



# Tech Considerations and Compliance Tools to Consider While Seeing Clients From Home

Years ago, when I was still a School Social Worker, I attended a [HIPAA training](#) presented by [Katie Malinski](#) who is a therapist here in Austin, TX. While the workshop was really designed for clinicians in private practice, I found a lot of the information immensely helpful for my time in the school, and also in subsequent years in my own private practice. In fact, many of the lessons had such an impact on me, that they were a large impetus and inspiration for creating [SocialNote](#)!

The 2020-2021 school year is already looking a lot different from any other year. With the coronavirus still lingering, and the decision for many districts to start the school year via remote learning, School-Based Mental Health professionals are having to consider how to remain HIPAA compliant while working from home. I know, it's a lot to think about, but it's also vitally important we keep this information secure for our clients and their families.

Specifically when thinking about HIPAA, here are my Top 10 Takeaways that still resonate from that workshop with Katie all those years ago.

## Top 10 Takeaways:

1. [HIPAA](#) is a standard of care. The Texas Medical Privacy Act says that anyone who has contact with any PHI (Protected Health Information) has to follow HIPAA guidelines.
2. Keep it simple. Keep it safe. Document everything!
3. Get to know the [Texas Medical Privacy Act/TMPA](#)!
4. Psychotherapy Notes and Progress Notes are NOT the same thing. If you're needing a good resource for note templates, consider buying this book.
5. Some states have passed a law banning ALL paper documentation. Texas is moving in that same direction!
6. HIPAA penalties exist. Use strong passwords, virus protection and a firewall wherever you have PHI to avoid a breach!
7. Breaches happen every day. Have an ongoingly updated "[HIPAA Compliance File](#)".
8. E-mailing and Texting PHI is not secure! Encrypt your emails and all electronic patient records.
9. Follow your Code of Ethics or State Laws when complying with HIPAA.
10. You can do it! Don't let it scare you!

As clinicians, we are ethically bound to our [Code of Ethics](#), and it is our responsibility to do our due diligence to protect the records of our clients and students. The more I have learned about record protection, the more I understand that going paperless is truly the safest option. Until now, there hasn't been a system that was built specifically for School-Based Mental Health professionals. The beauty of SocialNote is not only that it was built with you in mind, but it's also specifically designed to keep your client records HIPAA compliant and secure... a momentarily valuable asset while we continue to work from home.

Now that I've freaked you out a little (unintentionally), I'm sure you're wondering what you can do to make meaningful use of your EMR (electronic medical records). Well, first things first, take [Katie Malinski's HIPAA training](#)! You won't regret it. Second, complete a risk assessment. Find out where the holes are. What could possibly go wrong? What size mess would it cause? Fix it and document. Finally, go paperless and use [SocialNote](#)!