

## **Forge Clarity Privacy Policy**

### **Collection of Personal Information**

We collect personal and health information necessary to provide you with effective counselling and psychotherapy services. This may include:

- Your name, contact details, and date of birth.
- Medical history, mental health history, and treatment goals.
- Notes from our sessions, assessments, and treatment plans.
- Information provided by third parties (e.g., referrals from GPs or other healthcare providers) with your consent.

We will only collect information that is relevant to your care and will do so in a respectful and non-intrusive manner.

### **Use and Disclosure of Information**

Your personal and health information will only be used or disclosed for the purposes of providing you with counselling and psychotherapy services, unless otherwise required or permitted by law. This includes:

- Facilitating your treatment and care.
- Communicating with other healthcare providers involved in your care (with your consent).
- Complying with legal obligations (e.g., court orders, mandatory reporting requirements).

We will not disclose your information to third parties without your explicit consent, except in the following circumstances:

- If there is a serious risk of harm to yourself or others.
- If required by law (e.g., mandatory reporting of child abuse or neglect).
- If necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat to public health or safety.

### **Exceptions to confidentiality include:**

- Situations where we are legally obligated to disclose information (e.g., court orders, mandatory reporting).
- Instances where there is a serious risk of harm to yourself or others.
- Cases where you provide written consent to share information with a third party (e.g., a GP or family member).

### **Client Rights**

Under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW), you have the following rights regarding your personal and health information:

- Right to Access: You may request access to your personal and health information held by Forge Clarity. We will respond to your request within a reasonable timeframe (usually 30 days).
- Right to Correction: You may request corrections to your personal or health information if it is inaccurate, incomplete, or out of date.
- Right to Complain: If you believe your privacy has been breached, you may lodge a complaint with Forge Clarity directly or with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC).

- Right to Withhold Consent: You may choose not to provide certain information, though this may impact the quality of care we can provide.

#### Storage and Security of Information

At Forge Clarity we take all reasonable steps to ensure your personal and health information is stored securely and protected from misuse, loss, or unauthorised access. This includes:

- Storing physical records in a locked cabinet.
- Using password-protected electronic systems with encryption.
- Use codes in both written and digital documents instead of legal names.
- Retaining records for a minimum of 7 years (or 7 years after the age of 18 for minors) as required by law.

After this period, your records will be securely destroyed or completely de-identified.

#### Mandatory Reporting and Legal Obligations

As registered counsellors and psychotherapists, we are bound by legal obligations, including:

- Mandatory Reporting: We are required to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the relevant authorities.
- Duty of Care: If we believe there is a serious risk of harm to yourself or others, we may need to take steps to ensure safety, which may involve disclosing information to third parties.

#### Changes to This Policy

This policy may be updated from time to time to reflect changes in legislation or professional standards. The most current version will always be available on my website or provided upon request.

