



MALLEE FAMILY CARE

*towards stronger more caring communities*

# Your Privacy and Rights

Mallee Family Care (MFC) will comply with National Privacy Legislation and Australian Privacy Principles.

This brochure provides a summary of your Rights and Responsibilities and the Obligations of MFC.



## What happens to information about me?

When you become a client of MFC, a file is created. Basic information including your name, contact details and relevant information about you are placed on the file.

Your file is stored securely and will be kept for as long as legally required. After that time, it is destroyed in a safe and secure manner.

For some programs, your file is required to be stored indefinitely.

## Why is this information necessary?

MFC needs to collect and keep information to help provide you with appropriate services.

Information will be gathered in accordance with the relevant State or Federal Legislation.

Some information or data may be used for research, service planning and evaluation. This is done to help provide better outcomes and improve service delivery. Any identifying information such as your name and contact details will be removed before the information is used.

## What rights do I have to access my information?

In accordance with the State's Freedom of Information Legislation and any other Acts of the Commonwealth, you can ask to see information held on your file. This may include viewing the information, obtaining a summary or full copy of your records, or having the information explained to you.

Some limits may apply where particular circumstances prevent the release of information. If any limits apply, you will receive written advice explaining this.

You also have the right to correct any information in your file that you believe is incorrect, incomplete, out of date or misleading. Information on your file cannot be removed, though you may ask that a correcting statement be added.

## How will my information remain confidential?

MFC has strict policies about who can see and use your personal information. Your privacy is protected by law. All staff must treat your information confidentially.

Your personal information is only shared with people who are directly involved with you, their supervisor or senior management. If a need to share your information arises, you will be asked for your written or verbal agreement beforehand, unless otherwise required by law.

## Who may have access to information about me?

MFC may recommend other services become involved in your care. If this occurs, you will be asked to give consent for us to disclose any necessary information from your file to other services. This will help them assess your needs and provide relevant care.

Please note that you do have the right to refuse or withdraw consent at any time. If you have concerns or questions about sharing of information, discuss this with your worker.

## When can information be disclosed without my consent?

There are some situations when your information may be shared without your consent; for example, the need for urgent medical treatment.

In certain circumstances, MFC may be required by law to release personal information about

you. Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Suspected child abuse and children at risk;
- Information required in relation to legal proceedings - for example, when a file or staff are subpoenaed;
- Providing personal records to law enforcement agencies in response to a search warrant; or
- If staff feel you are at risk of harming yourself or others.

## What if I am unable to give consent?

In some cases, people may not be able to give consent because they are legally unable to make a decision about the release of their information.

In these cases, a decision will be sought from the person's authorised representative.

## What do I do if I have a complaint?

If you have a question about the way your personal information is being managed, a complaint in relation to the privacy or confidentiality of your information, or a general complaint about the service you have received; please contact us. You can also request to see our privacy policy.

You will receive a written response regarding your feedback and outlining any future steps should you wish to progress the matter further.

If you are not satisfied with the way MFC handles your information or deals with your concerns, you can make a formal complaint. For information on this process, please speak to your worker or their supervisor.

## How do I provide feedback?

Anyone accessing a service of MFC has the right, and is encouraged, to provide feedback about their experience. Feedback assists in the

improvement of services and is important in safeguarding your basic rights.

Some people may be reluctant to provide feedback on their own. If this is the case, you can use an Advocate to assist you. An Advocate may be a trusted friend, family member or a professional advocacy service.

Feedback can be given anonymously, which means you do not have to give your name or contact details. However, if you choose to do this, it is not possible for you to receive information on the results of your feedback.

## Rights and Responsibilities

You are expected to:

- Respect the rights of others to feel safe;
- Treat staff and others with dignity and respect;
- Actively make decisions for yourself;
- Accept the consequences of any decisions you make; and
- Offer feedback which will contribute to improving services.

You have the right to:

- Privacy, confidentiality and courtesy;
- Make decisions for yourself and to be encouraged to do so;
- Be treated in a way which respects your culture and beliefs;
- Feel safe;
- Refuse a service; and
- Provide feedback on your experience of MFC.

Our staff are obliged to:

- Explain their role and how they can help;
- Explain confidentiality and any limitations;
- Respond to your complaints fairly and promptly;
- Consider your views when planning, managing and evaluating our services; and
- Fulfill the obligations of the MFC Service Charter, a copy of which will be on display or available on request.



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**For more information or to obtain a copy of our Privacy Policy, feel free to contact Mallee Family Care.**

**By mail**

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**In person**

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