

## **Information Sharing Policy**

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to explain the Centre's commitment to sharing information about people in a responsible way.

### **2. Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the Centre's Board to ensure that this policy is implemented.

It is the responsibility of the Centre's CDO to ensure that the procedures are implemented.

### **3. Principles**

Gaining a client's consent for information sharing is the ideal and recommended practice, except where to do so would place a person at increased risk of harm.

Children's and vulnerable people's right to safety overrides an individual's right to privacy. An adult's wellbeing needs must not compromise a child's rights to safety and wellbeing.

At times staff and volunteers may be alerted to circumstances where an individual, family or group of people may be experiencing difficulties that place them at risk of harm or that pose a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of others. Where there is a reasonable suspicion of harm, information may need to be sought from or provided to another organisation so that services can be effectively coordinated to lessen threats to safety and wellbeing.

### **4. Definitions**

See the Explanation of Terms in the Information Sharing – Guidelines for Promoting the Safety and Wellbeing.

### **5. Policy**

The Centre will follow the Information Sharing Guidelines for Promoting the Safety and Wellbeing (ISG) which are the overarching principles and practices for government agencies and non-government organisations who support or provide services to children, young people families, pregnant women (and unborn children) and adults.

Seeking informed consent from someone for information sharing is the 'default' position in all situations. Where gaining consent is not possible or is considered dangerous the ISG describes how the Centre will manage these situations.

The safety and wellbeing of individuals and/or groups are the primary considerations when making information sharing decisions.

Information sharing decisions are made on a case-by-case basis using best interest principles and are supported by sound risk assessment.

Gaining a client's consent for information sharing is the ideal and recommended practice, except where to do so would place a person at increased risk of harm or where it is not possible.

An individual's right to safety overrides an individual's right to privacy.

Working in partnership with parents and other adults to provide safe and supportive family environments directly protects children's and young people's wellbeing.

When information is shared about people, it is done so respectfully in both verbal and written communication.

'Respecting cultural difference' means having the same aims for people's wellbeing and safety but finding appropriate ways of achieving them.

An adult's wellbeing needs must not compromise a child's rights to safety and wellbeing.

Informed consent should be sought from young people as well as adults. Young people's privacy deserves the same level of respect as adults' privacy. The ISG provides a consistent way of deciding whether a young person is capable of giving informed consent.

Information may be shared when it is believed a person is at risk of harm (from others or as a result of their own actions) and adverse outcomes can be expected unless appropriate services are provided.

## 6. Procedures

The ISG provide clear and consistent steps to determine if information sharing is appropriate while maintaining the balance between the right to safety and wellbeing and their rights to privacy.

The following statement will be included on forms for all participants/clients where personal information is gathered.

*"This Centre follows the SA Government's Information Sharing Guidelines for Promoting Safety and Wellbeing (ISG). This means we will work closely with other agencies to coordinate the best support for you and your family. Under the ISG your informed consent for the sharing of information will be sought and respected in all situations where it is considered safe and possible to do so.*

*Disclosure of information without consent is permitted if it is not safe or possible to seek consent; or consent has been refused, and the disclosure is reasonably necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat to the life, health or safety of a person or group of people."*

The Centre will develop an approval process giving clear direction as to who is to be involved and responsible for information sharing.

Where gaining consent is not possible or is considered unsafe the Centre staff or volunteers will manage the situation in accordance with the ISG guidelines.

If staff or volunteers are unsure at any stage about what to do, they are to consult their supervisor or the CDO. The CDO will, if unsure, seek advice from the SA Principal Advisor Information Sharing at Ombudsman SA on (08) 8226 8699.

## 7. References

- Information Sharing – Guidelines for Promoting Safety and Wellbeing. (ISG) published by the South Australian Government. [www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au/isg](http://www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au/isg)

## 8. Forms or Attachments

- ISG Practise tips.
- ISG appendix

## 9. Approvals

	Policy	Procedure
Approving Authority	Board of Management	Board of Management
Approval Date		
Next Review Due		