

Client privacy and confidentiality in addiction services

**Your privacy is very important to us.
The information you provide is treated
with your confidentiality in mind.**

We believe confidentiality is the foundation for the client-counsellor relationship. Counsellors will respect your rights to confidentiality in the way they collect, use and share information.

The collection, use and disclosure of the confidential information you provide is protected by Alberta legislation:

- Health Information Act (HIA)
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP)

You have the right to decide how much of your personal information can be given to others. Your information will only be shared with others when you give written permission. You also have the right to view your own information.

There are a few exceptions to these rights. If you have any questions at any time about your privacy rights, talk to your counsellor.

What kind of information is collected?

Depending on your circumstances, different kinds of information may be collected when you are receiving addiction services. These are some examples:

- case notes
- assessments
- a summary of your attendance
- progress summaries
- treatment plans
- medical records
- recordings taken during sessions
- other electronically stored information
- consent for a follow-up contact

How do I view my information?

To view your private information, you must submit a written request. You may ask to look at the information or to get a copy. A fee of \$25 may be charged to process the request.

If you are viewing file information, someone from Alberta Health Services must be present while you look at the file. Information that belongs to others will be protected from viewing. If you find mistakes in your records, you have the right to request a correction of your personal information. All documents and files belong to Alberta Health Services, but you can request copies.

What information is shared with others?

Your counsellor will discuss with you the type of information you may choose to share and who you wish to disclose this information to. Once your decisions are made, you will be asked to sign a form that gives consent to share your information.

Exceptions

There are a few situations where your information may be shared with others without your consent. These are some examples:

- when urgent circumstances require the release of confidential information to ensure your health and safety or the health and safety of others
- when the information is subpoenaed for court proceedings
- when the law requires release, usually to protect a child, to investigate a death, or to protect public health
- when the information is shared with another health service provider to benefit your treatment and care

If information is shared without your consent, a notice of disclosure will be mailed to your last known address.

A decision to reveal your information without your consent will only be made when it is consistent with the rules set out in the Health Information Act and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Where can I get more information?

Talk to your counsellor or call the province-wide help line at 1-866-332-2322 (toll-free). If you still have questions, call the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for Alberta at 1-888-878-4044 (toll-free).