SOS Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy

Introduction

Confidentiality is a central and integral part of Suicide or Survive. It provides safety and privacy for those who use our services. We work hard to ensure that information given by those who make contact with and/ or use our services is held in strict confidence and in a manner that is in line with Data Protection legislation.

Purpose

The purpose of this Confidentiality Policy is to provide staff involved in the Eden Programme with:

- Information on the organisations understanding of confidentiality
- Clear guidelines regarding the handling of confidential information
- Clear guidance on their responsibilities in relation to confidentiality

Policy

It is the policy of SOS to treat any and all information given by people who make contact with and/ or use our services confidentially.

Definition and Principles of Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a set of rules or a promise that limits access to or places restrictions on the use of certain types of information.

People working for or on behalf of SOS are bound by ethical and legal codes to protect the confidentiality and privacy of those who interact with our service and to protect and maintain the confidentiality of all information learned about them, their family members and acquaintances in the course of their interaction with us.

Confidentiality applies to all information that:

- Is or has been obtained during, or in the course of involvement with, or has otherwise been acquired in trust due to involvement with SOS

SOS All Rights Reserved 2015

- Relates particularly to the business of SOS, its service users or other people or bodies with whom we have dealings
- Has not been made public by, or with the authority of, the person or organisation to whom it pertains

Confidential information includes conversations, correspondence, forms, reports and computer generated communications with, about, or involving in any way any service users of SOS.

Limits to Confidentiality

SOS acts in accordance with best practice and legislation in relation to the limits to the confidentiality it offers those who contact its services. Where there is substantial reason to believe that either the individual him/ herself is at risk or any other individual is at risk SOS reserves the right to contact the appropriate person to seek support for the individual and/ or report the risk. SOS complies with Children First 2011 and all other legislation relating to the reporting of child protection concerns. Staff are referred to the SOS Child Protection Policy and Guidance in relation to this issue.

Data Protection

SOS complies with data protection legislation in the manner in which it gathers, stores and disposes of information about people who interact with its services.

The Data Protection Commissioner for Ireland specifies Eight Rules of Data Protection:

1. Obtain and process information fairly
2. Keep it only for one or more specified, explicit and lawful purposes
3. Use and disclose it only in ways compatible with these purposes
4. Keep it safe and secure
5. Keep it accurate, complete and up to date
6. Ensure that it is adequate, relevant and not excessive

SOS All Rights Reserved 2015

7. Retain it for no longer than is necessary for the purpose/ purposes for which it was gathered
8. Give a copy of his/ her personal data to an individual, on request

Staff working for or on behalf of Suicide or Survive:

- Inform those who interact with its service about whom information is being gathered and processed of the purpose for which data about them is being gathered and processed and the limits to the level of confidentiality that can be offered
- Gather and process only that information which is necessary for the provision of the service for which the person is interacting with SOS
- Retain data only for as long as it is necessary to do so to provide the service and/ or to comply with legislation/ funder regulations (or for a maximum period of 10 years)
- Dispose of paper based information through confidential shredding and delete all computer based records
- Use and disclose of the information in a manner that protects confidentiality, and solely for the purpose of providing the service.
- Where disclosure is required by law the CEO will inform the individual concerned what is being disclosed and will disclose only that information which is absolutely necessary under the law.
- Where an individual asks an SOS team member to disclose information about him/ her to a third party this is done only with his/ her written consent and for the purpose of providing the SOS service to that person
- Store paper based data in relation to people who interact with its service in a locked filing cabined in the SOS offices. Personal and/ or sensative data is coded to protect confidentiality and code keys are stored in a seperate location. Only those staff for whom it is necessary in order to provide the specific service to the individual, as authorised by the CEO, have access to the paper based records and the coding system.

SOS All Rights Reserved 2015

- Store computerised data on the SOS server in password protected files accessible only by those staff authorised by the CEO to do so for the purposes of providing the service to that individual. No data will be stored on personal computers/ laptops.
- Authorised staff will carry out regular checks to ensure that data stored in any format is accurate, complete and up to date
- Refer any request for data about any individual to the CEO

SOS All Rights Reserved 2015