

# What is in my file?

## Can I read my file?

You have the right to view your file. One example where you may not be able to read your file is at very specific times when police or lawyers are involved in your life.

Another time that you may not be able to read your file is if your worker thinks that it is not in your best interest to read parts of your file at that moment.

These times should be made clear to you by your worker.

## Can I have a copy of my file?

It depends. Each agency has their own rules about copying files and for what cost. Agencies are allowed to ask you to pay for copies of your file, as long as it is a reasonable amount. The money you pay helps to cover the cost of making photocopies and the time

it takes a staff person to make the copies for you.

You have the right to ask what the rules are at your agency and to make a complaint if you feel the rules are not fair.

## What if there are mistakes in my file?

You have the right to ask your worker to make additions or request

changes to what is in your file or ask that your comments be included.

## How long do agencies keep my file?

This depends. Many agencies keep files for as many as 10 years from the last time you saw them. The rules are different from agency to agency. Ask what the rules are at your agency.



## Nina's Story

Nina is 28 years old. She has been receiving mental health services from an agency for about 2 years. She has a great relationship with her worker Celeste, and in general, she is happy with the services she has received. Lately, Nina is curious about what is written in her file. Nina asks if she can look at her file and Celeste says that she has to check it out with her manager and will call back by the end of the week.

A week later, Celeste calls and tells Nina that she can read her file at their next meeting. Celeste also says that her manager has told her that Celeste needs to be with Nina when Nina reads her file.

## Your next steps...

Ask to see your file, if you want to see it. If you are not able to see your file, ask how to make a complaint.

Ask what the rules are to have a copy of your file for yourself.

Ask if you have to pay for it and how much you have to pay.

Every agency should have its own way of getting



your complaints heard and making sure that your privacy is protected when you are making a complaint.

You also have the right to make a complaint directly to the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario.

This is one in a series of pamphlets about your privacy rights and mental health. The other pamphlets in this series include:

- What are my privacy rights?
- Why am I being asked these questions?
- Who might see my information?
- Will you share my information?

For more information about your privacy rights, please see the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario's website at [www.ipc.on.ca](http://www.ipc.on.ca) or call:

Toronto Area (416/local 905): 416-326-3333

Long Distance: 1-800-387-0073 (within Ontario)

TDD/TTY: 416-325-7539

Pour joindre l'agente des communications bilingue, veuillez composer le: 416-326-4804