

## Privacy & Confidentiality

### **Privacy**

Access Psychology manages clients' personal information in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles set out in the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth). Client files are held in a secure storage room and lockable filing cabinets.

### **Collection of client information**

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. The information is collected in a number of ways including when the client provides information directly to the Access Psychology using hardcopy forms, correspondence via email, when the client interacts directly with the psychologist, associates or staff, and when other health practitioners provide personal information to Access Psychology via referrals, correspondence and medical reports etc.

### **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 presenting issue, and/or the preparation of reports. 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. If the client does not wish for their personal information to be collected in a way anticipated by this Privacy Policy, Access Psychology may not be in a position to provide the psychological service to the client.

### **Requests for access and correction to client information**

At any stage clients may request to review and correct the personal information about them kept on file in consultation with the psychologist. If satisfied that personal information is inaccurate, out of date or incomplete, reasonable steps will be taken in the circumstances to ensure that this information is corrected.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 in writing (e.g. letter or email) with the psychologist. These requests will be responded to in writing within 30 days. Access Psychology will endeavour to rectify simple factual corrections immediately, however, an appointment (billed at the usual consultation fee) will be made to clarify more complicated matters. A copy of the Australian Privacy Principles, which describes your rights and how their personal information should be handled, can be found at <http://www.oaic.gov.au> . 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.

## **Confidentiality**

Clients' personal information will not be disclosed except when:

- 1) 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
- 2) It is subpoenaed by a court; or
- 3) Failure to disclose the information would, in the reasonable belief of the psychologist, place a client or another person at serious risk to life, health or safety; or
- 4) You would reasonably expect your personal information to be disclosed 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; or
- 5) When consulting colleagues, or in the course of supervision or professional training, provided the identity of clients and associated parties involved are concealed; or
- 6) Disclosure is otherwise required or authorised by law.

Clients' personal information will not be used, sold, rented or disclosed for any other purpose.

## **Anonymity**

Clients may request to be anonymous or to use a pseudonym, unless it is impracticable for Access Psychology to deal with the client or if Access Psychology is required or authorised by law to deal with identified individuals. In most cases it will not be possible for the client to be anonymous or to use a pseudonym, however if the psychologist agrees to the client being anonymous or using a pseudonym, the client must pay consultation fees prior to the commencement of the appointment.

## **Contact**

Access Psychology aims to be easy to contact (even after hours), and to reply to clients' messages within an hour. However, if the office is closed and/or you do not receive a prompt reply (or you are experiencing an emergency), you should call one of the following emergency services:

ACIS            13 14 65 (Assessment & Crisis Intervention Service)

Life Line      13 11 14

Police         131 444 or 000

Ambulance    000

or your GP

If you are at all unclear about any of this privacy and confidentiality information, feel free to contact the psychologist prior to your appointment.