



Byrne Psychology Professional Corporation

PRIVACY POLICY

Privacy of personal information is an important principle to Byrne Psychology Professional Corporation (operating as Connect Cognitive Therapy). We are committed to collecting, using and disclosing personal information responsibly and only to the extent necessary for the goods and services we provide. We also try to be open and transparent as to how we handle personal information. This document describes our privacy policies.

WHAT IS PERSONAL INFORMATION?

Personal information is information about an identifiable individual. Personal information comprises information about an individual's *personal characteristics* (e.g., gender, age, income, home address, phone number, ethnic background, family status); *health* (e.g., health history, health conditions, health services received by them); or, *activities and views* (e.g., religion, politics, opinions expressed by an individual, an opinion or evaluation of an individual). Personal information is protected by privacy legislation and is different from business information (e.g., an individual's business address and telephone number), which is not protected by privacy legislation.

WHO WE ARE

Our organization, Byrne Psychology Professional Corporation, includes registered psychologists, registered social workers, therapy trainees working under supervision, and an administrative assistant. Our practice also uses third party agencies and consultants that may, in the course of their duties, have minimal access to personal information we have. We have professional relationships with third party service providers to provide the following services: bookkeeping and accounting, credit card billing, maintaining websites and social media accounts, and legal services. We restrict their access to any personal information we hold as much as is reasonably possible. We also have their assurance that they follow appropriate privacy principles.

WE COLLECT PERSONAL INFORMATION: PRIMARY PURPOSES

About clients

Our primary purpose for collecting personal information is to deliver appropriate psychological and other clinical services. For example, we obtain information regarding the client's health history, including family history, physical condition and function and social situation in order to help us evaluate their health needs, and recommend any additional services that may be beneficial to the client's condition. This information also allows us to identify any changes that have occurred in the client's condition as a direct result of therapy. Information from you will not be collected for any other purpose (such as conducting research) without first obtaining your informed consent. If you do not want to provide consent for the collection of this latter kind of information, you are free to refuse and there will be no impact on your services.

www.connectcbt.com

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Personal health information will be collected directly from you, except when you have provided consent to collect such information from others (such as a spouse, family physician, or mental health professional with whom you have previously worked), when others provide this information permitted under the Personal Health Information Protection Act (2004), or when the law requires the collection of such information without your consent (such as emergency situations where the purpose of collecting information is to prevent potential harm).

By law and in accordance with professional standards, Byrne Psychology Professional Corporation is required to keep a record of contacts with and services to you. Your record includes information that you have provided or have authorized Byrne Psychology Professional Corporation to receive, such as consent forms, session notes, results of any assessments, billing information, contact records, and correspondence sent to or received relating to your services. The physical records are the property of Byrne Psychology Professional Corporation; however, you have rights regarding access to and disclosure from your record, regardless of the form in which the information is recorded. In this office, information is recorded in both written and electronic form.

About members of the general public

For members of the general public, our primary purposes for collecting personal information is to communicate with them about services provided at Byrne Psychology Professional Corporation. For example, we might collect home or work phone numbers, fax numbers and email addresses. We try to obtain consent before using any such personal information, but where this is not, for any reason, possible, we will upon request immediately remove any personal information from our distribution list.

About web site and application users

Byrne Psychology Professional Corporation may collect and/or log Internet Protocol addresses, Internet domain names, the web browser and operating system used to access our web site(s) and/or applications, the files visited, the time spent in each file, and the time and date of each visit. We retain this information, and we retain them together with personally identifying information you may provide.

Byrne Psychology Professional Corporation may also uses cookies on its web site(s). Cookies are identifiers that can be sent from a web site via your browser to be placed on your computer's hard drive. Thereafter when you visit a web site, a message is sent back to the web server by the browser accessing the web site. You may elect not to accept cookies by changing the designated settings on your web browser. However, not utilizing cookies may prevent you from using certain functions and features of web sites and applications. The information collected from the use of cookies is used and analyzed to improve the functioning of the web site(s) and applications and our service to you, and to personalize your web-browsing experience. We use the information we collect through the use of cookies for our business purposes, including operation of the web site(s) and applications.

About contract staff, volunteers and students

For people who are contracted to do work for us (e.g., temporary workers), our primary purpose for collecting personal information is to ensure we can contact them in the future (e.g., for new assignments) and for necessary work-related communication (e.g., sending out paycheques, year-end tax receipts). Examples of the type of personal information we collect for those purposes include home addresses and telephone numbers. It is rare for us to collect such information without prior consent, but it might happen in the case of a health emergency (e.g., a SARS outbreak) or to investigate a possible breach of law (e.g., if a theft were to occur in the clinic). If

contract staff, volunteers or students wish a letter of reference or an evaluation, we will collect information about their work-related performance and provide a report as authorized by them.

WE COLLECT PERSONAL INFORMATION: RELATED & SECONDARY PURPOSES

We also obtain, collect, and disclose personal information for reasons related to or secondary to our primary purposes. The following are some examples of our related and secondary purposes:

- ❑ To invoice clients for goods or services that were not paid for at the time, to process credit card payments or to collect unpaid accounts.
- ❑ To advise clients and others of special events or opportunities (e.g., a seminar, development of a new service, arrival of a new product) that we have available.
- ❑ Our clinic reviews client and other files for the purpose of ensuring that we provide high quality services, including assessing the performance of our staff. In addition, external consultants (e.g., auditors, lawyers, practice consultants, voluntary accreditation programs) may on our behalf do audits and continuing quality improvement reviews of our Clinic, including reviewing client files and interviewing our staff.
- ❑ Psychologists and other associates are regulated by their respective professional regulatory bodies (e.g., College of Psychologists of Ontario) who may inspect our records and interview our staff as a part of their regulatory activities in the public interest. In addition, as professionals, we will report serious misconduct, incompetence or incapacity of other practitioners, whether they belong to other organizations or our own. Also, our organization believes that it should report information suggesting serious illegal behaviour to the authorities. External regulators have their own strict privacy obligations. Sometimes these reports include personal information about our clients, or other individuals, to support the concern (e.g., improper services). Also, like all organizations, various government agencies (e.g., Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, Information and Privacy Commissioner, Human Rights Commission, etc.) have the authority to review our files and interview our staff as a part of their mandates. In these circumstances, we may consult with professionals (e.g., lawyers, accountants) who will investigate the matter and report back to us.
- ❑ The cost of some goods/services provided by the organization to clients is paid for by third parties (e.g., WSIB, private insurance, Assistive Devices Program). These third-party payers often have your consent or legislative authority to direct us to collect and disclose to them certain information in order to demonstrate client entitlement to this funding.
- ❑ Clients or other individuals we deal with may have questions about our goods or services after they have been received. We also provide ongoing services for many of our clients over a period of months or years for which our previous records are helpful. We retain our client information for a minimum of ten years after the last contact to enable us to respond to those questions and provide these services (our regulatory College also requires us to retain our client records).
- ❑ If Byrne Psychology Professional Corporation or its assets were to be sold, the purchaser would want to conduct a “due diligence” review of the Clinic’s records to ensure that it is a viable business that has been honestly portrayed to the purchaser. This due diligence may involve some review of our accounting and service files. The purchaser would not be able to remove or record personal information. Before being provided access to the files, the purchaser must provide a written promise to keep all

personal information confidential. Only reputable purchasers who have already agreed to buy the organization's business or its assets would be provided access to personal information, and only for the purpose of completing their due diligence search prior to closing the purchase.

Clients can choose to opt out from some of these related or secondary purposes (e.g. by declining to receive notice of special events, paying for services in advance, etc.). We do not, however, have much choice about some of these related or secondary purposes (e.g., external regulation).

LIMITS TO CONFIDENTIALITY

With few exceptions, your personal health information will not be disclosed to people outside of Byrne Psychology Professional Corporation without your knowledge and express consent. Although written consent is preferred, in time-sensitive situations if you provide verbal consent to share information, written consent can be obtained during our next meeting. The exceptions are:

- (a) Situations where disclosure without consent is allowed by law (e.g., clear and imminent risk of serious bodily harm to someone, or professional or legal consultation)
- (b) Situations where disclosure is required by law (such as the mandatory reporting of a child who may be in need of protection, the mandatory reporting of a regulated health professional who has sexually abused a client, or a court order to release information from a record)

If other limits of confidentiality apply to your situation, they will be identified and discussed with you before proceeding with your service.

When providing consent to the disclosure of your personal health information, you may restrict the information that Byrne Psychology Professional Corporation shares (with the exceptions noted above). If, however, it is our opinion that the information you wish to restrict is reasonably necessary for another health service provider to provide appropriate services, we are required by law to inform the other provider that you have refused consent to provide some needed information.

The law requires that any disclosure of your personal health information is limited to information that is reasonably necessary for the purpose of that disclosure and does not include private information obtained by a third party. Professional ethical standards governing our practice also require that we not disclose any information that might cause serious harm to someone, unless the law requires disclosure.

PROTECTING PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please be advised that all personal information is kept confidential through the use of established protocols at Byrne Psychology Professional Corporation. We have taken the following steps to ensure confidentiality of our clients:

- ☐ Paper information is either under supervision or secured in a locked or restricted area.
- ☐ Electronic hardware is either under supervision or secured in a locked or restricted area at all times. In addition, passwords are used on computers.
- ☐ Paper information is transmitted through sealed, addressed envelopes or boxes by reputable companies.
- ☐ Electronic information is transmitted either through a direct line or has identifiers removed or is encrypted.

- ❑ Our staff members are trained to collect, use and disclose personal information only as necessary to fulfil their duties and in accordance with our privacy policy.
- ❑ External consultants and agencies with access to personal information must enter into privacy agreements with us.

RETENTION AND DESTRUCTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

We are required by our respective professional regulatory bodies (e.g., College of Psychologists of Ontario) to retain clients' records for at least 10 years beyond the date of last contact. We also need to retain personal health information to ensure that we can answer any queries that the client may have about the services provided. However, the client may request to remove certain contact information upon termination of services. We ensure that all paper records are destroyed by cross-cut shredding. We destroy electronic information by deleting it and, when the hardware is discarded, we ensure that the hard drive is physically destroyed. Alternatively, we may send some or all of the client file to our client.

YOU CAN LOOK AT YOUR INFORMATION

With only a few exceptions, you have the right to see your personal information in our records by contacting Byrne Psychology Professional Corporation. We can help you identify what records we might have about you. We will also try to assist you in understanding any information you do not understand (e.g., short forms, technical language, etc.). We will need to confirm your identity prior to providing you access to any personal information. We reserve the right to charge a nominal fee for such requests. If the record contains personal health information about another individual, that person's information must be removed before you access the record. Other exceptions include access to raw data from psychological assessments, information provided in confidence by a third party, and information that could result in serious harm to someone's treatment or recovery (including your own) or in serious bodily harm to someone (including yourself).

If you are the custodial parent or guardian of an adolescent under the age of 18 years who has received or is receiving service, you may not access the personal health information of that adolescent unless (a) s/he has provided written consent for you to access such information, or (b) s/he has been deemed incompetent to consent to the service on her or his own.

We may ask you to put your request in writing. If we cannot give you access, we will tell you within 30 days if at all possible and tell you the reason, as best we can, as to why we cannot give you access.

If you believe there is a mistake in the information, you have the right to ask for it to be corrected. This applies to factual information and not to any professional opinions we may have formed. We may ask you to provide documentation that our files are wrong. Where we agree that we made a mistake, we will make the correction and notify anyone to whom we sent this information. If we do not agree that we have made a mistake, we will still agree to include in our file a brief statement from you on the point and we will forward that statement to anyone else who received the earlier information.

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION?

These privacy policies and procedures have been developed in accordance with the laws of Ontario, as well as professional regulations and ethical standards. Further details regarding the applicable laws, regulations and ethical standards may be found at the websites of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (www.health.gov.on.ca), The College of Psychologists of Ontario (www.cpo.on.ca), and the Canadian Psychological Association (www.cpa.ca).

Complaints or general inquiries may be addressed to our Information Officer, Dr. Nelson Byrne, who can be reached at:

211-168 Queen Street South | Mississauga, ON | L5M 1K8
Tel: (905) 275-0665

Dr. Byrne will attempt to answer any questions or concerns you might have.

If you wish to make a formal complaint about our privacy practices, you may make it in writing to our Information Officer. Dr. Byrne will acknowledge receipt of your complaint, and ensure that it is investigated promptly and that you are provided with a formal written decision with reasons.

If you have a concern about the professionalism or competence of our services or the mental or physical capacity of any of our professional staff we would ask you to discuss those concerns with us. However, if we cannot satisfy your concerns, you are entitled to complain to the regulatory body that oversees the practice of the professional in question. In most cases, this will be the College of Psychologists of Ontario. However, depending on the professional, this may be the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers, or the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario.

COLLEGE OF PSYCHOLOGISTS OF ONTARIO

[110 Eglinton Ave West (Suite 500), Toronto, ON, M4R 1A3]

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORKERS AND SOCIAL SERVICE WORKERS

[250 Bloor St E, Toronto, ON M4W 1E6]

COLLEGE OF REGISTERED PSYCHOTHERAPISTS OF ONTARIO

[375 University Avenue (Suite 803), Toronto, ON M5G 2J5]

This policy is made under the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) and the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA). These are complex Acts and provide some additional exceptions to the privacy principles that are too detailed to set out here. There are some rare exceptions to the commitments set out above.

BY SUBMITTING PERSONAL INFORMATION TO BYRNE PSYCHOLOGY PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION, YOU SIGNIFY YOUR ACCEPTANCE OF THIS PRIVACY POLICY. BY USING THE SITES OR THE APPLICATIONS, YOU ALSO ACCEPT THE TERMS OF USE POSTED ON THE WEB SITE(S).

For more general inquiries, the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Canada oversees the administration of the privacy legislation in the private sector. The Commissioner also acts as a kind of ombudsman for privacy disputes. The Information and Privacy Commissioner can be reached at:

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