

Unison Confidentiality and Protection of Privacy

Unison prioritizes the protection of all personal information held by the agency. This includes information from clients, members, volunteers, users, employees and donors. Personal information will not be disclosed, obtained, or shared with any person or organization without the informed consent of the person involved or their guardian unless there are circumstances where legislation permits the disclosure.

Collection of Information

Unison will only collect personal information that is necessary for the identified purpose. Once the purpose is fulfilled, personal information will be securely disposed, unless required to be retained by law.

For every member, client, and employee, information specific to that person is retained as needed for:

- service delivery
- to comply with contracts
- to comply with consents
- to fulfil legal or legislative requirements

Where not otherwise specified by contract, files will be retained per relevant legislation.

Release of Information

Unison will only release the personal information of any person in accordance with the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA), the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) and the Health Information Act (HIA), as follows:

- The release of information must be in the best interests of the individual.
- The organization must have written consent of the person involved or their legal representative on a *Release of Information* form. This must include:
 - To whom the information will be released
 - Who will access the information
 - The purpose of sharing the information
 - The timeline, including dates, within which the release of information will be allowed.
- If there is a threat of imminent harm or a documented legal requirement, information may be released without written consent from the individual or legal representative. The preference would always be to inform the individual of any actions involving their personal information.
- Third party requests may be made by:
 - A legal guardian or other third-party requesting information.
 - Third parties asking for information of a deceased person.
 - Police or legal authorities as part of legal proceedings.
- No matter who is requesting information, all requests must be made in writing identifying the client or staff member, relationship to the client or staff members, and reason the information is required. Requests will be granted if:
 - Privacy criteria are met.
 - If access to the information does not endanger the individual or present any safety concerns.
 - If a court order has been received.

Access to Information

- Access to personal information is limited to authorized staff.
 - Client files can be accessed by the relevant senior manager, program manager, and those employees directly involved in providing services including practicum students and volunteers.
 - Staff files are retained centrally and can be accessed by Human Resources, Finance or other delegated staff. Managers and supervisors have limited access through the human resource software. Human resource documents may be retained for short periods in departments for purposes such as hiring or performance appraisal but must be sent to Human Resources or destroyed as soon as the purpose has been achieved.

- Unauthorized access to personal files may constitute a breach of professional conduct and result in disciplinary action.
- Personnel, clients, or their legal representatives may request access to their own records, in writing. Where a client is not able to write, staff will provide assistance in making the request.
- As per PIPA and PIPEDA, clients and staff who have made a written request may see all information on their personal file and take copies except for:
 - information related to legal proceedings.
 - any disclosures that would threaten the security of an individual or interfere with law enforcement.
 - disclosures that would require an excessive expense or burden on the agency.
 - information that reveals the identify of someone who provided an opinion in confidence, when that person does not consent to revealing their identity (references, colleague feedback etc.)
 - material that originates with a third party such as health information from Alberta Health Services or reports from a contractor or counsellor. These must be requested directly from the source.

Any questions about the collection and privacy of information please contact:

Unison

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