

PRIVACY POLICY

Dr. Karen Scarth and Dr. Jeffrey McKillop recognize the importance of privacy and the sensitivity of personal information.

YOUR PRIVACY RIGHTS

On November 1, 2004, the Government of Ontario proclaimed the *Health Information Protection Act*. This Act gives individuals rights concerning the privacy of their personal information.

Prior to November 1, 2004, the privacy of personal information collected by psychologists was guaranteed by the *Regulated Health Professions Act* as well as the *Psychology Act*. As psychologists practicing in the province of Ontario we are required to observe strict ethical guidelines to maintain client privacy. Only by your consent can we share information with another person.

The *Regulated Health Professions Act* and its *Psychology Act* only apply to psychologists who practice in the province of Ontario. The *Health Protection Act*, on the other hand, applies to all health care practitioners and all health care facilities operating in the province of Ontario.

WHY DO WE NEED PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION?

In providing psychological services we need to collect personal health information for various reasons including: compiling a history of your health, understanding your needs, and to meet regulatory requirements.

WHAT INFORMATION DO WE COLLECT?

We collect information such as age, identification numbers, income, place of birth, family history, and your current and past physical and emotional health. We must collect and use personal and health information to provide psychological services.

HOW DO WE COLLECT INFORMATION?

We collect information in the normal course of your assessment and treatment. Information regarding your treatment needs is generally gathered from yourself directly. There may be circumstances in which family members, a legal representative, or other health care providers also provide information to us in order to facilitate your assessment and treatment.

CONSENT

We ask individuals to specifically consent, if we collect, use, or disclose their personal health information. Permission may be expressed in writing or be implied and may be given to us verbally, electronically, or through an authorized representative. Individuals may withdraw permission to collect, use and disclose their personal health information at any time.

USE OF INFORMATION

We use information to provide psychological treatment and services to our clients and to administer client accounting. Where services are paid by a third party (such as Workplace Safety and Insurance Boards, motor vehicle insurers, Criminal Injuries Compensation Boards, or extended health benefit insurers), we may invoice these third parties directly. No information regarding the content of treatment is provided, only your name, identification, dates of treatment, and costs of services.

DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

Under certain circumstances, we may be required to disclose personal and/or health information. For example:

- If we are concerned about your personal safety due to risk for suicide.
- If we are concerned that you may seriously harm another person.
- If we are concerned that a child is being abused.
- If you report that you have been sexually abused by another health practitioner and tell us the name of that person.
- If our clinical notes or records are ordered by a judge during a criminal or civil trial.

As regulated members of the College of Psychologists of Ontario we are required to submit to quality assurance reviews. This may mean that we (as psychologists) are interviewed by another psychologist representing the College of Psychologists. Administrative practices are discussed as part of this review and files may be reviewed to ensure proper standards are met for file maintenance. All members of the College of Psychologists are required to keep utmost standards of confidentiality for any files they may review as part of this process.

IS MY INFORMATION SECURE?

We take all reasonable precautions to ensure that your information is kept safe from loss, unauthorized access, modification or disclosure. Among the steps taken to protect your information are: premise security; restricted file access with all files stored on-site in locked cabinets; and technological safeguards such as computer passwords and security software. Closed files are stored for a period of 10 years after which they are destroyed.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

You are entitled to view your file upon request and correct any information on file which may be inaccurate.

INQUIRIES

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your information or our policy regarding collection and use of personal and/or health information, you may contact our Health Information Officer:

Dr. Jeffrey McKillop
1095 The Parkway
London ON N6A 2W8
Telephone: (519) 679-5148
Facsimile: (519) 435-0057

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Please sign here to indicate that you have read and understood the above.

Signature

Date

Witness

Date