

# *Hester Covell Counselling*

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## Privacy policy

This policy outlines the ways in which Hester Covell Counselling handles the personal information of our clients. We take privacy seriously and are committed to complying with the Australian Privacy Principles in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

## Personal information

Personal information is any information about an individual that can be used to identify them directly or indirectly, such as name, address, phone number, email address, and date of birth. Sensitive information is a type of personal information which includes details, for example, about a person's racial or ethnic origins, political or religious beliefs, sexual orientation, health or genetic information, family court orders or criminal record. The breach of sensitive information is likely to leave people open to discrimination or embarrassment.

## Why we collect personal information

The sharing of personal information by a client to Hester Covell Counselling assists us to assess and support the client in processing their identified concerns. Personal information is retained to enable us to provide a relevant and informed service. Within our practice and due to our duty of care a client cannot be anonymous. A client may request to use a pseudonym, but a name as listed on ID's is required.

## How we collect personal information

We collect personal information through a variety of means, including:

- the information you verbally share with us
- written communication received from you via email, SMS or letter
- our online booking system
- our intake form
- social media
- the guardian of those under 18 years of age
- a referral from your GP or another treating practitioner or service.

## Our storage of personal information

To protect the personal information we hold from misuse or loss we store it in several ways, all of which are secure and can only be accessed by approved individuals. The method of storage varies between types of information and includes both hard copies and digital versions (either on a secure server or offline). We try not to retain unnecessary information, disposing of it securely from time to time depending on the type of information it is and our legal obligations. If

we become aware of a security breach we will promptly investigate and, where appropriate, take remedial action and notify the individual affected in accordance with the Privacy Act.

## Disclosure of your personal information

We will not disclose personal information about you to third parties without your consent, except when the disclosure is required by law. It is unlikely that we will disclose any information to a recipient outside of Australia.

## Accessing your personal information

You may request access to personal information we hold about you. We may ask you to specify what information you require and may charge a fee where we provide access. We deal with all requests for access to personal information as required by the Privacy Act. We may refuse to provide access if the Privacy Act allows us to do so.

## Integrity of your personal information

We try to ensure that the personal information we collect is accurate and up to date. You may request an update or correction to personal information we hold about you and we will deal with all such requests as required by the Privacy Act.

## Complaints

If you think your personal information has not been handled in line with the Privacy Act, please contact us in the first instance. We will investigate your complaint and try to promptly resolve your complaint directly with you. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, then you may make a complaint to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). For information about how to make such a complaint, please refer to the OAIC website <http://www.oaic.gov.au/>

## Changes to this privacy policy

We may make changes to this privacy policy from time to time and in such cases we will notify clients by email or on our website. Contact us If you have any questions relating to privacy matters, please contact us by email at [info@hestercovellcounselling.com.au](mailto:info@hestercovellcounselling.com.au).