

Down South Psychology

ABN: 31 650 445 748

Dr. Christine Botha-Webb

Clinical and Counselling Psychologist
Medicare Provider No. 4677362H
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Down South Psychology
20 Ingleton Drive
Hallett Cove, 5158, ADELAIDE



CONSENT FOR EMAIL COMMUNICATION

This practice offers clients/guardians the opportunity to communicate by email for some limited purposes. This form provides information about the risks of email, how we will protect your information and your responsibilities regarding email communication. This practice will also use this form to document your consent to communicate with you by email.

Email is not appropriate for urgent or emergency situations, nor is it a substitute for face-to-face or telephone/telehealth consultations.

Any email communication between you and the practice will be added to your client file and retained for a minimum of 7 years, or if clients are under the age of 18 at the time of treatment, until they are 25 years of age. As emails are a part of a client file, other individuals authorised to access the file will have access to those emails. Files of clients are held in a physical filing cabinet at 20 Ingleton Drive, Hallett Cove, 5158; on the clinic's practice management software and on secure hard drives at 20 Ingleton Drive, Hallett Cove, 5158. You may access the information in your file on request, subject to the exceptions in the Privacy Act 1988 (<https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A03712/latest/text>). As email communication forms part of your client file, this information will be kept confidential and secure except when:

1. A court subpoena or other disclosure is required or authorised by law
2. Your consent cannot be gained due to a requirement to get you emergency services during a medical crisis
3. If there is unauthorised access to data held by the clinic some limited information may need to be shared with the Office of the Information Ombudsman.
4. Failure to disclose the information would place you or another person at risk of harm
5. Given your prior approval or consent of a parent or guardian who is legally authorised to act on your behalf to provide a written report to another professional or agency or discuss information with another person, e.g., parent or employer
6. You have provided your consent to share your information for a specific reason and purpose.
7. You would reasonably expect your personal information to be disclosed to another professional or agency, and disclosure is directly related to the primary purpose for which it was collected, such as to inform your GP of treatment and progress, to claim Medicare rebates on your behalf etc.
8. Clinical consultation with another professional is required to provide better services. If this occurs, identifying details will remain confidential.

Risks

Communication by email has several risks, including, but not limited to, the following:

- This practice cannot guarantee that an email will be read or responded to. For example, security software can filter emails before it reaches Down South Psychology, and the intended recipient may go on personal leave unexpectedly.

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- Email can be circulated, forwarded, and stored in paper and electronic files.
- Backup copies of the email may exist even after the sender or recipient has deleted their copy.
- Email senders can easily misaddress an email, or unintended recipients can receive an email.
- Email can be intercepted, altered, forwarded, or used without authorisation or detection.
- Employers and online services have a right to archive and inspect emails transmitted through their systems.

How we will protect your information

- The practice will use reasonable means to protect the security and confidentiality of email information sent and received. However, because of the risks outlined above, we cannot guarantee the security and privacy of email communication, and we will not be liable for the inadvertent disclosure of confidential information.
- We will encrypt any documents we need to send you and forward the password to access this file by another communication method (phone or text message).
- We will verify your email prior to sending any confidential information.
- When emailing you, we will:
 - Put any identifying information in the body of the email, not in the subject line.
 - Include the general topic of the message in the email's subject line, for example, 'advice' or 'appointment'.

Client responsibilities around the use of email

- I will inform the healthcare professional of email address changes.
- When emailing a healthcare professional, I will:
 - not put identifying information in the email's subject line but will put this in the body of the email.
 - Include the general topic of the message in the email's subject line, for example, 'advice' or 'appointment'.
- I will contact the health care professional's office via alternative communication methods, such as a phone call, if a reply is not received within a reasonable period of time.
- I will not use email to communicate urgent or emergency information.
- I will not use email for communication regarding sensitive medical information.
- I am responsible for informing the healthcare professional of any information that I do not want to be sent by email.
- I am responsible for protecting my password or other means of access to email. The health care professional is not liable for breaches of confidentiality caused by me or any third party.

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Client/Guardian Agreement and Acknowledgement

Client's name: _____

Email address: _____

Contact phone number: _____

I have read and understood this consent form. I understand the risks associated with communicating via email with my healthcare provider. I consent to the conditions for using email outlined above.

Signed (Client/ Parent*/ Guardian*): _____

Print name: _____

Date: _____

*For clients unable to give informed consent.

This consent is valid for a period of 12 months and will be reviewed with you when you request this if the nature of your treatment changes or after a period of 12 months.

Note – you may withdraw your agreement anytime without any effect on service provision.