

Inner North Centre for Mental Wellbeing Concerns & Complaints Procedure

Updated: 21 October 2021

Inner North Centre for Mental Wellbeing (IN) and the mental health clinicians who practice at this clinic are committed to providing a high level of care and service to our clients. Notwithstanding, we understand there can be times where we don't meet our client's expectations and they may feel misunderstood, disappointed and/or frustrated. We have developed this policy to acknowledge these circumstances, and help us handle the process with fairness, confidentiality and respect when they occur.

Critical feedback is highly valued and provides us with an opportunity to acknowledge and understand the complaint, and explore whether further actions can be taken to resolve the situation. Furthermore, this feedback also allows us to reflect, learn and consider actions for improvement in future. We understand that some people find it difficult giving critical feedback. If this is the case, please consider asking a carer, guardian, friend, family members, or an advocate to do this on your behalf. Complaints may also be made anonymously, although there will be limitations in addressing a complaint made this way.

How to raise a concern or complaint regarding your mental health clinician

Mental health clinicians operating at IN are independent practitioners, whose clinical practice is conducted confidentially and autonomously within the group practice setting. As such, if you are making a complaint about your clinician, consider raising the issue directly with them in the first instance. This may allow you to resolve your concerns and clarify any misunderstandings quickly. Should you not feel comfortable to do this, refer to "Further actions you can take" in this policy.

How to raise a concern or complaint regarding all other matters at Inner North

If your concerns relate to any matter associated with Inner North outside of any direct interaction with your clinician, please contact the Practice Director, Dr John Dileo. This includes anything related to contact with the director, the practice manager or administration staff, and matters including referrals, the intake process, the practice amenity, or website.

Please provide whatever detail you feel is relevant. This can include what you experienced, the impact of this experience, and suggestions of how we could improve. We encourage complaints to be made in writing:

Post: PO Box 597, Carlton North, 3054

Fax: 9041 5438

Email: info@yourinnorth.com.au

Phone: 1300 987 177.

How we will respond to a concern or complaint

1. IN will confirm receipt of your complaint within 3 business days. This will include acknowledgement of the communication and outline how it will be responded to. Your consent will be sought to continue further steps.
2. If your complaint relates specifically to your clinician, this information will be passed onto the named clinician.
3. With other complaints, we aim to respond in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, we may need some time to gather further information to fully understand the circumstances of your complaint. We may contact you during this process to gain further understanding of the issue/s and the resolution you are seeking. We will endeavour to communicate again with you within 30 working days of the complaint being raised with a resolution. In situations where further time is required, we will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.
4. Information received during this complaints procedure will be handled according to our privacy policy (<https://yourinnorth.com.au/privacy-policy>). You and/or a third party may be required to sign a consent form as part of the complaints procedure. Your complaint will be handled and stored separately to your health records with your clinician. All information gathered through this process will be stored according to IN Privacy Policy for Management of Personal Information.

Further actions you can take

If, after following the steps above you are dissatisfied with the way your complaint has been handled, or if you do not wish to speak with your clinician or the clinic directly, you may make a complaint to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). All clinicians working at IN are registered members with AHPRA.

AHPRA

Ph: 1300 419 495

<https://www.ahpra.gov.au/Notifications/Concerned-about-a-health-practitioner.aspx>

You can also lodge a complaint with the Health Complaints Commissioner

Ph: 1300 582 113

<https://hcc.vic.gov.au/make-complaint>

This policy is informed by Health Complaints Act 2016, Complaints Handling Standards 2020.