Privacy Policy

How I collect, use, store and protect your personal information

Your privacy matters to me. Counselling relies on trust, and part of that trust is knowing your information is handled with care. This policy explains how I manage personal and health information in line with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and its Australian Privacy Principles, and the Health Records Act 2001 (Vic) and its Health Privacy Principles. I also follow the PACFA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (2026) and the Victorian General Code of Conduct for general health service providers.

What I collect

- Contact details: name, address, phone, email, date of birth and an emergency contact.
- Health information: the reasons you are seeking counselling, relevant health and wellbeing history, and brief notes from our sessions.
- Other details, with your consent: your GP or other practitioners, referral letters, and for young people, parent or guardian details and any parenting orders.
- Billing details: invoices and payment records. I do not keep your card or bank details once a payment is processed.

How and why I collect it

Most information comes directly from you, through conversations, intake forms, emails, texts or online bookings. Occasionally it comes from someone else, such as a referring GP or a parent, and only with your knowledge or consent.

I use your information to provide safe, effective counselling, to manage appointments and payments, to contact you, and to meet my legal and professional obligations.

You may use a first name only or a pseudonym when making an enquiry. Because of my duty of care, I need your real name and contact details once counselling begins.

Who I share it with

I do not share your information without your consent, except in the limited situations set out in my "**Confidentiality and its Limits"** statement, which applies in the case of a serious risk to someone's safety or a legal requirement. I never sell your information or use it for marketing.

How I store and protect it

- Client records are kept in the Halaxy database, a secure practice management system that stores data in Australia, with encryption and two-factor authentication.
- My work computer is encrypted and password protected and is used for practice purposes only.
- Email and Google Drive are used for administration. I keep sensitive details out of email wherever possible.
- Some services I use, such as Zoom and Google, may store or process data on servers outside Australia. I choose reputable providers with strong security and privacy protections.
- Records are kept for at least 7 years after our last session, or for a client under 18, until they turn 25. They are then securely destroyed.

AI Scribe (note-taking support)

With your permission, I may use Halaxy's AI Scribe during sessions. It listens in real time and drafts a summary for my notes, so I can give you my full attention rather than writing.

- It is only used if you agree, and you can say no or change your mind at any time. This will not affect your care in any way.
- No audio recording is saved. Only the written summary is kept, securely in your Halaxy file in Australia.
- Your information is not used to train the AI.
- I check and edit every note myself. The AI never makes decisions about you or your care.

Your rights

You can ask to see your records or correct them at any time. My **Records, Access and Correction** process explains how. If a data breach ever occurred, I would follow my **Data Breach Response** process, including telling you if you were at risk of serious harm.

Questions or concerns

Please talk with me first. If you are not satisfied, you can contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (oaic.gov.au, 1300 363 992) or the Health Complaints Commissioner Victoria (hcc.vic.gov.au, 1300 582 113).

I review this policy each year, and when the law changes. The current version is available on my website or on request.

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