

Privacy Policy

This document describes the privacy policy of Towards Optimism Psychological Services, for the management of clients' personal information. The psychological services provided by Towards Optimism Psychological Services are bound by the legal requirements of the Australian Privacy Principles set out in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

Client Information

Client files and personal information are held on our electronic practice management system, Halaxy. In some cases, paper files may be required. In such cases, these are held in a secure filing cabinet. Both Halaxy and the filing cabinet are only accessible to authorised employees or authorised service providers, in accordance with the practice's policies and procedures.

The information on each file includes personal information such as name, address, contact phone numbers, medical history, and other personal information collected during the process of providing the psychological service.

How Clients' Personal Information is Collected

A client's personal information is collected in a number of ways by Towards Optimism Psychological Services, including information provided directly by the client (via hardcopy forms, correspondence via email, and by completing secure online forms), when interacting directly with Towards Optimism Psychological Services team members (including administration staff), and when other health practitioners provide personal information to Towards Optimism Psychological Services (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 manner consistent with this Privacy Policy, it may result in Towards Optimism Psychological Services being unable to provide a psychological service to the client.

While in some rare circumstances, clients may request to be anonymous or to use a pseudonym, it is the general policy of Towards Optimism Psychological Services to collect the personal information of clients to provide an effective service. In these rare circumstances, privacy agreements may be negotiated with Towards Optimism Psychological Services on an individual basis.

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(s). This personal information is retained in order to document sessions and enable the psychologist to provide a relevant and informed psychological service.

All records relating to the psychological services provided by the treating Psychologist must, by law, be kept for a minimum of seven years after final contact. In the case that the client was less than 18 years old when the information was collected, the treating Psychologist is required to retain records until the client is at least 25 years of age.

Disclosure of Personal Information

Confidentiality of client's personal information is outlined in our Confidentiality Agreement which is provided to each client when making an initial appointment.

Clients' personal information will remain confidential except when:

1. With your written consent (or the written consent of the person with legal authority to act on behalf of the client);
2. Where there is a legal obligation to do so (e.g., child protection concerns; subpoena; firearms concerns);
3. Where failure to disclose the information would in the reasonable belief of the treating psychologist to place a client or another person at serious risk to life, health, or safety; or
4. When consulting with colleagues, or in the course of supervision or professional training, provided the treating Psychologist:
 1. Conceals the identity of clients and associated parties involved; or
 2. Obtains your consent (or the written consent of the person with legal authority to act on behalf of the client).
5. If you claim rebates from funding bodies, doctors and health practitioners may be required to provide summary reports to referring doctors, specialists and/or agencies regarding your progress.
6. Health research using de-identified data may be undertaken by this practice, by funding bodies or by this practice's technology providers, which you consent to as a client of this practice.

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, or disclosed for any other purpose.

In the event of unauthorised access, disclosure or loss of a client's personal information occurs, Towards Optimism Psychological Services will activate its data breach plan and use all reasonable endeavours to minimise any risk of consequential serious harm.

Requests for Access and Correction to Client Information

At any stage clients may request to access 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 that personal information is inaccurate, out of date or incomplete, reasonable steps will be taken to ensure this information is corrected.

All requests by clients for access to or correction of personal information should be lodged with their treating psychologist. These requests will be responded to, in writing, within 30 days. An appointment may be made if necessary for clarification of the request and/or to provide the personal information requested.

Website Users

The business may collect "clickstream" information (e.g., which areas of the website an individual has accessed, the time and date of access, the type of browser software used, etc.) from an individual's use of the Towards Optimism Psychological Services website. Towards Optimism Psychological Services may also store "cookie" information (such as user preferences relating to their use of the website) on their computer. This information is used to customise and improve the Towards Optimism Psychological Services website.

Concerns

If clients have a concern about the management of their personal information, they may inform their treating psychologist. 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:

- Phone: 1300 363 992
- Online: <https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/privacy-complaints/lodge-a-privacy-complaint-with-us>
- Post: Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, GPO Box 5288, Sydney, NSW 2001.

A copy of this Privacy Policy will be made available to anyone upon request. For further information about privacy issues, please refer to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's website at www.privacy.gov.au.