



# Richmond Centre for Disability

## *Maximizing Independence*

*2012 Business Excellence Awards – Association of the Year Winner*

## **Volunteer Training – Confidentiality**

### **What is Confidentiality?**

- ▶ An assurance of mind or firm belief in the trustworthiness of another person
- ▶ Someone or something in which trust is placed
- ▶ Something told in secret; a private communication
- ▶ The belief that another will keep a secret; assurance of secrecy
- ▶ Trust; reliance

### **The need for confidentiality**

Ensuring confidentiality is a legal, professional and moral responsibility of all people associated with social service delivery. The legal obligation for confidentiality is based on the principle that a person's personal information is private and any information that connects a participant's identity to a medical condition diagnosis and/or disability is also confidential. The professional obligation for confidentiality extends the right of privacy to a participant's family and friends. It also involves sharing only authorized information with the participant network.

### **Privacy vs. Confidentiality**

Privacy is the control over the extent, timing, and circumstances of sharing oneself (physically, behaviorally, or intellectually) with others.

Privacy is...

- About people
- A sense of being in control of access
- Is in the eye of the participant, not the service providers or the government

**Confidentiality** pertains to the **treatment of information** that an individual has disclosed in a relationship of trust and with the expectation that it will not be divulged to others without permission in ways that are inconsistent with the understanding of the original disclosure.

Confidentiality...

- Is about identifiable data
- Is an extension of privacy
- Is an agreement about maintenance and who has access to identifiable data

Privacy is about people. Confidentiality is about data.

It is important for volunteers working at RCD to pay strict attention to participants' privacy rights and preserve confidentiality, so as to help everyone to experience a secure environment at RCD.

### **Confidential information should not be discussed outside the organization**

- Do not discuss confidential information with family or friends.
- Avoid discussing contacts, names, and circumstances in elevators, restaurants, movie theatres, lunchrooms, etc.
- Discretion must be exercised in identifying participants outside the RCD.
- You might talk in generalities about what you are doing and about the participants, volunteers and staff with whom you interact, but nothing that identifies a specific person or any details.

### **Extreme care must be taken in distribution of personal information obtained through activities at the RCD**

- No personal information about participants should be shared with anybody else without their consent.
- Not all volunteers have access to confidential information; be mindful to discuss any participants' confidential information you might have with other volunteers.
- It is not acceptable to presume that any personal information about any staff, board, volunteer, participant or general member is common knowledge such as age, marital status, disability, etc.
- Confidentiality restrictions apply even after you have left the organization.

### **RCD respects participants' privacy**

- RCD respects the right of participants not to offer disability information if they choose.
- Participants only need to self identify having a disability; RCD will not ask for disability information unless it is necessary for service delivery.

### **RCD Confidentiality Agreement Terms**

- ▶ I agree at all times to treat as confidential all information in files, records, computer databases and other sources that I am privy to during the course of my volunteer job with RCD.
- ▶ I agree at all times to treat as confidential all personal information relating to participants and their families.
- ▶ I agree to be bound by the provisions of this agreement and will continue to do so following termination of my volunteer job for any reason.
- ▶ I agree at all times abide by the volunteer standard code of ethics.

### **REFERENCES**

RCD Volunteer Agreement, RCD Volunteer Duty & Confidentiality Agreement, RCD Volunteer Policies and Guidelines, RCD Code of Conduct