Authorization Forms Instructions

Introduction:

TSA requires Ministry Units to provide clients with appropriate authorization forms before providing support.
The Consent form is mandatory before engaging with a client, and requires the client's informed consent, before interviewing, assessing and or providing support. With the client's consent, during the intake process maybe recorded, stored, used and shared within TSA.
Additionally, there are Authorization forms, for Community Services (CS) or an outside organization to use if the client requires their personal information to be shared between TSA and the organization.

1. Consent Form *(updated once a year)*

The consent form is to be completed during the initial intake process for new clients and updated annually.

When a client is making an application for assistance at CS, the first thing a worker must establish is a sense of trust and safety for the client. Part of this process is to request the client's consent to record, save, use and share (within TSA) their household's personal information. As well as providing their informed consent, the client needs to have a sense that their personal information will be secure and is important to our organization.

What is the purpose of a consent form?

- A consent form itself is not the consent.
- A conversation with the client is the key feature of the consent process.

The purpose of consent form is to give the client the information he or she needs to make an informed choice, regarding if they wish to provide their personal information collected, stored, used and shared, without pressure from the intake worker.
The consent form itself confirms that the individual was informed, decided and consented to the process.

3 Key elements of Consent

1. Voluntary:

- Clients must be free to consent to or refuse the collection of their personal information and how it may be use
- Consent should be obtained without pressure or intimidation
- A client has a right to refuse

2. Capacity:

A client is considered to have the capacity to consent if he or she understands:

- The process of the collection and use of their personal information
- How their personal information will be used and to whom it will be disclosed
- The outcomes of refusing their consent

3. Informed/ Understanding:

- The worker has taken reasonable steps to be assured the client has understood the consent discussion *(Language used must be at a grade 6-8 comprehension level)*
- Workers are expected to answer clients' questions as honestly and completely as they can (if they are not able to then the worker must refer to someone who can)
- Documents will be made available in the clients' language of preference, if requested, to ensure the clients' rights are met

Steps to ensure Informed Consent

The Consent form is part of the Personal tab in Link2Feed (L2F); you may download or print off copies to have on hand.

1. When receiving an application for assistance, before entering any information into L2F, ask the client if they are willing to provide their household's personal information.

2. If the client responds 'yes', then provide and review with them the Consent form, reading through the document slowly and making sure they feel free to ask questions; ensure you pause after each paragraph to confirm they understand, before moving on.

3. Once you have reviewed the Consent form, ask if the client has any questions or concerns. Be sure to address any questions or concerns before asking for their signed consent.

4. Conform with the client that they understand they are providing consent on behalf of all members of their household by signing this form. Answer any questions they may have regarding this point.

5. Then have them sign and date (if paper format) the Consent form. In L2F chose Signature Type and have client sign with appropriate method, the date is automatically created in the L2F form.

**Follow all policies on retaining documents*

If Consent is refused:

There may be the very few instances that a client may decline to provide their consent. As stated earlier, the first thing a worker must establish is a sense of trust and safety for the client. This process must be voluntary, and a client has the right to refuse. This must not be seen as a negative disruption to intake process, but an opportunity to understand and further demonstrate our support.

- When a client states they refuse to provide their consent, first clarify with the client about their concerns regarding providing their consent; they may have a misunderstanding, had a previous negative experience or be given poor secondhand information.
- If the client still declines to provide their consent, then the worker needs to be very supportive, understanding and respectful of the client's decision.
- The worker then needs to clarify the implications of this decision as are two possible responses; provide full assistance without assessment (food only) or provide partial assistance with clarification.
- It is recommended that non-food assistance <u>should not be provided without Consent</u>.
- The intake worker will clarify to the client that without their household information, the worker is unable to assess and determine eligibility for full assistance today and that the client is always welcome. (outlining your MU's policy on when client's may return for further assistance)
- Also inform the client that if in the future they provide their consent, the intake process can be completed, and support may be reassessed.

If a client declines to provide their consent, the intake process ceases, and the worker is to select Anonymous Client in L2F.

The process should be seen as an opportunity to provide dignity and minister to this individual, from 'start to finish' workers are to take the opportunity to really give hope today.

2. <u>Authorization Forms</u>

I. <u>TSA requires client information from another organization:</u>

During the interview process, a client may request, or the worker may determine that another organization should be contacted for referral and the client's information needs to be shared for support. In this case, the worker needs to obtain authorization from the client for their information to be shared with another organization.

The TSA authorization form outlines the original contact (TSA MU and worker), the referral organization's information (including worker), what information may be shared for a specific purpose and for how long the authorization form is valid for. The authorization form is signed, dated by the client and witnessed (with signature) by TSA staff member.

II. Another organization requires client information from TSA:

Occasionally TSA may receive requests from organizations on behalf of their client to have client information from TSA shared with the organization. This request may come on the organization's request authorization form, or if they do not a form, TSA has a form created for such a request. Either format must include contact information for both TSA (including worker) and the referral organization's information (including worker), what information may be shared for a specific purpose and for how long the authorization form is valid for. The authorization form is signed, dated by the client and witnessed (with signature) by the organization staff member.

What is the purpose of an authorization form?

The authorization form is a formal document that outlines that a client has given their authorization for their personal information to be shared between two organizations for a specific time period.
It also protects the client, as well as protects the two agencies. Without this document, there can be no communication of the client's personal information.
It also sets out a time limit on how long this can occur. If the time period expires and there needs to be further communications, then the client must complete another authorization form with new dates.

Steps to follow

Forms are available in (Link2Feed Documents - Salvation Army Canada), these can be downloaded and printed off copies to have on hand, when required

There are two forms, one for TSA to receive information and the other for TSA to provide information (please use the appropriate form)

Authorization Form for TSA to provide information to another organization: *(at the client's request)*

- Inform the client as you would for Informed Consent about how this document will be used and stored
- Explain to the client about the time frame and allow them to determine what they feel is appropriate, with further details on the process for needing to extend the dates if required
- Once you have reviewed the completed authorization form, ask if the client has any questions or concerns
- Be sure to address any questions or concerns before forwarding this to the other service or agency
- The form can then be sent to the other organization.
- Call and confirm it has been received by the appropriate worker.
- Document this authorization in the client's L2F household case notes.

Witness of Client's Signature:

In witnessing a signature, the witness simply confirms the identity of the individual who signed the document.

Withdrawing Authorization:

If at any time the client determines they wish this authorization form to be canceled during the active time period, they must do so by notifying CS worker in person, with proper identification in hand. This cannot be done verbally over the phone or by electronic communication.

Steps to withdrawing authorization:

- The TSA worker, in the presence of the client will contact the other organization by phone and speak directly with the organizational worker (identified on the authorization form) and inform them of the client's request

- Communication of the client's information between the two organizations cease from this point
- If at a future time the client wishes for this process to be reinstated, they would need to fill in another authorization form.
- The CS worker documents this update into the client's L2F household case notes.

Follow all policies on retaining document