

# Community Living Association

## POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### Professional Boundaries

#### **POLICY**

Paid workers and volunteers in the organisation will hold appropriate personal boundaries in their relationships with clients. Certain boundaries e.g. sexual contact are non-permeable that is not allowed under any circumstances. Other boundaries e.g. physical contact are discretionary; however they should not result in damage to the professional relationship and be reasonably believed to be of benefit to the client. Where paid workers and volunteers engage in physical contact or self-disclosure with clients they should review in supervision with their supervisor.

#### **PROCEDURE**

- CLA workers will not engage in any form of sexualised conduct with a person with whom they are directly involved in a professional relationship, including current clients, clients' relatives or significant others, students, supervisees, research participants or others directly involved in a professional relationship which invites trust and confidence in the practitioner's role and/or involves an unequal distribution of power or authority in the CLA worker's favour.
- CLA workers will not engage in any sexualised conduct, or enter into an intimate or sexual relationship with a person with whom they were formerly directly involved in a professional relationship, including former clients, clients' relatives or significant others. In circumstances where any such relationship is considered, it is essential that the CLA worker undertakes professional consultation and supervision, in order to explore issues relating to power, and the potential of exploitation or harm to the former client.
- CLA workers, not their clients or former clients, are responsible for setting and maintaining clear and appropriate professional boundaries in all forms of communication, including face to face contact, written communication, telephone and online communications (including social networking, email, blogging and instant messaging).
- CLA workers will not provide clinical services to individuals with whom they have had a prior sexual relationship, as there is potential for the individual to be harmed and it is unlikely appropriate professional boundaries will be maintained.
- CLA workers will avoid any form of physical contact which may violate professional boundaries, result in unintentional psychological harm or damage the professional relationship. CLA workers will remain sensitive to the variety of ways in which clients and others may interpret physical contact, with particular reference to cultural and gender differences.
- CLA workers will use self-disclosure with circumspection, and only when it is reasonably believed that it will benefit the client. If unsure, CLA workers will seek professional consultation or supervision to review their intention to use self-disclosure.

## Section 3.29

- CLA workers' private conduct will not compromise the fulfilment of professional responsibilities.
- CLA workers will clarify whether they are acting as private individuals, or as representatives of a professional organisation, community or group when making public statements or performing public actions. When representing the profession or an organisation, workers will correctly reflect policies, procedures and services and distinguish between personal and official views or positions.
- CLA workers will ensure that professional relationships are not exploited to gain personal, material or financial advantage.
- Where dual or multiple relationships with clients, former clients, research participants, students, supervisees or colleagues exist, or are unavoidable, CLA workers will set and enforce explicit, appropriate professional boundaries to minimise the risk of conflict of interest, exploitation or harm.