

Ruth Christiansen Counselling and Therapy

Client Consent and Privacy Policy

Client Consent and Privacy Policy

At your first appointment, Ruth Christiansen will undertake an assessment about whether she is a suitable clinician for your situation. At the end of this session, we will agree to an initial treatment plan or she will recommend an onward referral to a practitioner or service that is more suitable for your needs. During assessment and treatment, Ruth Christiansen needs to collect information about you for the primary purpose of providing a quality service to you. In order to thoroughly assess, diagnose and provide therapy, we need to collect some personal information from you.

All personal information gathered by Ruth Christiansen will remain confidential and secure except where:

1. Failure to disclose the information would place you or another person at serious and imminent risk; or
2. There is an obligation to disclose the information under the Commission for Children and Young People Act (2000); or
3. It is subpoenaed by a court; or
4. It is used in relation to defending the Department in legal proceedings or for obtaining advice in respect of any potential legal proceedings; or
5. De-identified information is used for reporting and statistical purposes; or
6. Information is discussed as part of an approved professional supervision process; or
7. Your prior approval has been obtained to: a) provide a written report to another professional or agency (e.g., a GP); or
- b) discuss the material with another person, (e.g., a family member, employer, rehabilitation coordinator); or
8. If disclosure is otherwise required or authorised by law.

The service provided is bound by the legal requirements of the Australian Privacy Principles set out in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

Access to your information

All personal information is maintained in a locked filing cabinet or a secure online system, which is solely accessed by Ruth Christiansen. At any stage you as a client are entitled to access the information about you kept on file, subject to the exceptions in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth). Where our records are found to be inaccurate, out of date or incomplete, reasonable steps will be taken in the circumstances to ensure that this information is corrected. All requests by clients for access to or correction of personal information held about them should be lodged with Ruth Christiansen by email to ruthchristiansentherapy@gmail.com. These requests will be responded to in writing within 30 days and an appointment will be made if necessary for clarification purposes.

Telehealth requirement to provide contact details and location

When working together by videoconference, clinicians need to be able to contact support people in your locality should any issues arise. You will be asked to provide the names and contact details of at least 1 person known to you before we commence the treatment. Because you may be in varied locations for each videoconference, clinicians will require you to provide your location at the commencement of each session.

Privacy in online communications

The privacy of any form of communication via the internet or a mobile device is potentially vulnerable and limited by the security of the technology. Zoom video conferencing will be employed. Zoom only transmits encrypted information, never has access to personal information and does not persistently store information that is transmitted. The limits of this can be read further at www.zoom.us

Billing and Medicare rebates

This practice uses Auto Payments through Halaxy Health Platform or direct debit for you to pay your appointment and cancellation fees. If you have a valid GP Mental Health Care Plan the rebate for your session is \$82.30 and this practice uses online Medicare rebates claiming for your convenience.

Cancellation Policy

Session fees can be paid via the secure online system Halaxy, cash or direct debit. You will receive a reminder sms 48 hours before your appointment time. If, for some reason, you need to cancel or postpone an appointment, Ruth Christiansen would appreciate it if you would make contact by sms, phone or email prior to the appointment and reschedule the appointment if required. This enables another client to book into the time slot. Please note: If less than 24hrs notice is given, the full session fee will be charged as a cancellation fee and this cannot get a Medicare rebate.

Crisis and emergency situations

Ruth Christiansen Therapy is not a crisis service. If you are in need of crisis support you are directed to contact your local area mental health crisis team which can be found at <https://www.health.vic.gov.au>, or the emergency department of any hospital.

Concerns

If clients have a concern about the management of their personal information, they may inform Ruth Christiansen. Upon request they can obtain a copy of the Australian Privacy Principles, which describe their rights and how their personal information should be handled. Ultimately, if clients wish to lodge a formal complaint about the use of, disclosure of, or access to, their personal information, they may do so with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner by phone on 1300 363 992, online at <http://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/making-a-privacy-complaint> or by post to: Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, GPO Box 5218, Sydney, NSW 2001.