

# Privacy, Dignity & Confidentiality Policy and Procedure



Issued: 14/11/2018

## Objective:

**focus** is committed to respecting our client's right to be afforded individual privacy, dignity and confidentiality.

## Scope:

All **focus** Staff

## Policy Statement:

Clients receiving services from **focus** are entitled to the same level of privacy as all other members of society. Working with vulnerable clients should raise staff awareness to the importance of dignity to every client, and also raise awareness of the importance of sharing information where it is in the best interests of the client, where the client has given consent, or in line with the Information Privacy Act 2000.

Standard sharing of information regarding clients takes place between team members, and is usually done in a formal manner. Such information disclosed will be relevant to daily activities, PCP's or BSP's. Examples include:

- Behaviours of concern
- Positive reactions to a new activity
- Reaction to food/drink
- Reaction to another person, whether positive or negative

Any information sharing that is outside of what is relevant to the person's involvement with **focus**, either directly or indirectly, is not appropriate. All clients and/or families, carers should be given the policy on Information Privacy and the policy should also be explained in a manner that the client/carer/family member can understand. Written consent needs to be gained to share any information.

Formal conversations about clients should take place in a private setting and not in front of other clients, external staff members and never in a public place.

All employees understand and acknowledge through signing the employment contract that they owe **focus**, its employees, workers and clients, a duty of confidentiality and that they will not, at any time, knowingly disclose to any unauthorised personnel confidential information that comes to their knowledge during the course of their employment, including documents, materials, processes, and data whether physical, electronic or any form. Employees also owe the clients and other workers a duty of privacy and dignity that they will, at all times, maintain. Privacy and dignity will be

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understood to cover respect for the person's physical body, personal space and belongings, living arrangements, and personal information shared with written consent.

Violations will result in disciplinary action against the offending individual which may include termination of employment.

**focus** will work in accordance with relevant legislation including the Disability Act 2006, Information Privacy Act 2000, the Health Records Act 2001, and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

## Process Steps:

Responsibilities

### 1 What is considered a Breach of Privacy and Confidentiality?

Breaches of privacy and Confidentiality can be:

- Providing written information not in accordance with guidelines;
- Providing verbal information not in accordance with guidelines;
- Discussing clients and other staff with or in front of other people.

### 2 Respecting Privacy

As stated in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities a person has the right not to have their privacy, family, home or correspondence unlawfully or arbitrarily interfered with and the right to not have their reputation unlawfully attacked.

**focus** will inform our clients about their individual rights in regard to personal dignity and privacy.

Clients are entitled to:

- enjoy a private space
- feel comfortable and reassured that their personal information and belongings will be respected
- communicate confidentially with friends, family and carers when they wish to do so
- be supported in such a way that their personal dignity is maintained
- Where possible, make choices about those involved in their daily lives.

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## 3 Respecting Dignity

Dignity is the right of a person to be valued and respected for their own sake, and to be treated ethically. If people feel their identity and value as a human being is not respected, this can stop them from enjoying life and living comfortably.

Dignity and respect is important to every one of us and it is about ensuring our clients are treated in ways we would like for ourselves.

Methods of upholding dignity are usually small seemingly inconsequential things, but they mean a lot.

There are several factors related to dignity that all staff should be follow:

- Ensure people are dressed appropriately for the weather and for the activity they will be participating in on the day. All clothing should be clean, tidy and well fitting. Most importantly ensure the clothes actually belong to the person you are assisting.
- Involve people in their own care, ask them who they would like to support them.
- Address the person properly use a polite, amiable voice and don't adopt a patronising tone. Our clients are adults not children.
- Make food look and taste nice, involve the clients in menu planning and food preparation.
- Respect personal space and possessions. Always knock before entering a person's room.
- Handle personal care activities sensitively, ask who the person would like to assist them.
- Promote social activities.
- Know how to detect pain and address the issue immediately.
- Have a friendly chat, really listen and show interest in what the person has to share.

## 4 Staff Responsibility

All Staff have a responsibility to:

- Ensure client's personal information is not left on desks or photocopiers and that records and information are securely locked away.
- Ensure client information is stored on **focus** 'Supportability' only, and not on the desktop of individual computers.
- Only collect the necessary information from clients and their families/carers.
- Ensure conversations of a personal nature are conducted away from public areas.
- Do not pass on information verbally without consent.
- Do not share client or staff private or confidential information or photographs through social media.
- Ensure clients are aware of their rights regarding access to documents and files and what the information will be used for.

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- Consider the implications and risks of forwarding email messages to a third party without consent.
- If sending information of a private nature, notify the recipient that confidential information is about to be sent.
- Respect people's dignity at all times.