



Transformative Psychology

helping people transform their lives

Management of Personal Information Policy

Policy overview and purpose

This document describes Transformative Psychology's policy and practice for collecting, holding and managing information provided by its clients when providing a psychology service. The psychology service provided is bound by the legal requirements of the Australian Privacy Principles set out in the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth) and Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000. In Victoria the Victorian Health Records Act 2001 protects the privacy of individuals' health information.

Client information

Client information and files at Transformative Psychology are held in a secure filing cabinet, which is accessible only by the client's psychologist Charles Thermos. The information includes personal information such as name, address, contact phone numbers, and other personal information collected as part of providing the psychology service.

How clients' personal information is collected

A client's personal information is collected in a number of ways during psychological consultation with Charles Thermos, including when the client provides information directly to him using hardcopy forms, correspondence via email, and when other health practitioners provide personal information to him, via referrals, correspondence, Mental Health Care Plans, and medical referrals and reports.

Consequence of not providing personal information

If a client does not wish for their personal information to be collected in a way anticipated by this Policy, Charles Thermos may not be in a position to provide the psychology service to the client. A client may request to be anonymous or to use a pseudonym, unless it is impracticable for Charles Thermos to deal with the client or if he is required or authorised by law to deal with identified individuals. In most cases it will not be possible for a client to be anonymous or to use a pseudonym, however if Charles Thermos agrees to a client being anonymous or using a pseudonym, they must pay the consultation fee at the time of the appointment.

Purpose of collecting, holding and managing information

A client's personal information is gathered and used for the purpose of providing psychology services, which includes assessing, diagnosing (when required) and managing / treating a client's presenting issue(s). The information is accessed and seen only by Charles Thermos. The information is retained in order to document what happens during consultations, enabling the psychologist to provide a relevant and informed psychology service.

Disclosure of personal information

A client's personal information gathered by their psychologist will remain confidential, private and secure except when:

1. it is subpoenaed by a court, or disclosure is otherwise required by law; or
2. failure to disclose the information would in the reasonable belief of Charles Thermos place the client or another person at serious risk to life, health or safety; or

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3. the client's prior approval has been obtained to provide a written report or verbal communication to another professional or agency (e.g. medical practitioner or lawyer), or to discuss the material with another person (e.g. a parent, employer, health provider or third party funding provider); or
4. it is a requirement through a particular program that a progress report is sent by Charles Thermos to a medical practitioner or when information about the client's mental health and well-being needs to be shared between Charles Thermos and their GP to assist in the management of their health (e.g. Medicare Better Access Program); or when a progress report, if required, is sent to a third party funding the service (e.g. Transport Accident Commission (TAC), Victorian WorkSafe Authority (VWA), Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)).

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

Requests for access and correction to client information

At any stage a client may request to see and correct the personal information about them kept on file. Charles Thermos may discuss the contents with them and/or give them a copy, subject to the exceptions in the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth). 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 a client for access to or correction of personal information held about them should be lodged with Charles Thermos. These requests will be responded to in writing within 14 days, and an appointment will be made if necessary for clarification purposes. An administration fee may be incurred for preparing and copying a client's personal information.

Concerns

If a client has a concern about the management of their personal information, they may inform Charles Thermos. 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 a client wishes 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.

For further information on the Victorian Health Records Act 2001 and the Office of the Health Services Commissioner, contact The Commissioner's Office on 1800 136 066, or visit www.health.vic.gov.au

Please discuss any queries or concerns about the Management of Personal Information Policy with your psychologist, Charles Thermos.

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