**Privacy Policy**

**Policy Scope**

The privacy policy is developed to create guidelines and procedures drawn from the Federal Privacy Act (1988) and the Information Privacy Act (2009) QLD.

**Policy Purpose**

Massage therapists have a clear understanding of their legal and ethical obligations in relation to the privacy of clients’ personal information and the application of this knowledge is in line with the Boutique Therapy Privacy Policy.

**Collection of Personal Information**

As health service providers, Boutique Therapy Massage Therapists have a legal obligation to protect the privacy of their clients' personal information.

The collection of client information, such as name, address, phone, date of birth, email address and any personal information relating to their therapy sessions can’t be shared with anyone outside the purpose of assessment and treatment.

All information is kept confidential and stored in a safe location, as dictated by the Australian Privacy Law. (Federal Privacy Act 1988)

**Boutique Therapy Massage Therapists are required to:**

comply with the 13 Australian Privacy Principles in the Federal Privacy ACT 1988

• develop a clear and articulable privacy policy

• treat all client information as private and confidential

• respect client privacy

• protect the personal information of clients

• store all client records securely

• obtain consent from the client before sharing health information with another health practitioner or third-party service provider such as an insurer.

**Health information collected from clients must be:**

• information collected for the purpose of delivering massage therapy treatment to the client.

• relevant, accurate and up to date. Ensure that the collection does not unreasonably intrude into the personal affairs of the individual.

• collected directly from the client unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so. Information can only be sought from other parties with the express permission of the client.

• Communicated openly regarding the intent of the collection. Inform the client what you will do with the health information, and who else might see it. Tell the person how they can see and correct their health information, and any consequences if they decide not to provide their information to you. If you collect health information about a person from someone else such as a minor, you must still take reasonable steps to ensure that the client is informed of the collected information.

• stored securely and not kept any longer than necessary. We keep records for 7 years as required by law then disposed of appropriately shredded. Information should be protected from unauthorised access, use or disclosure.

• explained to the client in a transparent manner. What health information about them is being stored, why it is being used and any rights they must access it.

• allowed to access their health information without unreasonable delay or expense

• to update, correct or amend their health information where necessary

• confirmed relevant and accurate before using it.

• only used for the purpose for which it was collected, or a directly related purpose that the person would expect. For example, you cannot use health information for a case study or research without the express, formal consent of the client.

• only disclosed for the purpose for which it was collected, or a directly related purpose that the person would expect. You must obtain consent from the client before disclosing health information.

• given the opportunity to expressly consent to participate in any system that links health records across more than one organisation. Only include health information about a client for the purpose of the health records linkage system if they have expressly consented to this.

**Massage therapists do not:**

• share a client’s personal information with a third party without the express permission of the client

• discuss a client’s personal information with other clients, friends, or relatives

• discuss a client’s personal information with friends / relatives, a guardian or caregiver of the client

• solicit overly intimate details from clients.

Boutique Therapists should be mindful of the following risks in the mobile massage industry, in relation to client privacy and confidentiality:

* Boutique Therapists should be mindful when communicating verbally with a client in their own home, be conscious of others being able to hear because they are in the general vicinity
* Physical security of client records in transit. Documents must be stored in a closed bag when being transferred from the location to the car and the car must be lock if leaving it.
* Files are to be moved to a lockable cupboard inside a room. Files are not to be left in a car overnight.

**References**

Federal Privacy Act (1988)

Information Privacy Act (2009) QLD