

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

PURPOSE

The Tautoko Tāne Aotearoa ('TTA') Confidentiality Policy ('Policy') provides guidelines for peer-workers (both employees, contractors, and volunteers), trustees and advisors working for the national organisation or TTA Member Organisations ('TMO's).

The purpose of the Policy is to ensure that any personal information relating to peer-workers and the male survivors they support or TTA trustees or advisors, which is private and not public knowledge or information that an individual has not consented to and/or would not expect to be shared ('Confidential Information'), is adequately secured, protected and only used in the best interests of the information owner – the peer worker, male survivor, trustee or advisor who is the subject of the information or to whom the information refers.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all peer-workers (employees, contractors, and volunteers), trustees and advisors engaged by TTA or an TMO.

The Policy is intended to provide a useful framework for ensuring that Confidential Information is appropriately managed and controlled by all TTA or TMO peer-workers, trustees, and advisors.

OBJECTIVES

Applying this Policy will ensure that:

- Peer-workers, trustees and advisors understand their obligations and responsibilities relating to the proper acquisition, management and disclosure of Confidential Information;
- Male survivors are aware of their rights in respect of the acquisition, management and disclosure of their Confidential Information; and
- There is alignment with the relevant legislation (Human Rights Act, Crimes Act, Health and Disability Act, Oranga Tamariki Act and Children's Act 2014)

DEFINITIONS

Advisor

Means any individual or organisation that is engaged (remunerated or voluntary) to provide advisory or consultancy services to TTA, and TMO or any individual working for these organisations in a capacity that has potential to affect peer-workers ability to ensure the safety of children and young people.

Confidential information	Means any information that is private and not public knowledge or information that an individual has not consented to and/or would not expect to be shared. It Includes person-identifiable information (refer definition below). This information can take many forms including male survivor peer-support records, peer-worker records, confidential TTA or TMO organisational information.
Information Owner	The person (in this context usually peer-worker, male survivor, trustee or advisor) who is the subject of the information or to whom the information refers.
Male survivor	Means a male who has experienced sexual, physical, emotional, psychological and or family violence, abuse or harm and who is supported by a peer-worker required to comply with this Policy.
TMO	Is an organisation that is affiliated via formal membership agreement as an official Member Organisation of TTA.
TTA	Is the national organisation Tautoko Tāne Aotearoa which provides national advocacy for male survivors and governance, policy, coordination, and representation for TMO's.
Peer-worker	Means an individual engaged as employee contractor, or volunteer by TTA or an TMO to provide peer-support services to male survivors.
Personal identifiable information	('PII) Person-identifiable information is anything that contains the means to identify a person, e.g. name, address, postcode, date of birth, IRD or ACC or passport number etc.
Privacy Commissioner	Means the person appointed by the NZ Minister of Justice to this role as defined in the Privacy Act 2020
Privacy Officer	Means the TTA or TMO trustee or manager appointed as the organisational Privacy Officer in accordance with the Privacy Act 2020
Trustee	Means a trustee of TTA or an TMO

PRINCIPLES

Confidential information about peer-workers and the male survivors they support, trustees and advisors should always be:

- Obtained fairly and with informed consent as appropriate;
- Acquired only for the purposes of providing TTA or TMO services, including meeting any legal or statutory obligations relating to those services;
- Maintained as accurate and up-to-date;
- Used only for the purpose for which it was acquired and in accordance with this Policy and the law;
- Retained only as necessary to meet TTA or TMO service, legal or statutory requirements;

- Available to the information owner being the person (peer-worker, male survivor, trustee or advisor) who is the subject of the information or to whom the information refers;
- Not disclosed to third parties without consent other than when disclosure is required by the law and then only on a need-to-know basis and 'in confidence'; and
- Protected against loss, improper or unlawful disclosure when it is received, stored, transmitted or disposed of.

CORE ELEMENTS

The Policy has six core elements' that together reflect TTA's commitment to assuring the confidentiality of information about peer-workers, male survivor's and TTA and TMO trustees and advisors.

1. Commitment to Confidentiality

TTA and TMO's must ensure that the terms of engagement of peer-workers (employees and volunteers), trustees and advisors include a commitment to the protection of Confidential Information and provide that any breaches of that commitment may be regarded as serious misconduct and may result in disciplinary action that could include termination of their engagement.

Peer-workers will treat all information provided by male survivors, including any communications, as Confidential Information unless the male survivor gives informed consent for the disclosure of some or all of such information.

2. Provision of informed Consent

Peer-workers must inform the male survivors about the relevant provisions of this policy and in particular the nature and extent of confidentiality offered in relation to their engagement with TTA or TMO services.

Peer-workers should assure male survivors that Confidential Information about them will not be collected, recorded or disclosed to any third party without their informed consent except when:

- There is serious danger in the immediate or foreseeable future to the male survivor or others (including the protection of children or young people); or
- Disclosure is necessary to comply with the law (including matter of serious illegality); or
- Disclosure is made under the provisions of a TTA and TMO approved supervision contract provided that contract has provisions that support the confidentially obligations of peer-workers covered by this Policy; or
- In the opinion of the peer-worker, the male survivor's capacity to give informed consent is impaired provided that any decision made by the peer-worker to disclose the information is in the best interests of the male survivor and intended, as far as practicable, to safeguard his rights.

Peer-workers will respect the rights of children and young people to give age-appropriate information and have the ability to consent on their own behalf, commensurate with their capacity to do so.

Peer-workers must inform male survivors that they are entitled to withdraw their consent to the collection, recording or disclosure of their Confidential Information at any time except where the maintenance and/or disclosure of such information is required to comply with legal or contractual requirements.

3. Sharing Confidential Information

TTA and TMO's are responsible for:

- Protecting all the Confidential Information they hold, whether in electronic or physical form, and ensuring that they can justify any decision to share that information;
- Always prioritising the best interests of the Information Owner whenever Confidential Information is shared with any third party;
- Ensuring that Confidential Information is only shared with the appropriate people in appropriate circumstances, including with informed consent as appropriate, and in accordance with this Policy, TTA's Child Protection Policy or the law;
- Limiting the information shared to the minimum required to reasonably fulfil the purpose of the information sharing and/or meet legal or statutory obligations; and
- Providing appropriate safeguards for securing the electronic or physical storage and/or transmission of Confidential Information via emails, faxes, mail, courier etc.

If TTA, and/or TMO or a peer-worker are required (by warrant or subpoena) to give evidence in Court, confidentiality and the 'privilege of client information' should be assumed (in accordance with the male survivor's wishes) until all legal avenues have been explored.

Where peer-workers are uncertain about their obligations and/or responsibilities relating to information sharing and/or disclosure requests they should refer to their manager and/or the organisational Privacy Officer¹ as appropriate.

4. Abusing Privilege

When dealing with Confidential Information of any nature, peer-workers, trustees, or advisors must be aware of their responsibilities and obligations as provided in the TTA Code of Ethics, this Policy and the law.

It is strictly forbidden for peer-workers, trustees or advisors to knowingly browse, search for, or look at any Confidential Information without a legitimate purpose. Actions of this kind will be viewed as a serious breach of this Policy.

¹ The Privacy Officer for TTA is the Chair of the Professional Practice Committee or his/her Nominee; The Privacy Officer for an TMO is the Manager

5. Assuring Security

Wherever possible, Confidential Information that is stored electronically, should be held in secure (preferably 'cloud-based') environments and accessed via secure (password controlled) user-interfaces.

Passwords that permit access to Confidential Information must be kept secure and must not be disclosed to unauthorised persons.

Peer workers, trustees or advisors must not use someone else's password to gain access to such information. Actions of this kind will be viewed as a serious breach of this Policy.

Whenever peer-workers, trustees and advisors need to carry Confidential Information whilst travelling to, or working from, work-locations they must ensure the security of that information.

Where Confidential Information is stored in electronic form on personal (mobile) electronic devices (e.g. laptops, tablets, USB sticks etc.), such information:

- Must be password secured and only stored on devices that are appropriately secured by their owners;
- Should not be stored on personal devices (e.g. home computers) that are accessible by other people; and
- Should only be stored on personal devices when necessary to provide TTA and TMO services and limited, as far as practicable to the minimum information required to perform the service.

6. Assuring Confidentiality

Good practice requires that all organisations that handle Confidential Information implement appropriate protocols and procedures to assure the security and proper use of such information.

Given the potential risks for TTA and its TMO's relating to the loss or improper disclosure of Confidential Information, TTA reserve the right to audit TMO compliance with this policy including the effectiveness of their protocols and procedures for assuring the security and proper use of Confidential Information.

Any such audits will be conducted under the supervision of the TTA Privacy Officer.

7. Breaching Confidentiality

Any known or suspected breaches of this policy must be reported to the TMO Privacy Officer, or in his or her absence, the Chair of the TMO Board of Trustees. Serious breaches of this policy, where it is reasonable to believe that serious harm has or may be caused to any individual or group of individuals, must be reported to the Chair of the TTA Board of Trustees

Where it is reasonable to believe that there has been a loss of, or improper disclosure of, Confidential Information that likely to cause serious harm to an individual or group of individuals, the nature of that loss or improper disclosure must be reported to the Privacy Commissioner and to the affected individuals.

[Reporting](#)