



Privacy and Confidentiality

Disclaimer: This video is designed to be a conversation starter on the topic of privacy and confidentiality in a remote aged care setting. The facilitator should make use of other resources to ensure the learner continues to develop their understanding and competency of this topic.

This video emphasises the need for aged care staff to protect the private and sensitive information held by the organisation.

Aged Care organisations need to keep private and sensitive information on people receiving care, including where the person lives, who they share their home with, their health status, finances and vulnerabilities. This helps the organisation to provide the right services and support to a person and charge the correct amount for those services. Services can do their job correctly and effectively with accurate and current information.

Aged Care staff also learn more personal information about people receiving care as they work with them. This information is often added to the person's file as it helps to provide tailored, person-centred care. However, the organisation is responsible for ensuring this personal and sensitive information is kept safe.

What happens if information is not properly protected

Watch the different scenarios described by Enid in the video

- *Talk about how disclosing personal information, either deliberately or accidentally, can have serious consequences for a vulnerable person.*
- *Talk about what these consequences might be for the person.*

It's also a good idea to discuss privacy and confidentiality concepts.

Privacy

Privacy of a person's information is protected under the Privacy Act.

Because aged care providers handle a person's health information, they need to ensure they have things in place to support the privacy of this information; this includes having a privacy policy and making sure staff understand the policy and related procedures.

- *Show staff the privacy policy for your organisation and highlight key points in the policy, such as their responsibilities.*

Confidentiality

A specific law does not define confidentiality; it comes from common law.

Generally, however, confidentiality refers to keeping information or knowledge secret, preventing unauthorised access to personal information. It also includes how information is collected, handled and used and who has access to it.



It is the right of people receiving care to have their information handled confidentially; this is why we ask for people's consent before we share information with other people or organisations.

- *Talk about the concept of consent and who you get consent to talk to about a person's needs, for example, specific family members, allied health professionals or the person's doctor or health clinic.*

Disclosure of information

- *Talk about disclosure of information and when staff might be obliged to report something a person has told them in confidence:*

At times, Aged Care staff might need to disclose information they have learnt about a person to protect them and others.

Generally, you would not disclose anything that a person receiving care tells you in confidence. However, there are exceptions to this. For example, suppose the person tells you something that potentially puts themselves or another person in danger. In that case, you need to disclose this to your supervisor, manager or other authority, even if the person has told you this is confidential information and they don't want you telling anyone else.

Once you have reported this information appropriately however, you need to remember you cannot tell anyone else, such as other staff members or members of the public; it must remain confidential.

Data privacy

Many organisations use electronic client information management systems (CIMS) and other cloud-based platforms that contain client and staff information.

- *Please talk about the importance of keeping work information safe when staff use their mobile devices to access rosters or other client-related information.*
- *Talk about the appropriate use of computers and other electronic devices in your centre that staff can access.*

Social Media

Organisations are increasingly using social media to share information with people receiving care, their families, and significant others. It is vital though, that staff understand the appropriate use of social media in the workplace.

- *Show staff the organisation's social media or other relevant policies and discuss their responsibilities when using client images or information from the workplace on the organisation's social media accounts (if applicable) or their own accounts.*

Links to additional resources



Charter of Aged Care Rights – Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission:
<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/consumers/consumer-rights>