

THE LIFE ENRICHMENT CENTER, INC.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Date: 06/13

Reviewed: 02/16, 2/17, 3/18, 03/19, 11/20, 11/21, 3/22

Revised: 04/19, 3/22

- I. **Subject:** Code of Ethical Conduct
- II. **Purpose and Applicability:** The Life Enrichment Center employees are expected to comply with all statues and rules of the Federal, State, and Local Governments. It is not the intent of the Center as an employer to be concerned with the non-working time of employees. However, when off-duty conduct has a bearing on the Center operations or brings discredit upon the Center, then such conduct does legitimately become a concern and could result in appropriate disciplinary action against the employee.

Employees must be especially careful to avoid such things as using their official positions for personal gain, giving unjustified preference, losing sight of the need for efficient and impartial decisions in the methods of operations, or committing an act which could result in questioning the integrity of the Center. This policy applies to all Board Members, Staff, and Volunteers.

- III. **Policy:** It is the policy of the Center to encourage all Staff and Volunteers to conduct all activities in an ethical manner at all times. "Ethical" will be defined as being in accordance with acceptable principles of right and wrong that govern the conduct of a profession.

Requirements:

- I. General Conduct
 - a. Employees should remember that duties and responsibilities carried out in a diligent and cooperative manner contribute to the efficient functioning of the Center and to the persons' served feelings of confidence and security of the staff.
 - b. Generally, the Center Director should be consulted on any problem concerning the Center. The Center Director, in turn, will inform various staff members (as needed) concerning matters related to job performance or Center business. In this manner, a continuing dialog between staff and administration is promoted.
 - c. All persons served will be under staff supervision at all times during the work day, unless otherwise specified in his or her Individual Support Plan.
 - d. Direct Care Staff may not enter into romantic or physical relationships with persons served.
- II. Coverage of Duties
 - a. Attendance

- i. If an employee is not able to work on a scheduled day due to illness or other reason, that employee is to call his or her manager before 8:00 AM or the Front Office if the Manager is unreachable.
 - ii. Annual leaves should be requested by completing a Requested Leave Form. The form should be completed and turned in to the employee's direct supervisor at least 5 days before intended leave.
 - iii. An employee that has a Sick Leave absence for longer than 5 days must bring a physician's note to his or her direct supervisor.
 - iv. Any leave may be denied or revoked if adequate coverage is not available to match the demands of the work area.
 - b. Schedules
 - i. All employee and persons served schedules must be followed at all times.
 - 1. Vehicle usage is scheduled and a vehicle may not be used if doing so conflicts with said schedule.
 - c. Break Times
 - i. Each full-time employee will be allowed two 15 minute breaks per day (morning and afternoon) provided there is coverage for that work area. Notification to supervisor of breaks is necessary. Breaks are a privilege; therefore, you are not allotted time for missed breaks nor are you allowed to combine breaks. Any break time that exceeds 15 minutes is considered leave time. You must submit a request for annual leave.

III. Relationships with fellow employees

- a. Employees are expected to treat each other respectfully.
- b. Employees are expected to maintain a professional and businesslike relationship with fellow employees and persons served. Reports or threats of action will be taken. Examples of prohibited behavior are:
 - i. Threatening, abusive, or profane language, behavior, or written material.
 - ii. Argumentative behavior, whether directed toward a supervisor, person served, co-worker, or any other party while on duty.
 - iii. Unprofessional behavior such as sexual-related conversations, inappropriate touching (e.g. kissing, hugging, massaging, sitting on laps, etc.) racial or ethnic jokes and slurs, and other verbal or physical conduct of an offensive nature.
- c. Intimate relationships between managers or supervisors and their subordinate staff members, through any line of authority, based on the significant potential for such relationships to present an actual or perceived conflict of interest. Employees who enter into such relationships are expected to notify higher management of the need for one or both of the employees in the relationship to be reassigned, so that a line relationship no longer exists between the employees.
 - i. Intimate relationships between co-workers are prohibited when the relationship has a demonstrated negative effect on the performance of either co-worker or the effective, efficient functioning of the work unit.

IV. Service Delivery

- a. Service delivery should never be compromised by personal gain.

- b. Service delivery should ensure that goals set up during Individual Support Plans are worked in a manner that will give individuals the best opportunity to reach and achieve those goals.
- c. In all cases, employees will avoid physical and/or verbal abuse of persons served.
- d. Employees may not enter into any personal transactions with persons served which involve finances, borrowing, lending, or trading.
- e. Direct Care staff should advocate for persons served while they are in our care. It is not the Center's concern what those individuals do with their personal time, unless it directly impacts their time at the Center or if there is a safety concern.

V. Record Keeping

- a. Accurate records serve essential administrative, legal, and historical purposes. Good records protect people and meet our legal and funding requirements.
- b. Employees are prohibited from falsifying records or any other documents prepared during the course of business.

VI. Confidentiality and the use of Privileged Information

- a. Staff should remember that the privacy of persons served should be treated with the utmost respect. If staff are in doubt as to whether certain information is of a confidential nature, staff should consult the Center Director or a member of Management as quickly as possible.
- b. Many Center employees deal with plans and programs of significant public interest. Employees must not use this privileged information to their own financial advantage or to provide friends and acquaintances with financial advantage, or with information which could be used for financial advantages.
- c. Under no circumstances is it permissible to relate any persons served information to anyone outside the recognized service system without following the procedures established in Center Policy "Records of the Persons Served".
- d. The release of any privileged or confidential information, financial or otherwise, is not authorized to any person who does not have a legitimate need to know.
- e. Employees shall not disclose information gained in the course of, or by reason of, their official responsibilities in a way that would affect a personal financial interest for themselves, their relatives, or individuals with whom they are personally or financially involved.
- f. Use of computers to obtain information concerning clients, patients, customers, other employees or third parties for non-work-related reason is prohibited.
- g. The Life Enrichment Center is a "covered entity" under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), which provides for the safeguarding of each individual's personal health information.
 - i. No information about a person's health information may be shared with any non-employee without written consent from that person served. Exceptions will be made for Auditors, Nursing Staff, Support Coordinators, or other DBHDD employees that have a need to know about individuals on their caseload.

VII. Respect

- a. Employees shall treat each other and persons served with dignity.
 - i. Social communication from persons served, verbal and otherwise, shall be attended to and responded to with dignity and respect.

- ii. Staff will promote such communication and engage persons served in attempts to initiate communications.
- iii. Verbal praise will be used to reinforce communication and attempts to communicate.
- iv. Each person is part of the team.
- b. Persons Served must be treated with kindness and concern at all times. A friendly, empathic attitude is important. Consistency of treatment in day-to-day dealings with consumers can be an important and effective behavioral tool for the efficient management of behavior.

VIII. Community Inclusion

- a. All activities outside the Center and concerning the Center, involving staff and/or persons served should be coordinated with the Center Director and the Social Services Coordinator, or a Director Designee.
- b. Regardless of ability, every person has the right to live and participate in neighborhoods, communities, and volunteer locations.

IX. Appreciation of Diversity

- a. The Life Enrichment Center values that every person is unique and promotes diversity in the workplace.
- b. Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, employers cannot discriminate or treat employees less favorably because of their religious beliefs. The Center will accommodate an employee's religious beliefs and practices at work, as long as it does not cause "undue hardship" for the employer, such as incurring exorbitant costs. Accommodations may include requested days off to observe religious holidays, requesting a flexible work schedule, or accommodations for religious dress. All religious accommodations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- c. The Center does not discriminate against employees, persons served or any other stakeholder based on their culture, age, gender, sexual orientation, spiritual beliefs, socioeconomic status or language.

X. Empowerment

- a. Employees will do their best to build the capacity of person served to make choices and to reach their desired goals.
- b. Staff will advocate on the behalf of persons served and teach them how to be self-advocates.

XI. Collaborative Relationships

- a. The Life Enrichment Center recognized the need for employees to work effectively with each other within work areas to ensure service delivery.
- b. Staff shall be mindful that interactions with one another often occur in front of persons served. Therefore, staff shall model respectful verbal and non-verbal communications.

XII. Safety

- a. Center employees are not authorized to carry on his or her person any deadly weapons (i.e. rifle, pistol, knife, etc.) while on duty at the Center. Deadly weapons will not be stored in personal vehicles parked on the Center property. Any employee found to be in violation of this policy will be disciplined up to and including dismissal of employee.

- b. Employees must follow all safety policies and procedures.
- c. Employees are responsible for identifying hazards and taking immediate action to minimize or remove risk of harm or injury.

XIII. Quality

- a. In-Service Training
 - i. The In-Service Training Programs conducted by the Center are an integral and vitally important part of the overall program at the Center. Employees are expected to attend when requested. In-Service Training is offered by the Center on an on-going basis to staff up to date on new developments in the field of developmental disabilities or for personal growth. Employees are expected to continually increase their knowledge and competence, thus being able to demonstrate continued effectiveness and improvement in job performance.
- b. Staff Meetings
 - i. Monthly staff meetings will be held. All staff, not otherwise occupied, will be expected to attend. Part-time staff may be requested to attend. Minutes of meetings will be developed and routed to all staff to insure that everyone is updated, as needed.

XIV. Business Guidelines

- a. Conflict of Interest
 - i. A conflict of interest may exist where employees engage in activities which may financially or otherwise enhance themselves, their relatives or individuals with whom they are personally or financially involved as a result of knowledge, information, or action taken in an official capacity as Center employees. No one is permitted to make an improper profit from the exercise of duties and responsibilities.
 - ii. A conflict of interest may exist when no actual profit is made by the employee; the opportunity for profit or benefit alone may create the conflict.
 - iii. No promise of restraint or waiver by the affected employee will be sufficient to avoid a conflict or the appearance of a conflict.
 - iv. A conflict of interest may arise from a circumstance or situation, and not an activity. Its elements are the opportunity for enhancement by a transaction, and opportunity to influence that transaction as an employee.
 - v. A conflict of interest may arise where an employee engages in an outside activity which, while not necessarily incompatible or inconsistent with official duties, nevertheless, is or becomes so extensive that it interferes with the proper and full-time performance of official departmental duties. Decisions regarding the existence of a conflict and its remedy are to be made by the Center Director.
 - vi. Employees are to make every effort to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest.
 - 1. An appearance of conflict exists when a reasonable person would conclude from the circumstances that the employee's ability to protect the public interest, or perform public duties, is compromised by personal interests.

2. An appearance of a conflict could exist even in the absence of a true conflict of interest.
- b. Contractual Relationships
 - i. The Life Enrichment Center may maintain written contracts/agreements with public and/or private affiliates for the provisions outlined in the contract/agreement. All contracts/agreements are subject to specific stipulations as outlined in the Contracts and Agreements policy.
- c. Corporate Citizenship
 - i. The Life Enrichment Center is dedicated to protecting human rights and advocating for people with developmental disabilities. Some ways that we achieve this is by;
 1. Providing I/DD awareness training to our partners;
 2. Positively impacting and educating Georgia College students to become advocates and leaders in the field of I/DD; and
 3. Establishing a local community network that embraces individuals with DD for their commonalities, not their differences.
 - ii. People with developmental disabilities want to give back to their communities. We provide opportunities for them to do so with on-going communication about volunteer opportunities.

XV. Proper use of LEC Property and Other's Personal Property

- a. Employees should not, directly or indirectly, use or allow the use of State property of any kind for other than official activities.
- b. Employees should not use Center telephones for personal calls when placing of such calls would interfere with the employee's duties, would incur additional financial liability by the Center, or would interfere with the use of the facilities for official business. Any use otherwise should be infrequent and of short duration.
- c. Center employees will be expected to be responsible for equipment, materials, or other property belongings to the Center. The loss of or irreparable damage to any item costing more than \$25.00 should be reported to the Center Director.
- d. All employees are responsible for any personal property brought on the premises. The Center takes no responsibility for the personal items, i.e.: phones, watches, jewelry, etc.
- e. Offices, work stations, and office furniture are Center property and are reserved for work-related activities.
- f. The posting of quotes and inspirational sayings is allowed in an employee's work area. However, if such quotes are found to be of an offensive nature, the employee may be asked to remove them.

XVI. Marketing and Organizational Fundraising

- a. Occasionally, the Life Enrichment Center may engage in fundraising for business purposes. Staff will ensure that all marketing and fundraising is carried out with respect, dignity, and consideration of the privacy rights of persons served.
- b. Marketing and fundraising activities will highlight the vision, mission, and goals of the Center.

XVII. Personal Fundraising

- a. Employees shall not sell products or conduct fundraising on the work premises for personal profit or for an organization unless specifically authorized (e.g. Non-profit organizations, charitable causes, personal events such as retirement.)
- b. Managers and/or Supervisors may not solicit to subordinates or put undue pressure on any employee to make a purchase.
- c. Persons Served and their families may not be solicited for fundraising purposes.
- d. The fundraising must not conflict with Center fundraising efforts or service delivery.

XVIII. Buying and Selling

- a. No employee should engage in any business other than his or her regular duties during working hours, including such things as selling items to fellow employees, or the lending of money for profit, etc.
- b. Supervisors should avoid placing themselves in a position which could interfere with objective evaluation and direction of the subordinates. This could prevent him or her from properly carrying out his or her supervisory responsibilities in evaluation a subordinate's performance.
- c. Supervisors should not cosign on loans with fellow employees.

XIX. Gifts and Gratuities

- a. All employees must be scrupulously attentive to their dealings with non-employees, and be constantly alert to avoid even the appearance of misconduct in their business dealings. It is improper and prohibited for an employee to solicit or receive, directly or indirectly, any favor, gift, or thing of value with the intent of bribery. Such action may result in progressive discipline up to dismissal.
- b. Bereavement funds and gifts are not prohibited. However, participation in such activities must be wholly voluntary on the part of each employee, and any gifts should be of a normal value in keeping with the spirit of the event, rather than for financial benefit.

XX. Witnessing Legal Documents

- a. If an employee requires the witnessing of legal documents, those documents may be witnessed by the Administrative Assistant or Managerial staff.
- b. Examples of possible documents that may be witnessed include power of attorney, guardianship, and advance directives.
- c. No financial documents will be signed.
- d. The person witnessing such documents should have no personal, financial, or other interest in an agreement, i.e. a neutral third party.

XXI. Media and Public Relations

- a. The Director and the President of the Board are the only spokespersons for the Center.
- b. If an employee receives a media inquiry, it must be referred to the Director.
- c. Employees must represent the Center in accordance with the highest standards of professional integrity while engaging in community interactions.
- d. Employees should also be mindful that off campus conduct, including the use of social media, reflects on the Center. While there will be no attempt to interfere in your personal life, you are expected to conduct yourself in a fashion which will reflect credit on the Center.

XXII. Waste, Fraud, Theft, and Abuse

- a. Direct Care Staff are not to make purchases for themselves using money belonging to persons served.
- b. Frequent calls from creditors, garnishment proceeding, and harassment on the job because of financial mismanagement may lead to disciplinary action. This is considered a waste of company time and resources.
- c. Any employee found to be engaging in wasteful or fraudulent activities, theft, or abuse will be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal.

XXIII. Duty to Report

- a. Employees are expected to take all necessary steps to prevent theft, loss, misuses or damage to the Center assets and property.
- b. If an employee observes or becomes aware of waste, fraud, theft, or abuse he or she must report it to Management or the Center Director.
- c. Direct Care Staff are classified as Mandatory Reporters by the state. If an employee suspects or has knowledge of any form of abuse occurring to a person in his or her care, the employee must report immediately to the Consumer Rights Coordinator.
- d. There will be no retaliation of any sort placed upon a person reporting a potential loss, hazard, abusive situation, or any other wrongdoings.

XXIV. Reporting Violations of this Policy

- a. If an employee observes or becomes aware of a violation of the Code of Ethical Conduct, he or she shall report the violation to the Compliance Officer or the Executive Director.
- b. There will be no retaliation of any sort placed upon a person who reports violations of this policy.
- c. All reports, allegations, or suspicions of violations will be investigated immediately by the Compliance Officer and the Executive Director.
- d. Disciplinary decisions resulting from an investigation will be implemented within five (5) business days of the initial report of a violation.
- e. Violations will be evaluated on an individual basis, but general guidelines for discipline regarding violations are as follows:
 - i. First Offense-Verbal Warning
 - ii. Second Offense-Written warning with a probationary period. Any other offense during said probationary period may result in dismissal.
 - iii. Third Offense-Adverse Action

NOTE: The Director may use his or her discretion while determining the proper disciplinary actions warranted.

**The Life Enrichment Center
Code of Ethical Conduct**

Employee Acknowledgement and Agreement

I, _____, confirm that I have received a copy of the Life Enrichment Center's Code of Ethical Conduct and that they have been explained to me. I understand that the values and principles outlined in the Ethical Code of Conduct are expected of all staff. My signature below verifies my acceptance of these values and principals as a condition of my employment.

Employee Signature

Date