



ARAFEMI

5.5 Core Processes: Privacy and Confidentiality

1. General Policy Statement

ARAFEMI respects the right of all staff, volunteers and service users to have all information given to ARAFEMI, both verbal and written, treated with the utmost confidentiality. ARAFEMI has a commitment to protecting privacy and ensuring that all information collected is treated in a way consistent with the Privacy Amendment Act 2000 and the National Privacy Principles.

ARAFEMI has developed clear protocols relating to the disclosure and distribution of personal information and accessing of personal records to protect rights to privacy. The scope of this policy includes, but is not limited to, service users, members, participants at carer support groups and workshops and people utilising or working on the telephone support line.

2. Responsibility

- 2.1.1 The Board and Executive have a responsibility to ensure that there are clear policies and procedures relating to privacy for the organization and these are regularly reviewed and evaluated through compliance and continuous improvement mechanisms.
- 2.1.2 The Executive and Management Team have a responsibility to ensure that all program areas meet all privacy and confidentiality policies and procedures at all times.
- 2.1.3 It is the responsibility of the Executive and Management Team to ensure that regular reviews are conducted and to provide feedback and recommendations for improvement and change.
- 2.1.4 It is the responsibility of Program Managers to ensure that Privacy and Confidentiality policies and procedures are followed within programs and services.
- 2.1.5 It is the responsibility of Program Managers to ensure that all new staff are provided with appropriate induction to privacy and confidentiality policy and procedures.
- 2.1.6 It is the responsibility of all staff to implement the policy and procedures for privacy and confidentiality into service delivery practice.
- 2.1.7 It is the responsibility of all staff to participate in regular evaluation and review of privacy and confidentiality procedures and processes.
- 2.1.8 It is the responsibility of all staff to inform and support clients and service users in regards to confidentiality and privacy procedures and seek feedback about such processes for ongoing evaluation.

3. Definitions

- 3.1.1 *Privacy* – relates to many areas including the right not to be watched, listened to or reported upon without consent and not to be the focus of uninvited public attention. Privacy can be applied to clients' physical environment and possessions, physical and bodily needs, personal relationships and personal information and needs.
- 3.1.2 *Invasion of privacy* – encompasses many forms: intrusion into one's home or work, intrusion from unwanted publicity, intrusion from use of surveillance and intrusion by the disclosure of private or personal information (written or verbal).

4. Procedural Guidelines

- 4.1.1 Each program will have written procedures that outline program practice for protecting privacy and confidentiality of service users
- 4.1.2 The program procedures will be available in appropriate public documents such as client handbooks etc
- 4.1.3 ARAFEMI will only seek and record information from staff, volunteers and service users that is essential for the effective operation of ARAFEMI business and / or service provision. Information given to ARAFEMI will only be used for the purpose intended.
- 4.1.4 Service users will be informed of:
- the types of information collected and its usage for service delivery
 - legal obligations
 - mechanisms for accessing information
- 4.1.5 Personal information including names, addresses and telephone numbers will not be given out without the express written permission of the person involved.
- 4.1.6 Privacy will be respected in all telephone contacts and correspondence and information used on a 'need to know' basis.
- 4.1.7 Personal stories or 'case studies' will only be used with the permission of the person involved and any identifying details omitted unless specific written permission has been obtained beforehand.
- 4.1.8 All confidential information and client files will be kept securely at all times and locked in secure file cabinets with access only by authorised personnel.
- 4.1.9 Service user consent must be obtained in writing prior to information being obtained or released by ARAFEMI staff and services.
- 4.1.10 Consent must be obtained from staff, service users or volunteers for usage of any photo's, personal information or other media for publication / promotion or display purposes.
- 4.1.11 Each service user will have access to their file and the right to see any information, which ARAFEMI keeps about them, clients wishing to access files can contact the Program Manager who will respond within 24hours.
- 4.1.12 Each program will undertake an annual audit of the procedures for privacy and confidentiality and provide evidence of meeting the Disability Service Standards.

Relevant Legislation and Documentation

Mental Health Act – Resources www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/mh-act/index.htm

Freedom of Information Act – Resource library or www.foi.vic.gov.au

Privacy Act – Resource library or [Information Privacy Act](#), PDRSS Standards 2001