

CONFIDENTIALITY GUIDELINES

THERAPISTS

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. Therapists are also required to protect client confidentiality in accordance with the BACP *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy* and COSCA's *Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice*.

Therapists must also safeguard all confidential matters relating to Wellspring, both during and after their period of involvement with the agency. They have a responsibility to respect the organisation and to safeguard Wellspring's standing in the community.

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*
- *Therapists' Notes & Record Keeping*
- *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*

CLIENT WORK

1. Any disclosure of confidential information about clients should be restricted to furthering the purposes for which it was originally disclosed.
2. Where you have concerns that disclosure of confidential information may be necessary you should consult with the Co-ordinator of Clinical Services. Any disclosures should be undertaken in ways that best protect the client's trust.
3. Great care should be taken in clinical discussion with colleagues and supervisors to protect the anonymity of clients. Where identifying information must be shared confidentially within Wellspring, this should be kept to the minimum necessary.

4. Contact with a GP or other professional outwith Wellspring should whenever possible be with the client's knowledge, and preferably with their signed consent.
5. Records and personally identifiable and sensitive information must be protected from unauthorised disclosure. Wellspring keeps client records, but therapists are responsible for their own client information and any personal notes. These should be securely retained by you and care taken that they do not contain clients' names or addresses. All notes and records should be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act and be disposed of by shredding.
6. Some clients do not wish family or friends 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.
7. 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.

THE WELLSPRING OFFICE

1. 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.
2. Wellspring's shredder may be used to destroy notes and other confidential material.
3. 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.

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 THERAPISTS

This agreement is made between **Wellspring** and _____

on _____ day of _____ 200__.

- I have read and understood Wellspring's *Principles & Practice of Confidentiality*. I have also read the *Confidentiality Guidelines: Therapists* 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 the ethical principles of BACP and COSCA and with Data Protection legislation.
- I also undertake to safeguard all confidential or sensitive information relating to Wellspring that I may encounter and not disclose it to third parties.
- I will treat in strictest confidence any information about organisational clients or their employees. 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, or within Wellspring unless absolutely necessary.

Signed

Name (please print)

Date

Witnessed for Wellspring

Name (please print)

Date