlene and Howard Eisenberg.
Codependent No More: How to Stop Controlling Others and Start Caring For Yourself by Melody Beattie.

Child Abuse (emotional/physical/sexual):
The Courage to Heal Workbook: For Women and Men Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse by Laura Davis
The Right to Innocence: Healing the Trauma of Childhood Sexual Abuse by Beverly Engel
Trauma and Recovery by Judith Herman
The Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Sourcebook by Glenn R. Schiraldi

Family Dynamics/ Parenting:
Tough Love by Phyllis York and David and Ted Wachtel

Parenting Teens with Love and Logic: Preparing Adolescents for Responsible Adulthood by Foster Cline and Jim Fay.
The Drama of the Gifted Child: The Search for the True Self by Alice Miller.
Let's Fix the Kids: Creating a New Environment at Home by James J. Jones.
Parenting Teenagers: Systematic Training for Effective Parenting by Don Dinkmeyer.
Power and Compassion: Working with Difficult Adolescent and Abused Parents by Jerome A. Price.

Gender Specific Issues:
Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood by William Pollack.
Reviving Orphelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls by Mary Piper.

Self-Abuse (eating disorders / cutting):
Cutting: Understanding and Overcoming Self-mutilation by Steven Levenkron.
Surviving an Eating Disorder: Strategies for Family and Friends by Michelle Siegel, Judith Brisman and Margot Weinshel.
When Your Child has an Eating Disorder: A Step by Step Workbook for Parents and Other Caregivers by Abigail H. Natenshon.

Adoption/Attachment issues:
Attachment, Trauma and Healing: Understanding and Treating Attachment Disorders in Children and Families by Terry M. Levy and Michael Orlans.
Journey of the Adopted Self: A Quest for Wholeness by Betty Jean Lifton.
The Primal Wound: Understanding the Adopted Child by Nancy Verrier.
Being Adopted: The Lifelong Search for Self by Marshall D. Schecter (Author),
Twenty Things Adopted Kids Wish Their Parents Knew by Sherrie Eldridge

Attention Deficit Disorder:
Change Your Brain; Change Your Life by Daniel Awen.
Driven to Distraction by Edward Hallowell & John Raey

General Adolescence:
Lost Boys. Why Our Sons Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them by James Garbarino
Augusta Gone by Martha Todd Dudman
Teens in Turmoil by Carol Maxym

Assignments:
• Attend Weekly Family Therapy (Have your home therapist consult with 2n therapist.)

• Attend a support group
    Al-Anon 1-800-344-2666
    Alateen 1-800-344-2666
    Alcoholics Anonymous 1-212-870-3400
    Cocaine Anonymous 1-800-347-8998

Co-Dependency Anonymous 1-602-277-7991
Narcotics Anonymous (NA) 1-800-662-4357
Overeaters Anonymous (OA) 1-800-743-8703
Pill Addicts Anonymous 1-215-372-1128

• Analysis of your parenting style writing assignment: While your child has been at Evoke at Cascades, what are you learning about your parenting style? On the scale from being permissive to autocratic, where do you lie? What mistakes have you made in your parenting and what dynamics need to be addressed while your child is at Evoke at Cascades?

The following template is a primary tool used by Evoke at Cascades students for building assertive and clear communication. A feelings statement replaces aggressive or passive communication styles and helps to express our feelings, thoughts, and desires accountably. You may do well to practice the format below in preparation for attending your child's transition out of Evoke at Cascades. Your child has likely mastered this skill and you may be asked to participate in communication sessions using this format.

- Write an "I-feel" statement letter to your child in this format:
  I feel _____(an emotion)
  I feel this way when_____(an event)
  I feel this way because I think_____(thought or belief about the event)
  My hope for myself is _____(something you can control.)
  My hope for (you/group) is _____(something outside of your control)

  Examples:
  1) I feel sad when you shut down and don't talk to me. I feel this way because I think that you are upset and are punishing me. My hope for myself is that I can continue to let you know how I feel when you shut down. My hope for you is that you can share your feelings with me.
  2) I feel happy when you engage in family activities. I feel this way because I think we are having a more open relationship. My hope for myself is that I can be open and share my feelings with you. My hope for you is that you continue to engage in the family.

- Write a reflective listening letter in response to a letter from your child following this format:
  So you feel _____(reflect feeling).
  You feel this way when_____(reflect the event).
  You feel this way because you think_____(reflect belief about the event).
  Your hope for yourself is_____(reflect hope).
  Your hope for me/us is_____(reflect hope).
  Did I hear you correctly?
  or Did I get it right?

Reflective listening is an opportunity for you just to hear and reflect back what your child is feeling, it is not an opportunity for you to explain, correct or justify, if you do not agree with you child. The important piece is hearing to what he or she is feeling.

> **Example:** You feel angry that you are going to another program. You feel this way because you think that you should get a chance to come home and prove yourself. You would like to live your own life and make your own mistakes?.....Is that right?

NOTICE OF PRIVACY POLICIES FOR

Evoke Therapy Programs at Cascades

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW INFORMATION ABOUT YOU OR YOUR CHILD MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

Introduction

Evoke at Cascades is committed to treating and using protected health information about your child responsibly. This Notice of Health Information Practices describes the personal information we collect, and how and when we use or disclose that information. It also describes your rights as they relate to your protected health information. This Notice is effective 11/1/05 and applies to all protected health information as defined by federal regulations.

Understanding Your Health Record/Information

Each time your child visit's Evoke at Cascades, a record of his/ her progress is made. Typically, this record contains his/her symptoms, examination and test results, diagnosis, treatment, and a plan for future care or treatment. This information often referred to as you're his/her health or medical record, serves as a:

- Basis for planning care and treatment,
- Means of communication among the many health professionals who contribute to our patient's care,
- Legal document describing the care received,
- Means by which you or a third-party payer can verify that services billed were actually provided,
- A tool to educating health professionals,
- A source of data for medical research,
- A source of information for public health officials charged with improving the health of this state and the nation,
- A source of data for planning and marketing,
- A tool with which we can assess and continually work to improve the care we render and the outcomes we achieve.

Understanding what is in your record and how your health information is used helps you to: ensure its accuracy, better understand who, what, when, where, and why others may access your health information, and make more informed decisions when authorizing disclosures to others.

Your Health Information Rights

Your child's health record is the physical property of Evoke at Cascades, the information belongs to you.

You have the right to:

- Obtain a paper copy of this notice of information practices on request,
- Inspect and receive a copy of your child's health record as provided for in 45 CFR 164.524,
- Amend the health record as provided in 45 CFE 164.528,
- Obtain an accounting of disclosures of the health information as provided in 45 CFR 164.528,
- Request communications of your child's health information by alternative means or at alternative locations,
- Request a restriction on certain uses and disclosures of your child's information as provided by 45 CFR 164.522, and
- Revoke our authorization to use or disclose health information except to the extent that action has already been taken.

Our Responsibilities

Evoke at Cascades is required to:

- Maintain the privacy of your health information,
- Provide you with this notice as to our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to information we collect and maintain about you,
- Abide by the terms of this notice,
- Notify you if we are unable to agree to a requested restriction, and

- Accommodate reasonable requests you may have to communicate health information by alternative means or at alternative locations.

We reserve the right to change our practices and to make the new provisions effective for all protected health information we maintain. Should our information practices change, we will mail a revised notice to the address you've supplied us, or if you agree, we will email the revised notice to you.
We will not use or disclosure your child's health information without your authorization, except as described in this notice. We will also discontinue to use or disclose your health information after we received a written revocation of the authorization according to the procedures included in the authorization.

For More Information or to Report a Problem
If you have questions and would like additional information you may contact the Executive Director, John Huffine, Ph.D. If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you can file a complaint with the Executive Director or with the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. There will be no retaliation for filing a complaint with either the Privacy Officer or the Office for Civil Rights. The address for the OCR is listed below:

Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Room 509F, HHH Building
Washington, D.C. 20201

Example of Disclosures for Treatment, Payment and Health Operations

We will use your health information for treatment.
For example: Information obtained by a Therapists, Counselor, or other member of our health care team will be recorded in your record and used to determine the course of treatment that should work best for your child. Your child's therapist will document in his or her record his or her expectations of the members of your health care team will then record the actions they took and their observations. In that way, the therapist will know how you are responding to treatment.
We will also provide your physician or subsequent health care provider with copies of various reports that should assist him or her in your child's treatment. This is to include all health care providers in our practice and those assisting in coverage of our practice.

We will use your health information for payment.
For example: A bill may be sent to you or a third-payer. The information on or accompanying the bill may include information that identifies you, as well as your diagnosis, procedures, and supplies used.

We will use your health information for regular health operations.
For example: Members of the medical staff, the risk or quality improvement manager, or members of the quality improvement team may use information in your health record to assess the core and outcomes in your child's case and others like it. This information will then be used in an effort to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of the health care and service we provide.

Business associates*:* There are some services provided in our organization through contacts with business associates. Examples include physician services in the emergency room, certain laboratory tests, and a psychological testing company. When these services are contracted, we may disclose your health information to our business associate so that they can perform the job we've asked them to do and bill you or your third-party payer for services rendered. To protect your health information, however, we require the business associate to appropriately safeguard your information.

Notification: We may use or disclose information to notify or assist in notifying a family member, personal representative, or another person responsible for your child's care, your child's location, and general condition. We may leave a message on your answering machine or on voicemail as a means of communication. We may mail you a postcard or written notice as a means of communication. We email you or our transcriptionist as a means of communications.

Research: We may disclose information to researchers when their research has been approved by an institutional review board that has reviewed the research proposal and established protocols to ensure the privacy of your health information.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA): We may disclose to the FDA health information relative to adverse events with respect to food, supplements, product and product defects, or post marketing surveillance information to enable product recalls, repairs, or replacement.

Workers compensation: We may disclose health information to the extent authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to workers compensation or other similar programs established by law.

Public health: As required by law, we may disclose your health information to public health or legal authorities charged with preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability.

Law enforcement: We may disclose health information for law enforcement purposes as required by law or in response to a valid subpoena.

Federal law makes provision for your health information to be release to an appropriate health oversight agency, public health authority or attorney, provided that a work force member or business associate believes in good faith that we have engaged in unlawful conduct or have otherwise violated professional or clinical standards and are potentially endangering one or more patients, workers or the public.