

# What are my privacy rights?

## What is personal health information?

Personal health information is anything about your physical and/or mental health when getting health care services. When we talk about your mental health, personal health information can be things like your diagnosis, places where you get services or supports, or family history.

## Who collects my personal health information and why?

Anyone who offers you services that help you with your mental or physical health may collect your personal health information. So this might be your doctor, social worker, therapist, drop-in worker, peer support worker and the places where they work. They ask you questions so they can offer you services that are meant to help you most with what you need.

## Who gets to see my personal health information and when?

With permission, your health care provider may need to share your personal health information with other people sometimes. This might include:

- Other people in the agency where they work
- Other health or social service agencies
- Family and friends
- Your employer or people who give you insurance, if you need a leave from work or need to access insurance
- The police or lawyers, only in certain cases where a specific police officer is connected to you, for example when there's a court case against you.

Sometimes your worker will come to you and ask you if it is okay to share your information with other people. Feel free to ask them why.

Other times, the law says your information can be shared without asking you, and even without you knowing that it has been shared. Some of these times include when there is

a chance that you may harm yourself or harm someone else; when you have died and people need to know that.

## When can I read my file?

All your personal health information is kept in a file called your health record. You have the right to view your file anytime. There are very specific times when police or lawyers are involved in your life that you may not be able to read your file. Another time that you may not be able to read your file is if your worker thinks that it is not in your best interest to read parts of your file at that moment. These times should be made clear to you by your worker.

Remember that you always have the right to make a complaint.



## Your privacy rights

You have rights when it comes to your personal health information! They include the right to:

- See and have a copy of the information health care providers keep about you when you ask for it.
- Have your information kept private and be told how it is being kept private.
- Ask who outside of people working at your agency sees your personal health information, when they see it and what they do with it.
- Not give any personal health information to certain people if you don't want to, and also know when you don't have a choice.
- Make a complaint if you feel like your personal health information was shared and it shouldn't have been.
- **MOST IMPORTANTLY...** You have the right to ask what the rules are at your agency and to make a complaint if you feel the rules are not fair. If you make a complaint, you have the right to still receive services you need.

## Your next steps...

You can ask a lot of questions, like:

- Where does my personal health information go?
- Who sees my personal health information?
- Where is my personal health information kept?
- How can I see my file and the personal health information you are keeping about me?

If you don't get answers or the answers you get don't feel right



to you, you can stop answering questions until you understand. Also, don't consent to sharing

until you are sure why and how your personal health information will be shared.

This is one in a series of pamphlets about your privacy rights and mental health.

The other pamphlets in this series include:

- What is in my file?
- Why am I being asked these questions?
- Who might see my information?
- Will you share my information?

For more information about your privacy rights, please see the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario's website at [www.ipc.on.ca](http://www.ipc.on.ca) or call:

Toronto Area (416/local 905): 416-326-3333

Long Distance: 1-800-387-0073 (within Ontario)

TDD/TTY: 416-325-7539

Pour joindre l'agente des communications bilingue, veuillez composer le: 416-326-4804