



# DOM LAWRENSON

## COUNSELLING

## Clients' Rights and Protecting your Privacy

### Protecting your privacy

The services I provide are bound by the legal requirements of the National Privacy Principles from the Privacy Amendments (Private Sector) Act 2000, the Victorian Information Privacy Act 2000 and the Victorian Health Records Act 2001. These Acts, and the Privacy Principles, describe your rights and how your information should be handled. A copy of these are available at [www.legislation.gov.au](http://www.legislation.gov.au) and [www.legislation.vic.gov.au](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au).

### Why do I ask for personal information?

The information I hold about clients briefly documents what happens during your interview or counselling session and enables me to provide you with a relevant and informed service.

### What information is kept?

Personal information includes your name, address, contact telephone number and correspondence or any other information which is relevant to the service being provided.

### Where is this information kept?

I take all reasonable steps to protect information which is held (including your personal information) from misuse, loss, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. I take all reasonable steps to hold your information secure in an electronic or physical form. Information is stored in electronic databases requiring logins and passwords.

### Is everything in my file confidential?

All personal information gathered remains confidential and secure except when:

- It is subpoenaed by a court of law.
- Failure to disclose the information to an appropriate person would place you or another person at risk.
- Your prior approval has been obtained to discuss the material with another person.
- Your prior approval has been obtained to provide a written report, such as to a doctor or lawyer.

### Access to Records

You can request at any time personal information I may hold about you. I may charge a fee where access is provided. Requests by clients for information contained in their files should be lodged in writing to me. These requests will be responded to within seven working days and an appointment made, if necessary, for discussion. I may refuse to provide access to information held about you in situations where the National Privacy Principles allow me to do so. If I refuse access I will give a reason for doing so.

**Dom Lawrenson**  
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### **Feedback and Complaints Procedure**

If you have a concern about any aspect of your contact with me, I welcome you to discuss your concerns with me in person or in writing.

If you are unsatisfied with my response and wish to make a complaint to an external party, I will provide you with contact details for the most appropriate legislative body.

### **Advocacy**

An advocate is someone who will stand alongside you and speak out on your behalf in a way that represents your best interest. If you feel you have tried all avenues available to make your issues heard, or need some assistance to state your situation, then you would be wise to discuss your case with an advocate.

- I promote the use of an advocate if there is one needed or if a client requests to have an advocate present.
- I accept the involvement of an advocate of the client's choice.
- I am able to link you with other services that can provide you with an appropriate advocate.

### **Clients' Rights:**

- The right to respect for your individual human worth and dignity and to have your cultural and religious beliefs considered.
- The right to be free from abuse, neglect, violence and preventable injury.
- The right to be treated with courtesy.
- The right to be assessed for access to services without discrimination.
- The right to be informed and consulted about services on offer and about decisions and interventions that affect you or your family.
- The right to choose from available alternatives and/or withdraw from services and to be made aware of any consequences of this.
- The right to pursue a complaint about service provision without retribution.
- The right to be assisted by an advocate of your choice.
- The right to receive good quality, punctual and reliable service.
- The right to privacy and confidentiality.
- The right to access information held about you.

### **Clients' Responsibility**

- To respect the human worth and dignity of me and other clients.
- To treat me and other clients with courtesy.
- To be responsible for the result of any decisions you make.
- To play your part in helping me provide you with services.
- To provide a safe work environment for me and my clients to help me provide you with services safely.

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