**CATEGORY: Standards of Conduct**

## Policy: A4-07 Community and Service Complaints

**Revision Date: November 1, 2018 Approved by:**

1. The organization is committed to providing the best possible services to communities which it serves. It is also committed to respecting and supporting the competence and integrity of its staff.
   1. To achieve this, there must be a process in place to register complaints from members of the community in a systematic fashion, which protects the integrity of staff and attempts to resolve the complaint. The most common complaints have been from service users or program participants, followed by complaints from neighbours.
   2. Throughout these processes staff should take notes documenting issues, actions and resolutions.
2. The steps in process are as follows:
   1. Step One
   * If a complaint from a service user is received directly by the staff person providing the service, then they should discuss the complaint together as soon as possible and try to resolve it. The staff person should also make the service user aware of our policy and the name of their supervisor if further action is required.
   * If a complaint by a service user is received by another staff person or volunteer, they should (1) inform the service user about our policy, (2) encourage the service user to speak to the staff person providing the service first if possible, (3) ask if they can inform the staff person providing the service, and (4) provide the name of the appropriate supervisor. The staff person providing the service should be alerted to the existence of the complaint.
   * In hearing a complaint directly or indirectly, the staff person providing the service should consult the supervisor.
   * If a complaint is general in nature, then it should be directed to Step Two or Step Three to be dealt with by a supervisor.
   1. Step Two
   * If there is no successful resolution, the service user has an opportunity to have the supervisor review the complaint. Once the supervisor is involved, there are no anonymous complaints – the service user must identify themselves – and the complaint cannot be kept confidential from the staff person providing the service. At first contact, the supervisor should learn more about the complaint and the services being provided before taking any action. If the complaint is serious and involving accusations of violence, threatening, sexual abuse or realistic fears of retaliation, the supervisor will act with the safety of the service user and staff as top priority. The supervisor will also seek assistance from the Executive Director in investigating serious employee misconduct.
   * If the nature of the complaint does not put the service user or staff at risk, the preferred method of complaint resolution is to get all parties together to discuss the situation.
   * If the parties are unwilling or safety is a concern, the supervisor will meet with them separately. At this stage the supervisor will speak to the staff person providing the services in order to investigate the complaint. The supervisor will advise the client in writing of the results of the meeting/investigation. If the staff and supervisor fail to resolve the client’s complaint, the client should be informed of the right to seek resolution through a meeting with the Executive Director to review the complaint. The client should be informed of the name and work phone number of the Executive Director if they wish to pursue the complaint.
   * The Executive Director should be informed of the complaint by the supervisor and receive a copy of the written response to the service user (or community member).
   1. Step Three
   * The Executive Director will review the complaint to determine if the supervisor has properly and fairly followed our complaint process. They will not re-investigate the complaint unless there is a reason to believe that the supervisor has not acted properly.
   * The Executive Director will meet with the service user or community member and review the process of the complaint. They will also provide a final written response to the service user or community member of any actions that have resulted from the complaint.
   * The Executive Director should bring to the attention of the Board of Directors any complaints that have a negative impact on the organization’s financial, legal, or public relations situations.
   * Annually, the Executive Director will summarize all of the complaints for the Board of Directors.