

Grounding Bear Psychology

This Privacy Policy explains how Grounding Bear Psychology collects, uses, stores, and protects your personal information.

We are committed to protecting your privacy in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

1. What Information We Collect

We may collect personal information that is reasonably necessary to provide psychological services, including:

- Identification details (such as your name, date of birth, address, phone number and email address)
- Emergency contact information
- Health and clinical information, including psychological history
- Medicare details (if applicable)
- Appointment, billing, and communication records
- Information provided by referring health professionals where relevant

Psychological and health information is classified as **sensitive information** under the Privacy Act 1988 and is handled with a higher level of protection.

2. How Information Is Collected

Information may be collected through:

- Intake and consent forms
- The Halaxy booking and practice management system
- Direct communication (email, SMS, phone, or Telehealth)
- During therapy sessions
- Referrals from other health professionals (with your consent where required)

Where practicable, you will be informed when and why information is being collected at or before the time of collection.

3. Purpose of Collection and Use

Your information is collected and used to:

- Provide psychological assessment and therapy
- Maintain clinical records
- Manage appointments and billing
- Process Medicare rebates and other applicable funding arrangements (where applicable)
- Communicate with you regarding your care

- Ensure safe and appropriate clinical treatment
- Meet legal, ethical, and professional obligations

We do not use your information for purposes unrelated to the provision of psychological services.

4. Disclosure of Information

Your information is confidential and will not be disclosed without your consent except where required or authorised by law.

This may include circumstances where:

- There is a serious risk of harm to you or another person
- There are concerns regarding the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person and mandatory reporting obligations apply
- Disclosure is required by law, including court orders, subpoenas, or other legal requirements
- Professional consultation or peer consultation may be sought to support safe and effective clinical practice, with identifying information withheld where possible
- Disclosure is necessary to reduce a serious and imminent risk to health or safety

Where appropriate and practicable, you will be informed if information must be disclosed.

5. Third-Party Services

Grounding Bear Psychology uses trusted third-party providers to support service delivery, including:

- Halaxy (practice management, scheduling, clinical records, billing, and secure client communications)
- Medicare (where rebates apply)
- Healthdirect Video Call (secure Telehealth video appointments)
- Secure communication services used to support appointment delivery

These services are used only for purposes directly related to the delivery and administration of psychological care.

Grounding Bear Psychology does not sell, rent, or disclose personal information for marketing purposes.

6. Payment Information

Payment information may be processed through Halaxy's secure payment systems when electronic payment methods are used.

Grounding Bear Psychology does not collect or store credit or debit card details during the appointment booking process.

Where payments are made electronically, payment processing is managed through secure third-party systems. Grounding Bear Psychology may have access to limited transaction information required for administrative and accounting purposes, such as payment status or confirmation of payment.

7. Storage and Security of Information

Grounding Bear Psychology uses Halaxy to securely manage appointments, clinical records, billing, payment processing, and client communications.

Reasonable steps are taken to protect information from misuse, loss, unauthorised access, modification, or disclosure.

Security measures include:

- Restricted access to authorised systems
 - Secure password-protected clinical software
 - Secure payment processing through approved third-party systems
 - Secure cloud-based data storage
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8. Overseas Disclosure

Some information may be stored or processed using secure cloud-based infrastructure utilised by approved service providers.

Where overseas disclosure occurs, reasonable steps are taken to ensure personal information is handled in accordance with Australian privacy standards and applicable legal requirements.

9. Access to Your Information

You may request access to your personal or clinical information.

Requests will be considered in accordance with legal, ethical, and professional obligations.

Access may be limited where:

- It may pose a serious risk to health or safety
 - It would unreasonably impact another person's privacy
 - It is restricted by law
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10. Correction of Information

If you believe information held about you is inaccurate, incomplete, or out of date, you may request that it be corrected.

Reasonable steps will be taken to update information where appropriate.

11. Telehealth Privacy

Grounding Bear Psychology currently provides services via Telehealth using secure video technology, including Healthdirect Video Call.

When attending Telehealth appointments:

- Video appointments are generally preferred, although sessions may continue by telephone where clinically appropriate or if technical difficulties occur
- Absolute privacy cannot be guaranteed within your physical environment
- You are responsible for attending from a private and safe location where possible
- Technical interruptions may occasionally occur

Reasonable steps are taken to maintain confidentiality and security during Telehealth sessions.

12. Records Retention

Clinical records are retained in accordance with Australian legal, ethical, and professional requirements.

Records are generally retained for a minimum of seven (7) years from the date of your last appointment.

After the required retention period, records are securely destroyed or permanently de-identified where appropriate.

13. Identifying Information

To provide psychological services safely and meet legal, ethical, and professional obligations, Grounding Bear Psychology requires sufficient identifying information to verify a client's identity and maintain accurate clinical records.

14. Data Breaches

In the unlikely event of a data breach that is likely to result in serious harm, Grounding Bear Psychology will act in accordance with the Notifiable Data Breaches Scheme under Australian law.

This may include:

- Assessing the breach
- Taking steps to reduce potential harm
- Notifying affected individuals where required
- Notifying the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) where required

15. Complaints About Privacy

If you have concerns about how your information has been handled, please contact Grounding Bear Psychology in the first instance.

If your concerns cannot be resolved, you may contact: Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC): www.oaic.gov.au

16. Changes to This Policy

This Privacy Policy may be updated from time to time.

The most current version will be available on the Grounding Bear Psychology website.

17. Contacting Us About Privacy

If you have questions about this Privacy Policy or wish to request access to or correction of your information, please contact Grounding Bear Psychology using the contact details available on our website: <http://www.groundingbearpsychology.com.au>.