
PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Guidelines for Privacy and Confidentiality

The ethical principles that guide the practice of psychology protect the privacy of all communications between a client and a psychologist. Sequentia Psychology maintains confidentiality in the collection, recording, accessing, storage, dissemination, and disposal of information. All client information is subject to privacy laws. Sequentia Psychology adheres to the Privacy Act 1988 and the Health Records Act 2001. Under both the Privacy Act and the Health Records Act you are entitled to:

- know why your personal information is being collected and how it will be used
- ask for access to your records, including your health information
- receive therapy that is tailored to be relevant to your individual needs and values, and is non-discriminatory
- correct inaccurate information about you
- decline to participate in methods or procedures proposed to you

Limits of Confidentiality

Psychologists disclose confidential information obtained in the course of their provision of psychological services only under any one or more of the following circumstances:

- Where there is a legal obligation to do so
- When the client discloses information that may place others or themselves in danger
- When the client provides written consent for information to be shared to others

Confidential information may be disclosed where there is a legal obligation to do so. In legal proceedings files can be subpoenaed for the purpose of a court case. Psychologists can disclose information provided by a client about criminal acts if there is an overriding legal obligation to do so or when failure to disclose may result in clear risk to themselves or others. These are also situations where the psychologist has a legal obligation to take action to protect others from harm, even if information about your treatment is revealed. Likewise, if a client threatens to inflict self-harm, we have a duty of care to assess risk and if necessary notify next of kin or other parties. We are also subject to laws regarding mandatory reporting of suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to government authorities.

If a client is under eighteen years of age, the minor's parents have a right to information about the services rendered. It is our policy to provide parents with general information about the work with adolescents, unless there is a high risk that the minor will seriously harm him/herself or someone else. These matters are negotiated on a case-by-case basis dependent on the minor's age, family circumstances and risk management.

If the psychologist was to see a client out in public, in order to maintain your confidentiality the psychologist will not acknowledge the client unless the client chooses to engage.

Reporting is required by Medicare for the consulting psychologist to write to the GP regularly and clients have to attend their GP for reviews so as to maintain the GP approval for psychological therapy. The signing of a mental health care plan with your GP indicates that you are giving informed consent for your psychologist to correspond with your GP regarding treatment. Written reports to other parties will require your written consent.

Therapy: The benefits of therapy could lead to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and a significant reduction of distress and symptom reduction. Since therapy involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings from time to time. There

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are no certainties with regard to what your particular experience will be. Your active participation in the process is essential to reaching your goals

Type of Personal Information Collected

Psychologists are required to keep adequate records of psychological services provided to clients. Your psychologist needs to keep case notes or participation records about matters or information presented by you in engaging in our services. Your psychologist will collect information from you through forms that you complete when attending our service, through information which is provided by the person referring you to the service, and through conversations you have with your psychologist.

Data Storage and Security

Information collected by Sequentia Psychology is primarily stored electronically. Data security is maintained through the use of mechanisms which include password protection and encryption. Paper-based data is kept in locked storage.

Retention of Data

Psychologists keep records for a minimum of seven years since last client contact. In the case of records collected while the client was less than 18 years old, psychologists retain the records at least until the client attains the age of 25 years.

Further Information

If you would like further information about the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy at Sequentia Psychology please feel free to speak with your psychologist or email us at admin@sequentiapsychology.com. For more information about privacy issues in Australia and protecting your privacy, you can visit the Australian Federal Privacy Commissioner's website. <https://www.oaic.gov.au/>