



Policy and Procedure # 370

Confidentiality of Client Information

Approval: _____ Effective Date: 5/9/24

POLICY:

EFI employees will maintain confidentiality of client records and will not disclose client information other than for treatment, payment, and agency operations without the specific, informed consent of the individual, his/her legal representative, or pursuant to court order, except as authorized by law or permitted by the client or legal representative.

EFI employees will take precautions to safeguard the handling and disposition of confidential or sensitive information by using locked file cabinets where practical and necessary, and onsite shredding such documents when they are no longer needed.

REFERENCE: WAC [388-101D-0370](#)

PROCEDURE:

1. EFI believes that access to information and security and privacy of data is an absolute right of every client and that clients are entitled to see a copy of all personal information held about them and to correct any error or omission in it.
2. Employee Should do the following:
 - a. Ensure that all files or written information of a confidential nature are stored in a secure manner in a locked filing cabinet and are only accessed by authorized staff that have a need and a right to access them.
 - b. Ensure that all files or written information of a confidential nature are not left out or unattended where they can be read by unauthorized staff or others.
 - c. Wherever practical or reasonable fill in all logs and client notes in the presence of and with the co-operation of the client concerned.
 - d. Ensure that all client records and clients' notes, including care plans, are signed and dated.
 - e. Check regularly on the accuracy of data being entered into computers.
 - f. Always use the personal account and passwords to access the computer system and not abuse them by passing them on to people who should not have them.
3. Requests for Information
 - a. EFI will not provide information to relatives, spouses, friends or advocates without the signed consent of legal representative or guardian of the individual client concerned. All inquiries for information, even if they are from close relatives, should be referred to a supervisor, the client's legal representative or guardian.



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- b. When requests are made for confidential information by State and Federal agencies, or any transfer or inspection of records is made, they will be made only with written authorization from the client. If the client is unable to give their consent EFI must be furnished with a written authorization from the individual's legal guardian.
 - i. Exceptions to the authorizations include agencies that require access to client records as part of agency contracts. i.e. DDA, RCS, DRW, etc.
 - c. EFI is also often asked for reports by insurance companies, solicitors, employers, etc. Before providing requested reports, written consent is required from the guardian, legal representative, or client concerned. EFI will not divulge information without consent unless obliged to by law.
4. Record Keeping
- a. EFI will maintain and keep a current record for each client, but only keep pertinent information to ensure that the care we offer as an organization is of the highest quality.
 - b. Clients and guardians have access to their records and information about them held by EFI, as well as opportunities to help maintain their personal records
 - c. Records will be maintained as outlined in EFI's client records maintenance and retention P&P
5. Specific research projects using clients or their families as subjects conducted by higher education institutions or government agencies must first be given endorsement by the Department of Social and Health Services and the Board of Directors of EFI before clients and families can be contacted.