

Privacy Policy for Management of Personal Information

This document describes the privacy policy of Child Aware Counselling and Psychology Services for the management of clients' personal information. The psychological service provided is bound by the legal requirements of the Australian Privacy Principles set out in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

Client information

Client files are stored in an electronic document management system which is accessible only to authorised employees and contractors. The information on each file includes personal information such as name, address, contact phone numbers, medical history and other personal information collected as part of providing the psychological service.

How clients' personal information is collected

A client's personal information is collected in a number of ways during psychological consultation with the Child Aware clinician using hard copy forms, correspondence via email and/or fax, when the client interacts directly with the Child Aware clinician and other staff such as Administration, and when other health practitioners provide personal information to Child Aware, via referrals, correspondence and medical records.

Consequence of not providing personal information

If the client does not wish for their personal information to be collected in a way anticipated by the Privacy Policy, Child Aware may not be in a position to provide the psychological service to the client. In some circumstances, clients may request to be anonymous or to use a pseudonym. This is permissible unless it makes it too difficult to deal with the client or Child Aware is required by law to deal with an identified individual.

Purpose of holding personal information

A client's personal information is gathered and used for the purpose of providing psychological services, which includes assessing, diagnosing and treating a client's present issue. The personal information is retained in order to document what happens during sessions, and enables the psychologist to provide a relevant and informed psychological service.



Disclosure of personal information

Clients' personal information will remain confidential except when:

1. It is subpoenaed by a court, or disclosure is otherwise required or authorised by law; or
2. Failure to disclose the information would be in the reasonable belief of Child Aware place a client or another person at serious risk to life health or safety; or
3. The client's prior approval has been obtained to:
 - a. Provide a written report to another agency or professional, e.g. a GP or a lawyer; or
 - b. Discuss the material with another person, e.g. a parent, employer, health provider, or third party funder; or
 - c. Disclose the information in another way; or
 - d. Disclose to another professional or agency (e.g. your GP) and disclosure of your personal information to that third party is for a purpose which is directly related to the primary purpose for which your personal information was collected.

A client's personal information is not disclosed to overseas recipients, unless the client consents or such disclosure is otherwise required by law. Clients' personal information will not be used, sold, rented or disclosed for any other purpose.

In the event that unauthorised access, disclosure or loss of a client's personal information occurs, Child Aware will activate its data breach plan and use all reasonable endeavours to minimise risk of consequential serious harm.

Requests for access and correction of client information

At any stage clients may request to see and correct the personal information about them kept on file. The psychologist may discuss the contents with them and/or give them a copy, subject to the exemptions in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth). If satisfied that personal information is inaccurate, out of date or incomplete, reasonable steps will be taken in the circumstances to ensure that this information is corrected. All requests by clients for access to or correction of personal information held about them should be lodged with The Directors. These requests will be responded to in writing within 14 days and an appointment will be made if necessary for clarification purposes.

Concerns

If clients have a concern about the management of their personal information, they may inform the Practice Manager. Upon request they can obtain a copy of the Australian Privacy Principles, which describes their rights and how their personal information should be handled. Ultimately, if clients wish to lodge a formal complaint about the use of, disclosure of, or access to, their personal information, they may do so with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner by phone on 1300 363 992, online at <http://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/making-a-privacy-complaint> or by post to: Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, GPO Box 5218, Sydney, NSW 2001.