

Chapter:	Human Resources		
Title:	Relationship with Clients		
Policy: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Procedure: <input type="checkbox"/>	Review Cycle: Triennial Author: HR Specialist	Adopted Date: 08.2020 Review Date: 09.2023	Related Policies: Conflict of Interest Standards of Conduct Service Philosophy Rights Protection

Purpose:

This policy clarifies the necessity that Hopeful Horizons' (HHs') employees and volunteers maintain the integrity of their professional relationship with clients. The employee/client relationship must be protected from influences or activities that can interfere with services/treatment goals, organizational values and/or standards of conduct.

Scope:

This policy applies to

- All HH Staff Selected HH Staff, as specified:
 HH Board Members HH Volunteers
 Other:

Policy:

The integrity of the employee relationship with clients is the foundation of HHs' service philosophy and treatment approach. This relationship vests considerable trust in employees, who, in turn, bear authority and accountability as counselors, advocates, mentors and resources to the client. The unequal power inherent in this relationship heightens the vulnerability of the client and the potential for a conflict of interest. To mitigate this risk, it is HHs' policy that employees and volunteers shall not engage in personal relationships with clients that compromise the professional and/or therapeutic relationship or pose an apparent or actual conflict of interest.

Personal relationships that involve the exchange of funds, personal resources, or that are romantic or sexual in nature are of expressed concern and are prohibited in a staff to client subordinate relationship. Relationships of this nature can result in complaints of sexual harassment or concerns about undue access or advantage, favoritism, restricted opportunities, or unfavorable treatment. These concerns are damaging whether the favoritism is real or perceived and create a risk for both the employee and HH. Current and prior personal relationships between an employee and client that could result in a risk to HH shall be disclosed by the employee to either their immediate supervisor or Human Resources (HR). A determination shall be made, in consultation with HR, regarding the need for intervention or corrective action.

Failure to comply with this policy, including providing prompt notice of current or prior personal relationships with a client, is grounds for discipline.

In accordance with HHs' Confidentiality and Privacy policy, staff shall maintain a professional boundary with clients in not discussing personal, private or confidential matters regarding themselves, other clients, HHs' staff or the organization.

Communication and Training:

The Board shall receive a copy of the policy at the time of periodic review and will have an opportunity to ask clarifying questions during the approval process. Employees and volunteers

shall receive notice of the Board's policy review and approval including notice of any substantive changes. The notice will provide a link to the policy located on the HH website.

Definitions:

NA

Other Related Materials:

Progressive Discipline Procedure

References/Legal Authority:

NA

Change Log:

Date of Change	Description of Change	Responsible Party
09.2023	Updates to the new template; expanded scope to all services, staff and volunteers; Added communication and training and other related materials.	N. Miller, Prog. Eval Consultant, R. Lucovich, HR Specialist