

## *Personal Records*

There are many records kept about a person's life when they receive services or supports from an organisation. What information is kept, how that information is kept, and who has access to the information are all important questions for organisations to grapple with. All records are personal and confidential and may have a significant impact on the person's future.

### Quality in Practice

- Find creative ways to help people fully understand the files/books/records where information about them is maintained.
  - Use picture file covers to help people who cannot read identify their file
  - Use pictures to help people understand the various sections and contents (pictures of the people who contribute to those sections might be helpful, as well as pictures of the things or events that are discussed in that section).
- Invite people to review their record and to be present when people make additions to the record.
- Hold an ongoing discussion of the contents in the record, including why the information has to be written down.
- Some people may need various methods of education about their individual records in order to understand what information is kept and then make more informed decisions about with whom to share this information.
- Support staff to understand the importance of being factual and respectful when making notes in the file. Few people have as much written about them as people who live within service systems. Take this responsibility seriously and consider how you would feel if all of that information was written down about you and how you would like that information to be maintained and disseminated.
- Develop and implement strategies to encourage all people to "own" the information being maintained about them. Make requests for releases of information very serious and take the time to assist the person to understand why you are asking for the release.
- Assure that only the required information is released to any other person. Assist the person to identify information they may be more sensitive to, and assure that everyone knows about this sensitivity and respects the person's desires.