

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

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Policy 284 – Consensual Relationships & Harassment in the Workplace

I. POLICY

Southern Highlands CMHC will assure that all employees maintain appropriate professional and personal boundaries while in the workplace. To prevent conflicts of interest, misunderstandings, or the appearance of favoritism or in impropriety Southern Highlands has adopted the following policy. This policy is in no means to discourage work relationship among or between employees.

II. DISCUSSION

Southern Highlands understands that personal relationships can cultivate in the work environment and that work relationships can be productive and rewarding if the relationship remains in a professional manner and business-oriented.

- A. Supervisors are prohibited from supervising anyone that they have a personal relationship with (this includes family members, romantic partners, etc.).
- B. Personal relationship in the workplace should not interfere with work related duties.
- C. In order to prevent favoritism or harassment in the work environment, any employee that is involved in a romantic relationship must disclose the relationship to Human Resources. Romantic partners will complete the Acknowledgment of Consensual Relationship with Human Resources. (See Attachment B Acknowledgment of Consensual Relationship in the Workplace Agreement.)
- D. Employees who are involved in romantic relationships with each other will refrain from displays of public affection while in the work environment. This helps prevent a hostile or uncomfortable workplace.
- E. To avoid conflict, supervisors will make efforts to ensure that employees in romantic relationships do not work directly with each other when providing direct services to consumers.
- F. Employees in romantic relationships will refrain from participating in decision-making processes that could affect each other's pay, promotional opportunities, performance reviews, shifts, or career.
- G. Employees who have friendly or social relationship with coworkers must ensure that the relationship does not interfere with job duties.

- H. All employees will refrain from excessive socialization during work hours and will refrain from lingering on campus if not working.
- I. Supervisors need to be aware of their own personal relationships with subordinates to ensure no personal biases or favoritism occurs.
- J. To ensure privacy and protection, employees who are having a personal relationship with another employee will refrain from disclosing the relationship to consumers.
- K. All employees are **PROHIBITED** in engaging in personal/romantic relationships with consumers that they are providing or have provided direct service to per Employee Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy (Policy 242). Any employee engaged in a personal relationship with a consumer will receive disciplinary action up to termination.

III. PROCEDURE

- A. All employees will complete the Acknowledgment of Consensual Relationship and Harassment-Free Workplace Policy to acknowledge understanding of this policy. (Attachment A)
- B. Employees involved in a romantic relationship will complete the Acknowledgement of Consensual Relationship in the Workplace Agreement (Attachment B) with Human Resources.
- C. If conflicts result in the work environment due to an employee's personal relationship, supervisors will address and discuss with the staff when they arise.
- D. Any issues employees have with another staff need to be addressed with supervisor or another member of management per Employee Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy (Policy 242).
- E. Supervisors or upper management must be notified immediately if an employee is engaged in a personal relationship with a consumer of whom they are providing or have provided service to. An Adverse Incident Report must be completed for any inappropriate relationship with a consumer.
- F. An internal investigation will be implemented of any reports of employees engaging in a personal relationship with a consumer.
- G. Employees that violate this policy will receive disciplinary action up to termination.

Acknowledgement of Consensual Relationship and Harassment-Free Workplace Policy

It is Southern Highlands CMHC policy to assure that all employees maintain appropriate professional and personal boundaries while in the workplace. To prevent conflicts of interest, misunderstandings, the appearance of favoritism, or impropriety Southern Highlands has adopted the Consensual Relationship and Harassment-Free Workplace Policy.

As a Southern Highlands employee I, _____, will ensure that while in the work environment I will maintain professional boundaries with coworkers and consumers. I understand that if I enter into a personal/romantic relationship with another coworker I will complete the agreement for consensual relationship. (Attachment B).

My signature below acknowledges that I have read and understand Southern Highlands CMHC's Consensual Relationship & Harassment in the Workplace policy. I understand that any violation of the policy could lead to disciplinary action up to termination.

(Staff Signature)

(Date)

(Witness Signature)

(Date)

Acknowledgement of Consensual Relationship in the Workplace

(This section is only to be completed only by employees who have personal relationships (family members, romantic partners, etc.) with other employees.

I, _____, have entered into a personal / romantic relationship with my co-worker, _____. I have read and understand Southern Highlands CMHC's Consensual Relationship and Harassment-Free Workplace Policy, part of which is outlined above, and I agree to the following:

1. The relationship is entirely voluntary.
2. The relationship will not have a negative impact on work requirements.
3. I will not engage in any public displays of affection or other behavior that creates a hostile work environment for others, or that makes others uncomfortable.
4. I will act professionally and respectably towards each other at all times, even if the relationship has ended.
5. I will not participate in any company decision-making processes that could affect the other's pay, promotional opportunities, performance reviews, hours, shifts, or career.
6. I agree that, if the relationship ends, I will respect the other person's decision to end the relationship and not pursue that person, seek to resume the relationship, or engage in any other conduct towards the other person that could violate the Harassment-Free Workplace Policy.
7. I understand that if the relationship impacts our work, the work of others, or generally becomes disruptive to the work environment, I could receive disciplinary action up to termination.

(Staff Signature)

(Date)

(Witness Signature)

(Date)