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The OPAL Institute will update this policy on a regular basis and it is important that you monitor these updates and consider changes to your own policy

SEXUAL BOUNDARIES - ORGANISATIONAL POLICY

Date: 30 April 2016

Version: 1

Review date: annually and after each staff education session and any incident related to sexual boundaries

Aim: the aim of this policy is to outline the organisation's expectations of all home care staff in relation to sexual boundaries. We recognise clear communication about sexual boundaries is important to protect clients, their families and our staff. We expect acknowledgement of sexual boundaries will build client and family confidence in our service and will assist in ensuring we provide a safe and healthy workplace for staff.

Process

- Information on sexual boundaries will be provided to potential clients and families through our website and our service agreements.
- Information on sexual boundaries will be provided to all staff through:
 - Educational content of staff orientation program
 - Through mandatory staff education sessions
- Staff education will include:
 - Power imbalances
 - A clear definition of what a sexual boundary is
 - A clear description of where sexual boundaries are
 - Why sexual boundaries are important
 - Strategies for responding when a sexual boundary is crossed by a client or a family member
 - Consequences for staff who cross sexual boundaries.
- Actions which constitute a sexual boundary being crossed by a client or family member include:
 - Sexually suggestive comments or jokes

- Intrusive questions about a worker's physical appearance, sexuality or sexual activity
 - Inappropriate staring or leering
 - Unwelcome hugging, kissing or cornering or other types of inappropriate physical contact
 - Sexually explicit text messages, images, phone calls or emails
 - Intentionally touching a staff member on the breast or genitals or other intimate body parts.
- Actions which constitute a sexual boundary being crossed by a worker include:
 - Sexually suggestive comments or jokes
 - Intrusive questions about a client's sexuality or sexual activity
 - Inappropriate staring or leering
 - Sexually explicit text messages, images, phone calls or emails
 - Forming an intimate or sexual relationship
 - Providing a sexual service e.g. having intercourse with or masturbating a client
 - Kissing a client on the mouth.
- A sexual relationship which is reported to be 'reciprocal' by a worker and family or a client is still recognised as crossing a sexual boundary.
- Where a sexual boundary is crossed by a client or a family member - workers are expected to follow the following process
 - Make sure you are safe
 - Communicate directly to the client or family member that the action needs to stop
 - Leave the home
 - Notify the team leader immediately.
- Team leaders or case managers who are notified by a worker that they have been sexually harassed by a client or family member will undertake the following:
 - Check the worker is okay
 - Offer the worker professional debriefing services
 - Ask the worker to come into head office to complete an incident form
 - Give the worker the option of not returning to that home
 - Make contact with the client or family member and reinforce the conditions under which a service will be provided:
 - Discuss what occurred
 - Remind the client and family about the information on professional and sexual boundaries provided in the service agreement
 - Let the client know you are sending a new worker – and that if this happens again the service will be terminated – or terminate on the spot
 - Identify means of documenting new agreement on client's care plan to ensure any relieving worker who has missed a comprehensive briefing has information they require to protect themselves

- Inform all other workers who are providing a service to that client what has occurred and what the management strategies are
 - If necessary or appropriate send a male worker or two workers
 - Regularly review and report to head office
- Where a worker notices a sexual boundary has been crossed by another worker they are required to report this to their team leader immediately – a failure to do this could result in the worker being dismissed
- Where a sexual boundary is crossed by a staff member the team leader will (insert your organisational process here)