

**PRO-GAM Inc.**  
**Intervention and Research Center for  
Conjugal and Family Violence**

Community organization, founded in 1982.  
Subsidized by l'Agence de Développement de Réseaux Locaux de Services de Santé et  
de Services Sociaux de Montréal and Centraide du Grand Montréal.

**Policy Concerning Confidentiality and Communication of  
Personal Information**

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PRO-GAM Inc.

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## **Policy Concerning Confidentiality and Communication of Personal Information**

This document is addressed to institutions, organizations, health service centers, or professionals interested in referring clients to PRO-GAM: Intervention and Research Center for Conjugal and Family Violence. By briefly presenting the organization's mission, mandate, services, approach and intervention framework, we hope to facilitate the referral process, clarify collaboration methods and ensure the complement of services.

### **Mission**

PRO-GAM is a non-profit community organization and a pioneer resource in its domain of activity in Quebec. Its mission is to contribute to the prevention of conjugal and family violence by assisting male perpetrators of abuse. Its primary mandate is to provide assistance through psychotherapy and its services are aimed at altering behavior and preventing recidivism.

### **Services**

The clinical services at PRO-GAM are concentrated on group intervention. The basic program consists of fourteen weekly meetings which are preceded by a minimum of three individual intake-evaluation interviews. These interviews not only serve to establish a therapeutic alliance with the client, they also serve to obtain an overview of the client's situation, the client's understanding and thoughts about the situation, as well as to consider the client's disposal regarding therapy.

### **Admission Criteria**

In order for a man to join a group, he must make a commitment to respect certain rules which are formalized in a therapeutic contract. The individual must also demonstrate a minimum openness to reflect upon his situation, to question certain attitudes and behaviors and to want to cease using violence. We reserve the right to refuse a client who does not correspond to these admission criteria.

### **Approach**

The clinical intervention of the organization is based on a psychotherapeutic approach that is adapted to the needs and to the particularities of the individual. While considering the different levels of motivation, the context of the consultation and the personal and social factors associated to the phenomenon, we address one's present reality as well as one's past experiences related to his violence.

To render it possible for individuals to commit to their process and to be open to themselves and to confidences, we focus on establishing a therapeutic alliance which is based on a bond of trust and respect with the clientele. This condition is elementary and indispensable to the success of any therapeutic process.

## **Framework of Practice**

The clinical practice of the team of professionals at PRO-GAM is governed by the regulations of the Code of Ethics for Psychologists in Quebec. This practice aims to respect one's fundamental rights as set in the Quebec Charter of Rights and Liberties as well as the legal measures registered in the Quebec Civil Code which frames the Code of Professions. Thus, the obligation to respect private life and professional secrecy restricts counselors from divulging any information which is confidential in nature, unless the client has provided enlightened written consent, or when a particular situation arises which obligates counselors to do so (Bill 180, Youth Protection Act).

Any request from a third party (court, probation service, transition house, Youth Protection Agency, etc...) to communicate confidential information must be expressed at the initiative of its representative after having obtained the client's enlightened written consent, attested by his written authorization. Upon informing the client of the received request and obtaining the client's agreement, we will then contact the referring party within a reasonable delay.

The information divulged to third parties is limited to objective data and to facts that the therapist is directly a witness of. It is centered on the client's participation: his attendance, his openness to question himself, his interest in understanding his situation, his disposal to change, as well as on the evolution of his therapeutic process. Information that has to do with the content of the exchanges with the client, thus, remains confidential.

## **Requests for Evaluations**

PRO-GAM does not offer psychological evaluation services, or services to assess the risk of danger. The clinical material that is revealed in the context of therapy can only be used for therapeutic ends. Its subjective nature, as well as the purpose for which it was confided and collected, make it such that it cannot have a place in an evaluation without potentially falsifying the conclusions. Such information, therefore cannot substitute a psychological expertise that requires specific methods and conditions.

While we acknowledge its legitimacy, we cannot comply with third party requests to provide an opinion about the risk of recidivism, or to express a professional opinion or recommendation about decisions regarding verdicts from court rulings, the revision of probation conditions and/or conditional release, or about child custody and child visitation rights.

By establishing this intervention framework, the administrators and the clinical team at PRO-GAM, provide themselves with the means to ensure that a therapeutic service is in place which can respond, as best as possible, to the needs of our clientele. Furthermore, such a framework maintains our mandate of assistance in conformity with the organization's mission and as a complement to that of community partners working in the domain of conjugal and family violence.

Steven Bélanger, psychologist  
Clinical Coordinator  
PRO-GAM Inc.

Approved by the Board of Directors on April 15, 2009.

Marie Savard, President