

Name:	<b>PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES POLICY</b>
Approval Date:	12 September 2020
Version	3

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Glasshouse Country Care guides the practice and management of professional boundaries to ensure that we have a sound ethical framework to provide good quality care and to protect the rights of care recipients and staff.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to document Glasshouse Country Care's approach to effectively and efficiently managing professional boundaries.

Professional boundaries define effective and appropriate interaction between professionals and the public they serve. Boundaries exist to protect both the professional and the care recipient.

## **LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK**

Aged Care Quality Standards

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/providers/standards>

NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2018

[www.ndiscommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2019-08/ndis-practice-standards-july-2018.pdf](http://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2019-08/ndis-practice-standards-july-2018.pdf)

Charter of Rights

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/consumers/consumer-rights>

## **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Glasshouse Country Care Board Members and employees (full-time, part-time, fixed term, casual, voluntary and temporary) for the duration of their employment.

## **ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT**

Glasshouse Country Care is committed to ensuring staff understand and comply with this policy. This includes understanding the core principles and responsibilities:

### **Core Principles**

All formal working relationships need rapport and trust to function well. This is particularly relevant to the relationship between an individual and the person/s who are employed to provide them with home and community care.

It is certainly important that the support worker or staff member makes sure the client feels at ease with approaching and relating to them – but it is equally important that the lines don't become blurred.

Successful and ethical working relationships are based on a clear understanding of what the staff member role is – and just as importantly – what their role isn't. The work is personal in much of community and in-home care services however staff must maintain professional boundaries. These boundaries protect the worker and the client.

## **Responsibilities**

- Recognise where work ends and where personal life begins
- Staff should always respect working hours, and not work outside of these
- The client or their family should not have access to a workers personal phone number
- The staff member's focus should always be the client they are providing a service to
- It is not appropriate for staff to disclose information about their personal life / circumstances. Staff should never use the time that they are providing a service as an opportunity to vent their feelings or discuss their problems
- Staff and volunteers should never discuss or disclose organisational information with any client or their family including any information discussed in meetings, via email, memo or text message
- Staff members should be listening, not talking, so the focus remains on the person who is receiving the service
- Service time is not a time to respond to text or email messages or to make those phone calls you've been meaning to make!
- It is NEVER appropriate for a staff member to ask for money or suggest that they are having financial difficulties or to accept gifts (see receipt of gifts policy).
- It is also never appropriate for a client to ask a staff member for money. Inform your clinical manager or team leader if this should occur
- Don't offer to provide other services to a client or ask them to do this for you
- At times staff or a client may have other skills that they can provide on a commercial basis. It is inappropriate for either party to ask the other to perform or provide services for them – whether it be for free or for pay. This may represent a serious conflict of interest that could cost the staff member their job.
- Staff should never exhibit behaviour that is unprofessional.

Unprofessional behaviour includes the subjects already mentioned above but may also include:

- Being late for shifts
- Asking to leave a shift early or start later
- Not attending to the duties they are required to undertake
- Not treating the care recipient with dignity and respect at all times
- Swearing, raising their voice
- Attending to personal errands whilst providing a service
- Spending unreasonable amounts of time on the phone whilst providing a service
- Inviting a client into their home during service time or outside of work hours
- Touch – from a worker should only ever be of a nature that is essential to the person's care
- Keeping information about a client from their employer

- Arriving for work under the influence of alcohol or drugs or consuming these whilst providing a service
- Sexual advances or misconduct
- Talking negatively about their employer or other staff that provide a service to the client
- Disclosing information about other clients or staff

The setting and maintaining of professional boundaries within a home and community care environment is critical, because it creates an environment of mutual respect and productivity and it enables the staff member to 'support' the client more effectively in the long run. It also protects the client from a staff member being over involved in their personal life and potentially putting them at risk.

If a care recipient believes the staff member is behaving in an unethical or unprofessional manner or just crossing any boundaries that make them feel uncomfortable, they have the right to approach the General Manager, Clinical Program Manager, Service Delivery Manager or team leader to make a complaint.

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

The Board of Directors is responsible for the endorsement of this policy and the General Manager has primary responsibility for the management of staff and services covered by this policy.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS:**

Human Resource Management Policy

Standards of Conduct Policy

Duty of Care Policy

Client Rights and Responsibilities Policy

Receipt of Gifts Policy

Date	Version Number	Changes	Review Date
20/8/2020	3	Added version control box, added review date Checked and updated legislation Added – dispose of records securely Pg. 2 Added discuss organisation information to Responsibilities list on Pg. 2 Added Service Delivery Manager Pg. 3	March 2023