

# information sharing

GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTING THE SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES



- ISG overview
- appropriate information sharing
- seeking consent and limited confidentiality
- ISG in practice
- the future

## the ISG.....

- Layton Report, Keeping Them Safe, National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children
- an overarching framework endorsed by Cabinet
- replaces multiple agreements
- risk is serious and *anticipated* but not necessarily *imminent*

*The key to success is to intervene early, when children are beginning to experience difficulty, share the warning signs, collaborate and take action before the problems become entrenched.*

Government of South Australia (2004) page.12  
*Keeping Them Safe*

## main principles underpinning the ISG.....

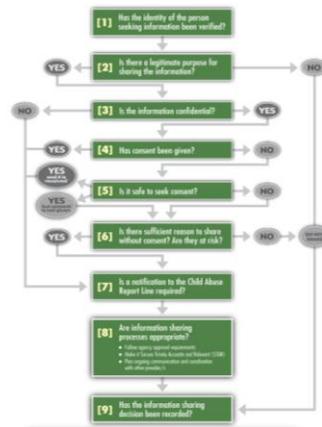
- gaining a client's consent for information sharing is the ideal and recommended practice, except where to do so would place a person at increased risk of harm.
- children's and young people's right to safety overrides an individual's right to privacy.
- working in partnership with parents to provide safe and supportive family environments directly protects children's and young people's wellbeing.
- when information is shared about people, it is done so respectfully in both verbal and written communication.

## benefits of ISG in practice:

- improved information sharing across and between government agencies and non government organisations
- earlier, more effective intervention and collaboration will support children, young people and their families – better service coordination
- workers will be more confident about requesting and sharing information
- through monitoring and evaluation, systems issues and quality improvement opportunities will be identified

STAR best practice.....

**SECURE**  
**TIMELY**  
**ACCURATE**  
**RELEVANT**



**APPROPRIATE INFORMATION SHARING PRACTICE**  
A guide to applying the Decision Making Steps flowchart

**Step 1: Know the person seeking information, you need to verify who they are and for whom they work before sharing information.**

**Step 2: Is there a legitimate purpose for information sharing?**

**Step 3: Is the information confidential?**

**Step 4: Has consent been given?**

**Step 5: Is it safe to seek consent?**

**Step 6: Is there sufficient reason to share without consent? Are there any risks?**

**Step 7: Is a notification to the Child Abuse Report Law required?**

**Step 8: Are information sharing practices appropriate?**

**Step 9: Are the information sharing decisions being recorded?**

this goes with that.....



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what must be included in all ISG appendices?

**7 agency/organisation appendix**

- lines of approval/supervision for decision making in individual agencies
- cultural guidance
- documentation practice/protocols

what must be included in all ISG appendices?

**7 agency/organisation appendix**

- protocols for gaining consent from clients and for discussing limited confidentiality
- examples of case studies
- other relevant information

***We work from an early intervention and systemic framework anyway, so we always consider the safety and wellbeing of the whole family in what we do. The ISG reinforce that. This process makes staff feel more confident they are doing the right thing.***

*Group Manager, UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide*

## **seeking consent and discussing limited confidentiality**

- broad range in current practice
- quality improvement – developing good practice
- improved relationships with clients
- most information sharing is occurring with consent

## **feedback.....**

- the ISG supports and expands on existing good practice
- benefit in having one overarching framework - a consistent approach that explains clearly how and when to share information and for what purpose
- acting to protect vulnerable children and young people frequently involves sharing information about adults they relate to
- supporting vulnerable adults supports vulnerable children

***... the ISG gave all of the workers involved in this case the extra tools and permission they needed to 'join the dots' and provide the multi agency support this family really needed.***

Child and Family Health Service worker about a positive intervention involving a young mother and her six day old child escaping family violence.

## **early observations of ISG in practice.....**

- important to have key Government agencies and diverse mix of NGOs involved in first stages of implementation
- expanding scope of duty of care – adult and children's services
- shift from reactive crisis driven to early intervention/ prevention
- worker confidence – how, when and why

## **Aligning the planets.....**

- Commonwealth legislation
- State jurisdictions
- the cost of failing to intervene early
- there is a need for sustained intervention with vulnerable families - policy and funding

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