



## PRIVACY STATEMENT

**Our privacy policy:** Our privacy policy has been developed to suit your health care needs and the unique way our clinic delivers services to you.

The provision of quality health care is our principle concern. It requires a therapeutic relationship of trust and confidentiality. The mental health and chronic pain service providers who form your treatment team at Lifeworks Occupational Therapy regard patient health information as confidential and will collect this information with your consent whenever practicable.

As a patient of Lifeworks Occupational Therapy, we handle your personal information in accordance with this privacy policy and with the privacy legislation. You are entitled to know what personal information is held about you; how and under what circumstances you may have access to it; why it is held; its use; to whom and under what circumstances it may be disclosed; when consent is required for these purposes; and how it is stored.

Every effort will be made to ensure you are aware of our privacy policy at the time your personal health information is collected. Because there will be occasions when it is not practicable to discuss privacy matters with you in detail, this document is designed to outline how Lifeworks Occupational Therapy endeavours to protect the privacy of our patients' personal health information.

**Why we collect information about you:** As a patient of Lifeworks Occupational Therapy, information about your medical and family health history is collected in the interests of providing you with the highest quality and continuity of health care. It helps your treatment team to provide appropriate treatment. You do not have to give all your personal and health related information, but if you don't, this may affect the quality and level of service we are able to provide to you.

There are also some necessary purposes for which information will be used beyond providing you with health care, such as professional accreditation, service quality assessments, clinical auditing, and billing. Wherever practicable, all personally identifying information will be removed and the minimum necessary detail provided.

**How we collect information about you:** We will be fair in the way we collect information about you. In general, this information will be collected with your consent. However, from time to time we may receive relevant information from others (for example, your family members or carers). When this occurs we will, wherever practicable, make sure you know we have received this information.

**How we record information about you:** The information about you that we collect is recorded in order to document what happens during your assessment and treatment in accordance with professional standards of accountability, and enables the members of your treatment team to provide you with a relevant and informed service.

Our patient records are held in secure electronic record keeping systems which are accessible only to authorised staff. The information on your record includes personal information such as name, address, contact telephone numbers, and documents and health records relevant to the service you receive. We retain information regarding your treatment at LifeWorks Occupational Therapy after your last attendance for professional practice and administrative requirements.

**Use and disclosure of your information:** All members of your treating team require full knowledge of your health information to provide you with a comprehensive high quality service. The information gathered as part of the assessment and treatment of your condition is accessed only by the practitioners involved in your treatment.

To ensure the quality and continuity of your care, your health information is shared with health care providers outside your LifeWorks Occupational Therapy treatment team from time to time. LifeWorks Occupational Therapy routinely sends your referring health care provider an initial report, and provides regular reports of your progress. Your treatment team may also liaise with that person regarding your ongoing care. Information regarding you is not released to any health care provider not already involved in your care without your consent.

**Family members or carers:** In some situations, you may achieve better health outcomes if your family members or carers are involved in your treatment. Should such a situation arise, a member of your treatment team will discuss with you the benefits of sharing information with specified family members or carers. In all but exceptional circumstances the sharing of this information requires your consent.

<b>Billing information:</b>	We release relevant information regarding you to Medicare, and private health insurance funds for billing and medical rebate purposes. If the cost of your treatment is covered by an insurance company, relevant information about your attendance is released for billing purposes. It is also a condition of service that we provide reports regarding your progress in treatment.
<b>Legal requirements:</b>	In some circumstances a member of your treatment team may be legally bound to disclose your personal information. Please see the section below on <b>Special circumstances: disclosure without your consent</b> .
<b>Research and quality assurance:</b>	Information regarding your contact with the service from which all personally identifying details have been removed is used for the purposes of quality assurance and research into the efficacy of our services. This information is only reported in an aggregated format.
<b>Access to your information:</b>	<p>In general you, as a patient, are entitled to access to the information about you kept on our records at any stage. All requests for access to your information should be lodged with the clinic manager. There is no fee for requesting access, although we may charge a reasonable fee for the cost of processing your request. These requests will be responded to within 10 working days.</p> <p>You do not have to let us know why you require access to your information, but we may need to clarify the scope of your request so that an appropriate form of access can be arranged.</p> <p>In certain circumstances, direct access to part or all of your records may be denied. These circumstances include when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing access would pose a serious threat to the life or health of any individual</li> <li>• providing access would have an unreasonable impact on the privacy of others</li> <li>• the request is frivolous or vexatious</li> <li>• access relates to existing or anticipated legal proceedings</li> <li>• denying access is required or authorised under law</li> <li>• providing access would be unlawful</li> </ul> <p>If Lifeworks Occupational Therapy denies you access you will be provided with the reasons why you have been refused access. Where there are grounds for refusing access to your information other means of providing access will be considered such as providing a summary or engaging an intermediary.</p>
<b>Corrections and amendments:</b>	If you become aware that the information we hold regarding you is not accurate or complete, you may request to have that information amended. We will take reasonable steps to correct the information. With regards your health records, this generally involves attaching comments to your records noting the corrected information rather than permanently erasing earlier details.
<b>Exceptional circumstances: disclosure without your consent:</b>	<p>In certain exceptional circumstances, Lifeworks Occupational Therapy may use or disclose your information without your consent. These circumstances include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• if the use or disclosure is required or authorised by law</li> <li>• circumstances which override the duty of confidentiality</li> </ul> <p>For example, in an emergency medical situation we will allow access to relevant parts of your health record and supply this information to the necessary health authorities or your next-of-kin.</p> <p>Further examples of circumstances in which Lifeworks Occupational Therapy may use and disclose your information without your consent include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where there is a serious and imminent threat to an individual's life, health or safety</li> <li>• if, by law, your treating professional is required to disclose information for public interest reasons (e.g. statutory requirement to report some communicable diseases)</li> <li>• to fulfill a professional indemnity insurance obligation</li> <li>• the use or disclosure of information needed for research or statistics relevant to public health or public safety or to the management, funding or monitoring of the health service</li> <li>• information concerning unlawful activity or which is reasonably necessary for certain purposes for law enforcement bodies</li> </ul> <p>Wherever practicable, all personally identifying information will be removed and the minimum necessary detail</p>

provided.

**Parents,  
guardians and  
children:**

The right of minors to privacy of their health information, based on the professional judgment of the treating professional and consistent with the law, might at times restrict access to this information by parents or guardians. On the other hand, we might suggest that the child or young adult involve their parent or guardian in decisions as to how their health information will be handled.

**Complaints and  
further  
information:**

It is important to us that your expectations about the way in which we handle your information are the same as ours. Please do not hesitate to discuss any concerns, questions or complaints about any issues related to the privacy of your personal information with members of your treatment team. If you are still dissatisfied you can complain to the Federal Privacy Commissioner whose contact details are:

**The Federal Privacy Commissioner**

Level 8 Piccadilly Tower  
133 Castlereagh Street  
Sydney NSW 2000  
GPO Box 5218  
Sydney NSW 2000  
Privacy Hotline: 1300 363 992  
Website: [www.privacy.gov.au](http://www.privacy.gov.au)

Further information about an individual's privacy rights can be obtained from the Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner at the above address.