

# CONFIDENTIALITY GUIDELINES

## ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

*These should be read in conjunction with Wellspring's "Principles & Practice of Confidentiality"*

### THE DUTY OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Everyone who works within Wellspring is bound by a duty of confidentiality towards all clients and potential clients seeking Wellspring's help.

You are expected to safeguard all confidential matters relating to Wellspring, and to respect the organisation and safeguard Wellspring's standing in the community.

You will meet clients in your reception role and will be the first person they speak to when they contact Wellspring by phone. You will also be processing confidential client data. All workers at Wellspring are expected to maintain the principle of confidentiality during and after their period of service. Breaches of confidentiality are regarded as extremely serious and may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

You have a duty to respect confidentiality and should only speak about clients in a purposeful way, restricting discussion of confidential information to furthering the purposes for which it was originally given.

### POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Wellspring has specific policies and procedures relating to confidentiality to guide staff and to ensure that the highest possible standards of confidentiality are maintained within Wellspring. It is essential that you are familiar with these and understand them fully. They include:

- *Data Protection Policy*
- *Procedures for Data Handling & Storage*
- *Policy on the Secure Handling, Use, Storage and Retention of Disclosure Information*
- *Client Access to Notes and Records*
- *Policy and Procedures for Responding to Requests for Access to Records*
- *Client Information: Confidentiality and Data Protection*
- *Client Information: Access to Records*
- *Client Information: Procedure for Subject Access Requests*

## **GUIDELINES RELEVANT TO SOME OF THE SITUATIONS WHERE CONFIDENTIALITY COULD BE PUT AT RISK:**

- It is important that, where possible, you are clear about your limits with clients, so that you are not placed in a position of hearing information you would prefer not to hear, or feel that you are not able to keep within the bounds of confidentiality.
- Clients may, especially when they phone for the first time, want to go into details about their difficulties, or treat you like a therapist. It is important to be able tactfully to cut people short and explain that your role is to respond to their questions about the service and to take details so that they can be sent an Information Pack.
- Some clients do not wish family or colleagues to know that they have made contact with or are attending Wellspring. You need to take particular care when phoning or leaving messages, including answering machine messages for clients, not to disclose that the call is from Wellspring.
- If you respond to a telephone call to Wellspring from an enquirer who asks whether a named individual is a client of Wellspring's, even to confirm this is a breach of confidentiality unless the client has given consent for this to be disclosed. You should tell the caller that you are not at liberty to say who is a client here, but that you can take a message which may be passed on *if* the person comes here.
- Confidential material left lying in the Wellspring office, or information on an unattended computer, may be seen by those not entitled to do so. It is important not to leave such information visible. It should be locked away or removed from the screen even if you are out of the office for only a brief period. Confidential material must always be secured and filing cabinets locked when you are closing the office.
- Your personal notes and records relating to work at Wellspring should be shredded on completion of your service here.
- If you meet a client in the street, to acknowledge them may risk breaching confidentiality. Let that person make the decision to recognise you or not.
- You should never become involved in conversations about clients with other clients.
- You should not offer personal information to clients about yourself, or about colleagues. This would include, for example, not discussing why a therapist has been absent or where he or she has been.
- You may feel that a close friend can be trusted and may be a form of support. Remember that no matter how close or concerned, friends do not have the right to confidential information about Wellspring or its clients.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

As part of your contract with Wellspring you are asked to sign a Confidentiality Agreement, two copies of which you will find attached. They should be signed by you and by the Chair of the Management Committee. One copy should be retained by you and the other by Wellspring.

# CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

This agreement is made between **Wellspring** and \_\_\_\_\_

on \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 200\_\_.

- I have read and understood Wellspring's *Principles and Practice of Confidentiality*. I have also read the *Confidentiality Guidelines: Administrative Staff* and the confidentiality documents itemised in the section "Policies and Procedures".
- I agree to maintain client confidentiality as set out in these documents and in accordance with Data Protection legislation.
- I undertake to safeguard all confidential or sensitive information relating to Wellspring that I may encounter in the course of my work and not to disclose it to third parties.
- I will not disclose any information about organisational clients, or their employees, to anyone other than Wellspring staff. This includes the information that an organisation has an Employee Assistance Programme with Wellspring.
- I will treat any sensitive information I encounter relating to the business activities of organisational clients in strictest confidence and will not disclose it to anyone outside Wellspring.

Signed .....

Name (please print) .....

Date .....

Witnessed for Wellspring .....

Name (please print) .....

Date .....