

Code of Practice

Dun Laoghaire Rathdown
Outreach Project

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1.Responsibility for approval of policy	Governance & Human Resources Sub-committee
2.Responsibility for implementation	Manager
3.Responsibility for ensuring review	Manager
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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. The Code of Practice clarifies the standards of behaviour that are expected of staff of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Outreach Project in the performance of their duties.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Outreach Project recognises its obligations and strives to ensure that all staff, sessional and in reach workers have clearly communicated guidelines which inform their working practices.
- 2.2. The Code of Practice should be adhered to by all staff in all aspects of their work with the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Outreach Project, both within and outside the organisation.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy covers all staff within the organisation. It also includes people from other agencies conducting in reach services in the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Outreach Project for the time they are on the premises.

4. Glossary of Terms

- 4.1 The term staff will be utilised throughout this policy and is defined as “the collective group of people who work for and serve as the foundation for the organisation's operations and goals. This term will include all those who work for and volunteer within the organisation.”
- 4.2 Smart casual dress code can be defined as a dress code that combines well-fitting, business wear with elements of casual attire for example blouses, shirts, polo shirts, knitwear, chinos, trousers, skirts, dark-wash jeans, and polished, practical footwear.

5. Principles

5.1. Respect and Dignity

Staff must at all times respect the rights, dignity and interests of all people who use the service. They should treat all participants equitably, and must not discriminate on grounds of: lifestyle, gender, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, religion, culture, ethnicity, class, membership of the Traveller community, family status and / or marital status. This applies to participants, colleagues, or anyone else with whom they have dealings in the course of their work.

5.2. Active Inclusion

The Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Outreach Project aims to actively include people seeking access to our services. Where staff feel it would be inappropriate for them to provide a service they should, in consultation with their line manager, take all reasonable steps to help find an agreed suitable alternative. The Code of Practice should be read alongside the organisations Inclusion Policy.

5.3. A Right to Complain

If participants wish to complain about the services we provide, we will uphold the right of all participants to do this. The process will be supported as consistent with the complaints procedure. Staff must never attempt to prevent or dissuade a participant from making a complaint about a service with which they are dissatisfied.

6. Key Practice Areas

6.1. Consent

- 6.1.1. Before providing a service, staff should secure the informed consent from the person concerned (or their legal representatives) and must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the nature of the service, and anticipated outcomes are adequately understood, as per DROP's Intake, Care Planning & Discharge Policy.
- 6.1.2. Staff must recognise that in some situations a person's capacity to give valid consent may be diminished and should take this into account before agreeing to provide a service. Staff must never use any form of coercion to obtain consent.

- 6.1.3. Staff must not make false or exaggerated claims about the effectiveness of the services they are providing, nor should they promise outcomes which cannot be assured.
- 6.1.4. Staff must recognise and uphold an individual's right to withdraw consent at any time.
- 6.1.5. Written consent must always be secured for a person's involvement in research
- 6.1.6. Written consent must always be secured for including participants in photos or videos that record and/or promote the activities of the organisation. Staff will provide verbal reminders to participants of photo opportunities in case they would prefer to decline their involvement.

6.2. Confidentiality

- 6.2.1. All information about current or previous participants is confidential to the organisation. As such this cannot be disclosed to anyone outside of the organisation without the consent of the individual unless exceptional circumstances have been identified (see 5.2.2).
- 6.2.2. Where staff hold a sincere belief that a participant poses a serious risk of harm to themselves or others, or where obliged by law, Staff may be required to disclose personally identifiable information without the individual's consent. Before breaking confidentiality, however, staff should still seek to secure valid consent for disclosure from the person concerned and should consult with their line manager or a senior colleague where this is not provided - except where the staff judges that any delay would present a significant risk to life or health, or place the practitioner in contravention of the law. Staff should be familiar with the contents of the Confidentiality Policy.
- 6.2.3. Information obtained about any individual cannot remain confidential to one staff member or agent of the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Outreach Project. Such information must properly be reported to their line manager or CEO as appropriate. In the case of a disclosure of sensitive information (example – alleged sexual abuse) the matter should be brought to management first.
- 6.2.4. In such circumstances where staff may obtain relevant information about participants through their work with other organisations, the information should be shared with the clinical team consistent with this policy, and the policy of the other organisation. Likewise information obtained about a participant whilst working with the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Outreach Project should only be shared in accordance with our procedures for the exchange of such information.
- 6.2.5. Information identifying participants must never be published (for example in an article or book), without their written agreement (or that of their legal representatives).
- 6.2.6. All efforts will be taken to ensure that any records relating to participants are kept secure from unauthorised access, and that the requirements of the Data Protection Act should be complied with at all times. Staff should be familiar with the contents of the Data Protection Policy. All staff in the organisation must complete basic training in GDPR.
- 6.2.7. In addition to the above guidelines, the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Outreach Project strives to uphold its obligations on information provision and retention under all relevant statutory provisions and including the General Data Protection Regulations.

7. Professional Conduct

7.1. General

- 7.1.1. All staff should be reliable and punctual, and staff appearance should be appropriate for professional relations. The organisation's dress code is smart casual. At times it may be necessary to wear sports clothing when taking part in sporting, outdoor or exercise activities as part of your role but these are the only times that warrant the wear of such clothing.
- 7.1.2. Staff shall avoid all acts which are likely to bring the name of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Outreach Project into disrepute.

7.2. Professional Competencies

- 7.2.1. Staff should keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date. They should not attempt to work beyond their competence, if a situation arises where staff do not feel they have the competency or training to adequately undertake the task assigned or required as part of

their role, they should discuss this with their line manager at the earliest possible convenience.

- 7.2.2. Staff should take care to present their qualifications and experience accurately and to avoid these being misrepresented.
- 7.2.3. Staff should refrain from practice when their ability to act professionally is impaired as a result of a psychological or physical condition, for example; an on-going or recent alcohol or drug related problem, illness, personal stress etc. Where staff are under any doubt as to their ability to work effectively, they should seek the guidance of their manager.
- 7.2.4. Except for medication taken under direction of a doctor, staff should not take any mood-altering substance, including alcohol, prior to, or while carrying out, their work.
- 7.2.5. Staff should never practise while their competence is impaired by the use of any medications that may have a mood-altering effect. In instances where staff believe that prescribed medications have a mood-altering effect they should inform their line manager immediately taking into consideration the nature of our work.
- 7.2.6. Staff need to be aware of their role as defined in their job description and the policy framework of the organisation. If there is ever a situation where the application of the organisations policies is unclear staff should seek advice from their line manager or, in the event that they are not available, the CEO at the earliest convenience.

7.3. Relationship with Colleagues

- 7.3.1. Staff should maintain professional communications with colleagues at all times.
- 7.3.2. Staff should be aware of, and work to, the behavioural standards set out in the Harassment, Sexual Harassment & Bullying Policy.
- 7.3.3. Staff must not condone, support, conceal or otherwise enable the unethical conduct of colleagues. Where they are aware of, or have good reason to suspect, misconduct on the part of a colleague this should be discussed with their own line manager.
- 7.3.4. If a staff member is approached by a colleague with a complaint regarding another staff member, they should advise the colleague to address the issue with his/her line manager.
- 7.3.5. Where a conflict arises that cannot be managed within the general communications of the service this should be brought to the attention of each staff's line management as soon as possible. It would be expected that staff will engage in any required meetings or mediation outlined by the management in order to resolve any issues arising.
- 7.3.6. If a staff member engages in a romantic relationship with another staff member the CEO must be informed.

7.4. Relationship with Participants

- 7.4.1. It is the responsibility of staff to ensure a professional relationship with participants.
- 7.4.2. Staff must be aware of the difference between being a counsellor and using counselling skills that are appropriate for the delivery of care and support. Counselling is not an appropriate role for staff unless employed specifically to deliver counselling services. Where it is deemed appropriate that a participant may be in need of counselling, they should be given advice and support on accessing a counsellor.
- 7.4.3. It is the responsibility of staff to be aware of the social, legal and professional consequences of any act requested of them by a participant.
- 7.4.4. Staff must never overstep the professional boundaries and confuse befriending with friendship. Befriending is an appropriate relationship for Employees and part of building the necessary trust to work with participants. Becoming a friend is inappropriate. Staff are contracted by the organisation to work with participants as part of their contract of employment/Volunteer Agreement and it is potentially abuse of power to represent the relationship as friendship.
- 7.4.5. Staff must not abuse their participant's trust in order to gain sexual, emotional, financial or any other kind of personal advantage.
- 7.4.6. Staff should not engage in sexual relations, or any other type of sexualised behaviour, with or towards participants.

- 7.4.7. As a general guideline, Staff may not:
 - 7.4.7.1. lend or borrow money to or from participants
 - 7.4.7.2. make or receive gifts to or from participants. Any exceptions to this rule, where a decision is made by staff based on a specific circumstance, should be discussed with their line manager.
 - 7.4.7.3. gift, sell or purchase items to or from participants
- 7.4.8. Staff should exercise considerable caution and consult their line manager before entering into personal or business relationships with former participants and should expect to be held professionally accountable if the relationship becomes detrimental to the participant or to the standing of the profession.
- 7.4.9. Staff should not carry out an assessment or intervention with, or provide supervision to, someone with whom they have an existing close personal relationship. In the event of staff having an existing close relationship with any person who is referred to an agency in which they work, this should be drawn to the attention of their line manager.
- 7.4.10. Staff should not impose their personal beliefs (for example: religious, spiritual or political) on participants.
- 7.4.11. Staff should be seen to be approachable, open to fair criticism and available to engage in meaningful dialogue. They should not be seen as intimidating or inaccessible people.

7.5. Relationships with participants outside of work

- 7.5.1. Staff must not encourage participants to develop relationships with the staff member's relatives or friends.
- 7.5.2. Staff must not give participants their personal contact details i.e. postal address, personal telephone, personal email, social media
- 7.5.3. Staff should not use social media, such as but not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter to engage with participants unless this is a stated part of a DROP programme or service and utilising the organisations social media accounts. If a participant asks to "be a friend" or connect on social media, the request should be turned down, and the participant informed that this is based on the organisation's policy.
- 7.5.4. Staff must not give participants the personal contact details of any colleagues.
- 7.5.5. Staff who encounter participants out of hours should be pleasant and civil if approached by the participant, but should generally discourage prolonged social contact. Staff should not approach participants in any social setting if the contact is not instigated by the participant especially where the participant's behaviour indicated that they did not want to be recognised or indeed identified as a user of the services of the organisation.
- 7.5.6. Staff must not arrange out of hours contact with participants.
- 7.5.7. Staff who leave the service must respect the confidentiality of the participants and not initiate contact with participants, even after they have ceased their employment with DROP through social media or other methods. This would be deemed as unethical and may be reported to accrediting bodies to which they are affiliated.

7.6. Managing Boundary Issues

- 7.6.1. Staff may be unwittingly put in a position where their relationship with participants is compromised, or be drawn into conversations or situations where their boundaries are being stretched or crossed. In some situations the fine line between good and bad practice may not always be clear or obvious. Boundary issues should be discussed with the line manager and within the team on a regular basis, and on occasion where specific to the team, training or facilitated discussions may be appropriate.
- 7.6.2. Staff should seek the guidance of their line manager if they are unsure about the nature of a relationship developing with a participant, or if they need advice on how they intend to deal

with a situation. Similarly, if the line manager requires advice they must consult the appropriate supports to them i.e. clinical supervisor

7.7. Professional Supervision

- 7.7.1.** All staff should have regular professional supervision, focusing on reviewing, guiding and supporting their practice. This includes line management and clinical supervision as provided by the organisation.
- 7.7.2.** Where staff have any serious doubts about how to handle a particular situation, including in relation to this Code of Practice, they should discuss this with their line manager at the earliest opportunity.

8. Public Profile

- 8.1. All staff are expected to commit to the Mission, Vision, Aims and Objectives of the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Outreach Project in all external contacts.
- 8.2. Invitations to speak on behalf of the organisation may only be accepted with prior permission of the CEO, additionally no staff can give information to the media without the permission of the CEO. No staff may permit a member of the media onto the organisation's premises without the permission of the CEO. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Media Policy.

9. Finance

- 9.1. Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Outreach Project is committed to a high standard of financial transparency.
- 9.2. Detailed financial procedures are outlined in the Financial Policy and Procedures and related financial policies developed in line with the National Financial Regulation, Staff should be aware of anything within these policies pertaining to their role and this policy should be fully adhered to by all staff.
- 9.3. All financial donations will be sent directly to the CEO. This includes any fees, payments or gifts which any staff receives as a result of their connection with the organisation which must be declared to the CEO
- 9.4. Anyone with a financial interest in any organisation or individual with whom the organisation is carrying out a transaction should declare that interest.
- 9.5. Gifts to staff from participants are not allowed while participating in the program. End of program appreciation gifts from participants to staff are to be declared to line management. This does not include donations to the organization as a result of fundraising.