



Early Intervention Services

Client Handbook

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Welcome to Relationships Australia, Tasmania

We want your experience with us to be a positive one and to make a positive difference in your life. Relationships Australia, Tasmania (RA Tas) works with people to change and transform their lives through counselling, mediation, dispute resolution, support and training.

At RA Tas we are;

- ✓ Client-centred,
- ✓ Clear in our purpose and expectations,
- ✓ Optimistic and hopeful,
- ✓ Part of a collective effort,
- ✓ Committed to outstanding service, and
- ✓ Professional and responsible.

These values are demonstrated through positive client experience of services and a well-functioning organisation.

This handbook provides specific information regarding the services and support provided by our Early Intervention services staff.

RA Tas staff are available to answer your questions about the services we offer and how you can access them. You can call to speak with one of our staff or visit the RA Tas website.



1300 364 277
www.tas.relationships.org.au

Who We Are

RA Tas is a leading not-for-profit provider of relationship and individual support services. We support people to change and transform their lives through counselling, mediation, dispute resolution, support and trauma support.

We have a team of highly qualified professionals offering state-wide services. We have no religious affiliations. Our services are for all members of the community, regardless of religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, lifestyle choice, cultural background or economic circumstances.

We have 70 years of experience, helping over 8,000 Tasmanians every year.

RA Tas is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for children. We recognise that children can be vulnerable in a number of different ways, and we regard our responsibility for the safety and well-being of children as paramount in any decisions about their welfare.

What to Expect from Us

RA Tas is committed to providing support that is tailored to your individual needs.

We will:

- ✓ Involve you in all decisions related to your support services.
- ✓ Ensure your privacy is respected and information about you and the services you receive are kept confidential and secure.
- ✓ Treat you with courtesy and always respect your dignity.
- ✓ Listen to your feedback and resolve problems quickly.
- ✓ Support you in a welcoming and inclusive way, free from stigma.

Choice and Control

We believe you are the best person to make decisions about your life, including the services and supports we provide you. You have the right to:

- ✓ Be involved in all discussions and decisions about your supports and services.
- ✓ Choose who is involved in your supports and services, including family members, friends and carers.
- ✓ Have a choice of worker, wherever possible.
- ✓ Choose to use other mental health or disability services.

- ✓ Give your consent to supports and services, seek a second opinion or refuse services or support options recommended to you at any time without consequence.
- ✓ Have independent advocacy or support to make decisions.
- ✓ Receive services and supports based on your preferences and needs.

Your Rights as a Client of RA Tas

Everyone involved in our Early Intervention Services has a range of rights. Your rights are adapted from those set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

This means offering a service that:

- ✓ Respects the uniqueness of you, your situation and your family.
- ✓ Recognises your need and identity, with respect to culture, religion, gender, sexuality, language, disability or mental health.
- ✓ Supports your access to an interpreter, if required.
- ✓ Respects your privacy and confidentiality, dignity and lifestyle.
- ✓ Is inclusive and free from abuse, discrimination, neglect, force and favouritism.
- ✓ Is in an environment that is safe, accessible, clean and secure.
- ✓ Is engaging and empowering.
- ✓ Provides you with the opportunity to be involved in all aspects of your treatment, care and recovery planning.
- ✓ Allows you to nominate an advocate and/or carer to help you make decisions related to your care.
- ✓ Assists you to access alternate services if you ask for assistance to do so.

In addition, we are committed to ensuring the safety, well-being and empowerment of children. This means:

- ✓ A zero-tolerance approach towards all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation of children and young people.
- ✓ Creation of child safe services and environments.
- ✓ Engagement and empowerment of children, young people and their families.
- ✓ Care, protection and support from all the adults involved in their lives.

Your Responsibilities

When you use an RA Tas service you not only have rights, you also have some responsibilities. It is your right to be told what these responsibilities are and what happens if you do not uphold them. The responsibilities you have are towards all people connected to your RA Tas service – including yourself, other clients, staff and volunteers.

You agree:

- ✓ To inform RA Tas about how you wish the service(s) to be delivered to meet your needs.
- ✓ To treat RA Tas staff with courtesy and respect their right to work in a safe environment, free from exploitation, abuse, discrimination or harassment.
- ✓ To talk to RA Tas about any concerns regarding the service(s) being provided. Inform RA Tas if your needs change and negotiate modifications to support your needs.
- ✓ To accept responsibility for your own actions and choices even though some actions and choices may involve an element of risk.
- ✓ Tell RA Tas about any problems with the staff or service(s) provided.
- ✓ Provide RA Tas with 24 hours' notice if you cannot make a scheduled appointment; and if the notice is not provided by then, the RA Tas cancellation policy will apply.

Advocacy

An advocate is a person who, with your authority, represents your interests. You may use an advocate of your choice to negotiate with RA Tas on your behalf.

Your advocate may be involved during:

- ✓ Assessments,
- ✓ Fee negotiation,
- ✓ Support planning and evaluation,
- ✓ In the presentation of complaints, or
- ✓ Any communication between you and RA Tas.

Should you wish to nominate an advocate, you will be asked to complete a written authority, which includes the name of the person you have nominated. RA Tas will provide your nominated advocate with written guidelines regarding the role they are able to fulfil.

Responsibilities of RA Tas

RA Tas agrees:

- ✓ To provide supports that meet your needs at your preferred times (as far as possible).
- ✓ To communicate openly and honestly in a timely manner.
- ✓ To treat you with courtesy and respect.
- ✓ To inform you of the contact details of the key person providing your service.
- ✓ To support you to make decisions about your own support and keep you informed about the way your support is provided.
- ✓ To give you information about managing any complaints or disagreements and details of the RA Tas cancellation policy (if relevant).
- ✓ To give you adequate notice if RA Tas has to change a scheduled appointment to provide supports.
- ✓ To give you the required notice if RA Tas needs to end the service to you.
- ✓ To protect your privacy and confidential information.
- ✓ To provide support in a manner consistent with all relevant laws, including the Australian Consumer Law; keep accurate records on the supports provided to the client.
- ✓ To issue regular invoices with details of services delivered, if requested/relevant.
- ✓ To provide you with details of all services available at RA Tas.

Privacy and Confidentiality

We care about your privacy and confidentiality and are committed to protecting it.

When providing you with a service, we need to collect information about you and your circumstances.

We will only do this when it is relevant to your service or if it is required by law. Our services are completely confidential. We will not give your name or any information about you to anyone outside Relationships Australia Tasmania, unless someone's personal safety is at risk, or it is required by law.

In protecting your privacy we must:

- ✓ Keep all information we collect about you confidential.
- ✓ Respect your safety, privacy and dignity when using your information.
- ✓ Protect information from any misuse or loss.
- ✓ Take steps to ensure that the information we have about you is accurate, complete, up to date and relevant to the service you are accessing.
- ✓ Not share your information with anyone else unless you have given clear written consent or if it is necessary to maintain your safety or otherwise required by law.

You have a right to:

- ✓ Complain if you feel we have not respected your privacy.
- ✓ Know why and how your personal information is collected.
- ✓ Know how your personal information is used, who it may be shared with and when.
- ✓ Give or refuse consent before information is collected about you.
- ✓ Ask for information or records to be explained or changed if you believe it is inaccurate, misleading, incomplete or out of date.
- ✓ Request access to your client file.
- ✓ Request a copy of our *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*.

Privacy and Confidentiality - Common Questions

Relationships Australia Tasmania (RA Tas) respects your right to privacy and is committed to safeguarding the personal information you provide to us.

What personal information is collected about me?

There are certain personal details that we collect and record in order to be able to provide you with a quality service. Some of these details are collected as part of a holistic assessment process and others need to be collected as part of an arrangement with our funding body. The details collected may include:

Identifying information about you (your name, date of birth, etc.):

- ✓ Your contact information (address, telephone number).
- ✓ People to contact in the event of an emergency.
- ✓ Relevant details about your circumstances.
- ✓ Information requested by our funding body, as required.

RA Tas will only collect the personal information that is reasonably necessary to provide a quality service.

How is my personal information used?

Your personal information is primarily used by our organisation for the purpose for which it was collected, to assist RA Tas in providing a service relevant to your circumstances.

How is my personal information stored?

While you may sign some papers or forms, your personal information is stored in a secure electronic format on our client data management system. Some services use paper files that are locked in a secure filing cabinet.

As services expand and the use of internet or cloud-based technology increases there will be other third-party services RA Tas may choose to access to assist in managing data and improving our services to clients.

If you wish to know more about the storage of your information, feel free to request a copy of the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*.

How long is my information kept for?

In accordance with our funding and contractual requirements, all information collected is kept on file for the entire contract period. Once your service has ended, your information is saved in a digital format for 25 years. Paper files are archived and kept for seven years for adults and 25 years for children and young people.

Who has access to my personal information?

In most cases, your RA Tas practitioners will be the only people accessing your information. RA Tas funding bodies may require us to demonstrate continuous quality improvement and safety activities in accordance with service delivery standards. In order for audits to be conducted, there are times when external auditing parties will request to view files to ensure that the correct processes are being followed and correct documents are being used. The auditors do not read file notes or personal information. If you are not happy for your file to be used for this purpose, you need to tell us. You are under no obligation to authorise your file to be used for this purpose.

Do you disclose my personal information to any other services or agencies?

RA Tas are required to provide non-identifying data to our funding body. We will seek your written consent before providing non-identifying information.

Limitations of Confidentiality

Confidentiality is strictly maintained. However, RA Tas has a duty of care to protect their clients and those close to them. RA Tas are mandated by law to report risk of harm to self or others as well as instances of current child abuse or neglect or the risk of child abuse or neglect.

Your Consent

If we gain your consent to share your information we will ask that you sign a '*Consent to Share Information*' form declaring your consent. This form will include the person/agency/service that your information will be shared with. There are some extreme circumstances in which your personal information may be shared without your consent, these are outlined in the *Privacy Act, 1988*.

How can I access and make any corrections to my personal information?

If you would like access to any of your personal information you will be requested to complete a *Request for Release of Information Form*. Only information directly related to you can be accessed, any information recorded about other people will not be released. If your access to any personal information is denied, you will be provided with written notice of the reasons for denying access.

Contacting RA Tas

For further information about how RA Tas manages your personal information, please request a copy of our *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*. The most up-to-date version of the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* reflecting any amendments that may have been made is available on the RA Tas website.

If you have any questions, comments or if you wish to give feedback or make a complaint about how we handle your personal information, please do not hesitate to contact us on 1300 364 277 or email admin@reeltas.com.au. Alternatively, you can contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner on [1300 363 992](tel:1300363992) or email enquiries@oaic.gov.au.



Conflict Of Interest

What is a Conflict of Interest?

A conflict of interest is a situation or set of circumstances that might affect an organisation's ability to provide an appropriate and professional service to a client.

What does this mean for you?

If RA Tas is providing you with a service and you choose us to align with an additional RA Tas service we will:

- ✓ Act in your best interests by informing and empowering you.
- ✓ Act in a way so as to not limit or influence decision-making.
- ✓ Support you if you wish to change your mind about the services we provide or choose another service provider.
- ✓ Tell you about other registered providers who provide similar services.
- ✓ We will document any conflict of interests.
- ✓ We will listen to you if you have any concerns.
- ✓ Any conflicts that are documented will be communicated to the RA Tas Board.

Can someone help you with your decisions?

Yes. You can ask a family member, an advocate or a friend. It is important that you understand your choices and that you feel that you have control when making decisions.

The following organisations may be able to assist:

Advocacy Tasmania

Speak Out Association of Tasmania

Contacting Relationships Australia, Tasmania

If you have any questions or you would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact us on 1300 364 277.

Feedback, Complaints and Disputes

RA Tas welcomes feedback about the service you have received from us. We use the information that you provide to improve our services. RA Tas is committed to:

- ✓ Promoting the well-being of individuals to equitable and mutually satisfying relationships at all levels,
- ✓ Providing services which are ethical, professional and of the highest quality; and
- ✓ Maintaining and promoting its favourable reputation in the community.

Client Feedback

The following procedures are in place to encourage feedback about our services and to ensure that the information you provide is used in a meaningful way:

- ✓ Any feedback or evaluation you provide will be kept strictly confidential and will not impact on your access to our services in the future.
- ✓ Feedback forms are located on the RA Tas website and in the waiting area. The forms in the waiting area can be filled out and handed directly to reception staff or mailed to the organisation at any time.
- ✓ If you have provided consent we may contact you by telephone for the purpose of evaluation.

Client Complaints

We take complaints seriously and RA Tas commits to responding in a prompt, thorough, considered and effective way to any complaints received. The following points outline how you can make a complaint and the commitment of RA Tas to dealing with complaints:

- ✓ If you are comfortable, you can provide your practitioner with information about your complaint in the first instance. If the complaint relates to your practitioner, you can talk to the practitioner's supervisor or Manager about your concerns.
- ✓ You can provide your complaint in writing, however, if this is not possible, then a staff member can assist you in providing your complaint. Interpreters can also be made available if required.
- ✓ Complaint forms are located in the client waiting area and can be filled out and handed directly to reception staff or mailed to the organisation at any time.
- ✓ Complaints can also be made via a complaint form on the RA Tas website - www.tas.relationships.org.au All information entered is kept confidential.

- ✓ Your privacy and confidentiality will be maintained to the maximum extent possible when a complaint has been made.
- ✓ You will be treated fairly and services will not be withheld if you make a complaint.
- ✓ A manager or other senior RA Tas staff member will be responsible for investigating the complaint.
- ✓ RA Tas will respond to your complaint outlining the action we have taken to address the complaint within two weeks of the organisation receiving it. If this is not possible, we will contact you to provide an update on the progress of your complaint.

If you wish to provide feedback or make a complaint you can do so by:

1. Calling RA Tas on [1300 364 277](tel:1300364277)

2. Writing to the Manager of the relevant service at:

Hobart
20 Clare Street, Hobart, Tasmania, 7000
Email: hobart@reltas.com.au

Launceston
6 Paterson Street, Launceston, 7250
Email: launceston@reltas.com.au

Devonport
68 North Fenton Street, Devonport, 7310
Email: devonport@reltas.com.au

3. Submitting feedback on our website at

www.tas.relationships.org.au/contact-us/contact-us-form

4. You can also contact an external service to raise your concerns, as below:

The Department of Health & Human Services

South – [6166 1127](tel:61661127) North – [6777 1060](tel:67771060) North West – [6477 7609](tel:64777609)

Advocacy Tasmania
Call [1800 005 131](tel:1800005131), PO Box 426, Sandy Bay TAS 7006, advocacy@advocacytasmania.org.au

National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)
Call [1800 800 110](tel:1800800110), visiting one of its offices in person, or visiting ndis.gov.au

The Ombudsman
Call 1800 001 170 health.complaints@ombudsman.tas.gov.au

For more information, please ask for a copy of our *Client Complaints Policy and Procedures*.

Crisis Help and Support Services

Service	Contact Details	Online
Lifeline	13 11 14 24 hours, 7 days. Suicide prevention/crisis support	Crisis web support 7pm - midnight www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/online-services/crisis-chat
Beyondblue	1300 224 636 Information/support for mental health/crisis	Online chat support www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/get-immediate-support
Headspace	South: 6231 2927 North: 6335 3100 Nth West: 6424 2144 Counselling for 12-25 year olds	Online chat for people aged 12-25 www.eheadspace.org.au
MensLine Australia	1300 789 978 24 hours, 7 days for family/relationship concerns	www.mensline.org.au/want-to-talk
Mental Health Line	1800 332 388 24/7. State-wide for crisis support/advice/referral	www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/service_information/services_files/mental_health_services/mental_health_service_HELPLINE
1800 Respect	1800 737 732 Sexual Assault, Domestic and Family Violence Counselling	Chat online www.chat.1800respect.org.au/webmodules/chat/initialinformation.aspx
STANDBY - Support	0400 183 490 24 hours, 7 days, support for people affected by suicide	http://standbysupport.com.au
Suicide Call Back	1300 659 467 24 hours, 7 days, Counselling service	Online chat www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/need-to-talk/my-suicide-call-back-service
SANE Helpline	1800 187 263 Mental health professionals Mon-Fri 10am-10pm	Online chat https://www.sane.org/get-help
Relationships Australia Tas	1300 364 277 General mental health/counselling support	Contacts and resources www.tas.relationships.org.au
Aboriginal Health Services	South: 6234 0777 North: 6332 3800 Nth West: 6431 3289 For Tasmanian Aboriginal people	www.tacinc.com.au/programs/health
Rural Alive & Well	1300 4357 6283 Mental health & suicide prevention to rural Tasmanians	www.rawtas.com.au/get-help-now.aspx
Black Dog Institute	Web based information and emergency contact details	www.blackdoginstitute.org.au
Kids Helpline	1800 551 800 24 hours, 7 days. Free, private and confidential	Telephone and online counselling service for young people aged 5-25 https://kidshelpline.com.au/

Child Safety Services	1300 737 639 24 hours, 7 days	To make an urgent notification about abuse www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/children/child_protection_services
Gamblers Help	1800 858 858 24 hours, 7 days	Self-help, discussion, SMS support, counselling and support https://www.gamblinghelponline.org.au/
The Salvation Army	1300 363 622 24 hours, 7 days	A range of support services www.salvationarmy.org.au/en/Find-Us/Tasmania
Parent Line Tasmania	1300 808 178 24 hours, 7 days. To assist parents of children 0-5 years	Assists with stressful parenting issues or concerns www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/service_information/children_and_families/parentline
Family Violence & Counselling Support Service	1800 608 122 9am - midnight. If someone is at risk or in danger, call the 24 hour Family Violence Response Referral Line (below) on 1800 633 937, or 000 in an emergency	Phone advice service www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/service_information/children_and_families/family_violence_counselling_and_support_service
Family Violence Response Referral Line	1800 633 937 24 hours, 7 days. Information and referral	Phone service www.legalaid.tas.gov.au/referral-list/listing/family-violence-response-and-referral-line
Family Drug Support	1300 368 186 24 hours, 7 days. Information and referral	Information and support www.fds.org.au
Headspace	1800 650 890 A national youth mental health foundation dedicated to improving the well-being of young Australians	www.headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/hobart www.headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/launceston www.headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/devonport
Emergency Accommodation Service (EASe)	1800 800 588 5pm to 9pm Monday to Friday or 24 hours on Saturday, Sunday and public holidays.	EASe can only provide assistance to people who have nowhere to sleep that night www.sheltertas.org.au/housing-in-tasmania/homelessness/are-you-looking-for-emergency-accommodation



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