

Privacy and Information Management Policy

Approving Authority:	Managing Director
Approval Date:	14/05/2024
Policy Owner:	General Manager – Service Delivery
Next Scheduled Review:	14/05/2025
Document Location:	TP Connect – Controlled Document Hub
Description:	This policy sets out the principles, objectives, and responsibilities for maintaining the privacy of client information and information management principles at Therapy Pro.

Related Documents

- *Client Record Keeping Policy Procedure;*
- *Referral/Intake Processes;*
- *Client Consent Form;*
- *Consent Policy;*
- *Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act)*

Definition

Privacy and information management is the process of securely collecting, organising, and storing client personal information.

Preamble

The Therapy Pro Group (Incorporating Therapy Pro and Adaptability Therapy) is committed to service excellence that recognises good client record keeping is paramount to best practice approaches. When collecting and using personal and sensitive client information to support therapy interventions good record keeping is essential to: ensure high levels of support; effective therapy practice; protection of therapists by minimizing exposure to litigation; and an obligation under the human service quality and safeguard and various legislative frameworks.

Therapy Pro Group is committed to safeguarding a client's privacy and personal information, and under obligations to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988*, will only collect, use, store and maintain personal information to meet responsibilities of providing quality services to clients.

Information about a client will be stored securely in a Client Management System. Legislation regarding disposal of records varies between States and Territories, however in general, records regarding adults will be kept for seven years following the date of last contact; and records regarding children will be kept for the duration of the person's natural life. Records will then be destroyed or permanently de-identified.

Policy Statement

Therapy Pro will collect information in a fair, legal, and transparent way, and will securely maintain and store information on clients whilst they are accessing Therapy Pro services. Therapy Pro will maintain secure information management systems and processes to make sure the privacy of clients is maintained. Client information is securely stored, and Therapy Pro abides by all State/Territory criteria for management of client information. Clients can request access to their personal information held on file by Therapy Pro at any time by telephone or in writing. Records will be transferred to another service provider only with the informed consent of the client concerned.

Policy Objectives

Client information will only be used for the purposes for which it was collected, or other purposes as agreed to by the client (for example, referral to other services). If Therapy Pro is required to release personal information to comply with legislation, clients will be informed of this requirement. How, why, and what Therapy Pro collects client information for, will be clearly explained to clients. The exception to this is where a therapist establishes risk of harm, abuse or neglect to the client or others, where a failure to disclose relevant client information would result in identifiable risk or harm to the client or others. Where this can be prevented, therapists may need to provide the minimal information necessary to avert harm, abuse, or neglect of a person, to the relevant third parties.

Each client's consent is obtained to collect, use, and retain their information or to disclose their information (including assessments) to other parties, including details of the purpose of collection, use and disclosure.

Each client is informed in what circumstances the information could be disclosed, including that the information could be provided without their consent if required or authorised by law.

Each client is informed of how their information is stored and used, and when and how they can access or correct their information and withdraw or amend their prior consent.

Therapy Pro ensures that client information is current and relevant in the Client Management System records. Client records are stored with appropriate use, access, transfer, storage, security, retrieval, retention, destruction, and disposal based on legislative requirements and complexity of records and supports delivered.

Responsibilities

All Therapy Pro staff are responsible for:

- advising clients about how their private information will be collected, used, stored and accessed in order to provide quality services;
- taking reasonable steps to preserve the security, privacy, and confidentiality of sensitive and personal client information, and appropriately using the client information management system;
- taking precautions to ensure any personal and sensitive information about clients is not misused, intentionally or unintentionally;
- regularly reviewing and updating client information as necessary to ensure completeness, accuracy, and currency;
- providing feedback and suggesting ideas for improving the client information management system;
- contacting their Team Lead or National Head of Discipline immediately to discuss situations where they believe that their duty of care to vulnerable people may require the disclosure of a client's personal information;
- contacting their Team Lead or National Head of Discipline immediately to provide notice of any serious breach of a client's private and sensitive information, including unauthorised access to, unauthorised disclosure of, or loss of electronic data or records;
- staff will not use any device that has not been provided by Therapy Pro for any Therapy Pro related work;
- staff will always work within the secure electronic environment that Therapy Pro provides access to. At no stage is any client information to be worked on or saved other than on the personal OneDrive of each staff member that sits behind the Office 365 firewalls; and
- all staff are required to use a locked bag (briefcase, or similar) to transport all client related information when travelling to, from and between client visits.

The General Manager is responsible for:

- organising and making available to staff a client information management system to store and secure client information;

- following up on requests by clients for access to their personal information;
- regularly reviewing the client information management system;
- identifying and implementing improvements to privacy and information management processes;
- responding to, and supporting, therapists to determine risk and any requirements to disclose client personal information to minimise or avert harm, abuse, or neglect; and
- implementing investigations into privacy breaches.

Monitoring and reporting

Therapy Pro will take all reasonable steps to ensure that hard copy and electronic client information (video, photos, and audio) is secured. Therapy Pro will adhere to the 13 Privacy Principles in the *Privacy Act 1988* and will provide notice of any serious breach to affected individuals and the Privacy Commissioner in accordance with these formal legal requirements as outlined. Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a data breach, Therapy Pro will carry out an expeditious and reasonable assessment of the breach within 30 days to determine the kind of information leaked, the sensitivity of the information, the kind of persons who may have obtained the information and whether the information has been otherwise protected.

Therapy Pro will monitor the privacy and information management procedure of the organisation and take all reasonable steps to correct client personal information where it is found it is inaccurate, out-of-date, incomplete, irrelevant or misleading (considering the purpose for which the information is held).

In circumstances where it is required by law, or where it is permitted by law, or with the client's consent, Therapy Pro will disclose information to the client and appropriate third parties as is required.