



The purpose of this form is to inform you of your rights and responsibilities as a recipient of Open Arms services and the management of personal information within the Open Arms Client Management System.

Part A

Management of Personal Information

Purpose of collecting information

- As part of providing a counselling service to you, Open Arms will need to collect and record personal information about you. Personal information is collected for the purposes of assessing your eligibility for Open Arms services and to enable your counsellor/group program facilitator to plan and review the effectiveness of your counselling and/or group program.
- Aggregated, de-identified data may be used for research and reporting purposes.
- You do not have to disclose personal information to Open Arms; however Open Arms counsellors can only work with the information you provide and if you choose not to provide some information this may limit the services able to be provided to you.

Confidentiality

- Open Arms is committed to preserving and upholding your right to privacy and confidentiality. Subject to certain limited exceptions (described below), your personal information is kept strictly confidential and stored securely, at all times.
- All Open Arms client information is stored separately from the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA). Open Arms will not provide any information about you to DVA, except in aggregate and de-identified form to meet reporting requirements (for example, in the DVA Annual report). If you give your consent in writing, Open Arms will work with DVA and share relevant information where it is in the best interests of your clinical care.
- The clinician allocated to you will be able to access both your current and previous Open Arms records.

Exceptions to confidentiality

- As explained in the clauses above, Open Arms will not share your personal information unless you have provided your consent, or there are other circumstances where the sharing of that information is considered appropriate or necessary. For example, Open Arms may be required to disclose your personal information without your consent when:
 - information about you is subpoenaed by a court or tribunal in legal proceedings;
 - you or another person is at serious risk of harm;
 - the disclosure is necessary for the enforcement of the criminal law; or
 - disclosure is otherwise required or authorised by law.
- Should these circumstances arise, your personal information will only be released in accordance with the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1988*.

Reporting to the Australian Defence Force

- As you are referred to Open Arms through the ADF Agreement for Service, Open Arms is required to provide periodic reports to the ADF Referring Authority. Information Open Arms will provide to the ADF Referring Authority includes:
 - that you have attended the first assessment session;
 - if you fail to attend an appointment;
 - if you are at risk of harming yourself or another person;
 - a care plan detailing presenting issues, treatment goals, treatments and estimated number of sessions required;
 - interim reports outlining progress and prognosis;
 - if necessary, a request for approval for further sessions;
 - a final discharge report outlining outcomes and any recommendations for follow-up.
- Open Arms will also inform the appropriate ADF health services or emergency services where you disclose information that indicates a serious risk to yourself or to others, and where this risk is likely to impact on your ability to perform duties or raises ongoing safety concerns.

Accessing your information

- You have a right of access to information Open Arms holds about you in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.
- Requests for access should be made in writing to Open Arms.
- Examples of where access to information may be restricted are where disclosure:
 - may pose a serious threat to your physical or mental well-being, or the physical and mental well-being of others;
 - may infringe on the privacy of others; or
 - may hinder law enforcement activities.

Client Rights and Responsibilities

- You should have been provided with a Client's Rights and Responsibilities brochure by Open Arms in, or prior to, your first session. Before finalising this consent form, please raise any issues or questions you may have about this information with your counsellor.

Open Arms is 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.dva.gov.au/privacy.

Part B**Confirmation of Informed Consent**

- I have read and understood the information on pages 1 and 2.
- I acknowledge that my rights and responsibilities have been explained to me by a Open Arms counsellor/group program facilitator.
- I understand that my counselling sessions may be conducted, with my agreement, face-to-face, by telephone or via Open Arms videoconference.
- I understand that Open Arms may disclose my personal information to third parties, including DVA, if Open Arms has identified a risk to my, or others, health or safety, or as required by law.
- I understand that I can withdraw my consent in writing at any time.
- I understand that I may ask Open Arms to change incorrect information contained in my file.
- I give my informed consent for Open Arms to provide me with services for duration of this episode of care.

1. Client's name**2. Client's signature**

Date