

The Psychologists Richmond policy for the management of information (*page 1 of 2*)

Our Services

The Psychologists Richmond offers a psychological service. This service entails the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of clients.

Collection of Information

In order to provide a psychological service effectively and safely, and to ensure that the service is relevant and informed, the psychologists at The Psychologists Richmond need to obtain information from clients and, in some circumstances, from other individuals and/or organisations about the client, which is relevant to the client's current situation and to the service being provided.

That information may include health information, i.e. information or opinion about the client's physical, mental or psychological health, disability, wishes about the future provision to them of health services (activities that are intended to assess, maintain or improve an individual's health, or diagnose or treat an illness, injury or disability), and personal information, i.e. information about a client from which their identity is apparent or can be ascertained.

If the psychologists are unable to collect health and personal information about clients, the clients may be unable to receive the full benefit of our psychological service, and the psychological care they receive from us might be compromised.

Recording of Information

Psychologists are required to make and keep adequate records. The Psychologists Richmond retains information provided to its psychologists about their clients.

Once that information has been collected, The Psychologists Richmond is required by law, to store the information for a minimum of 7 years since the last occasion on which The Psychologists Richmond provided a psychological service to the client and, if the client was under 18 years of age, at least until the client reaches 25 years of age, whichever is the later.

Access to Information

Clients have a right to access the information held about them. In certain circumstances however, by law, The Psychologists Richmond will not be able to give the client access to this information, such as, if:

- The Psychologists Richmond believe on reasonable grounds that providing access to the information would pose a serious threat to the life or health of any person;
- The Psychologists Richmond considers that providing access to the information would have an unreasonable impact on the privacy of other individuals;
- the information was provided to The Psychologists Richmond in confidence by a person other than the client with a request that the information remain confidential; or providing access to the information would be unlawful.

If clients wish to access information held about them by The Psychologists Richmond, in the first instance they should discuss this request with their treating psychologist and the psychologist will suggest appropriate forms of access to their records.

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Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information

The Psychologists Richmond will endeavour to safeguard the confidentiality of information it obtains about its clients to the extent that this is possible.

The psychologists will primarily use or disclose that information for the purpose for which the information was collected, namely to provide a psychological service.

There are circumstances, however, where the psychologists are entitled and/or required by law to disclose information obtained about clients, including:

- if the client, or a person with legal authority to act on their behalf, consents to the disclosure of this information (for instance, in order to provide a report to another professional or agency, or to discuss the information with another person, such as a parent or employer of the client);
- if the disclosure is required, authorised or permitted under law (for instance if the psychologists receive a subpoena from a court requiring them to attend court and/or provide records to the court);
- if The Psychologists Richmond reasonably believes that the disclosure is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious and imminent threat to an individual's life, health, safety, or welfare, or a serious threat to public health, safety or welfare;
- where The Psychologists Richmond is required to provide reports, where relevant, to referring medical practitioners under the Medicare Better Access scheme, TAC, Workcover and Victims of Crime.
- if The Psychologists Richmond has reason to suspect that unlawful activity has been, is being, or may be engaged in and uses or discloses the information as a necessary part of its investigation of the matter or in reporting its concerns to relevant persons or authorities;
- where The Psychologists Richmond consult colleagues or supervisors for professional training (the information is de-identified)
- if the disclosure is to an immediate family member of the client and it is necessary to provide appropriate health services or care of the client, and the client is incapable of giving consent to the disclosure.