

Ethical Guidelines in Professional Relationships

It is the responsibility of the peer navigator to establish the tenor of their professional relationship with clients, members and others, and to ensure that the relationship serves the needs of clients, and others to whom there is a professional duty, over the needs of the peer navigator. In establishing a professional relationship the peer navigator takes into account relevant contextual issues, such as age, culture and gender of the client, and ensures the dignity, individuality and rights of the client and members of our society are protected.

2.1 Appropriate Professional Boundaries

2.1.1 Peer navigators maintain appropriate professional boundaries throughout the course of the professional relationship and after the professional relationship.

2.2 No Exploitation for Personal or Professional Gain

2.2.1 Peer navigators do not exploit professional relationships for personal benefit, gain or gratification.

2.2.2 Peer navigators do not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further their personal, religious, political or business interests.

2.3 Declare Conflicts of Interest

Peer navigators avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment. Peer navigators inform clients when a real or potential conflict of interest arises, and take reasonable steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes the clients' interests primary. In some cases, protecting clients' interests may require termination of the professional relationship with proper referral of the client to another professional.

2.3.1 When peer navigators provide services to two or more people who have a relationship with each other (e.g., couples, family members), peer navigators clarify with all parties which individuals will be considered clients and the nature of the professional relationship with other involved parties.

2.3.2 Peer navigators who anticipate a conflict of interest among the individuals receiving services, or who anticipate having to perform a difficult role, clarify with clients their role and responsibilities. (For example, when a peer navigator is asked to testify in a child custody dispute or divorce proceedings involving clients).

2.3.3 Peer navigators consider carefully the potential for professional conflicts of interest where close personal relationships exist or where social, business or sexual relationships with colleagues are contemplated or exist.

2.4 Dual and Multiple Relationships

Dual or multiple relationships occur when peer navigators relate to clients in more than one relationship, whether professional, social or business. Dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively. While having contact with clients in different life situations is not inherently harmful, it is the responsibility of the peer navigator to evaluate the nature of the various contacts to determine whether

the peer navigator is in a position of power and/or authority that may unduly and/or negatively affect the decisions and actions of their client

2.4.1 Peer navigators take care to evaluate the nature of dual or multiple relationships to ensure that the needs and welfare of their clients are protected.

2.5 Physical Contact with Clients

2.5.1 Peer navigators who engage in appropriate physical contact (a hug) with clients are responsible for setting clear, appropriate and culturally sensitive boundaries to govern such physical contact.

2.6 No Romantic or Sexual Relationships with Clients

2.6.1 Peer navigators do not engage in romantic relationships, sexual activities or sexual contact with clients, even if such contact is sought by clients.

2.6.2 Peer navigators who have provided support or services do not engage in romantic relationships, sexual activities or sexual contact with former clients for at least one year. It is the responsibility of the peer navigator to evaluate the nature of the professional relationship they had with a client and to determine whether the peer navigator is in a position of power and/or authority that may unduly and/or negatively affect the decisions and actions of their former client.

2.7 No Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment refers to unwelcome sexual comments or lewd statements, unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome requests for sexual favours or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in circumstances where a reasonable person could anticipate that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

2.7.1 Peer navigators do not sexually harass any person.