

Consultation with other professionals:

At times it may be necessary for the Psychologist to discuss the child's issues or therapy with a professional from another agency (ie schools, Court, Doctors). If this occurs you will be informed. Again personal information regarding you as the carer will not be disclosed in these circumstances, without your consent.

When confidentiality is not maintained:

Confidentiality cannot be maintained in certain circumstances. These are:

- Where a file is subpoenaed by a Court of law. All subpoenaed information must be produced to the Court. If this occurs and you have concerns about the child's welfare as a result of such information being released, please inform your therapist
- Where a child is being harmed/ abused in some way requiring notification to the appropriate authorities
- A serious crime has been committed or planned

Carer Responsibilities:

You have responsibilities:

- To keep appointments or promptly advise your therapist if you are unable to attend
- To let us know if you have any queries or concerns about the service you receive from us
- To let us know relevant details about your family history that might impact on the child in your care
- To answer your therapists questions frankly and honestly. It is helpful to discuss with your therapist any factors which you feel may be affecting the problems being addressed
- To inform your therapist if you are seeking or receiving a service from another provider about the same issue

When a problem arises:

If you are unhappy with the service you are receiving, please discuss your concerns with your therapist. If you feel unable to discuss issues directly, please contact your therapist's Principal Clinical Psychologist, the Manager of Psychological Services or your Support Worker:

Claire Simmons,
Principal, Southern Metro Region
Ph: 8124 4322

Patricia Rayment
Principal, Northern Metro Region
Ph: 8360 4760

Trish Mahoney
Principal, Country Region
Ph: 8150 8132

Cate Braham
Principal, Youth Justice
Ph: 8124 4350

Cathy Heinrich
Manager, Psychological Services
Ph: 8124 4332



Government of South Australia
Department for Families
and Communities

Families SA

Carers Rights and Confidentiality



Families SA Psychological Services provide therapeutic services to some children and young people who have been placed under the Guardianship of the Minister. Whilst the focus of this intervention is in relation to the children and young people in the care of the Department, it is recognised that, in order to provide the most effective interventions for these young people, therapy services should ideally involve those adults who play a significant role in the child's life. In many cases this may mean that foster parents or other caregivers of the child may need to be involved in the therapy process. This, in turn, may mean that carers' personal information is disclosed during therapy. This brochure, therefore, provides you with information regarding confidentiality and your rights when participating in therapy as the carer(s) of these children and young people.

There may be a range of approaches used when working with your family (including the foster child(ren) in your care). These may include seeing family members together, seeing different individuals separately or working with various combinations of family members. The therapist may consult with other Psychologists within Families SA and will also receive supervision, where the therapy will be discussed. At times the therapist may ask if the session(s) can be video or audio-taped. No video or audio taping will occur without your knowledge or consent.

Where information is stored:

Within Families SA the child has a number of files. One is generally kept in the District Centre and maintained by the child's Social Worker. Where any contact has occurred with Families SA Psychological Services, a separate file is kept and maintained by the psychologist involved. A record of any therapy the child receives is kept in the Psychological Services file. Each time a child or family attends a therapy session, new information will be added to the file (i.e. progress, suggestions etc). This information is used in planning the child/ family's care and support.

In order for therapy to be effective, information may need to be gathered regarding you as an individual, as well as in regard to your relationship with the child. You may also choose to disclose information you feel will be of assistance. In order to protect your privacy, any specific, personal information in relation to you will be kept in a separate file and not included in the child's file.

Your Rights:

As a carer, you have the right to-

- Be treated with respect, consideration and dignity
- Be informed by your therapist of her/his opinion regarding the issues involved and what might assist in addressing these problems. You are also entitled to have the choice of approach being used explained to you.
- Have access to a professionally qualified interpreter if required (this service is free and confidential)
- Have access to culturally appropriate services
- Request to bring a third party to sessions to provide you with support.
- Access your own file (through the Freedom of Information process).
- Be informed if you are to be interviewed by a trainee. Families SA is committed to providing clinical supervision to trainees/ Graduate Officers in Psychology. A registered Psychologist closely supervises the work of each trainee. If you do not wish to be seen by a trainee you are entitled to ask to see an alternative therapist.
- Be informed if your contact with Psychological Services is to be part of a research programme. You have the right not to participate in any research and to ask to see another therapist.

Confidentiality within families (between carer and child):

Generally therapy is most effective when children and young people are aware information they share in their individual sessions cannot be passed on to anyone (including their carers) without the child's consent.

However there are certain circumstances under which such confidentiality cannot be maintained. As the child's carer you will be informed if:

- A child is threatening to harm themselves or others
- If a child discloses they are currently being harmed or abused in some way by someone
- If a child is experiencing a mental illness or disturbance to the degree that their judgement is seriously impaired or they are at risk of self harm

Where other information is disclosed during therapy that the therapist feels would be beneficial for you to be aware of, all efforts will be made to encourage the child/ young person to give consent for the information to be shared.

Confidentiality outside families (beyond carer and child):

As these young people are under the Guardianship of the Minister, the Families SA Case Worker also may request (or provide) certain information about the therapy.

This may include:

- That the child is (or is not) attending sessions.
- That you, as the child's carer, are involved in the therapy process
- Regular updates regarding the child's progress in therapy and issues that still need to be addressed
- If a child is threatening to harm themselves, discloses abuse (current or past), or is mentally unwell.
- If a child intends to commit a crime.

This does not include:

- Any specific, personal information regarding you as a carer that does not have direct implications for the child's day to day care/ safety.
- Any specific, detailed information regarding the content of the sessions, unless the child is at risk as outlined above.