



Values, Attitudes and Professional Conduct

Values & Conduct

- Department of Human Services has around 14,000 employees
- Secure Services clients are some of the most at risk and vulnerable young people in the state.
- As employees we all have a duty of care for clients and our co-workers.
- To do our job we require you to adhere to specific values & codes of conduct

These are guided by:

- Department of Human Services Values
- Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Servants
- Equal Opportunity legislation
- Charter of Human Rights



Conduct?

human
services

- In 2010 Youth Justice was the subject of an Victorian Ombudsman review and a review undertaken by former Chief Commissioner Neil Comrie
- It is more important than ever that we work as a professional, respectful and inclusive workforce
- **YOU** are the change makers
- An example:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QaqpoeVgr8U>

What is our take away message?



Do you think this is relevant to our workplace?

Department of Human Services Values

Client focus

- Showing empathy to our clients and others
- Responding to clients' needs with flexibility
- Being informed to understand client needs
- Deliver on our commitments
- Maximising client outcomes

Department of Human Services Values

Professional integrity and respect

- Being well prepared and punctual
- Acting within departmental guidelines for the benefit of clients
- Treating others with respect at all times
- Being transparent in our dealings with others
- Supporting an environment that is free from bullying, intimidation and harassment
- Providing advice in a professional manner
- Acting fairly and objectively
- Making informed decisions
- Using authority responsibly with the best interest of the client in mind.

Department of Human Services Values

Quality

- Look for ways to improve work
- Establish high standards and act to achieve them
- Encourage others to find better ways to work
- Provide high quality service to the Victorian community

Collaborative relationships

- Being open to the ideas of others
- Sharing relevant information, knowledge and expertise with colleagues
- Recognise others who have performed well
- Asking others for their ideas and suggestions
- Providing support to colleagues

Department of Human Services Values

Responsibility

- Providing information in a timely and appropriate manner
- Taking appropriate actions and steps without being prompted
- Taking ownership of mistakes, problems, issues as well as successes
- Working towards goals in a transparent manner
- Being open to evaluation and monitoring

Professional requirements

In reflecting the DHS values in the workplace, you have the responsibility to

- Distinguish between your personal and professional lives
- Recognise that many young people in custody have histories of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and that this may influence their behaviour in custody
- Maintain information privacy and confidentiality unless there is a risk of harm to the young person or others
- Arrive punctually at work and be at the workplace during required hours, unless otherwise authorised
- Use appropriate and non-offensive language



Professional boundaries

In your everyday interactions with young people, you should conscientiously work within professional boundaries at all times.

Having clear boundaries promotes a feeling of safety, consistency and fairness for staff and young people. It provides a basis for working with young people to bring about change and improve their outcomes.

Professional boundaries apply to all your interactions with young people, and cannot be changed for an individual young person or set of circumstances.



Professional boundaries

In order to ensure you work within these boundaries, you must **NOT**

- Have any physical contact with young people that contradicts the physical contact guidelines
- Engage in any behaviour that is abusive or violent to young people or other staff
- Have any contact with young people after they are released from the precinct unless authorised (this includes social networking sites)
- Record, use, disclose or communicate confidential information obtained during the course of your employment unless this is necessary for you to perform your role
- Purchase or provide any items for young people unless authorised to do so

Physical contact with young people

Physical contact must be strictly limited and must take into account:

- The context of the situation and who else is in the environment
- The gender of the young person and the staff member
- The working relationship between them
- The young person's age
- The young person's culture

The most sensible approach is to avoid almost all physical contact. This protects young people and prevents staff from accusations of inappropriate physical contact

Physical contact with young people

Inappropriate physical contact compromises the professional relationship between staff and young people

It represents a breach of the department's duty of care and may also be against the law

Unacceptable physical contact may result in staff disciplinary action

Inappropriate, and therefore unacceptable physical actions, include:

- Kissing, embracing or any other type of intimate or sexual contact
- Massage
- Play-fighting, arm-wrestling or any form of violence
- Entering an occupied client bedroom alone, unless in response to an emergency

Contact with young people after they have left the precinct

You must not continue to maintain contact with young people after they have been released from the precinct unless this has been approved by the General Manager.

You must not at any time:

- Give your personal contact details to young people or their families
- Initiate contact with young people who have exited the precinct
- Invite young people or their families to your home
- Contact young people outside your professional capacity, or outside rostered working hours
- Interact with young people or young people who have been released from the precinct via email or social networking sites such as **Facebook**

You should notify the area youth justice unit (and Child Protection, where appropriate) if a young person makes contact after they have been released from the centre

Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees

The Code was created to promote adherence to the public sector values by Victorian Public Servants.

The Code of conduct outlines the following values & behaviours you are required to demonstrate:

- Responsiveness
- Integrity
- Impartiality
- Accountability
- Respect
- Leadership
- Commitment to Human Rights



Code of conduct

Responsiveness

- Providing clear, timely and impartial advice
- Providing high quality services
- Promoting best practice

Integrity

- Honesty and openness in dealings
- Using powers responsibly
- Reporting improper conduct
- Avoid any conflict of interest

Code of conduct

Impartiality

- Making decisions and providing advice free of bias or self-interest
- Acting fairly by considering all facts in decision making
- Implementing all governmental policies equitably

Accountability

- Working towards clear goals with transparency
- Accepting responsibility for decision making
- Act to achieve the best use of resources
- Being open to investigations

Code of conduct

Respect

- Treating all individuals fairly and objectively
- Acting in a way that promotes freedom from discrimination, bullying and harassment
- Taking on others' views to improve outcomes

Leadership

- Demonstrate leadership by acting in accordance with these values at all times

Human Rights

- Decision making in accordance with Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities
- Promoting others to support human rights

Engaging with young people

Developing a foundation of honesty and trust, which allows them to feel safe, is the first step in working well with young people

To do this you should do the following:

- Encourage positive behaviour by being a positive adult role model for young people
- Show you are concerned for the young person, and want to help them change their behaviour
- Recognise that young people have often had chaotic, abusive and disruptive lives, and might not have learnt appropriate ways to behave and communicate
- Encourage young people to be responsible for their behaviour, including their offending, while being sensitive to their individual needs and background
- Discuss any inappropriate behaviour with young people
- Set boundaries and limits and apply them consistently and fairly to all young people
- Focus on and help to develop solutions, rather than emphasising problems

Always do what you say you will, and don't make promises that you may not be able to keep

Equal Opportunity Act

We are legally required to ensure Youth Justice custodial centres are an equal opportunity workplace

The way you are treated and the way you treat others must not be influenced by “protected attributes”, in accordance with the Equal Opportunity Act.

Protected attributes are personal characteristics that cannot be used to disadvantage another

Protected attributes

Age

Physical features

Lawful sexual activity

Gender identity

Sexual orientation

Sex

Race

Disability/impairment

Marital status

Parental status

Career status

Pregnancy

Breastfeeding

Industrial activity

Political belief or activity

Religious belief or activity

Personal association

Merit

All staff should have access to equal opportunities based on merit, in:

- Employment & promotion
- Transfers
- Study leave
- Training & development
- Performance appraisal (Departmental Diversity & Equity Policy)

Safety

- All staff are entitled to work free from bullying, harassment & sexual harassment in accordance with the Equal Opportunity Act
- Everyone has the right to dignity, respect and to be treated fairly at work in accordance with the *Fair Work Act 2009*
- You must not discriminate, harass or bully anyone
 - particularly those people over whom you have authority
 - those that are vulnerable

Always act in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Victorian public sector employees

Flexibility

- Employers are required to make reasonable changes to working arrangements to enable equal participation in the work force by people with protected attributes in accordance with the Equal Opportunity Act

This includes flexible work arrangements and work/life balance

Equal Opportunity

Equal opportunity law covers:

- Discrimination
- Harassment
- Sexual harassment
- Bullying
- Victimization
- Reasonable adjustment

Discrimination

Direct discrimination is when someone with a particular attribute is treated less favourably than others, including:

- Harassment
- Denying benefits available to others
- Less favourable terms in provision of goods, services, benefits or opportunities

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is any behaviour that is:

- Unwelcome
- Of a sexual nature
- Likely to intimidate, offend or embarrass

Sexual harassment: Examples

- Unwelcome physical contact; from sexual assault to brushing against someone
- Demands for sexual favours
- Demands for out of work social activities
- Sexually offensive jokes, comments, gifts, questions, emails, or text messages
- Comments or questions about another's sexual activities or personal life
- Sexually graphic pictures

Harassment

Any unwanted behaviour toward another person due to their *personal attributes* that is likely to create a hostile or uncomfortable workplace by:

- Humiliating
- Seriously embarrassing, or
- Intimidating

Workplace bullying

- Repeated, unreasonable behaviour
- Creates a risk to health and safety
- Behaviour that victimises, humiliates, undermines or threatens

Harassment and bullying: examples

- Verbal abuse
- Excluding or isolating staff
- Psychological harassment
- Assigning meaningless tasks unrelated to the job
- Impossible assignments
- Deliberately changing rosters to inconvenience staff
- Withholding information required to do the job

Equal opportunity in the workplace

Equal opportunity must be upheld in all areas of employment, including:

- Recruitment, selection, promotion
- Redundancies
- Working conditions
- Leave
- Rostering, allocation of tasks
- Meetings and meeting times
- Other benefits

Equal opportunity in the workplace

The workplace is not just the custodial centres.

The workplace:

- Extends beyond physical boundaries
- Extends beyond set times of work
- Includes interactions between staff
- Includes interactions with other organisations and the public

Equal opportunities: your responsibilities

You will be held responsible for your behaviour at work or work-related functions

As a result of breaches of policy or law you may:

- Be required to change behaviour, apologise
- Be subject to *Managing Discipline* or '*Positive and Fair Work Places Guidelines*'
- Sign behavioural agreements
- Pay compensation

Equal opportunity: Youth Justice Custodial Services' responsibilities

Youth Justice Custodial Services has the legal obligation to:

- Take reasonable precautions against discrimination and harassment occurring in the workplace
- Enforce equal opportunity policies and procedures
- Provide a safe work place free of discrimination and harassment

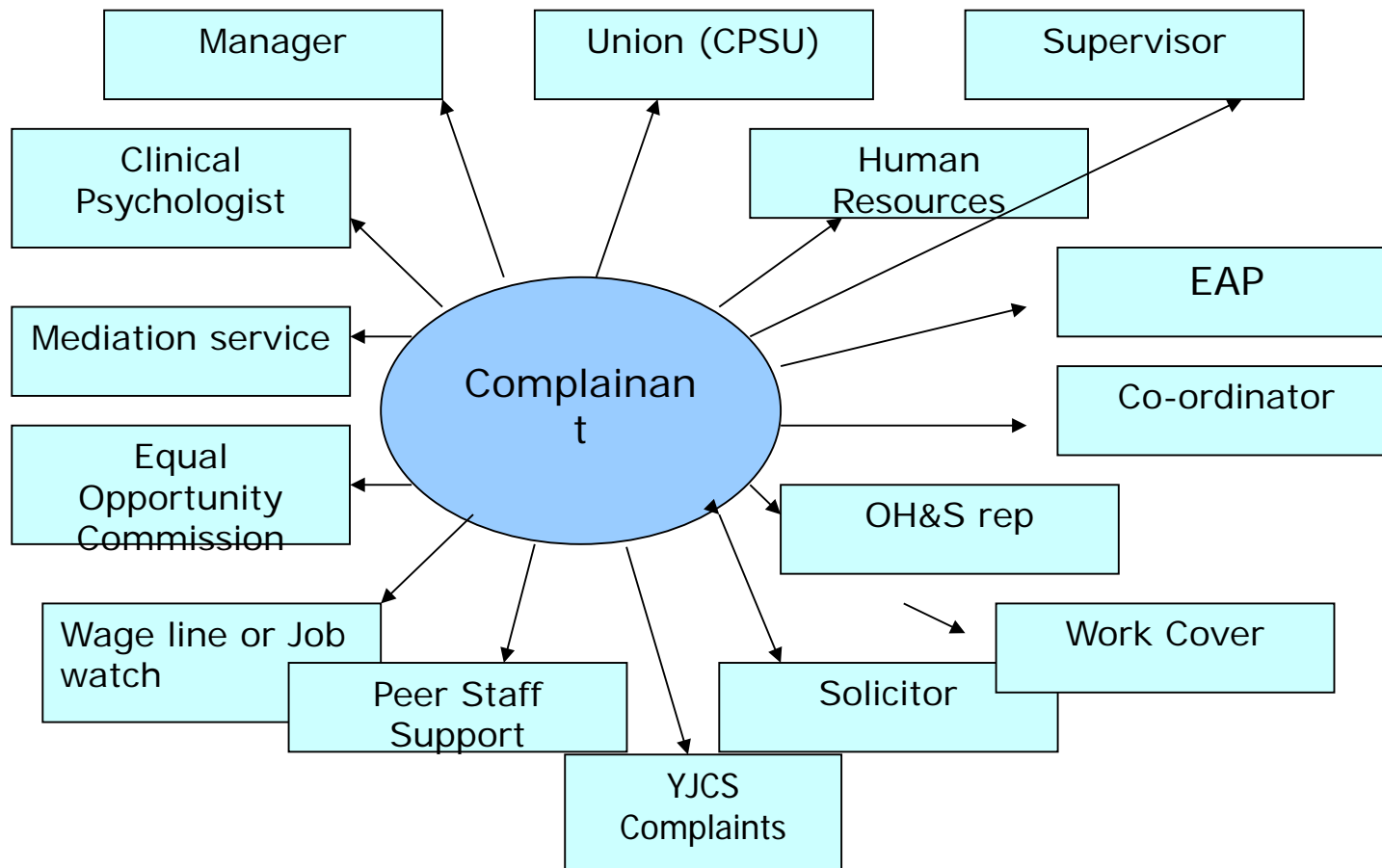
Discrimination and harassment is not acceptable and will be acted against

Making a complaint

If you are subject to discrimination or harassment or if there is anything that concerns you, you can:

- Discuss your concerns directly with the person concerned
- Discuss with your supervisor or manager
- Lodge a complaint (forms and drop box at entry-points of each site; email YJCS.complaints@dhs.vic.gov.au)
- Submit a *Workplace Complaint* with Fair Work Australia or *Grievance*
- Speak with a friend or mentor
- Seek assistance from the clinical psychologist (through Employee Assistance Program EAP)

Who can help you?



Duty of care

As Youth Justice Workers your duty of care includes:

- Clients
- Their families or carers
- People in the community
- Other YJ workers
- Visitors to the centre

Duty of care

This is important because:

- Most of our clients are vulnerable
- Many demonstrate at risk behaviour
- We are responsible for their care 24 hours a day
- We are highly scrutinized regarding the standards of care we provide to young people
- We can be found legally liable for negligence if we breach our duty of care

Accountability

The ways in which we are held accountable for our actions are:

- Supervision
- Reporting via line management
- Documenting information
- Yearly Performance assessments

Information privacy

- Personal information directly or indirectly identifies a person
- Privacy laws apply to written, electronic and verbal information
- **You** are responsible for protecting the integrity of clients' personal information

Information privacy: It can happen

A DHS employee and a friend were out to dinner. The employee was discussing their work with the friend and was using the names of the child and family they were working with.

Another departmental employee was in the same restaurant and overheard this conversation and reported it to management the following day.

The worker was subsequently let go.

Moral of the story:

Leave work conversations at work

If you go out with a colleague, don't say anything

That breaches the clients' privacy.

Information Privacy: Collection and release of information

- Clients must be advised of their rights
- Information must only be collected for assessments and plans or if required by other mandated services
- Information cannot be released to other sources without consultation with your manager
- Clients must not be forced or coerced
- Our clients are often young and vulnerable and may not understand their privacy rights
- Our clients may not understand the implications of having their personal information collected and shared
- It is up to you to help your clients understand their rights and our responsibilities

Information privacy: What do clients need to know?

- That information will only be collected as needed
- That you may need to tell someone if they threaten to hurt themselves or others
- That their personal information will be protected by Youth Justice – even if this means sharing it with others

Information privacy: Verbal interactions

- Discussions about clients should be confined to workplace
- Sensitive information should not be discussed in open-plan or public areas
- Phone calls about clients should be made in private
- Client information is not to be discussed in front of other clients

Information privacy: Written

- Client information should not be left in offices or taken from the centre
- Identifying and sensitive information should not be displayed on whiteboards etc.
- Unit co-ordinator must approve shredding of duplicate copies of information (ie. reports)
- Any documents (ie court orders, remand warrants etc) should be filed away in the client's file immediately and not left in the day book or a filing box for later
- Think about the information that can be gathered by other clients from a charge sheet

Information privacy: Electronic communication

- Staff should not work on electronic reports in view of other clients
- Employ a 'clean screen' practice
- External emails must not be used to send confidential information about clients
- Sensitive information must not be stored on generic computer hard drives
- Ensure printed information is collected promptly
- Never share your DHS password
- If using email, never use the name of a client in the title; always initials and only if it is absolutely necessary

Information privacy: Dos and don'ts

Do's

- Always ask your supervisor
- Explain to the client why information is being collected and who will see it
- Always lock information away as soon as possible
- Treat client information with respect
- Check the details of who you are speaking with

Information privacy: Dos and don'ts

Don'ts:

- Never speak with the media (refer them to Media Liaison Unit of DHS)
- Never share client information with other clients
- Never share information about staff with clients
- Leave documents lying around
- Give a person information because verification is taking too long

Breaching confidentiality

Information handled by Youth Justice Custodial Services is particularly sensitive and can give staff power over a client

A failure to comply with information privacy policy is not only a breach of confidentiality, it is also an abuse of power

With increasing scrutiny from the media and public about our clients, be vigilant to ensure their rights are upheld.

Uniform

Uniforms: Are supplied to casual staff but will remain the property of DHS and must be returned if the staff member resigns or is terminated from the position.

Hair: Long hair needs to be tied back and hair styles are to be neat and of a professional appearance.

Jewellery: Staff must not wear any jewellery items that may pose a WHS risk. This includes long earrings that can be torn from ears, necklaces that can be used to choke, and facial piercings. Staff must not wear other large jewellery items such as large watches or belt buckles that could cause injury during an incident response.

Uniform

- Additional Clothing:
- Undergarments that are visible, such as t-shirts worn underneath shirts or socks are to be of a colour consistent with the uniform and are limited to blue, white or black and without print or designs.
- External visits, leaves and appointments:

Staff are to wear uniform for all external visits, included escorted client leaves, professional meetings, client related medical or other appointments, unless approved otherwise by a Unit Manger, Operations Manger or General Manager.

Uniform – Visitors and External Providers

People entering the precinct in casual attire should always be dressed in appropriate clothing.

That is, avoiding revealing clothing and t-shirts with offensive words or images, wearing footwear that is suitable, and keeping jewellery and cosmetics to a minimum

Therefore, **NO** –

- Mini skirts
- Short shorts or football shorts
- Singlets, tank tops, midriff, sleeveless or strapless tops
- See through clothing
- Thongs
- Jewellery that may pose as a safety risk
- Hats, beanies or caps
- Heavy or padded coats, parkas, anoraks, jackets
- Hooded tops
- Fluorescent tops and t-shirts