

When at work, employees are always expected to conduct themselves in a professional and responsible manner. This includes maintaining professional boundaries with service recipients, engaging in respectful interactions, and respecting each person's social and physical boundaries.

The guidelines below do not, and cannot, outline every situation or behavior encountered while on the job. Therefore, it is important that staff act with discretion. Although some behaviors or conduct are not mentioned in this section, that does mean they are acceptable.

Outreach will not tolerate misconduct or disrespect by any employee. If staff make any exception/s to the guidelines below, they must discuss it with their supervisor as soon as possible. All reportable incidents should be reported in accordance with reporting requirements and protocols. Supervisors must document and address circumstances that do not rise to a reportable incident but fail to follow the guidelines below or other established agency policies.

In terms of professional boundaries, employees should adhere to the following:

Respectful Interactions

- Staff should treat all people who receive services with respect and nonjudgment. Treatment must be fair and equitable, and must not impose bias due to gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or disability.
- Employees must be diligent in avoiding any preferential treatment or the appearance of such treatment.
- Staff must never use harsh, demeaning, or inappropriate language or degrading punishment or any type of unauthorized restraining device in the name of client behavioral management.
- Employees should never participate in or allow others to engage in any form of hazing, unwelcome teasing, ostracism, or bullying of clients.

Social Boundaries

- Staff should not intentionally connect with a person receiving services outside of the course of their work. Employees should also limit unintentional contact with clients to brief greetings and conversation.
- Employees should never connect with a person receiving services at Outreach via social media (please review Outreach's Social Media policy 512:1 in the Employee Handbook).

Physical Boundaries

- Staff must never engage in physical contact that may be unwelcome or misconstrued by an individual or others. This includes, but is not limited to, hugging, head patting, pinching cheeks, patting buttocks, etc. While some individuals may find some physical contact supportive, those who benefit from supportive touch should only receive it if it is provided in a manner that best meets their individual needs and has been discussed, clearly defined, and documented.
- Staff should intervene and provide support when they observe co-workers exhibiting a loss of ability to safely and effectively manage a challenging behavior or situation that involves a person/s they are providing care for.
- Employees should never use physical punishment in any form. The only time that physical force is allowed with a person who receives services is when their actions are placing themselves and others at immediate risk for serious harm and are consistent with the agency's crisis management policies and procedures. Staff should never have any sexual contact with people who receive services, including touching of non-sexual body parts for the purpose of sexual stimulation for either party.

- Employees should address and manage their own sexual reactions to a person receiving services by requesting support from their supervisor as needed, requesting limited contact or no 1:1 contact as needed, or other safeguards to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Staff should never dress, undress, shower, or bathe with, or in the presence of, people who receive services.
- Staff should not discuss their personal sexual history, preferences, or fantasies, nor their use of illicit or pornographic materials while in the presence of people who receive services.
- Staff should not possess any sexually oriented materials (i.e., books, videos, magazines, clothing, etc.) when conducting business in the name of Outreach.

Overall Code of Conduct

Employees must also engage in respectful conduct with fellow staff as well as with clients. Outreach will not tolerate misconduct by any employee who harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another's work performance or who creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile work environment. Staff should be familiar with Outreach's policy forbidding harassment in the workplace, outlined in section 304:1 in the Employee Handbook.

All employees are expected to conduct themselves and behave in a manner which is conducive to the efficient operation of Outreach. This includes:

- Performing assigned tasks effectively and in accordance with established quality standards;
- Reporting to management suspicious, unethical, or illegal conduct by other employees, clients, or suppliers and fully cooperating in the investigation of such allegations by answering questions truthfully and completely;
- Adhering to basic work standards, as described in various sections of the Employee Handbook; and
- Respecting the dignity and individuality of any person who receives services and supports from this organization and honoring their choices and preferences whenever possible and consistent with agency policy.

Although no list of rules can include all instances of prohibited conduct, below are examples of types of conduct that is prohibited:

- a) Refusing to follow management's instructions concerning a job-related matter;
- b) Reporting to work under the influence of alcoholic beverages and/or illegal drugs and narcotics;
- c) Using tobacco on the premises or on the job;
- d) Using, selling, dispensing, or possessing illegal drugs (including prescription medication for which the user does not have a prescription);
- e) Using alcohol outside of work hours when such use adversely affects job performance, job safety, or Outreach's reputation in the community;
- f) Using abusive language on the job or towards other employees or clients;
- g) Using, possessing, or selling alcoholic beverages on Outreach premises or in Outreach vehicles;
- h) Possessing firearms or other weapons on Outreach property or in Outreach vehicles;
- i) Endangering the welfare of a client, visitor, or fellow employee;
- j) Engaging in sexual contact with or physically or verbally abusing clients;
- k) Fighting with or assaulting a fellow employee or client;
- l) Engaging in unprofessional contact concerning current or former clients outside of the normal work scope, including but not limited to engaging these clients in private practice or fraternizing with them;
- m) Engaging in social media interactions with current clients and/or former clients who were in treatment within the past year;
- n) Destroying, defacing, or misusing Outreach property or another employee's property;

- o) Gambling on Outreach property;
- p) Falsifying or altering any Outreach record or report, such as an application for employment, a medical report, a client record, a time record, an expense account, an absentee report, or receiving records;
- q) Threatening or attempting to intimidate clients, management, supervisors, or fellow workers;
- r) Engaging in horseplay, pranks, or practical jokes at work;
- s) Sleeping on the job;
- t) Failing to abide by the agency's safety rules and policies;
- u) Reporting to work in improper attire or with an inappropriate personal appearance;
- v) Engaging in any form of sexual harassment;
- w) Violating Outreach's policies on solicitation or distribution;
- x) Providing client, employee, or organizational photographs for public use without approval;
- y) Using Outreach space, equipment, or resources for a staff member's private purposes without a written lease for the staff member to do so;
- z) Soliciting or accepting gifts, loans, or favors from vendors, clients, or co-workers, etc.;
- aa) Engaging in inappropriate and or unprofessional verbal and non-verbal communication exchanges; and
- bb) Violating any of the policies enumerated in this Handbook.

Additional Considerations

Furthermore, consistent with its policy prohibiting harassment on the basis of any protected status (including religion), Outreach is committed to a policy of mutual respect and non-proselytization. The agency expressly prohibits any form of religious harassment or manipulation. Religious harassment includes coercive behavior that may affect a colleague's or client's personal freedom to choose one's own religious practices. This means that Outreach expects all employees to perform the duties of their job without expressing or implying that people must adhere to, act in accordance with, or convert to a particular faith.

Any staff member who is arrested for a felony, DWI, or drug-related offense must report that conviction within five days of occurrence. Any employee who fails to report such a conviction will be subject to appropriate administrative action up to and including termination.

Violations of these rules, as well as other behaviors, may result in administrative action up to and including suspension with or without pay and/or termination. Any questions concerning this policy should be directed to the employee's Unit Director and/or Human Resources.