TIP SHEET No.4

Informed consent for digital service delivery

It is important to seek a consumer's consent specifically for the delivery of digital services, even if they have already consented to general service delivery from your organisation. Ideally, you should have discussion with them before starting to provide a digital service to them. If digital services were delivered at short notice as in during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is best practice to still seek informed consent as soon as you can.

Before seeking informed consent

Consider how to communicate information effectively to the consumer by asking yourself:

- ☐ Does the consumer need time to read written information and ask questions?
- ☐ Have the consumer's particular needs been addressed (e.g., disability, literacy issues or a background of cultural and linguistic diversity)?

Seeking informed consent

When seeking informed consent, make sure you discuss the following with the consumer:

- ☐ They have a choice of whether to receive services digitally, including where possible, other options.
- ☐ There are possible risks and benefits of digital service delivery.
- ☐ You will describe how digital service delivery will be used in the consumer's situation.
- ☐ You will let them know how their data will be managed, including privacy and confidentiality safeguards.
- ☐ If required, how a support person can participate.
- ☐ If required, how an interpreter can be involved.

After seeking informed consent

After seeking informed consent, make sure that you keep a record of written consent, or make a note of verbal consent to be added to the consumer's file. Record the details of any other parties present during the consultation and the consumer's explicit consent for them to be present.

Further resources

- National Safety and Quality Mental Health Standards, Product information template for digital mental health services (safetyandquality.gov.au)
- Allied Health Professionals Australia: Telehealth Guide: Appendix A has an example of a video consultation informed consent form.