

DONOR LINKING ANZICA GUIDELINES

SUGGESTED PROCEDURE

Guiding Principles:

The client (donor or donor conceived person)

- Should be provided with clear information
- Should be offered the opportunity for discussion
- Should be treated with respect
- Should be assisted with the process and in their adjustment to the outcome
- Should have choice and should have their choices clearly spelt out
- Should make their own decisions about what they want
- Should have control over the pace of the steps involved

The counsellor

- Should not become the advocate for one party
- Should take on the role of the mediator
- Should support the principle that people have a right to make contact with genetic offspring or donor

Procedure:

1. Initial

The approved counsellor is the person who should deal with these cases. All initial inquiries should be referred to the counsellor.

At the time of the initial inquiry the needs of the client should be established. If their needs are not clear or there are issues needing further discussion an appointment for counselling should be offered.

A search of clinic records should be made to establish whether there are any records. For some case there will not be. The client should be advised and counselling should be offered.

2. Non-identifying information

If non-identifying information is requested, this should be provided by the counsellor in writing after searching appropriate records
Follow up counselling should be offered.

3. Identifying information

If the request is for identifying information, an appointment for counselling should be arranged before any further steps are taken. The counselling should address the following:

- Confirm the identity of the inquirer (e.g. driver's licence check)
- Clarification of the issues for that person
- Their needs and expectations
- Other life issues
- Possible outcomes of pursuing the request
- Potential difficulties
- Expectations of the other party
- Building a working relationship with the client
- Informed decision making
- Helping the client to develop a clear understanding of their needs and motivations

If it has been decided to proceed with the request, the following steps should be followed.

1. The request should be received in writing.
2. A search is initiated.
3. If not located the client is advised and further counselling may be necessary.
4. If located, the counsellor should adopt the role of mediator.
5. Before any attempt is made to contact, establish whether the client wishes to proceed. Some clients may have second thoughts as the possibility of contact moves closer to reality.
6. The client should provide in **writing** the information that they want communicated when contact is made. The subject of the search will question the counsellor about the inquirer (e.g. needs, motivations). The only information that should be passed on is that which was given by the client. Also establish in writing what the client wants the counsellor to ask the subject of the search.
7. Write a letter to the subject requesting that they contact the counsellor.
8. The letter should be sent by person to person registered mail and should contain information that will enable the person to recognise what it is about. However it should not spell out the details.
9. If the letter is received but no contact is made a further letter should be sent requesting the subject to communicate their wishes. If there is still no answer a third letter is sent confirming that no further correspondence will be attempted and the inquirer will be informed that there has been no response. No further attempt to communicate should be made.
10. When contact is made information may be passed on to the subject as authorised by the client. Information may also be gained to pass on to the client. The subject should be invited to attend counselling. No identifying information should be exchanged without prior counselling of both parties.
11. The counselling should aim to clarify the subject's feelings, thoughts, expectations, and wishes in relation to the enquiry. What information would they be prepared to give, would they be prepared to meet, would they be prepared to exchange letters etc?

12. The counsellor continues to act as a mediator between the two parties until either an agreement is reached to exchange identifying information or it becomes clear that an agreement cannot be reached. This should happen as soon as possible so the counsellor can step out of the mediating role and the clients can establish their own relationship independently if they agree to do so.
13. Further counselling may be required by either party depending on outcomes and emotional reactions. The needs of others in the immediate families for further counselling should also be considered. It is likely that issues that were salient at the time of the treatment or donation will resurface and will need to be dealt with (e.g. marital conflict, dealing with infertility, grief etc).

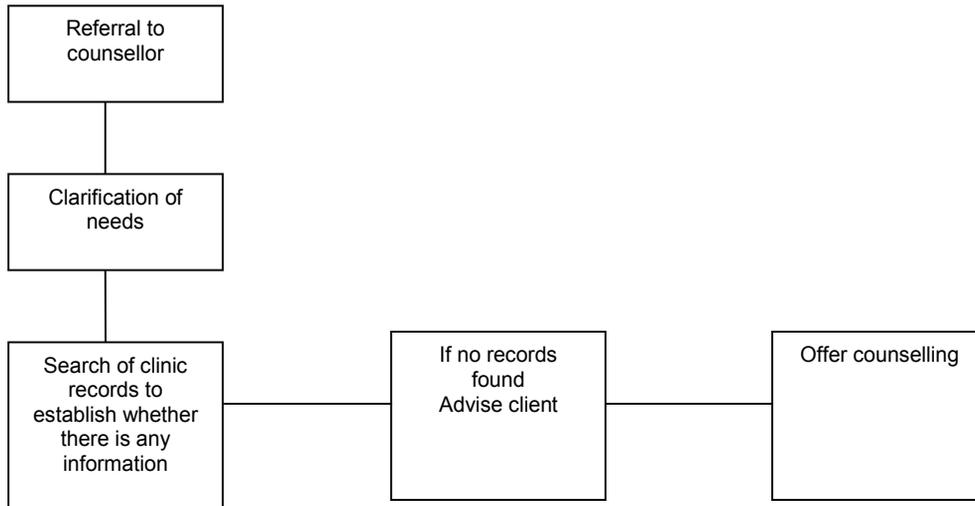
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FACILITATING CONTACT BETWEEN DONOR CONCEIVED INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR DONOR PARENTS.

SUMMARY



If Located

