



Privacy Policy for the Management of Personal Information

This document describes the privacy policy of Mend Psychology for the management of clients' personal information. The service is bound by the legal requirements of the Australian Privacy Principles set out in the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

Our Services

Mend Psychology provides a counseling and psychology service. This service involves the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of clients.

Purpose of collecting personal information

A client's personal information is collected in order to provide a psychological service that is effective and safe, and to ensure that the service is relevant and informed. The personal information is kept in order to document what happens during sessions.

How clients' personal information is collected

A client's personal information is collected in a number of ways during psychological consultation at Mend Psychology, including when the client provides information directly to Mend Psychology using hardcopy forms, correspondence via email, when the client interacts directly with Mend Psychology staff such as a receptionist, and when other health practitioners provide personal information to Mend Psychology via referrals, correspondence and medical records.

How clients' personal information is stored

Client files are kept in a secure filing cabinet that is only accessible to authorised staff of Mend Psychology. The information in each file includes personal information such as name, address, contact phone numbers, medical history, and other personal information that is collected as part of providing the counseling and psychology service.

Mend Psychology is required by law to store client information for a minimum of 7 years since the last occasion on which the client was provided a service and, if the client was under 18 years of age, at least until the client reaches 25 years of age, whichever is the later.

Consequences of not providing personal information

If the client does not wish for their personal information to be collected as described, Mend Psychology may not be able to provide the counseling and psychological service to the client, and the care received may be compromised.

Clients' may ask to be anonymous or use a pseudonym, unless it is impracticable for Mend Psychology to deal with the client, or if Mend is required or authorised by law to deal with identified individuals. In most cases it will not be possible for a client to remain anonymous or use a pseudonym.

Disclosure of personal information

Clients' personal information will not be disclosed, except when:

1. It is subpoenaed by a court; or
2. Failure to disclose the information would in the reasonable belief of Mend Psychology 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 professional or agency, e.g., a GP or a lawyer; or

- b. Discuss the material with another person, e.g., a parent, employer or health provider; or
- c. Disclose the information in another way; or
- 4. Disclosure is otherwise required by law;
- 5. Disclosure may assist in the location of a missing person.

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.

Request 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 exceptions of 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 Dr Janine Clarke. 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 Dr Janine Clarke. 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.