



YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS AN OPEN ARMS CLIENT

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As a client of Open Arms you should expect to:

- be treated with respect, dignity and courtesy regardless of age, disability, cultural and linguistic background, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and religious or spiritual beliefs
- have fair and equal access to Open Arms services, including the use of an interpreter if required
- receive services that comply with appropriate standards of professionalism, competency and accountability
- be able to refuse any, or all, assessment and care that is offered
- have access to information about your counselling and treatment options and be involved in decision-making regarding these options
- have your right to privacy and confidentiality protected, within the limits imposed by the law and duty of care
- access your records by request, in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS AN OPEN ARMS CLIENT

In return, Open Arms expects that you:

- respect the right of other clients and staff to privacy and confidentiality
- treat other Open Arms clients and staff in a respectful manner
- ensure that you are not under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, and/or not behaving in a way which makes delivery of service difficult or dangerous
- attend appointments when they are scheduled and advise the relevant Open Arms centre, as soon as possible, if you are unable to attend a scheduled appointment
- respect Open Arms' property
- honour agreements made with Open Arms about service and provision of care.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Open Arms services provided to minors occur with the active involvement of parents in most circumstances.

Open Arms generally requires parental permission for the delivery of services to persons less than 18 years of age.

The law regards minors as being capable of giving voluntary informed consent to the provision of health services if they have sufficient maturity, usually around the age of adolescence. Open Arms requires parental permission for the referral and treatment of all persons under 15 years of age. For adolescents aged 15 – 17 years, other factors, including the young person's maturity and their preferences regarding parental involvement will be considered prior to services being provided.

Young people have the same right to confidentiality in counselling as adults, within the context of parental responsibility. Children and adolescents should be aware that it is Open Arms policy to disclose 'relevant' information to parent/s or legal guardians.

In deciding whether to disclose any information about a child or adolescent to their parent/s or other relevant person, the counsellor will take into account the maturity of the minor, the nature of the issues and any statutory or other obligations which may need to be considered, including the safety of the minor and any protection orders that note the interests of the young person.

Open Arms will inform the young person what information will be disclosed.

PROTECTING YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Open Arms is committed to preserving and upholding your rights to confidentiality and privacy.

Open Arms' records are stored securely and every effort is made to ensure that your counselling sessions and contact with Open Arms are confidential. Open Arms keeps confidential notes and reports on your counselling and group program attendance so we can provide you with appropriate professional help and for planning and evaluation purposes.

Your clinical information will not be released to the Department of Veterans' Affairs, other government agencies or external parties without your consent, unless there are exceptional circumstances where information may have to be released in accordance with the law. This would only occur where your safety or the safety of others is at serious risk, in serious criminal matters, or in response to a court direction.

If you are a member of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and you have been referred through the ADF Agreement for Services, Open Arms is required to provide periodic reports regarding your treatment to the ADF Referring Authority.

Open Arms are bound by the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs). For more information on how Open Arms manages personal information, please visit www.OpenArms.gov.au/about/confidentiality-and-privacy

FEEDBACK

Open Arms welcomes and values your feedback as it assists us in improving the standards and quality of the service.

If you have feedback about an Open Arms service you should:

- Step 1: Contact Open Arms by calling 1800 011 046 during business hours
- Step 2: If you are not satisfied after calling us, please submit your written feedback online: openarms.gov.au/about/contact-us
- Step 3: If you are still not satisfied, please write to: The National Manager – Open Arms, GPO Box 9998 Brisbane QLD 4001