



PRIVACY POLICY

COMMITMENT TO PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Regain Balance Counselling, Health & Wellbeing is committed to protecting your privacy and maintaining the confidentiality of your personal and health information. This Privacy Policy should be read alongside the Counselling Agreement and explains how information is collected, used, stored, and disclosed, and outlines your rights in relation to that information.

This practice operates in accordance with:

- The *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)* and the *Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)*
- The *Australian Counselling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics and Practice*
- Mandatory reporting and legal disclosure obligations under Australian law
- Relevant Commonwealth and State legislation

Confidentiality is a cornerstone of counselling practice. All reasonable steps are taken to safeguard your information and to ensure it is handled ethically, lawfully, and respectfully.

WHAT IS PERSONAL AND SENSITIVE INFORMATION?

Personal Information is information or an opinion that identifies you. *Sensitive Information*, including health information, receives a higher level of protection under the Privacy Act.

Information collected may include:

- Identifying and contact details
- Date of birth and emergency contact information
- Health, wellbeing, and psychosocial information relevant to counselling
- Referral information (where applicable and with consent)

Only information that is reasonably necessary for the provision of counselling services or to meet legal, ethical, and administrative obligations is collected.



HOW INFORMATION IS COLLECTED

Information may be collected through:

- Intake, consent, and assessment forms
- Counselling sessions
- Telephone, email, and online communications
- Secure practice management systems
- Other health professionals or third parties, with your consent

You will be informed about the purpose of collection and how your information will be used.

USE AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

Personal information is collected and used for the primary purpose of providing counselling services, maintaining clinical records, and managing the practice in accordance with professional and legal obligations.

Information may be disclosed without consent only where:

- Disclosure is required or authorised by law
- There is a serious and imminent risk to the safety, health, or wellbeing of the client or others
- Mandatory reporting obligations apply (for example, child protection requirements)
- Disclosure is required by subpoena, court order, or other lawful process

Where disclosure without consent is required, this will be discussed with you wherever appropriate, practicable, and safe to do so.

Information will not be disclosed to third parties without your prior written consent, except where permitted or required by law or ethical duty of care. With your written consent, information may be disclosed to relevant third parties where appropriate for your care or service coordination, including (but not limited to):

- General Practitioners or other health professionals
- Specialist assessment or treatment providers
- Schools or educational professionals
- NDIS providers or support coordinators
- Insurance providers where claims are being made



Written consent will specify the information to be shared, the purpose of disclosure, and the recipient of that information. Consent may be withdrawn at any time, subject to legal or contractual limitations.

DUAL RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNITY CONTACT

Regain Balance Counselling operates in regional and community-based settings where incidental contact outside the counselling room may occur. A *dual relationship* refers to any situation where another relationship exists alongside the therapeutic relationship.

In line with the ACA Code of Ethics, dual relationships are avoided where possible and carefully managed when unavoidable to protect confidentiality, professional boundaries, and therapeutic integrity.

Where multiple individuals from the same family, household, or social network seek counselling, confidentiality, impartiality, and fairness are prioritised. Information disclosed by one client will not be shared with another without explicit consent. The counsellor does not act as a mediator or take sides in family disputes unless this forms part of an agreed family counselling process.

If a dual relationship or conflict of interest is identified that may compromise care or neutrality, alternative arrangements or referrals may be recommended in the best interests of those involved.

To protect client privacy, the counsellor will not acknowledge clients in public unless the client initiates contact.

ACCESS TO AND CORRECTION OF INFORMATION

You have the right to request access to your personal information and to request corrections where information is inaccurate or incomplete.

Requests must be made in writing, and identity verification may be required. Access is usually provided within 14 days. An administrative fee of \$100 may apply for the provision of copies of records.

Access may be refused or limited where permitted by law, including where access would pose a serious risk to health or safety or unreasonably impact the privacy of others.



DATA SECURITY, TECHNOLOGY USE, AND RECORD RETENTION

Reasonable administrative, technical, and physical safeguards are used to protect personal information from misuse, loss, unauthorised access, modification, or disclosure.

Practice Management Software (Halaxy)

Client demographic information, appointment records, invoices, and clinical notes are stored using *Halaxy*, a secure, encrypted practice management system designed for Australian health practitioners. Access is restricted through authentication controls.

Clinical Assessment and Documentation (NovoPsych)

This practice uses *NovoPsych*, an Australian-based clinical assessment and outcome-measure platform, to support evidence-informed practice and clinical documentation. Information entered into NovoPsych is protected by security and privacy measures consistent with Australian privacy legislation.

Client information is not used for secondary purposes without consent.

Record Retention

Client records are retained only for the minimum period required under professional and legal obligations. When no longer required, records are securely destroyed or permanently de-identified.

COMPLAINTS AND PRIVACY CONCERNS

If you have concerns about how your information is handled, you are encouraged to raise these directly with the practice.

If concerns cannot be resolved, you may lodge a complaint with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC).

This Privacy Policy is reviewed periodically to ensure ongoing compliance with legal and ethical requirements.