

Confidentiality Policy for Empower Neurodiversity

Introduction

At Empower Neurodiversity, we are committed to providing a safe and supportive therapeutic environment for all clients, where trust and respect are foundational. As part of this commitment, confidentiality is paramount in our therapeutic practice. We adhere to strict confidentiality standards to protect the privacy of all individuals who access our services. This policy outlines how we manage and safeguard client information, ensuring compliance with ethical, legal, and regulatory requirements.

1. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all personal, medical, and therapeutic information shared between the client and Empower Neurodiversity, including verbal, written, and electronic communications. It is applicable to all therapy services provided by Empower Neurodiversity, including one-to-one therapy, group sessions, assessments, consultations, and follow-up support.

2. Our Commitment to Confidentiality

Empower Neurodiversity is committed to:

- Ensuring that all client information remains confidential and is only used for the purpose of providing therapy.
- Protecting the privacy of clients, maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and ethics in every interaction.
- Keeping all records secure, whether stored digitally or physically, and limiting access to authorized personnel only.
- Informing clients of the limits of confidentiality before therapy begins and respecting their rights to privacy.

3. What Information is Confidential?

All information shared between the client and therapist is considered confidential. This includes but is not limited to:

- Personal identification details (e.g., name, address, contact information).
 - Medical and psychological history.
 - Any information disclosed during therapy sessions, including personal experiences, emotions, and challenges.
 - Any notes, records, or reports created during therapy sessions.
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4. Limits to Confidentiality

While confidentiality is a core aspect of therapy, there are specific circumstances where information may need to be shared, even without the client's consent. These circumstances include:

- **Risk of harm:** If there is a concern that the client or another person may be at risk of harm (e.g., physical injury, neglect, or abuse), the therapist has an ethical and legal duty to share information to protect safety.
- **Legal requirements:** If required by law (e.g., a court order or subpoena), the therapist may be compelled to disclose confidential information.
- **Serious mental health concerns:** If a client is at risk of serious harm to themselves or others (e.g., suicidal thoughts or intentions), the therapist may need to break confidentiality in order to protect the client or others.
- **Child protection:** If a client is a minor and there are concerns of abuse or neglect, the therapist may have a legal obligation to disclose information to child protection services.

In these situations, the therapist will, where possible, inform the client of the need to share information and involve them in the decision-making process.

5. How Confidentiality is Maintained

To protect client confidentiality, Empower Neurodiversity follows the following practices:

- **Secure storage:** All client records are stored securely, whether in paper or digital format. Digital records are stored on encrypted devices or platforms, and paper records are kept in locked cabinets.
- **Restricted access:** Only the therapist (sole trader) has access to client records. In the event that a colleague or external professional is involved in providing additional services (with client consent), information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.
- **No recording of sessions:** Therapy sessions will not be recorded without the explicit consent of the client. If recordings are made for training or quality purposes, clients will be informed, and their consent will be sought beforehand.
- **Secure communication:** Any communication (e.g., emails, text messages) with clients will be done using secure channels, ensuring that information is not at risk of being intercepted.

6. Client Rights Regarding Confidentiality

Clients have the right to:

- **Know how their information will be used:** Clients will be informed of the confidentiality policy at the start of therapy, including any limits to confidentiality.
- **Access their records:** Clients have the right to access their personal records upon request, in accordance with applicable laws and ethical guidelines. Clients may request to review or request changes to their records if they believe there are inaccuracies.
- **Withdraw consent:** Clients may withdraw consent for information sharing at any time. However, this may limit the therapist's ability to provide certain services and may lead to the need for an urgent review of safety concerns, depending on the situation.

7. Training and Professional Standards

As the sole practitioner, I am committed to ongoing professional development and training regarding confidentiality and data protection. This includes:

- Regularly reviewing relevant laws and ethical guidelines related to confidentiality.
- Attending training sessions and workshops that address confidentiality in therapeutic settings.
- Maintaining an understanding of data protection regulations (such as GDPR or relevant national data protection laws) and implementing best practices in information handling.

8. Data Protection and Privacy

Empower Neurodiversity is committed to protecting client data in accordance with relevant data protection laws, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) or equivalent local legislation. Key practices include:

- **Data minimization:** Only collecting and storing information that is necessary for the provision of therapy services.
- **Accuracy:** Ensuring that client information is accurate and up to date.
- **Retention:** Keeping client information for only as long as necessary for the purpose of therapy, or as required by law, after which it will be securely destroyed or anonymized.
- **Confidentiality agreements:** If any external contractors or agencies are involved in supporting therapy services, confidentiality agreements will be in place to protect client information.

9. Feedback and Complaints

Clients are encouraged to provide feedback regarding their experience with confidentiality practices, and to raise any concerns they may have. Should a client feel their confidentiality has been breached or their rights violated, they are encouraged to discuss the matter with the therapist directly or to seek external support through the relevant professional body or regulator.

10. Contact Information

For further questions or concerns about this confidentiality policy, clients can contact:

- **Catherine Hurley:** - Owner, 'Empower Neurodiversity'
- **Email:** catherine@empower-neurodiversity.co.uk
- **Phone:** 0774 302 0223

Date: 30/03/2025

Reviewed by: Catherine Hurley

This confidentiality policy reflects the commitment of Empower Neurodiversity to protect the privacy of all clients while ensuring that therapy services are delivered in a safe, ethical, and professional manner. Clients' trust and confidentiality are fundamental to our practice, and we work diligently to uphold these principles at all times.

Signed (Client)

Date