



TITLE

Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

INTRODUCTION

The ACT Mental Health Consumer Network (the Network) is committed to handling the personal information of our members, consumer representatives, staff, volunteers and members of the public with openness, transparency and accountability. The Network respects the right of privacy and takes measures to protect personal information of any individual making contact with the organisation for any purpose. This policy is in line with the Privacy Act.

PURPOSE

This Privacy Policy outlines how the Network manages the personal information of staff, volunteers, members and consumer representatives and members of the public. It also describes the type of personal information held, for what purposes, and how that information is collected, held, used and disclosed.

POLICY

Collection Use and Storage of Information

Personal information is any material that identifies or could reasonably identify an individual. Normally the personal information collected by the Network may include an individual's:

- Name, title, address, sex
- Telephone number
- Email address
- Training, consumer representative and work experience Bank details
- Taxation details
- Superannuation details
- Details of any salary sacrificing arrangements
- Resume/curriculum vitae or details such as relevant training/experience
- Emergency contact information
- Dietary requirements
- Photos or videos of people participating in Network events

Personal information will, generally, only be used for the primary purposes of:

- Responding to individual queries
- Processing Network membership forms
- Processing registrations for community education
- Processing appointments of consumer representatives
- Processing applications for opportunities such as sponsored places at conferences
- Reimbursements
- Distributing information to Consumer Representatives
- Informing members about upcoming events

Information about individuals and organisations shall only be accessed by Network staff. Information about individuals or organisations obtained by Network staff in the performance of their duties shall be destroyed 6 months after it was last used, except if:

- a) The information relates to a complaint against the Network, in which case it shall be retained for 3 years;
- b) The information relates to a legal matter where the Network is, directly or indirectly, the complainant or respondent, in which case the information shall be retained for 7 years;
- c) The information relates to an application to become a consumer representative or other official representative of the Network, for example attending a conference on behalf of the Network, in which case it shall be retained for 3 months after the appointment or representation has been approved by the relevant steering committee;
- d) The information is required to maintain an individual's membership of the Network, in which case it shall be retained for as long after the person ceases being a member of the Network as is required by law;
- e) The information relates to a staff member, in which case it shall be retained for as long after the person ceases being an employee of the Network as is required by law; and/or
- f) Information stored on, or retrieved from, the Network website will not be shared with any other organisation or individual.

The Network will only disclose personal information:

- For the primary purpose for which it was collected;
- Where the individual would reasonably expect this;
- Where the individual has consented; and/or
- As required by law.

The Network will not sell any personal information that it collects from an individual under any circumstance.

Permission must be obtained from the individual(s) concerned, before discussing or forwarding personal information to other people or organisations. For example, providing unsuccessful job applicant CVs to other organisations seeking employees in similar roles.

Protecting personal information

The Network stores information in different ways, including in paper and electronic form.

The Network takes reasonable steps to protect personal information from misuse and loss and unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. Some of the ways the Network does this are:

- Confidentiality requirements for employees;
- Storing files containing personal information in locked cabinets;
- Security measures for systems access;
- Providing a discreet environment for confidential discussions;
- Only allowing access to personal information where the individual seeking access has satisfied the Network identification requirements;
- Access control for buildings;
- Electronic information is stored under a 'password protected' computer system;
- Workers log off from their electronic user ID when stepping away from their desk; and
- All written information about an individual or individuals, which is not already in the public domain, shall be destroyed by shredding or disposed of in a locked document 'security bin'. For members this will occur one year following last communication e.g. one year following resignation of membership; and for employees this will occur two years following cessation of their employment.

Sensitive Information

The Network will not collect information about an individual that reveals their racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs or affiliations, membership of a professional or trade association, membership of a trade union, details of health, disability, sexual orientation, or criminal records without the consent of individuals.

Anonymity when dealing with the Network

Individuals dealing with the Network have the right not to identify themselves in relation to a particular matter where it is lawful and practicable to do so.

Accuracy and Correction of Personal information

The Network tries to ensure information is accurate and up-to-date by updating its records whenever changes to information come to staff's attention and, where

appropriate, create a note of the change and date it was made. The Network disregards information which seems likely to be inaccurate or out of date.

Dealing with Unsolicited Information

The Network will not retain unsolicited information that it could not have lawfully collected.

Using our Website

The Network may record anonymous information such as IP address, time, date, referring URL, pages accessed and documents downloaded, type of browser and operating system. The Network's website may contain links to or from other websites. The Network is not responsible for the privacy practices of other websites. This privacy policy applies only to the information we collect on the Network's website.

Access to Personal Information

The Network acknowledges that individuals have the right to access to the personal information the organisation may have collected from them. If an individual wants to access their personal information held by the Network, they need to send a written request by:

- email to actmhcncn@actmhcncn.org.au;
- post to Reply Paid 469, Civic Square ACT 2608; or
- hand delivery to Level 2, Room 11 Griffin Centre, 20 Genge Street, Canberra.

The Network will handle such requests in accordance with the Privacy Act.

Direct Marketing

The Network may use individuals' personal information for the purpose of informing them about Network events such as Consumer Representatives Forums, Community Education and Training, information, consultation and issues groups, forums and workshops. If people do not want to receive this type of information they can contact the Network to request that staff adjust their mailing subscriptions and/or delete their contact details from Network distribution lists, as appropriate.

Information about Individuals

As a non-service provider, which does not engage in individual advocacy, the Network does not normally retain documents or information about individuals other than information related to their membership or activities as a Network member. However, during the course of conversations with enquirers who wish to discuss personal circumstances, including health, the Network may occasionally receive personal information which it will retain until contact with the individual(s) about the particular issue concludes. The Network will then destroy this information unless otherwise requested by the individual concerned.

Consumer Representatives: Communication with community members on general principles and issues

Asking consumer representatives to observe the confidentiality and privacy of information will not prevent participants from communicating with other community members on general principles and issues as they need. If the consumer representative is unsure it is important that they check and seek clarification from the chairperson of the committee that they are a part of.

Systemic Advocacy:

The Network makes submissions, delivers presentations and advocates on behalf of consumers. While based on the experience of consumers, Network staff shall not refer to individual experiences unless they have

- Obtained written permission from the person concerned to use their experience; and
- Made every effort to de-identify the record of the experience.

In the event the person wishes to reveal their identity, Network staff shall make every attempt to ensure the person's decision is an informed one; the person has had sufficient time to make the decision; and the person was not under pressure when making the decision. Network staff should also suggest the person discusses the decision with an appropriate third party, for example an advocate, family member or solicitor.