CLIENT RECORDS - INFORMATION MANAGEMENT, CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY — IS 4

INTENT

Staff will have clear guidelines with regard to the safeguarding of personal information and clients will have confidence that their confidentiality and privacy are respected and secure.

POLICY

Sunshine Coast Community Services Society maintains a complete, current and confidential record of each client receiving service, based on program requirements. The Society ensures that all recorded information is accurate and relevant to the ongoing development and support of the clients.

The Society recognizes that all individuals who receive service have the right to privacy and confidentiality. Clients and their families and caregivers are made aware that records containing information about them are kept by the Society and are accessible to them.

Records of clients served in the Family and Youth Services cluster are maintained in a web-based, encrypted and password protected electronic client records (ECR) data base. Documentation must be entered in the client records within three working days of the service provided.

The Society ensures that all information related to clients receiving services is treated as confidential. Release of information will be guided by rules under the Freedom of Information and Personal Information Protection Act.

The Society retains records for periods of time established by legal requirements of appropriate jurisdictions.

The Society ensures that client records are stored in a secure area or on a secure electronic device/system.

A. CLIENT INFORMATION

PROCEDURE

1. Confidential records are retained in individual client records and are accessed by staff on a need to know basis only.
2. Client records may include, but are not limited to the following information:
   - Demographic information
   - Contact information for personal representatives, family members, caregivers, guardians and/or advocates
   - Medical information
   - Individual service plans
   - Consent and release forms
   - Follow-up, progress and exit reports
   - Weekly activity schedules

- Behavioural supports
- Record of communication
- Referrals to other services and resources

3. See program operating manuals for program specific requirements. Funders and referral agencies may require certain information be maintained.

B. CLIENT ACCESS

PROCEDURE

1. During the orientation session, staff ensure that clients understand how to access their own records. Clients have the support required to understand the information contained in their records.
2. Clients and/or their caregivers and/or their legal representative may request information that is recorded about them and may view their files by requesting to do so.
3. See program-operating manuals for program specific procedures for accessing records.

C. RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

PROCEDURE

1. The Society ensures that the client and/or their caregiver and/or their legal representative authorize any release of confidential information.
2. Such release of information is limited to the specific information identified and for a time period not to exceed twelve months.
3. All releases are in accordance with applicable federal and provincial legislation and regulations and apply equally to written and verbal information.
4. All releases are documented in client records.
5. See program operating manuals for program specific procedures for release of information.

D. RETENTION

PROCEDURE

1. The Society ensures that client records will be retained and securely stored for periods specified by funding bodies and/or government regulations.
2. Upon expiry of the designated period, any disposal of client records shall be done in a manner that ensures confidentiality (e.g., incineration or shredding).

E. SECURITY

PROCEDURE

1. Staff will ensure that filing cabinets and offices where client records are stored are kept secure and locked when program staff is not present.
2. Client records are not to be removed from secure areas without prior consent of the Program Director. Staff will follow program procedures for removing files from secure areas as outlined in program operating manuals. It is the responsibility of the staff to make every effort to maintain security of all confidential materials in their possession in the course of their outreach work.

3. The ECR is a secure and encrypted system for storage of client records. The preference is for the ECR to be accessed at the staff assigned work site or other Sunshine Coast Community Services location. This will not always be possible especially for staff working only a few hours per week supporting clients in the community. With direct supervisor's knowledge and permission staff may access the system from a location other than a work site. Supervisors and Coordinators will review confidentiality practices with staff when they request permission to access the system off site.

   The ECR is not to be accessed from any public spaces such as recreation centres, libraries, schools, coffee shops, restaurants or stores. When accessing the ECR it must always be accessed using a pass word protected network.

   When accessing the ECR from a location such a staff 's home staff must ensure that no one but the staff member is able to view the website and files. The ECR must always be treated with the same level of confidentiality as any documentation regarding a client file. Electronic devices shall not be left unattended and open on the ECR.

   If staff is using their own personal computer they must not store any client documents on the personal computer. All information must be stored in the ECR client file.

F. PRIVACY

PROCEDURE

1. Staff is aware of the client's right to privacy.
2. All information about clients, either verbal or written, is considered confidential and is shared or accessible by program staff on a need to know basis only.
3. Clients of the Society are provided with information about their rights to privacy and confidentiality as part of the client orientation.