

Confidentiality and information sharing

The Purpose of a confidentiality and information sharing policy

1. We have a confidentiality policy to enable service users to the Honour Based Abuse Helpline and email service to make informed decisions about any information they disclose to us. This policy enables Karma Nirvana always to offer a consistent service.

Introduction

2. Karma Nirvana's Honour Based Abuse Helpline and email service offers its service users the opportunity to discuss any issue in a non-judgemental and confidential setting. Karma Nirvana aims to provide an active listening service, which empowers its service users to make informed decisions about their safety and welfare. This service is provided so that it allows its services users to choose how much identifying information they share.
3. Confidentiality is vital to the Honour Based Abuse helpline as we aim to build a trusting relationship with all our service users. We aim to offer a confidential space whereby service users can openly discuss the problems they are experiencing and discuss options, which leave them feeling their wishes and feelings have been respected.
4. Karma Nirvana will not share any information with third parties except in specific situations in which we are required by law or potential risk of harm to the service user or others. Confidentiality is between a service user and the Honour Based Abuse Helpline, not an individual Helpline call handler.

Specific instances where a Karma Nirvana call handler may have to break confidentiality

5. The following are instances where a Karma Nirvana call handler may have to break confidentiality:
 - a) If the caller is at high and immediate risk of serious physical harm or death. This includes suicidal callers.
 - b) If we receive information that a child is being abused or neglected
 - c) If we are instructed through a court order to do so
 - d) Where a caller threatens a call handler or tries to prevent the helpline from being used to support others
 - e) If we receive information about terrorist activities
6. If a call handler deals with a situation whereby they may need to break confidentiality without the caller's permission, the call handler must refer this to their senior immediately. Wherever possible, a caller will be informed of our consideration about passing details to third parties.

7. The position regarding confidentiality should be explained to and discussed with the caller at critical points to afford the caller every opportunity to exercise control over the information they provide.

What do we do when considering breaching confidentiality?

8. If a call handler feels they have been given information that falls into a category listed in our exceptions to confidentiality list, they will first consult with senior management.
9. They will use all available information to assess how the disclosed information meets the outlined clauses. If the Helpline call handler and senior management need further input, another Helpline staff member may be contacted and consulted.
10. If the decision is made to call the emergency services, then, in that case, all available information will be passed to them along with the name and number of the Helpline call handler for further consultation.
11. A written report of the incident, which led to a breach of confidentiality and subsequent discussions and decisions, will then be made. In addition, any incident that involved the breaking of confidentiality will be reviewed by a Helpline manager not involved in the initial process to ensure correct procedures have been adhered to.
12. If a decision is made to disclose confidential information to another professional, the call handler should always seek the person's consent before the disclosure. In addition, a careful explanation of why the disclosure is to be made and assurance of the service user's safety, including what will happen following the disclosure, may assist the service user.

Unauthorised breaches of confidentiality

13. All Helpline call handlers that any deliberate or reckless unauthorised disclosure of identifying information about current or former callers is a severe offence and will be dealt with disciplinary action.

Confidentiality in practice

14. All service users have the right to use a pseudonym or remain completely anonymous when they call or email us.
15. All Helpline staff will sign a confidentiality agreement stating they will adhere to the above rules before viewing any information or taking any calls.
16. Karma Nirvana uses a phone system where the number of each person calling is displayed on our phone screens at the helpline. Where the number is withheld on the caller's end, we will not receive this number, and it will appear as anonymous or No caller ID on our phone screens. In line with Karma Nirvana's helpline, policy all phone numbers received at the helpline will be kept confidential unless we feel the call meets

our safeguarding threshold, in which case we would pass this information on to the relevant authority.

17. The Karma Nirvana Honour Based Abuse Helpline will investigate any complaint about a breach of confidentiality; please see our complaints policy for further details.

Record Keeping

18. All information taken regarding a service user is to be recorded on the electronic database. All information retained on the electronic database will be securely filed and password protected. Any hard copies of information relating to service users will be kept in securely locked files.
19. Any specific identifiable examples of an individual case will not be quoted as a media or campaign tool without express consent from the individual.
20. All records should be accurate, detailed and clear. For example, if a call handler is referring to the words used by a service user, this should be reflected in quotation marks.

Monitoring

21. All calls are written up on the electronic database for training, monitoring and collation for data purposes. All data obtained from the electronic database will be anonymised.
22. In the circumstances of training or improving our service, another staff or volunteer member may listen in to the call, following signing the confidentiality policy. This will only be undertaken for training or improving our service. If a service user asks whether the call is being listened to, the handler will always answer honestly and honestly.

Access to information

23. If a service user wishes to know whether Karma Nirvana is holding or processing any of their current personal information, they must submit the request in writing with as much detail as possible about their service use, including dates and times. There may be a small fee associated with locating this data, as permitted by the Data Protection Act.
24. If we receive a call on the helpline from professionals requesting information regarding an individual we have supported, we must inform the professional that we cannot confirm or deny whether the person has been in contact with the helpline. Again, this is due to data protection.

There are certain instances in which we may be legally required to disclose information these are;

- If there is a missing person enquiry
- If there is a homicide enquiry

In the above instances, and before disclosing any information, call handlers should verify the professional by going through the switchboard for their organisation. Call handlers need to obtain the following information to verify the professional - the professional's name, the organisation they work for, collar/badge number (for the Police), crime/report reference numbers (to verify the case is open with and being investigated by the Police) and details of the victim.

Call handlers must inform the helpline manager, senior call handler or other senior management staff if the helpline manager or senior call handler is unavailable before disclosing information.

In the instance that a professional calls requesting information and details of an individual both supported by them and the helpline, then call handlers must always obtain the individual's consent before disclosing any information.

Where we cannot confirm safe consent, we will suggest the professional contact the individual and arranges for them to contact Karma Nirvana. Call handlers must log the call with the individual, outlining whether they provided consent to disclose information or not.

If a request is made by a professional for a copy of Karma Nirvana's call logs for use in court, this is to be put formally in writing to Karma Nirvana.