

## Privacy Policy – August 2023

Thank you for accessing our Privacy Policy.

Communitalk – Vicki Ridgeway, Director and Principal Speech Pathologist and her team of Speech Pathologists provide Speech Pathology services at Suite 3/764 Old Princes Highway Sutherland 2232 with Australian business number 96 737 843 377.

### **What is this policy about?**

We are committed to protecting your privacy in your dealings with us.

This policy explains how we manage personal information, what kinds of personal information we hold, why we hold it, and how we collect, store and handle it.

Like most private health businesses in Australia, we are bound by the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) (including the Australian Privacy Principles) (the Privacy Laws). This Policy is intended to reflect our obligations under the Privacy Laws.

Hard copies of this policy are available for free in our reception area. When we refer to “clients” or “you” below, we mean both former and current clients, as well as people who make inquiries about our products and services (i.e. potential clients).

### **What kinds of personal information do we collect and hold?**

In this policy, “personal information” means information or an opinion about an individual whose identity is apparent or can reasonably be ascertained. To provide evidence-based speech pathology services to our clients, we need to know personal information about them and others, including:

- names, ages, genders, and other identifying information;
- Medicare and health fund details (including Medicare numbers and health fund insurers and the extent of their coverage);
- developmental, medical, ethnic, language, cultural and social histories (including medications, diagnoses, surgeries, and allergies);
- disabilities and impairments;
- family histories, to the extent they may be relevant to our assessment, diagnosis and/or treatment of clients;
- work and education histories;
- hobbies, motivations, interests, and activities in which clients and their families participate; and
- financial information concerning the ability of clients to pay for our products and services.

For sensitive information – such as information about your health that is reasonably necessary for us to provide you with services or products – we will seek your consent.

### **How do we collect personal information?**

We collect personal information by telephone (e.g. when you first call us to book an appointment for yourself or your child), via our website, pages on our social media sites (e.g. on our Facebook sites), through our client questionnaires (which are filled in by a client or carer as part of our assessment process), by written letters, reports and other documents (e.g. through doctors reports you provide to us), through emails, SMS and other forms of electronic communication, and in interviews and other interactions in our clinic (including face-to-face interviews and interviews conducted electronically, such as by way of Skype).

### **Who do we collect personal information from?**

We collect personal information from clients or someone authorised to act on the behalf of clients (e.g. their parents, carers or guardians). Wherever practicable, we will ask for the information directly. However, we may need to contact others when relevant to a client's circumstances (e.g. when working with clients who cannot communicate their needs without the assistance of others). In these cases, we will, where practicable, make you aware of the fact that we have collected this information and the circumstances of the collection. When you give us information about other people, we rely on you to have obtained their prior consent and on you to tell them of the types of third parties we may provide the information to and why.

### **Why do we collect personal information?**

We collect personal information to deliver, review and improve the products and services that we provide. Generally, these services and products relate to speech-language pathology. If we didn't collect this information, we wouldn't be able to carry out our business or provide our products and services to you in accordance with the standards required by law and the Speech Pathology Australia Code of Ethics. If you do not provide the personal information that we request, we would not be able to carry out our business and provide our products or services to you.

More specifically, we need personal information (including health information) to provide clients with assessment, diagnosis and management services and products related to their speech, language, voice, fluency, swallowing/feeding, and/or literacy-related issues, and/or multi-modal communication. We also need this information:

- for administrative purposes of managing our business;
- when necessary, to fulfil our obligations under law, regulation and/or Speech Pathology Australia's Code of Ethics;
- for billing management (either directly or through insurers or other compensation agencies);
- for discussions between speech pathologists and others working at our clinic (including other speech pathologists and sub-contractors) related to the care of clients;
- for discussions and other communications with your doctors, other health professionals, and education professionals in relation to your care;
- for discussions with insurers; and
- for any insurance or compensation or other claims or litigation (including threatened litigation).

From time to time, we may use personal information (but not sensitive health information) to provide you with news or offers about our products or services that may be of interest to you. These products and services will be related to our speech pathology business described above and will be products and services that we believe will be relevant to you. You have a right, at any time, to tell us that you don't want to receive this type of material.

## Can people access our products and services anonymously?

No. Due to the nature of our services and products, we cannot offer them to people who wish to be anonymous, wish to use a pseudonym or who do not provide us with enough information to properly identify them for the purposes of providing services and products.

## Who will see or have access to your personal information?

Your information may be seen or used by people working for or on behalf of Communitalk Speech Pathology Services and other service providers including (without limitation):

- our Speech Pathologists (employed or contracted);
- our Administrative Staff (employed or contracted);
- Doctors, other health professionals, and education professionals;
- our third-party professional advisors and service providers, including (without limitation) our lawyers, book-keepers, accountants, auditors, tax consultants, actuaries, management consultants and IT service providers (including software-as-a-service providers); and
- Medicare, private health insurance providers, our insurers and reinsurers.

We will not rent, sell, trade or otherwise disclose to any other third parties any personal information about you without your consent, or unless we are required by law (including pursuant to a court or tribunal order), or where a permitted general situation (including a permitted health situation) exists within the meaning of the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), or if we reasonably believe disclosure is necessary for enforcement-related activities.

## Security of your personal information and data retention

We know that you are concerned about your personal information – especially your health information. We will use reasonable endeavours to prevent unauthorised access to, modification of, disclosure, misuse or loss of that information as required by law.

Our directors and staff have reviewed the requirements of the Privacy Laws and our third-party service providers have been made aware that they are required to comply with the requirements of the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

We have data protection measures in place (including password-locked computers) when we store personal information electronically.

If we no longer need personal information about you for any purpose described above, then we will take reasonable steps to destroy the information or to ensure that such information is de-identified. This obligation is subject to an important exception – for NSW practitioners, the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW)], we are obliged to retain health information:

- about adults for 7 years from the last time we provided them with a service or product; and
- about children, until the individual has attained 25 years of age.

## Access to and accuracy of your personal information

We take reasonable steps to ensure that personal information we collect about or from you is accurate, complete, up-to-date and relevant whenever it is used, collected or disclosed. Subject to the recognised exceptions to access for organisations contained in the Australian Privacy Principles (APP12.3), you have a right to access your information if you wish (subject to any privilege or legal restrictions); and, if it is reasonable and practicable

to do so, we will give you access to the information in the manner requested by you. By law, we may charge you a reasonable fee to cover the cost of retrieving and processing the information.

If you believe personal information that we hold about you is inaccurate, out-of-date, incomplete or misleading, we will, on receipt of your request, take steps that are reasonable in the circumstances to correct the information.

### **What happens if personal information is disclosed outside Australia?**

Given the increasing globalisation of electronic information systems and the businesses of service providers, it is likely that personal information may be disclosed to a person or entity outside Australia (e.g. to a third-party service provider managed outside Australia). For the same reason, it is not practicable to specify the countries in which such recipients may be located.

If your personal information is disclosed by us to an overseas recipient (e.g. to an insurer or IT-service provider), we will take reasonable steps in the circumstances to ensure the overseas recipient does not breach the Australian Privacy Principles in relation to the information.

### **Complaints**

If you believe your privacy has been prejudiced by something we have done or failed to do, you have a legal right to lodge a complaint.

Our Privacy Officer is Vicki Ridgeway, who can be contacted by phone at 0447 685 405 or email at [info@communitalk.com.au](mailto:info@communitalk.com.au).

We will respond to you in writing within 15 days of receiving your complaint.

### **Want more information?**

If you have any questions about this policy or have any concerns about the personal information you or others have given us about you, please contact us at [info@communitalk.com.au](mailto:info@communitalk.com.au).

More information on the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) can be found on the website of the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.