



PRIVACY POLICY

At **Regain Balance Counselling, Health & Wellbeing**, I am committed to providing high-quality counselling services while respecting your privacy and confidentiality. I adhere to the Australian Counselling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics and the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) outlined in the Privacy Act 1988. This privacy policy outlines how I manage your personal information and my obligations to you, ensuring transparency and protection in all aspects of my services.

Compliance with Privacy Laws and Ethical Standards

I comply with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the *Australian Counselling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics*, which guide how I handle your personal and health information. My practices are also aligned with the *Code of Conduct for Certain Health Care Workers (Community Services Complaints Regulations 2019)* and relevant privacy regulations to safeguard your rights to confidentiality and privacy.

What is Personal Information and Why Do I Collect It?

Personal Information refers to any information or opinion about you that identifies you, including sensitive health information related to your physical or mental health or disability.

The types of Personal Information I collect include:

- Name, contact details (e.g., phone number, email address, home address)
- Date of birth
- Religious or faith affiliation
- Emergency contact information
- Health information (e.g., physical, mental, or emotional health history)

I collect this information in various ways:

- Client intake forms
- Interviews and counselling sessions
- Telephone and email communication
- My website (via consent)
- From publicly available sources and, when necessary, from third-party health providers, with your consent

I only collect Personal Information that is essential to the service I provide to you, and I will explain the reason for collecting this information and how it will be used at the time of collection.



Use and Disclosure of Personal Information

I use your Personal Information solely to provide you with the best counselling services. I will not use or disclose your information for any other purposes without your informed consent, unless required by law or in accordance with the ACA Code of Ethics and privacy laws.

I may share information with other health professionals or third-party service providers (e.g., administrative support, technology providers) only when necessary and with your consent. I will ensure these third parties uphold privacy and confidentiality standards similar to my own.

Third-Party Information

In certain circumstances, I may receive Personal Information from third parties, such as other healthcare providers. I will only collect such information after obtaining your consent. I will make reasonable efforts to ensure you are informed about the details of the information I receive and how it will be used.

Confidentiality and ACA Code of Ethics

As a registered practitioner with the Australian Counselling Association (ACA), I am bound by the ACA Code of Ethics, which sets clear standards for maintaining confidentiality. This means that, in most cases, your information will not be shared with others without your explicit consent, except in the following circumstances:

- **Risk of Harm:** Where there is a risk of harm to you or others (e.g., imminent danger or risk of abuse).
- **Mandatory Reporting:** In some cases, I am required by law to report certain information to authorities, such as if I believe a child or vulnerable person is at risk of abuse or neglect. This is a legal obligation and overrides confidentiality.
- **Legal Requirements:** When disclosure is required or authorised by law (e.g., subpoena, court order, mandatory reporting).
- **Explicit Consent:** If you give explicit written consent for disclosure to a third party (e.g., other health professionals).

I will discuss with you the potential limits to confidentiality before commencing therapy, ensuring you are fully informed of the circumstances under which confidentiality might be breached.

Accessing Your Personal Information

You have the right to access and correct your Personal or Health Information that I hold. If you wish to view, correct, or update your information, you may contact me directly.

To ensure the security of your information, I require identification before granting access. In most cases, I will provide access to your information within 14 days. However, if you request a copy of your records, I charge an administrative fee of \$100 to cover time and costs associated with the provision of this information.



Access may be refused or restricted in certain cases, including:

- Where access would have an unreasonable impact on the privacy of other individuals.
- If providing access would prejudice an investigation of unlawful activity or pose a serious and imminent threat to health or safety.
- Where providing access is prohibited by law.

Maintaining the Quality of Your Personal Information

It is important to me that the Personal Information I hold is accurate and up to date. If any of your details change or if you believe the information I hold is inaccurate, please inform me so that I can update my records.

I will take reasonable steps to ensure that your information is accurate, complete, and up-to-date, and will notify you of any corrections made.

Data Security and Retention

I take reasonable steps to protect your Personal Information from misuse, loss, or unauthorised access. This includes securely storing your information and only sharing it with relevant parties as outlined above.

I retain your personal information only for as long as necessary to provide you with my services or as required by law. Once your information is no longer needed, I will ensure it is destroyed securely or permanently de-identified.

Your Rights

- You have the right to access your Personal Information.
- You have the right to request corrections if the information I hold is incorrect or incomplete.
- You have the right to be informed about any third parties who may have access to your information.
- You have the right to lodge a complaint if you believe I have not complied with my privacy obligations.

If you have any concerns or wish to access or amend your Personal Information, please contact me. I am here to ensure your rights are respected and to provide high-quality, confidential services in line with the ACA Code of Ethics and privacy regulations.

Contact Me

If you have any questions or concerns about my privacy practices or your personal information, please do not hesitate to contact me. Your privacy and confidentiality are of the utmost importance to me.
