

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

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Policy 232 – Volunteers and Visitors

I. POLICY

It is the policy of Southern Highlands Community Mental Health Center to provide quality, confidential services to our consumers. Due to the sensitive nature of the work at Southern Highlands, every effort must be made to protect consumer privacy. It is also the philosophy of Southern Highlands to promote better understanding of community mental health services for students, instructors, volunteers, and visitors. It must be realized that Southern Highlands Community Mental Health Center is a place of business and student or visitor activity must never interfere with employees executing their duties.

II. VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers must meet all requirements of paid staff. At no time should a consumer volunteer in any program unless there is a formal written peer to peer volunteer program with Chief Executive Officer approval.

This application process will be as follows:

- A. The person wishing to volunteer will be directed to the Personnel Specialist. The Personnel Specialist will have an application completed by the potential volunteer. Once completed she/he will send the application to the Director of the program where the applicant wishes to volunteer. All volunteers must be 18 years of age, have a high school diploma, and not bill any third party payor including charity care for services.
- B. The Director will interview the potential volunteer, send for a drug screen, and return paperwork to Human Resource Specialist.
- C. The Human Resource Specialist will complete all reference checks, DHHR background check, criminal background checks, and any other checks currently being completed for employees.
- D. The required paperwork will be reviewed by the Director designated by the Chief Executive Officer and, if all is in order, be included in the next new employee orientation.

III. PROCEDURES

- A. Visitors who wish to tour or gain information about our Center will be permitted only in the general or other approved areas. Under no circumstances shall they observe individual or group therapy sessions. Photographs of the facility may be permitted upon request and approved by the Chief Executive Officer. Consumers attending the day program or receiving services in any of the residential sites may be photographed only with the consumer and/or guardian's consent. These visitors who will have direct contact with consumers, will be required to sign pledges of confidentiality. Staff shall not discuss specifics of a case.
- B. Visitors (family, friends, ex-employees) should be informed that the Center is a place of business and their visits should be limited to a specific purpose and limited time. Visitors shall not congregate in the public areas of the Center, but shall be escorted to either a staff member's office or to a conference room. Under no circumstances shall a visitor be received in the business section or the medical records area.
- C. Job program training participants will be treated as volunteers and as such will receive an orientation to the Center. A personnel file will be maintained by Human Resources which will include volunteer application forms, contract, statements of review of policy and procedure manual, any correspondence with the referring agency, job description and performance indicators. All requirements of paid employees must be met prior to providing services.
- D. Students who are participating in an internship/practicum or similar activity will be treated as an employee and submit an application/resume, go through the interviewing/screening process and orientation/training. A personnel file will be maintained by the Human Resources Director which will include the dates of placement at the Center, confidentiality statements by the student and instructor, statements of review of policy and procedures, and correspondence including a formal contract with the school. The student will be responsible for adhering to the policies and procedures of SHCMHC in the same fashion as any employee. Students will be required to complete SH-367-A Permission for Observation of Clinical Session form before observing any clients in group or other services. Students may provide and be paid for any billable services performed during their internship/practicum as long as they meet credentialing requirements. Non-paid interns are not permitted to provide any services including provision of protective oversight to consumers. They will only be allowed to observe.
- E. Visitors and students could be restricted in the event of a pandemic or natural disaster.

IV. ASSIGNMENT AND SUPERVISION

Volunteer assignments into various program service areas shall be upon the request and approval of the Director of the program service area in which the volunteer wishes placement. Upon acceptance of a volunteer, the Program Director is responsible to provide the necessary supervision for the volunteer to perform effectively. The volunteer has the right to expect to be regarded as a fellow employee in the performance of his/her volunteer services. The Program Director shall afford the volunteer the same supervision and direction that would normally be given to a Center employee. It shall be understood that the volunteer is seeking self-satisfaction by providing useful and meaningful volunteer services to the Center's consumers either directly or indirectly. **Any documentation completed by a volunteer that is submitted to the clinical record is required to include the date and signature of the volunteer's onsite supervisor prior to being submitted to electronic health record.**

V. REGULATIONS

The Center shall comply with all State and Federal regulations regarding the use of volunteer services. The Center shall recognize that volunteers have the right to choose the kinds of opportunities they desire, the hours they wish to provide services, the right to change their schedule according to their own needs and desires, the right to be treated as an equal on the work site, the right to receive supervision, training, and evaluation of services provided. The Center shall provide any necessary insurance to cover any liability, except willful wrong, that volunteers may incur.