

SAMSN POLICY



Privacy Policy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to describe how SAMSN collects, uses, and stores information. SAMSN collects information for a variety of purposes, such as responsible service provision, and to maintain the safety and well-being of people who use SAMSN services and resources. The type of information collected depends on the service that is required: any enquiry or request for general advice may not involve the collection of personal details, and contact information may not be required. However, in choosing to access services such as group or individual support, SAMSN may need to collect, with consent, further information, such as a name and contact details. Personal information is stored confidentially in compliance with the relevant Commonwealth and State government privacy and confidentiality laws.

INFORMATION COLLECTED

PERSONAL INFORMATION: Indicates information of a personal, identifiable nature that may be collected and maintained with your consent. This includes identifier information (i.e. name and date of birth) and contact details such as address, phone numbers and emails.

SENSITIVE INFORMATION: SAMSN may also request and keep more sensitive information relevant to the service provided such as attending a group or obtaining individual support. This information may include a person's requests and needs, disabilities impacting on obtaining a service, and personal disclosures.

COMPUTER INFORMATION: As with all websites, SAMSN may also, through the provision of and means of our website, passively collect data. This includes IP address, domain, browser, geographical location, and click stream, and search words to access pages.

HOW INFORMATION IS COLLECTED

Personal and sensitive information is collected when it is willingly provided to SAMSN, as well as through communications and transactions with SAMSN such as emails.

As with all websites, technical information is collected passively when visiting the SAMSN website. An example of this is the number of website views. This information is collected using Google analytics and cookies. Cookies are small text files that are placed on a user's hard disk by SAMSN's software: they can be deleted manually, otherwise they remain where they are. The function of the Cookie is to collect information anonymously, and to track user patterns. You have a choice to reset your browser to either accept or refuse cookies.

LINK TO THIRD PARTY WEBSITES

SAMSN's website may contain links to other sites. By accessing these external websites users are subject to the third parties' privacy policies; while SAMSN supports the protection of everyone's privacy and abides by security policies, SAMSN is not responsible for the actions of third parties or their privacy practices. Awareness of the privacy statements of any new website you interact with is advised.

Web based visual and audio communication such as Skype, Zoom or other video-based technology, have inbuilt security mechanisms. The website www.esafety.gov.au provides some additional advice regarding settings on computers to keep your information safe.

INFORMATION STORAGE AND PROTECTION

The information shared with SAMSN is stored and protected by the following means:

- Electronic data is stored on databases and computers, which are password protected, encrypted and where only approved staff have access. Electronic data may also be stored on Australian-based cloud databases, in accordance with Australian privacy and archival requirements.
- Written documents are stored in secure cabinets at SAMSN's head office facilities, with restricted staff access.
- All personal and sensitive information is maintained in accordance with legal requirements and to ensure safety and confidentiality of information.

SHARING OF INFORMATION

Confidentiality of those who engage with SAMSN is a high priority. Information shared with SAMSN is kept completely confidential within the agency unless there has been a request by the person to share specific information with another agency to access their services. This will only be disclosed with the person's consent in all cases where legal requirements do not compel otherwise. In many cases written consent to share information with external parties is required ('Authority to Inquire or Act' form). The only instances when specific information may be divulged are when disclosures of personal information are required by law, such as through a subpoena or police request. In many states there is special legislation within sexual assault criminal matters aimed at protecting counselling notes from being subpoenaed. Mandatory reporting requirements may also be followed if a child or adult is at significant risk of harm to themselves or others. These are rare occurrences. If these do occur SAMSN would endeavor to inform the person affected by the mandatory disclosure and seek consent first wherever possible.

ACCESS TO PERSONAL INFORMATION SHARED WITH SAMSN

SAMSN supports a person's right to access information they have shared with SAMSN. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, this can be done as a written request, or by contacting SAMSN by phone or in person. SAMSN can also be contacted to correct or update personal information.

COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK

SAMSN is committed to providing an effective and responsive service. SAMSN welcomes feedback, including compliments and complaints. For further information about how to give feedback, or make a complaint, please go to the CONTACT US section on the home page of the SAMSN website.