

Eating Disorders: Confidentiality in Treatment

Family members, friends and support people can help you throughout the assessment, treatment and recovery phases of an eating disorder.

Their level of involvement may depend on your age, the type of relationship you have with them and whether you give permission for them to be involved.

Family and carer involvement in treatment is usually associated with better outcomes.

Think about how your family can best support you in your recovery.

All health professionals are legally required to maintain their patient's confidentiality, but there are exceptions if:

- You have given permission to share personal information with your family members
- They believe you may hurt yourself or someone else
- They are required to talk to another health professional about your treatment
- They are legally required to share confidential information

An individual's status under the NSW Mental Health Act can impact on how your information is shared. Under the Act, the primary person responsible for the individual's care is entitled to certain information regardless of the individual's consent (e.g. if the individual is an involuntary patient or under a Community Treatment Order).

Denial and secrecy are common features of these illnesses and can hinder recovery if they are not addressed.

Confidentiality for Minors

In Australia, parents and teenagers both have rights to consent to a teenager's treatment.

A young person can consent to simple health care treatments without a parent from the age of 14 years.

However, the treatment for eating disorders is complex. It is best practice for the family and/or support people of children and adolescents to be actively involved throughout the treatment process.



If you are unsure how confidentiality applies in your situation, ask the health professionals you are working with to explain it to you and your support people.