

CONSENT TO SERVICE

What Clients Need to Know

The Service(s) Being Offered:

- What specific services are being offered and why? (see Service information forms)
- What benefits or likely outcomes can be expected? (see Service information forms)
- What are the risks or what should be considered when deciding? (see Service information forms)
- What are the alternatives, if any? (ask the Service Coordinator)

Personal Information:

What is Collected from/about the client:

- *Information about the child* (name, age, gender, presenting problems, strengths, needs, and may include developmental history, medical history, previous assessment results, previous professional involvement, current settings/placements, parents observations/perceptions of the child, teacher/childcare/other professional observations/perceptions of the child)
- *Information about the parent(s):* (name, address, telephone number, marital status, custody/guardianship arrangements, country of birth, stressors/risk factors, social support, perceptions of service needs/desires)
- *Information about the family:* (may include number of siblings, others living in the home, languages spoken in the home, emergency contact information)

Why Personal Information is Collected:

- To create files for clients who are 'registered' to receive services from the agency
- To assist in understanding the needs presented by the child and family
- To develop service plans, where appropriate, and make referrals to appropriate services
- To coordinate plans and services with other service providers with consent
- To help identify the need for further assessment
- To identify strengths on which to build
- To ensure parents or guardians can be contacted or communicated with when required
- To allow for statistical analyses of trends in service provision over time
- To facilitate the service delivery process from intake to discharge from the agency
- To assist in quality assurance and program evaluation activities

How Personal Information is Protected/Safeguarded:

- Access to paper and electronic records is restricted to agency employees (including service providers, supervisors, program directors and office/administrative staff). Staff access to client records is closely monitored by the agency and is restricted to authorized personnel who have active involvement in service delivery.
- Client paper files containing personal information are stored in locked cabinets
- Access to client files is restricted to Lumenus employees directly involved in service delivery.
- Lumenus is a multi-service agency and clients may access services consecutively or simultaneously. Information contained in the client file is accessible to Lumenus employees for the purpose of facilitating an integrated care approach.

- Access to a client file is tracked and periodically audited by supervisors and managers to ensure client information is protected.
- Confidential information is shared within Lumenus on a “*need to know*” basis and within a circle of care. This includes all persons involved in provision of service to the client (including assessment, supervision, and consultation, and support services). It also may include those involved in a training relationship with the service provider(s), volunteers and students registered with the Centre, researchers, licensing inspectors, auditors, accreditors and those with whom the Centre has a contractual relationship (e.g. professional consultants, training consultants, etc.). The *need to know* specific confidential information about the client (e.g., assessment information) does not necessarily mean that the same individual has a need to know all confidential information about the client.
- Files are audited to ensure they are current and complete
- Computerized information is protected with passwords
- Computerized information is backed up to protect against loss
- Client reports are marked 'confidential' and are not sent via electronic mail
- All staff, students, and volunteers sign Statements indicating information obtained in the course of their work will be held Confidential

When is Personal Information Disclosed:

- Clients receive copies of all reports, letters, and documents created by the agency respecting their child/family
- Information is not disclosed to third parties without written informed consent by the parent/guardian
- Exceptions to obtaining parent/guardian consent to disclose information include legal responsibilities to report (abuse or neglect to child protection; death to coroner; communicable disease to public health)
- Information may also be disclosed to individuals engaged in reviews of the agency's practices for Accreditation, Audit, or Quality Assurance purposes (e.g., Ministry of Children & Youth Services, The Canadian Centre for Accreditation Site Review Team, Quality Assurance Committees from various regulating Colleges.)

When is Personal Information Destroyed:

- Client files are retained for 20 years for FSS, Day Treatment after the client has been discharged from receiving agency services. Autism program retain files according to guidelines consistent with the partnership.
- Files are destroyed after 20 years, including all personal information

The Clients Rights:

Confidentiality

- The right to refuse or decline services at any time
- Personal information will be protected from loss, theft, and/or unauthorized access
- Personal information will be treated confidentially
- Personal information will only be disclosed to third parties when authorized by the client, except in the exceptional situations identified above
- Clients will be notified if unauthorized access, disclosure, theft or loss occurs

Access to Information

- Clients have the right to access personal information in their files
- Clients have the right to request copies of information in their files (cost recovery fees may apply)
- Clients have the right to request corrections to information in their files
- Requests for access and/or changes to information should be made in writing to the agency's information custodian (see below) and/or the assigned Service Coordinator
- Requests will be responded to within 30 days
- Access can be denied if the file is subject to a legal proceeding or court order, and/or in the judgement of the agency's Executive Director, access could result in risk of serious harm to an individual, or would violate the privacy of another person.
- Requests for changes can be denied if the request pertains to a document not originally created by the agency and/or if the change pertains to a professional opinion or observation made about the client that was made in good faith
- Clients can prepare a 'statement of disagreement' if requests for changes are denied, that must be included in the file
- Requests for access or changes to personal information that are denied can be registered as complaints with the Ontario government's Privacy Commissioner

Complaints

- Complaints about the agency's services, policies, procedures, facilities or staff can be put in writing and addressed to the agency's Executive Director. (it is suggested that attempts be made to resolve issues through informal discussions with the appropriate agency contact as a first step to resolution)
- Complaints about the agency's personal information practices (including requests for access and changes to information) can be put in writing to the Privacy Commissioner

Client Responsibilities:

Participation/Involvement in:

- developing service plans where appropriate
- identifying goals for intervention
- reviewing progress towards goals
- use of recommended strategies
- developing discharge plans where appropriate

Providing Current/Accurate Information

- participating in interviews to determine needs
- providing workers with information to help with service provision
- advising of changes to personal information

Keeping Everyone Informed

- communicating with staff and other service providers as appropriate

Feedback/Suggestions

- providing feedback regarding the services and information received
- providing suggestions for improvement