

We respect your privacy and work hard to keep your personal information safe. This document explains when information is kept confidential, when it may need to be shared, and how you can raise concerns or make a complaint.

1. Confidentiality

The information you share with us is confidential. We will not share your personal information without your consent unless disclosure is permitted or required by law.

Examples of situations where information may need to be shared include:

- If a court orders us to release information.
- If police present a valid warrant.
- If a regulatory body audits a Service provider involved in your care (for example, the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario or the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers).
- If disclosure is otherwise required or permitted by law.
- If we believe a child may be experiencing abuse or neglect.
- If we believe there is a serious risk of harm to you or someone else.
- If information is needed to address significant safety concerns.

School Safety and Violence Risk Assessment

Ray of Hope participates in violence threat and risk assessment processes with local school boards to help support safety and early intervention.

If we believe a student may present a significant risk of harm to themselves or others, or is showing increasing signs of violence-related behaviour, we may share relevant information with appropriate school officials, emergency services, or Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) teams when necessary to protect safety.

2. Information Sharing with Parents or Guardians

If you are under 18 years of age, we may discuss some information with your parent(s) or guardian(s) when it is in your best interest.

Whenever possible, we will discuss this with you in advance and involve you in decisions about what information is shared.

Your consent to Service includes consent to share relevant information with your parent(s) or guardian(s) unless you ask us to limit or withdraw that consent, where legally permitted.

3. Information Sharing Within the Circle of Care

To help you achieve your goals, we may communicate with other health-care professionals involved in your care.

This is often referred to as the **Circle of Care** and may include:

- Doctors
- Psychiatrists
- Nurses
- Pharmacists
- Mental health professionals
- Addiction treatment providers

When appropriate and legally permitted, health-care providers within the Circle of Care may share information with one another to coordinate services and provide the best possible care.

This may include:

- Discussing assessments, treatment plans, and services provided.
- Exchanging written reports.
- Sharing relevant portions of your clinical record.

You may withdraw your consent for this information sharing at any time, subject to legal and professional requirements.

4. Who Can Access Your Information

Your Service provider is not the only person who may need access to your file. Authorized Ray of Hope staff may access your information when necessary for:

- Clinical supervision
- Administrative tasks
- Crisis management
- Internal case reviews or consultations
- Auditing procedures
- Accreditation requirements
- Quality improvement activities
- Legal and regulatory obligations
- Program operations

If there is a specific provider within Youth Support Services whom you do not want to access your file, please discuss your concerns with your Service provider. We will review available options with you.

5. Teaching, Research, and Quality Improvement

We may use information to:

- Improve our services
- Measure program outcomes
- Conduct quality improvement activities, such as client satisfaction surveys
- Compile statistics
- Meet legal and regulatory requirements

Research activities, where applicable, are subject to strict privacy protections and ethics review processes.

6. Group Programs

If you participate in a group program, we will encourage all participants to respect one another's privacy.

However, we cannot guarantee that other participants will keep information shared during group sessions confidential once they leave the program.

7. Digital Communication

We may communicate with you using phone calls, video calls, email, or text messages.

While we take steps to protect your privacy, including the use of encrypted email systems, no electronic communication method is completely secure. Risks may include:

- Delivery errors
- Technical failures
- Human error
- Cybersecurity incidents

Our service providers do not communicate with clients through social media platforms such as Instagram or Facebook.

By agreeing to communicate electronically, you acknowledge and accept these risks.

8. Recording of Sessions

Sessions are generally not audio- or video-recorded.

Exceptions may include:

- Staff training or professional development purposes, with your consent.
- Safety-related reasons when determined necessary by the Program Director or designate.

You may decline recordings for training purposes and still receive services.

We also ask that you do not record sessions or take photos without the consent of your service provider.

9. Electronic Records and Technical Support

We use secure electronic systems to store and manage information, including:

- **EMHware** (electronic client records)
- **Greenspace** (questionnaires and progress monitoring)

Access is limited to authorized individuals who require the information to provide services or support program operations.

In rare situations, technical support staff from these providers may temporarily access limited information to:

- Resolve technical issues
- Restore data
- Investigate system errors
- Troubleshoot account access problems
- Support software updates and maintenance

These individuals are required to maintain the confidentiality and security of any information they access.

How to Make a Complaint

You have the right to raise concerns or make a complaint about your care. We encourage you to speak up if something does not feel right.

Step 1: Speak With Your Service Provider

Whenever possible, start by discussing your concern directly with the Service provider involved. Many issues can be resolved through a conversation.

Step 2: Contact the Program Manager

If your concern is not resolved, you may submit a written complaint and request a meeting with the Program Manager.

The Program Manager will review your concern and arrange a meeting with you as soon as reasonably possible.

Step 3: Contact the Program Director

If you remain | *If you have questions about this information or how your privacy is protected, please speak with your Service provider. We are happy to help.*
Director.

The Program Director will review the matter, may meet with you, and will work to resolve the concern.

Step 4: Contact the Chief Executive Officer

If the issue is still not resolved, you may bring your concern to the Chief Executive Officer of Ray of Hope.

External Complaints

You may also contact Home and Community Care Support Services – Waterloo Wellington:

Phone: 1-888-883-3313 or 519-883-5589

Contact Information

Program Director

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Head Office

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