

## Privacy Policy

Policy number	P7	Version	2.0
Drafted by	Rachel Hall	Approved	24/05/2025
Responsible person	Rachel Hall	Scheduled review date	04/07/2028

### Part 1 – About This Policy

#### Our Privacy Promise

At Helpful Connexions, we take your privacy seriously. This policy explains how we collect, use, and protect your personal and health information, making sure we follow all Australian privacy laws, including the NDIS guidelines and the Australian Association of Social Worker's Code of Ethics. We only collect information we genuinely need to provide you with the best care, and we're always clear about why we're collecting it. Your information is kept safe and confidential, and you always have the right to know what we hold and ask for changes.

#### 1.1 Purpose

This privacy policy covers all personal information we hold, that is, information, or an opinion about an individual, whose identity is apparent, or can be reasonably ascertained, from that information or opinion. This includes information we have collected from people through our office, over the phone and over the internet.

When we collect personal information from an individual, we will ensure that we do so in a fair manner and that we let the individual know where and how to contact Helpful Connexions. We will only collect information that is necessary for one or more of our functions or activities. We will advise individuals of the purpose for which their personal information is collected.

If we collect sensitive information (as defined under the Act), we will treat it with the utmost security and confidentiality. We will ensure that it is not collected for any purposes, other than those for which we have obtained the individual's consent, unless the law requires otherwise, or other exceptional circumstances prevail as described under the Act. Where an individual chooses not to provide requested information, we will advise that individual of what consequences this non-disclosure may have. For example, withholding certain information may limit our ability to provide relevant offers or services to individuals.

Helpful Connexions complies with the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), other privacy laws that govern how private sector health service providers like Helpful Connexions handle your personal information (including your health information) and the Australian Association of Social Worker's *Code of Ethics* (2020).

This Privacy Policy explains how Helpful Connexions manages the personal information we collect, use and disclose. Helpful Connexions is a private practice under the ownership of Rachel Hall.

### Part 2 – How Helpful Connexions Handles Your Personal Information

#### 2.1 Helpful Connexions' Legal Obligations



In order to provide you with the health care services that you have requested; Helpful Connections will need to collect and use your personal information. If you provide incomplete or inaccurate information to us or withhold personal and health information from us, we may not be able to provide you with the services you are seeking.

## 2.2 What information does Helpful Connections collect?

We will only collect the information we need for the particular function or activity we are carrying out. We collect information from you that is necessary to provide you with services and to manage our relationship with you. The information we collect includes: your name, date of birth, address, health fund details and information about your health history and family history.

## 2.3 How does Helpful Connections collect health information?

We will usually collect your health information directly from you. Sometimes, we may need to collect information about you from a third party (such as a relative or another health service provider).

## 2.4 How does Helpful Connections use your information?

Helpful Connections uses your personal information for the purpose you have given the information to us. We will use your information to provide to you, to manage our relationship with you and to contact you in relation to matters concerning your care. We may also use your information for other purposes permitted under the Privacy Act 1988.

## 2.5 Who might we disclose your information to?

We may disclose your information to the following people:

### (a) disclosure to other health professionals involved in your treatment

Your personal information will generally only be used by the social worker involved in your care, however on occasion your care may be provided by a number of health professionals (for example, social worker, speech pathologist, occupational therapist and/or psychologist) working or consulting together. We may disclose your information to these health professionals as part of the process of providing your care and to other health professionals involved in your care.

### (b) the referrer

Helpful Connections will may send a letter or engagement or a discharge summary to the referrer (i.e., your medical practitioner) following discharge from Helpful Connections or at other times, as required for your care.

If you do not wish us to provide a copy of your engagement letter or discharge summary to the referrer you must let us know. Also, if the referrer's details have changed, please let us know.

### (c) Relatives, guardian, close friends or legal representative

We may provide information about your condition to your parent, child, other relatives, close personal friends, guardians, or to a responsible person for you, unless you tell us that you do not wish us to disclose your health information to any such person.

Other uses and disclosures



In order to provide the best possible environment in which to treat you, we may also use or disclose your personal and health information where necessary for:

- activities such as quality assurance processes, accreditation, audits, risk and claims management, patient satisfaction surveys and staff education and training;
- invoicing, billing and account management;
- to liaise with your health fund, Medicare or the Department of Veteran's Affairs and where required provide information to your health fund, Medicare or the Department of Veteran's Affairs to verify treatment provided to you;
- the purpose of sending you standard reminders, for example for appointments and follow-up care, by text message or email to the number or address which you have provided to us;
- compliance with relevant legislation regarding a client's real or perceived harm to self or others.

#### Other uses with your consent

We will only disclose personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988. This means that personal information may be disclosed:

- For the purposes for which we have advised that we are collecting it, and for related purposes that the individual would reasonably expect,
- Where we have the consent of the individual to do so,
- As required by law, or
- Under other circumstances where permitted under the Act.

In the course of our business activities, we may need to disclose some of your personal information to relevant staff. With your consent we may also use your information for other purposes such as including you on a marketing mail list, or research. Please note, however, that unless you provide us with your express consent for this purpose, we will not use your information in this way. We will not disclose your personal information to any individual who is outside Australia.

#### 2.6 Access to and correction of your health information

You have a right to access the personal and health information that we hold about you. You can also request an amendment to your personal and health information should you believe that it is inaccurate.

If we do not agree to change your medical record/personal information in accordance with your request, we will permit you to make a statement of the requested changes and we will enclose this with your record.

Should you wish to obtain access to or request changes to your health record you can ask for our Privacy Officer (see details below) who can give you more detailed information about Helpful Connections' access and correction procedure.

Please note that Helpful Connections may recover reasonable costs associated with supplying this information to you.

#### 2.7 Data Quality



Helpful Connexions will take reasonable steps to ensure that your personal information which we may collect, use or disclose is accurate, complete and up to date.

## 2.8 Data Security

Helpful Connexions will take reasonable steps to protect your personal information from misuse, interference, loss, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. We use technologies and processes such as access control procedures, network firewalls, encryption and physical security to protect your privacy.

Helpful Connexions will destroy or permanently de-identify any of your information which is in its possession or control, and which is no longer needed for the purpose for which it was collected provided Helpful Connexions is not required under an Australian law or court/tribunal or otherwise to retain the information.

As Helpful Connexions is committed to protecting the privacy of individuals, we will view unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal information by our employees or contractors, as a serious breach of this policy. Appropriate action (which may include disciplinary or legal action) will be taken in such cases. Our goal is to protect the personal information collected by Helpful Connexions and its associations. Personal information will be managed confidentially and securely and destroyed appropriately when no longer required. We will monitor and implement appropriate technical advances or management processes, to safeguard personal information.

## 2.9 Availability and review of Policy

We will make our privacy policy available upon request and a link to this policy from our website at [www.helpfulconnexions.com.au/privacy-policy](http://www.helpfulconnexions.com.au/privacy-policy). This policy will be reviewed from time to time and any amendments will be incorporated into the updated policy.

## 2.10 What to do if you have a complaint about privacy issues

If:

- (a) you have questions or comments about this Privacy Policy;
- (b) Helpful Connexions does not agree to provide you with access to your personal information; or
- (c) you have or a complaint about our information handling practices,

You can lodge a complaint with or contact our Privacy Officer on the details below. We will promptly review your complaint and provide a response to you.

## 2.11 How to contact us if you have a complaint about privacy issues

By letter: Privacy Officer, Helpful Connexions C/- Gembrook Post Office 3783.

By email: [info@helpfulconnexions.com.au](mailto:info@helpfulconnexions.com.au)

By telephone: 0477 219 177

## 2.12 What to do if you have a complaint about our service



If you would like to make a complaint about any service delivered by Helpful Connections, please contact:

- If your complaint is regarding the NDIS, you can also send an email to [feedback@ndis.gov.au](mailto:feedback@ndis.gov.au) or call 1800 800 110.
- For social work - the *Australian Association of Social Workers* at [ethicscomplaint@aasw.asn.au](mailto:ethicscomplaint@aasw.asn.au) or via telephone 03 9320 1044. If your complaint is regarding the NDIS, you can also send an email to [feedback@ndis.gov.au](mailto:feedback@ndis.gov.au) or call 1800 800 110.

### Part 3 – How Helpful Connections Handles Your Personal Information When You Visit Our Website

This section of our Privacy Policy explains how we handle your personal information which is collected from our website: [www.helpfulconnections.com.au](http://www.helpfulconnections.com.au)

This Privacy Policy applies to your use of our website and the use of any of the facilities on our website.

#### 3.1 Collection

When you use our website, we do not attempt to identify you as an individual user, and we will not collect personal information about you unless you specifically provide this to us.

Sometimes, we may collect your personal information if you choose to provide this to us via an online form or by email, for example, if you:

- submit a general enquiry via our contacts page;
- register to receive eNewsletters; or
- send a written complaint or enquiry to our Privacy Officer.

When you use our website, our Internet Service Provider (ISP) may record and log for statistical purposes the following information about your visit:

- your computer address;
- your top level name (for example, .com.,gov., .org, .au etc.);
- the date and time of your visit;
- the pages and documents you access during your visit; and
- the browser you are using.

Our website management agent may use statistical data collected by our ISP to evaluate the effectiveness of our website.

#### 3.2 Cookies

A "cookie" is a device that allows our server to identify and interact more effectively with your computer. Cookies do not identify individual users, but they do identify your ISP and your browser type. This website uses temporary cookies. This means that upon closing your browser, the temporary cookie assigned to you will be destroyed and no personal information is maintained which will identify you at a later date.



Personal information such as your email address is not collected unless you provide it to us. We do not disclose domain names or aggregate information to third parties other than agents who assist us with this website and who are under obligations of confidentiality. You may be able to configure your browser to accept or reject all cookies and to notify you when a cookie is used. We suggest that you refer to your browser instructions or help screens to learn more about these functions. However, please note that if you configure your browser so as not to receive any cookies, a certain level of functionality of the Helpful Connexions website and other websites may be lost.

### 3.3 Links to third party websites

We may create links to third party websites. We are not responsible for the content or privacy practices employed by websites that are linked from our website.

### 3.4 Use and disclosure

We will use any personal information collected via our website in accordance with our privacy policy.

