



## PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

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Approved by Board       27 April 2020

### Policy

The Centre is committed to handling personal information responsibly and with respect for the principle that people have control over the way information about them is handled.

The Centre will endeavour to protect confidentiality, and will create an environment of respect and privacy for program participants, service users, staff and volunteers. Confidentiality applies to verbal information, written information and information stored electronically.

Staff may share information with their supervisor for the purposes of supervision and debriefing. Information disclosed will be treated confidentially by the supervisor.

Information about staff, volunteers, program participants and Centre users shall remain confidential except where the person gives consent or where it involves:

- serious illegal actions on the part of a person involved with The Centre
- any issue which could endanger the safety of other people
- any issue which could endanger a person and/or dependent children
- where a staff member is obliged to make a notification to the Department of Health & Human Services

In such a case, the person concerned must be informed directly that any information they give (ie on violent crimes, child abuse) may need to be reported to the relevant authority in accordance with Victorian or Federal laws.

### Principles

Personal information is collected for purposes directly related to a service or activity of The Centre.

When collecting personal information, we need to be open about why it is being collected and to whom it might be disclosed. The individual concerned must be aware of the purposes for which information is collected and who has access to the information.

The Centre endeavours to protect records by reasonable safeguards against loss, unauthorised access, use, modification or disclosure, or against any other use.

A period for which each type of information is kept in hard copy and electronically is established.

Criteria will be developed for obtaining, retaining, destroying or de-identifying personal information.

If at any point confidential personal information is to be handled for purposes not in accordance with why it was collected, the person's consent must be obtained.

Files created by staff when at work remain the property of The Centre.

### Procedure



The Director will oversee the implementation of the policy and ensure that it is communicated to staff and participants in Centre courses and activities. Design of forms for programs, classes and activities will include information about the uses of the information.

All participants seeking to take part in applicable Centre programs and activities must complete the registration which includes an appropriate acknowledgment of personal information that is collected and which may be reported to local, state or (if so) federal agencies.

Staff must be informed of the Centre's confidentiality policy as part of their induction.

Conversations with participants or between workers about participants should not be conducted in places or situations where they can be overheard. Interviews where personal information is to be discussed will take place in a private space.

Personal information should not be left open in publicly accessible areas (particularly reception and in classrooms). Staff are responsible for their own diary notes not breaching confidentiality. All personal information about participants should be stored in a locked filing cabinet or in electronic form, with access supervised by the Director or relevant Coordinator.

Information collected during the referral process for people who do not become participants in course or activities can be aggregated into broad categories and used for data collection. Telephone referral information will then be destroyed.

If an agency or department makes an approach for information about a participant in Centre activities, the agency should be referred to the Director. No information will be disclosed to overseas recipients.

If staff wish to have information provided to external parties (for insurance, financial loans or other purposes) written authorisation (with details of information able to be disclosed, organisation/person to which information can be provided) should be given to their supervisor or Director.

#### **Related documents and references**

Centre Registration Forms

*Privacy Act 1988* (Vic)