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Privacy Policy for Management of Personal Information

This document describes the privacy policy of Houston House for the management of clients' personal information. The psychological service provided is bound by the legal requirements of the Australian Privacy Principles set out in the *Privacy Act* 1988 (Commonwealth).

Client information

Client files are held in a secure filing cabinet and any electronic document management systems, which is accessible only to authorised employees. 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.

How clients' personal information is collected

A client's personal information is collected in a number of ways during psychological consultation at Houston House, including when the client provides information directly to each practitioner and administrative staff using hardcopy forms, correspondence via email, when the client interacts directly with Houston House employees such as the receptionist, and when other health practitioners provide personal information to Houston House, via referrals, correspondence and 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 Privacy Policy, Houston House practitioner's may not be in a position to provide the psychological service to the client. Clients may request to be anonymous or to use a pseudonym, unless it is impracticable for Houston House practitioners to deal with the client or if the practitioner 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 Houston House practitioner agrees to the client being anonymous or using a pseudonym, the client must pay consultation fees at the time of the appointment.

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. 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.

Disclosure of personal information

Clients' personal information will not be disclosed except when:

1. It is subpoenaed by a court; or
2. Failure to disclose the information would in the reasonable belief of Houston House and place a client or another person at serious risk to life, health or safety; or
3. 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

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. disclosure is otherwise required or authorised by law.

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.

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 psychologist may discuss the contents with them and/or give them a copy, subject to the exceptions in the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). 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 with Houston House – Dr Aaron Osmachenko. These requests will be responded to in writing within 30 days, and an appointment will be made if necessary for clarification purposes.

Concerns

If clients have a concern about the management of their personal information, they may inform Houston House – Dr Aaron Osmachenko. 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.