

Privacy Policy and Consent for Psychological Services

Purpose

This Privacy Policy sets out how Laburnum Psychology manages personal information provided to or collected by it.

Laburnum Psychology is bound by the Australian Privacy Principles contained in the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988, and Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012 (referred to as the Privacy Act), and the Privacy Amendment (Notifiable Data Breaches) Act 2017. In relation to health records, the Practice is also bound by the Health Records Act 2001 (Vic).

Scope

This Policy applies to all employees (including previous employees), clients, visitors, contractors, guests of Laburnum Psychology offices and to any other person who is notified that this Policy applies to them.

Introduction

As part of providing psychological services, including therapeutic counselling, Laburnum Psychology collects and records personal information relevant to your situation. This includes your name, contact details, medical history, and other information necessary for employment or psychological assessment and treatment. This document outlines how your information is managed and your rights regarding its use.

Purpose of Collecting and Holding Information

Job applicants, staff members and contractors

Personal information of job applicants, staff members and contractors, Laburnum Psychology's primary purpose of collection is to assess and (if successful) to engage the applicant, staff member or contractor, as the case may be. The purposes for which Laburnum Psychology uses personal information of job applicants, staff members and contractors include:

- in administering the individual's employment or contract, as the case may be;
- for insurance purposes;
- to satisfy Laburnum Psychology's legal obligations, for example, in relation to NDIS and other legislation.

Clients

Your personal information is gathered to:

- Document your assessment and treatment.
- Enable your psychologist to provide informed and relevant psychological services.

All personal information is stored securely and is accessed only by your psychologist or authorised personnel of Laburnum Psychology as required.

Consequences of Not Providing Personal Information

If you choose not to provide the requested personal information, your psychologist may be unable to offer psychological services. This is because the information is critical for accurate assessment and effective treatment.

Access to Personal Information

You are entitled to access the personal information we hold about you, subject to legal exceptions. If you wish to access your records, your psychologist will discuss the available options with you.

Disclosure of Personal Information

Your personal information will remain confidential except in the following circumstances:

1. Legal Obligations:

- When required by law, such as under a subpoena.

2. Risk of Harm:

- If your psychologist reasonably believes that failure to disclose the information would place you or another person at serious risk of harm to life, health, or safety.

3. Professional Consultations:

- With your prior consent, information may be disclosed to professionals or agencies involved in your care, such as a GP, lawyer, or other health providers.

4. Medicare Requirements:

- If you are using a Mental Health Care Plan (MHCP), Medicare requires feedback to be provided to your referring GP regarding your progress, requests for additional sessions, and the completion of your treatment.

5. Other Circumstances with Consent:

- If you agree to disclosure for specific purposes, such as discussing your case with a parent, employer, or third-party funder.

Your personal information will not be disclosed to overseas recipients unless required by law or with your explicit consent. It will never be sold, rented, or used for purposes beyond those outlined in this policy.

Data Security

We take your privacy seriously and have implemented the following measures to protect your personal information:

- Secure storage systems with restricted access.
- Encryption for electronic records.
- Regular audits of privacy practices.
- All electronic systems require password-protected access, along with two-factor authentication for users. Regular backups are performed to ensure data integrity.

- Where Laburnum Psychology uses secure third-party IT Australian-based cloud storage services, such services comply with the Privacy Act to store electronic records. All third-party providers are contractually bound to uphold strict confidentiality standards.

Notifiable Data Breaches

In the event of a data breach that is likely to result in serious harm, Laburnum Psychology will respond to notifiable data breaches in accord with the Privacy Amendment (Notifiable Data Breaches) Act 2017, taking immediate steps to contain the breach, assess its impact, notify affected individuals and the OAIC, and implement measures to prevent recurrence.

Data Retention and Destruction

Client records will be retained for a minimum of seven years from the date of the last service, or until a client who was under 18 at the time of service reaches the age of 25, as per Australian law. Record destruction is performed in accordance with Laburnum Psychology's file destruction policy.

Complaints and Concerns

If you have any concerns about how your personal information is handled, you can:

1. Contact Tim McCorriston at Laburnum Psychology to discuss your concerns.
2. Lodge a formal complaint with the **Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC)** if you believe your privacy rights have been violated.
 - Website: www.oaic.gov.au
 - Phone: 1300 363 992

Acknowledgment of Consent

By proceeding with psychological services at Laburnum Psychology, you acknowledge that you have read and understood this Privacy Policy. Your consent will be formally documented at the time of service commencement.