Cairnmillar INSTITUTE

Student Guide: Informed Consent for Education and Training Purposes

Purpose and Scope

This guide includes a **Student Summary Sheet** version of the *Informed Consent for Education and Training form* which is simple, accessible, and written for students to use when **verbally explaining the consent process to clients** before presenting the official form. It's recommended that students use their own words and check understanding, to reinforce consent as a process rather than a script.

The guide explains the mandatory requirement for all Cairnmillar students to obtain written informed consent when using any client information for education and training purposes. This includes information for coursework, coursework-based research (education and training only) and placements (external and within the Cairnmillar clinics). For example, if you are using a client's case for coursework purposes, you will need to have obtained their written informed consent to do so.

It's important that students understand that this consent does not extend to research or publications. Students are required to follow the informed consent process approved by the relevant Ethics Committee in relation to research.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do we need to obtain informed consent from clients for use of their information for education and training purposes?

Clients accessing psychology, psychotherapy or counselling services have a right to privacy and to understand how their private information will be handled. Psychology, Counselling and Psychotherapy students are required to obtain written informed consent for the use of de-identified client information for training and education purposes. Below are the relevant references to this requirement:

- **AHPRA (Psychology):** Psychology Board of Australia's Code of Conduct (2025) section 3.3 (h)
- **PACFA (Counselling & Psychotherapy)**: Code of Ethics (2017) section 4, subsection 5 (g) and section 5,
- **ACA (Counselling & Psychotherapy):** Code of Ethics and Practice (2019) section 4.2 (a)(iii) and 4.7 (d)

What if the client has already provided informed consent, do I still need to give them this form?

It depends on whether the client's existing consent includes permission for their information to be used for education and training purposes. If the placement organisation's own informed consent form specifically includes consent for activities such as supervision, case discussions, assessments, or session observations, then you may not need to ask the client to complete this additional CMI form. However, if the placement organisation's consent does not clearly cover education and training, or if you are unsure, you must provide this form to ensure informed consent is obtained for all relevant uses of client information. **Always check with your placement provider and supervisor to confirm which consent form(s) should be used in your setting**.

Remember, supervision consent is mandatory for all students. If a client does not consent to their information being shared for supervision, ***you must discuss this with your supervisor or placement representative***, as the client may need to be reassigned to another practitioner who is not under supervision.

Where do I store the completed version of this form?

The completed version of this form must be stored in the client's health record along with other client notes. Any education and training materials created by students (e.g., assessments tasks) are stored separately with Cairnmillar (e.g., Sonia).

What's the difference between a health record and education records?

Health records

Health records contain information about a person's physical or mental health, disability, or the health services they receive. This includes client case notes, assessment information, treatment details, and any other information collected while providing a health service. Health records are governed by health privacy laws and are owned and managed by the health service where care is provided, not by students.

Education records

Education records relate to your progress and performance as a student. These include assessment submissions, competency evaluations, placement documentation, and evidence used for accreditation or audit purposes. Where education records include references to client work, this information is de-identified wherever possible and used only to assess learning outcomes. or example, for supervisor observations you will delete the recording after your unit is complete, however the SONIA forms you submit will contain deidentified client material.

Education records are governed by education and privacy laws and are retained by the Institute in line with regulatory requirements.

Can I just give the client this form or do I have to explain it to them?

You are required to verbally explain and/or reiterate and obtain verbal consent to ensure the client understands what they are agreeing to and answer any questions they may have. Please note this in the client's notes for the session.

How do I de-identify the client's information?

There is information on my.CMI here that students are required to comply with for all education and training work, including for assessments, timesheets (logbooks), reflections etc. You can use this information to explain deidentifying to clients. Note that supervision (individual) and supervisor observations, cannot be deidentified.

Am I required to use this form for role plays etc. in coursework or pre-placement assessments?

Please refer to your unit information on Canvas or enquire with unit teaching staff for guidance.

Who do I need to obtain informed consent from?

There are two main principles underpinning the requirements for managing informed consent, that the client be competent to provide consent and that consent is given freely and without coercion. It is your responsibility to consider whether the client has capacity to consent. CMI recommends you follow the same policies, procedures, and approach your placement service uses for clinical informed consent when deciding whether the client can provide consent.

Student Summary Sheet: Explaining informed consent to clients

(Education and Training Purposes)

This sheet helps you explain to clients why you are asking for their consent and what it means. Please use your own words to make it sound natural and check that the client understands before asking them to sign.

1. Why we need consent

As part of your training, you'll need to:

- Discuss client work in supervision
- Use de-identified information (no names or identifying details) in case reports, presentations, and assessments; and teaching (where relevant)
- Possibly have your supervisor observe or review your work

The client needs to know and agree to this before you do so.

Remember that if the client does not consent to discussing their case in supervision, then as a student you cannot provide them with a service. You will need to discuss, with your supervisor and the placement representative, how to manage situations where this occurs and seek alternative service options to provide for the client (continuity of care principle).

Please be mindful to respect the client's right to provide consent freely and without coercion when explaining the requirement for supervision, including positively discussing alternative service option if consent is not provided.

You can say: *"Because I'm a student completing my professional training, I'm required to discuss my work in supervision, and also use some de-identified details from our sessions for learning purposes. This helps me to receive feedback and develop my professional skills and supports the quality of service provided to you"*

2. How their information will be used

Explain that:

- Their information will only be used for **education and supervision**, not for research or marketing.
- Any identifying information (name, address, workplace, etc.) will be removed when used for case reports and assessments.
- Supervisors who observe sessions are bound by professional confidentiality.

You can say: *"Your privacy is protected, I'll remove your name and any details that could identify you. Only my supervisor and the education team will see this information for training purposes."*

3. Privacy and confidentiality

Make sure clients understand the limits of confidentiality:

- You cannot keep information private if there is **serious risk of harm**, or if the law requires disclosure (for example, child protection or a court order).
- Supervisors and the education team are also bound by professional codes of ethics and must act on these responsibilities.
- If you are providing this form at the same time as informed consent for the service, you can adjust it accordingly so you don't double up. Just remember to specifically address the education and training purpose use and that learning assessments will be identified where possible.

You can say: *"Similar to what we discussed when you consented to the service, everything you share with me remains confidential (between my supervisor and I) unless I am required by law to share the information, if there's a serious safety issue and I'm legally required to share information to protect you or someone else, or I'm required by law to share information such as if your records are subpoenaed. Where you consent for your deidentified information to be used for education and training purposes, I will remove your name and any details that could identify you where possible."*

4. How records are stored

Clarify that:

- These are **education records**, not health records.
- Health records, including notes and materials are stored securely, either in the placement service's system or Cairnmillar's approved system.
- For education records, these are stored securely with Cairnmillar, for example through Sonia and/or Canvas. This means access is limited to you (the student), your supervisor, and authorised education staff.

You can say: *"Any notes or learning materials I create for the purpose of my learning are kept securely as part of my training records, not your health record, and only authorised people can access them."*

5. Withdrawing consent

Explain that:

- Clients can withdraw consent at any time.
- Work already completed or submitted for assessment cannot be removed.
- If a client withdraws consent for supervision, you must discuss this with your supervisor and placement provider staff so alternative arrangements can be made. As a student, you are required to discuss your client work with your supervisor to ensure safe, high-quality care.

You can say: *"You can change your mind later, just let me, a staff member or my supervisor know either verbally or in writing. Because I'm a student, I must be supervised, which means I need to discuss your care with my supervisor to make sure the service is safe and high-quality. If you withdraw consent for supervision, we will talk with the service to arrange an alternative clinician or service option for you. Anything already used for my learning cannot be withdrawn, but we won't use anything new from that point on."*

6. Checking understanding

Before asking for a signature, check that the client understands.
You might ask:

- *"Does that make sense?"*
- *"Do you have any questions about how your information will be used?"*

Then provide the official **Informed Consent Form: Education and Training** for them to sign.

Key contact

If the client wants more information or has concerns, they can contact:
The Cairnmillar Institute Email: placements@cairnmillar.edu.au