

Who might see my information?

What is personal health information?

Personal health information is anything about your physical or mental health when getting healthcare 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 might see my personal health information?

People that provide mental and physical health services can only see your personal health information so that they can give you the services or help that you need.

You have the right to tell your worker not to share your personal health information with any people or agencies you choose. You also have the right to change your mind after you have given consent.

Why and when can families and friends know my personal health information?

They can, if you give permission for them to have the information. There are also certain circumstances where families and friends can know about your personal health information from the agency where you get service.

One case is when it has been decided that you can't make your own decisions about your health and your life. Examples of decisions include how you spend your money, how you take care of your home or how you follow supports. If your health care provider feels that you are not capable of making your own decisions, they have to tell you. In fact, it is against the law not to tell you.

Also, if you are under 16, your parent or guardian can make certain decisions for you.

Why and when can employers and insurers know my personal health information?

Your employer or people who give you insurance can only know about your personal health information if you tell your health care provider that they can see it. An example might be if you need to take a leave from work and your employer or the people who give you insurance need a note from your doctor.



Nina's Story

Nina is 28 years old. She's been seeing a mental health worker named Celeste at an agency for about three months to get counseling, and also help her to find a job and a really good place to live. Nina has a very good relationship with Celeste. She trusts Celeste and finds her really respectful. One day, Nina is visiting her mom and her mom says "I was a bit worried about you last week and called your counselor to find out if you were okay. But your counselor wouldn't tell me anything about you. I felt a bit upset, because I'm your mother, after all, and I need to be able to know how to help you." Nina didn't even realize that her mother had her counselor's phone number. She feels really grateful that Celeste hasn't said anything but wonders if there is a time where Celeste might. Nina feels unsure how to find out more about if her personal life is going to get shared.

Your next steps...

Sometimes family, friends or other people may contact your worker to find out how you are doing. Think about what information is okay for your worker to tell your family and friends, and what isn't okay to tell family and friends.

You have the right to ask for certain people not to see your personal health information.

You have the right to change your mind about who sees your personal health information.



You have the right to know if your personal health information has been shared with anyone it should not have been.

You have a right to make a complaint to the agency if you feel like your personal health information was shared and it shouldn't have been.

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

The other pamphlets in this series include:

- What are my privacy rights?
- Why am I being asked these questions?
- Will you share my information?
- What is in my file?

For more information about your privacy rights, please see the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario's website at 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