

Vulnerable (includes Minors) Patients Policy

Introduction

This vulnerable patient's policy is to provide information to you, the patient, on how Maitland Myotherapy and Sports Massage manage minor and vulnerable patients in our practice.

Our Professional Associations' Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice apply equally to the treatment of minor and vulnerable clients as they do to adults.

Maitland Myotherapy and Sports Massage are committed to providing a professional service to all patients and carry out that service with due skill and care.

Purpose

This guideline has been developed to assist therapists when treating vulnerable patients.

The purpose of this guideline is to ensure that we meet the responsibilities for the safety, welfare and wellbeing vulnerable patients.

For the purposes of this Guideline, Vulnerable Patients means:

- a Child or Children – a person under the age of 18 years;
- an individual aged 18 years and above who is or may be unable to take care of themselves or is unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation by reason of age, illness, language, trauma or disability, or any other reason.

Definitions

Responsible Adult – is a person to whom care, custody and control of a vulnerable person is entrusted. This may be a parent or an appointed guardian.

Jurisdiction – one of the states or territories in Australia.

Working with Children Check - In some Australian jurisdictions compulsory checks have been introduced with the aim of protecting minors from abuse in certain circumstances. Therapists may be required to undertake these checks by law in their jurisdiction, or there may be no check, or the check may be optional. A check valid in one state is not transferable to another jurisdiction, and the holder must apply for a check in each jurisdiction in they work.

Policy

The treatment of vulnerable patients brings with it distinctive challenges for the therapist, particularly in the areas of assessment, risk, consent, and therapeutic relationship requirements about communication, professional boundaries, currency of skills and knowledge.

The therapist who works with vulnerable patients will maintain the dignity and privacy of each patient and work in a way which is respectful, caring and protective of the vulnerable patient/client.

The treatment plan and informed consent may be discussed and agreed to by all parties involved and that the vulnerable patient/minor should be accompanied by a parent/adult/carer/guardian at all times whilst in the clinic space (including the waiting room etc).

As the responsible adult of a vulnerable patient, you have a right to request to sight the therapists *Working with Children Check*.

When treating a vulnerable patient, the therapist will:

- Comply with relevant local statutes relating to child protection, mandatory reporting and working with children;
- Under most circumstances, ensure that a responsible adult is present in the treatment area during treatment of a vulnerable patient at all times;

While not required by law, it is considered best practice that the responsible adult of vulnerable patients is present during treatment at all times.

Confidential of Vulnerable Patients/Clients/Information

Under normal circumstances, the responsible adult is entitled to access information relating to the vulnerable patient's health status and the treatment performed. This entitlement may be varied in the case of sensitive information, or when the vulnerable patient is capable of providing informed consent.

The therapist will clarify at the commencement of the therapeutic relationship how confidentiality will be maintained, who can access the information and under what circumstances.