



Privacy Policy for Management of Personal Information

This document describes the privacy policy of St Paul's Counselling Centre for the management of clients' personal information. This policy is applicable to St Paul's Counselling Centre and all its staff, including Counsellors, Psychologists, interns and non-clinical staff, to whom this document refers, collectively, as "St Paul's Counselling Centre".

The counselling and psychological services provided by St Paul's Counselling Centre are bound by the legal requirements of the Australian Privacy Principles as set out in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the relevant NSW and Commonwealth law.

Client information

As part of providing counselling and psychological services, St Paul's Counselling Centre collects and retains Personal information for each client, including their name, address, date of birth, gender, contact phone numbers, email address, medical history, and other relevant personal information.

Purpose of holding personal information

Personal information is gathered and used for the purpose of providing Counselling and psychological services, and particularly for assessing, diagnosing and treating a client's presenting issue. The personal information is retained in order to document what happens during sessions and enables the counsellor or psychologist to provide a relevant and informed counselling or psychological service.

How clients' personal information is collected

A client's personal information is collected in a number of ways including:

- when it is provided (verbally, on paper or electronically) to St Paul's Counselling Centre staff;
- when it is disclosed in therapy;
- when it is provided to St Paul's Counselling Centre by other health practitioners through referrals, correspondence and other medical reports.

Consequence of not providing personal information

If the client does not wish for their personal information to be collected in a way anticipated by this Policy, St Paul's Counselling Centre may be unable to provide any services to the

client. In some circumstances, clients may request to be anonymous or to use a pseudonym, unless:

- in the opinion of St Paul's Counselling Centre, that would make it impracticable for St Paul's Counselling Centre to deal with the client; or
- if St Paul's Counselling Centre is required by law to deal with identified individuals.

Storage of personal information

Personal information is stored as follows:

- Hard copy material is stored in a secure filing cabinet that is locked whenever St Paul's Counselling Centre is unattended.
- Electronic material is stored on St Paul's Counselling Centre's computers and/or on secured Internet cloud servers; all such systems require, at a minimum, a username and password to access that information.

Personal information is retained for 7 years after completion of therapy or, for children, until they reach the age of 25.

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, in the reasonable belief of the therapist, place a client or another person at serious risk to life, health or safety; or
3. It would assist in ascertaining the whereabouts of an individual reported as a missing person; or
4. There are reasonable grounds to believe an offence may have been committed; or
5. 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 any other way.

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, St Paul's Counselling Centre will activate its data breach action procedures and use all reasonable endeavours to minimise any risk of consequential serious harm.

Requests for access and correction to client information

At any stage, clients may request to see and correct the personal information about them kept on file. The counsellor or psychologist may discuss the contents with them and/or give them a copy, subject to the exceptions in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth). If St Paul's Counselling Centre is satisfied that any 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 Business Manager at St Paul's Counselling Centre. These requests will be responded to in writing within 10 business days, and an appointment will be made, if necessary, for clarification purposes.

Concerns

Any clients who have a concern about the management of their personal information should first raise their concern with the business manager. Upon request they can obtain a copy of the Australian Privacy Principles, which describe 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