



## **Rural Outreach Counselling Privacy Policy**

### **Protection of your privacy and personal information**

Rural Outreach Counselling (ROC) takes the protection of your privacy very seriously. This Privacy Policy sets out how we deal with your personal information. ROC is bound by the Australian Privacy Principles (APP) under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) (The Act). It also has obligations under other laws, regulations and industry codes including the Employment and Related Services Code of Practice, and Employment Services Industry.

### **What personal information does Rural Outreach Counselling collect?**

For us to supply services and benefits to you, we need to collect certain personal information about you. This personal information may include your name, address, telephone number, date of birth, email address, payment details and occupation.

Rural Outreach Counselling may need to collect sensitive information from you such as your medical history and referring Doctor Information in accordance with the APP.

We may collect from you, personal information of a third party. Where you provide the personal information of a third party, it is your responsibility to ensure that these persons are aware of this Privacy Policy, understand it, and agree to accept it.

You do not have to provide us with any personal information, however, if you do not do so, we may not be able to provide you with the services or benefits you have requested.

### **How Rural Outreach Counselling collects personal information**

We collect your information in the following ways:

- during conversations with you, over the phone and/or face to face
- from your referring doctor or any other persons/entities that have referred you
- when you complete our forms and paperwork

We may also obtain health information about you from your partner or family member when it is not practicable to obtain it from you. If this ever happens, we will always confirm that information with you as soon as possible.

### **Why Rural Outreach Counselling collects, uses and discloses personal information**

ROC will use the personal information it collects for the purpose disclosed at the time of collection, or otherwise as set out in this Privacy Policy.

ROC will not use your personal information for any other purpose without first seeking your consent, or where authorised or required by law.

ROC collects, uses, and discloses personal information about you in order to supply our services or benefits to you, or for related purposes, for example:

- billing for your use of our services.
- administering your use of our services or benefits.



- doing anything we are required to do by law or on the direction of a relevant authority, including to assist in connection with legal proceedings, crime or fraud protection, detection, and prosecution
- informing you about problems with our services or benefits.
- informing you about ways our services or benefits, or your use of our services or benefits, can be improved.
- reviewing and improving our services or benefits.
- providing you with marketing and promotional material, including by direct marketing providing you with information about other services.
- protecting the safety of you or any member of the public, for example, to avoid an imminent threat to a person's life.

We may also disclose your personal information to third parties who work with us in our business including, without limitation, any of our commercial associates, suppliers and business partners, agents, consultants, professional advisers to help provide, promote, or improve the services or benefits we provide, or where authorised or required to do so by law.

This includes your case notes being shared with a Professional, clinically registered Supervisor, to assist with your overall care from a supervisor that is more highly qualified and experienced than the counsellor to ensure the best of services for you.

ROC may also disclose personal information in circumstances where it is authorised or required to do so by law, and in circumstances where we consider it is appropriate to do so to ensure laws are complied with, for example, to reduce the occurrence of fraud.

### **What is 'health information'?**

Rural Outreach Counselling is a provider of health services. 'Health information' is a highly sensitive type of personal information and is subject to further protection as it contains more private and comprehensive details about an individual.

Health information is personal information or an opinion about: a person's physical or mental health or disability a person's express wishes about the future provision of health services for themselves a health 3 service provided, or to be provided to a person 'Health information' includes your personal information. Once you are a client of Rural Outreach Counselling (or if we have collected health information about you), we also treat your personal information as 'health information'.

Health information that we collect may include:

- your medical history
- your family's medical history
- you and your partner's ethnicity
- your relationship status and history
- any additional information obtained throughout the course of your treatment



If you become a client of Rural Outreach Counselling your health information will be held in your client records. This is comprised of both hard copy and electronic records and will be established at the point of initial contact.

### **Why do we collect, hold, and use your personal and health information?**

Your personal and health information is collected and used to ensure you can be informed about the services that we provide, that you receive the best possible care if you become a client of ROC and for us to manage the health services and support, we provide to you effectively.

It will also be used to:

- send communications to you and your referring/treating doctors
- provide information and advice
- conduct business processing functions
- update our records and keep your contact details up to date
- respond to any complaint made by you
- comply with any law, rule, regulation, lawful and binding determination, decision, or direction of a regulator, or in co-operation with any governmental authority.

It will also be used internally for the administrative, marketing, planning, product or service development, quality control and research purposes of ROC.

### **What happens if we don't have your personal or health information?**

If any of the personal or health information you provide is not accurate or complete, or you choose not to provide us with your personal information, it may detrimentally affect the services that we provide or we may be unable to provide you with our services at all.

### **Keeping records accurate and secure**

Rural Outreach Counselling will take all reasonable steps to ensure your information is protected from misuse and loss and from unauthorised access, modification, or disclosure. We will hold your health information in electronic form and information is destroyed or de-identified when no longer needed and when the legislative period relevant to medical records has expired.

We have an internal policy with respect to how confidential information will be treated in-house to protect your privacy from accidental disclosure.

They include the following directives that:

- only employees who have a need to view your file will do so
- documents containing personal information are not left on desks or workstations where they may be visible to unauthorised persons
- client lists and medical records are covered when travelling
- client information is not discussed in public areas where it may be overheard



### **To whom may we disclose your information?**

We may disclose your personal and health information to our employees, MateKeepers, contractors and service providers for the purposes of us providing the health service to you and managing our business.

We may also disclose your personal and health information to healthcare professionals directly involved in your treatment.

However, if you are hospitalised because of your health and your records are needed urgently, they will be forwarded to the relevant medical professional without waiting for written consent.

Health information may also be provided to third parties if we are legally obliged to do so by a court subpoena, statutory authority, search warrant, coronial summons or to defend a legal action.

If information is requested by a third party connected to you it must be accompanied by an original written authorisation from you to release that information.

There may be instances where mailing houses, couriers, payment processors, data entry services providers, electronic network administrators and debt collectors are be provided with some of your personal details.

They will never have access to your treatment information.

Your personal and health information will never be disclosed other than as described in this policy.

No personal or health information is disclosed to parties outside Australia except in circumstances where you request and consent to its release.

### **How can you access and correct your personal information?**

You may request access to any information we hold about you at any time.

There may be instances where we cannot grant you access to some of the information we hold.

For example, we may need to refuse access if granting access would interfere with the privacy of others. If that is the case, we will provide you with a written explanation of those reasons.

If you believe that the information, we hold about you is incorrect, incomplete, or inaccurate, then you may request us to amend it. We will consider if the information requires amendment and amend it if we conclude that it requires amendment. If we do not agree that there are grounds for amendment, then we will add a note to the information stating that you disagree with it.