

# Privacy and Confidentiality

An introduction

## What is confidentiality?

- 'Confidentiality' means making sure that information is only available to those who are authorised to have access.
- Usually, this will mean keeping things secret between the client and you, the worker.
- As a worker, you will find out things that should not be shared amongst your family, your community or the client's family.

## What is so important about confidentiality?

- Confidentiality is important because clients tell us things, expecting us to keep it confidential.

EXAMPLE: Jimmy told his new coach that he couldn't come to football because there were some problems at home. He assumed he could tell his coach because he trusted coaches, even though he didn't know the new one.

## What is so important about confidentiality?

- Confidentiality is important because clients tell us things, expecting us to keep it confidential.
- Confidentiality is all about our position of trust- we need to show people that we can be trusted.

EXAMPLE: Cheryl wasn't sure about telling her youthworker, Jim, about her drug problems. Her friend told her that Jim didn't blab when he knew about her pregnancy, so they knew he could be trusted.

## Confidentiality is hard

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Confidentiality can be hardest when you:

- Feel like the family should know everything about their kids
- Feel like the police should know about any crimes
- Find it hard not to gossip
- Are related to the people you work with

## Confidentiality is hard

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Confidentiality means proving that you, and your club, can be trusted.

Often, young people can't get help because there is no- one they trust enough to keep things confidential.

## There are exceptions

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Sometimes we can't keep things confidential.

The exceptions are:

If you find out someone could get hurt because of what you know

EXAMPLE 1: Barry said he was going to hurt Grace when he got home. The youthworker, Jim, had a duty to protect Grace, so he let Barry know that he couldn't just keep this information to himself. They talked for a while, and Barry agreed to stay at a friend's until he sobered up.

## There are exceptions

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EXAMPLE 2: Jim found out that Anna was trying to hurt herself by taking an overdose of drugs. He called an ambulance to protect her.

## There are exceptions:

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The exceptions are:

If you find out someone could get hurt because of what you know

- *This is especially important if kids are involved*

EXAMPLE 3: Jim thinks that the kids he works with are being abused. He knows that he legally has to get some help for them. He calls DoCS, who set up some help for them.

## There are exceptions:

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The exceptions are:

If you find out someone could get hurt because of what you know

- If a *major* crime is planned, or being committed

EXAMPLE 4: Jim knows about his clients' drug use and car stealing, and they know he doesn't tell the police. He makes sure they know that he would have to tell police if he knew about major drug trafficking, so they don't tell him anything like that.

## Confidentiality

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We need to keep files and records in a place where people won't see them if they are not supposed to.

EXAMPLE 5: Jim keeps the permission forms on a clipboard when he takes kids out on activities. He makes sure he puts it where no- one can read them, so that no- one finds out about other people's medical problems.

## Confidentiality

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We need to keep files and records in a place where people won't see them if they are not supposed to.

Clients are always allowed to read their own files, though. *We keep secrets for them, not from them.*

EXAMPLE 5: Stacey wants to read her file. Jim finds a time and place where she can do this. Stacey found some things which weren't true, so Jim corrected them for her. Stacey now trusts the service even more, since she knows they won't keep secrets from her.

## Confidentiality

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- It is important that young people know that you will mostly keep things confidential, so they can get help if they need it.
- It is important that young people know that you will not always keep things confidential, so they are not confused if you ring DoCS or the police.

## Confidentiality

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- If you are not sure about whether to keep something confidential, ask your supervisor.
- This fact sheet will tell you more about confidentiality:

<http://www.yapa.org.au/youthwork/facts/privacy.php>