



# Dr Chris Psychology

Psychologist &  
Clinical Psychology Registrar

## Privacy Policy

This document describes the privacy policy of *Dr Chris Psychology* (operated by Dr Chris Jillard) and provides additional information on the management and protection of clients' personal information. It should be read in conjunction with the Statement of Confidentiality and Informed Consent. The aim is to provide open and transparent management of your personal information, including what information is collected and why, how it is stored, how you can access and seek correction of inaccurate information, and an independent complaints process in relation to your privacy.

This document also sets out in general terms how Dr Chris Psychology aligns its business processes with its privacy obligations. The psychological service provided by Dr Chris Psychology is bound by the legal requirements of the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) set out in the *Privacy Act 1988* (Commonwealth; Act) and complies with the Australian Psychological Society (APS) Code of Ethics.

### Types of personal information collected

The types of information collected from you and created about you in the course of your assessment and treatment can include:

- your name, address, date of birth, relationship status, contact details (including phone number), and emergency contacts or contact details of parents or guardians (if under 18 years old);
- personally identifying information, such as Medicare number or other unique Government identifiers, or insurance information;
- sensitive personal and health information, such as:
  - current and historical mental and physical health status
  - current and past medical and psychiatric diagnoses and treatment, along with associated reports
  - employment status and financial wellbeing
  - education and employment history
  - lifestyle and sexuality
  - racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and demographic information
  - dates, times and payment for your sessions

### How information about you is collected

Personal information is collected:

- directly from you in either written or verbal form, such as during sessions or in the completion of forms and assessment tools, either in-person or remotely, as well as through communication with us via email and telephone

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- indirectly (with your knowledge and consent), through third-parties such as parents or guardians (if you are under 18 years old), your GP or other health professionals, health insurance companies, or Medicare

### **Why this information is collected, held, and disclosed**

Information about you is collected and held for the following reasons:

- to facilitate your treatment and other related psychological services provided to you
- to create appropriate records of your treatment in accordance with the ethical guidelines and standards of the APS and regulatory bodies for the profession of psychology, as well as comply with other legal obligations
- to facilitate payment for psychological services and management of practice accounts

Information about you might be disclosed for the following reasons (refer also Statement of Confidentiality and Informed Consent):

- your clinical records or therapist are subpoenaed by a court, or disclosure is otherwise required or authorised by law; or
- failure to disclose the information would, in the reasonable belief of Dr Chris Psychology, place you or another person at serious risk to life, health or safety (including concerns about the abuse of a child); or
- where your prior approval has been obtained, to:
  - (a) Provide a written report to another professional or agency—e.g. to a GP or a lawyer; or
  - (b) Discuss the material with another person or agency—e.g. a parent, employer, or health provider; or
  - (c) Disclose the information in another way.

Your information will not be disclosed to overseas recipients, unless you provide your consent or it is otherwise required by law. Please note that it is possible that some of your personal information may be stored overseas through the use of cloud-based storage by practice management software. As the data remains within the effective control of the practice (i.e. Dr Chris Psychology) and is encrypted, this is regarded by the OAIC as a 'use' of the information rather than a disclosure. Your personal information will not be used, sold, rented, or disclosed for any other purpose.

### **How this information is stored**

This information is securely stored in accordance with relevant Australian and Victorian privacy legislation, and all reasonable steps are taken to protect the privacy of your information from misuse, unauthorised access, modification, and disclosure, as well as loss. These steps include:

- access to and disclosure of information is undertaken on a 'need to know' basis
- hardcopy information is secured in a locked filing cabinet at a site with physical access controls, and documents no longer required are destroyed for disposal by shredding
- electronic forms of information are securely stored in a cloud-based practice management system that complies with relevant Australian privacy legislation (e.g., APPs), with data encrypted and access controlled by two-factor authentication and strong password protection

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In the event that unauthorised access, disclosure or loss of client's personal information occurs, Dr Chris Psychology will activate its data breach plan and use all reasonable endeavours to minimise any risk of consequential serious harm.

### **How you can access and seek correction of your personal information**

In accordance with the APPs and guidance of the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC), as well the *Victorian Health Records Act 2001*, you have a general right to access at any stage information recorded about you and your treatment. You also have a right to have inaccurate information corrected within a reasonable timeframe (stipulated by the OAIC as being a response to your request within 30 days).

For accountability purposes, a request to access any of your personal information held as part of your clinical records should be made in writing to Dr Chris Jillard. He will then discuss this request with you, including the manner in which you would like to access the information. It is preferred that any records provided to you as part of an access request be reviewed with the assistance of your therapist, to clarify and provide interpretation of any professional language. A good example is the interpretation of the results of psychological tests. However, your right to access the material in the manner you choose is paramount and you can decline that assistance.

An administrative fee is charged for access, and this can vary depending on the volume of material and manner of access requested. The *Victorian Health Records Regulations 2012* sets out caps for the various fees involved that will be used to determine the appropriate charge. Your therapist will discuss this further with you. The aim is not to create a barrier to access, but to provide reasonable compensation for costs incurred in providing access. Please note that there are some grounds detailed by the OAIC for refusal to give access and these include: the reasonable belief that giving access would pose a serious risk to the life, health or safety of any individual, or to public health or public safety; frivolous or vexatious requests.

If personal information is found to be inaccurate, reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that this information is corrected. Any disagreements about the accuracy of the information held will be noted on the record.

If you have any questions or concerns about the handling of your personal information, you can inform Dr Chris Jillard (refer contact details in the footer) and obtain a copy of the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) that describe your rights and how you can exercise them. You can also seek further information and assistance through the OAIC website: <https://www.oaic.gov.au/> or by calling the OAIC on 1300 363 992.

If you are unsatisfied with the response provided by the practice and wish to make a formal complaint to the practice or the OAIC, you can find more information about how to do so on the OAIC website: <https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/privacy-complaints/>

### **The option to be anonymous or use a pseudonym**

In some circumstances, clients might wish to be anonymous, or use a pseudonym, and this is option is provided for in the APPs (Chapter 2). It is acknowledged in the APP that it may be impracticable for the practice to deal with a client anonymously or using a pseudonym. This is assessed as likely being the case in your engagement with Dr Chris Psychology, and it is requested that you provide your legal name to the practice due to potential dealings with organisations and authorities requiring verification of your identity such as Medicare and health insurers.

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Please note that use of your legal name by the practice on official correspondence with organisations and authorities such as Medicare has no bearing on your right to be referred to by a preferred name or personal pronoun by your therapist.

If you have any concerns or questions about use of your legal name by the practice in its dealing with official entities, please contact Dr Chris Jillard.

### **Use of the Dr Chris Psychology website - cookies**

The Dr Chris Psychology website uses a range of cookies to manage your interaction with the website. These include essential cookies that enable core functionality on the website, as well as analytic cookies that provide information on how site visitors interact with the site. Third-party cookies may be placed on the website by Google Analytics as part of management of the site's profile in search engines. This is configured so that your IP address is not saved by Google. You are given the option to decline non-essential cookies when first visiting the website, please see the cookie banner at the bottom of the webpage. You can also adjust your browser settings to manage cookies on your devices.

### **Online interaction with the practice – email and telehealth**

It is likely that some of your interaction with the practice will be conducted online, such as through email and telehealth. Communication via the internet comes with privacy vulnerabilities. Dr Chris Psychology has in place mitigation strategies to minimise these vulnerabilities on the part of the practice, but cannot be held responsible for vulnerabilities at the user-end of the communication – such as malware, local settings and human error, insecure and outdated software, and ineffective security. It is noted that a range of free email services (such as Gmail) can also present privacy concerns due to the access provided to your personal communications for the purposes of marketing, potentially including to third-parties.

The practice limits communication of sensitive personal and health information to you via email, and consent will be obtained prior to communicating any such information via email. Clients are recommended to familiarise themselves with the privacy vulnerabilities of their chosen email provider and consider this in the content of their emails to the practice. Dr Chris Psychology uses a Microsoft Outlook as an email provider, as emails are encrypted at rest and in transmission – meaning they are secure and private until they reach the client's email provider.

For telehealth, video sessions are conducted using Healthdirect software through your internet browser. Healthdirect was developed in Australia for the health industry to meet stringent Australian security and privacy requirements for the delivery of telehealth, and is endorsed by the Australian Government. However, clients should be alert to the same general internet device vulnerabilities outlined above, as well as potential issues of privacy in the client's location (e.g., the home).

### **Updates to this policy**

Any significant revisions or updates to this Privacy Policy will be published on the Dr Chris Psychology website.

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