

Catholic Centre for Immigrants (CCI)
Client Interaction Policy

Introduction

The nature of the Catholic Centre for Immigrants' (CCI's) work involves daily contact with clients. This policy will ensure staff, volunteers and students understand their obligations as well as the appropriate boundaries relating to interactions with clients as they carry out their daily activities. The purpose of establishing and maintaining boundaries is to promote the well-being, safety and security of the staff, volunteers, students and the client, as well as create a safe and predictable environment, which allows the client to optimize his or her growth, change, and safety. Staff, volunteers and students should always ensure that health and safety and security procedures are adhered to when dealing with clients and their belongings.

Application

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and students of CCI. In the performance of their duties, staff, volunteers and students are expected to know and comply with the rules and regulations established in the Client Interaction Policy, which will be provided during their orientation. Failure to comply with this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Definitions

Staff – A staff is someone who is working for and receives a paycheque from CCI. This includes all full-time, part-time and casual staff.

Client – A client is someone who is using or has used the services of CCI during the past two years.

Student – A student is someone who is serving a placement through CCI as a part of their academic requirements.

Volunteer – A volunteer is someone who registered as part of the volunteer program. This may include an individual, a group or someone volunteering as a requirement under a Community Service Order.

Boundaries – Are the parameters which allow us to differentiate ourselves from others and to maintain a sense of self. Boundaries define the edge of appropriate behaviour and provide the physical and emotional limits of the relationship between the *caring* staff or volunteer or student and *trusting* client. Boundaries help to establish clear roles and expectations. They serve to protect and preserve the integrity of the services offered to clients by CCI.

Procedure

While staff, volunteers and students are expected to treat clients with respect and courtesy, they must refrain from developing or encouraging the development of personal relationships with clients. A staff / volunteer / student / client relationship must be kept professional at all times on and off the CCI premises. All off-premise activities involving clients and staff or volunteers or students must be pre-

Catholic Centre for Immigrants (CCI)
Client Interaction Policy

approved by the appropriate CCI Manager. At no time should a staff, volunteer or students be off the premises with a client for purposes other than the business of CCI.

Staff, volunteers and students must also be aware of what actions or activities cross the boundaries. Boundary crossings are interactions between a staff, volunteer or student and the client in which more of the “person” enters the relationship. Staff, volunteers or students must be mindful of the impact the boundary crossing has on themselves, the client and CCI. It must be remembered that there is an inherent power imbalance between staff, volunteers and students and those who are served by CCI.

More specifically:

- Staff, volunteers and students are asked not to fraternize with clients during off-hours. This includes inviting clients home, employing clients, engaging in business transactions with clients, associating with clients during off-hours, including accepting phone calls from them at home or asking clients for favours.
- Staff, volunteers and students are asked not to spend longer than usual/necessary with a client.
- Staff, volunteers and students are asked not to give, buy, borrow, receive, sell or lend money or items to clients either on or off CCI premises, unless pre-approved by the Executive Director or Director of Operations.
- Staff, volunteers and students are asked not to provide or share personal information about self, staff, volunteers, students, or other clients to clients. The issue with self-disclosure is not whether or not it occurs, by the content of what is disclosed and the impact the disclosure has on the client.
- Physical contact of any kind with clients may be misinterpreted and should be avoided unless essential to the performance of their duties.
- Staff, volunteers and students must not engage in any intimate or otherwise non-professional relationship with a client or behaviour that is perceived to be sexual in character or actual sexual contact with a client.
- It is the policy of CCI that no physical, aggressive contact be used to diffuse a client situation. Unless the safety and security of the client, the staff, volunteer or student are at absolute risk, proper calming and diffusing techniques should be employed.

Interactions with Clients Disclosure

When a situation arises where a staff, volunteer or student is faced with a real or perceived inappropriate interaction with a client or this policy and/or that of CCI, they are expected to disclose the potential conflict either to their Manager, Deputy Executive Director or Executive Director and to take action to avoid it. If in doubt, the staff, volunteer or student should discuss the situation with their Manager and Deputy Executive Director and make a prompt and full disclosure orally or in writing to their Manager and Deputy Executive Director of any actual or potential inappropriate interactions with themselves or another staff, volunteer or student with a client. This disclosure should include:

- A description of the actual or potential interaction,
- The nature of the direct or indirect personal interaction, and
- The identity of the person(s) in which the interaction lies.

Catholic Centre for Immigrants (CCI)
Client Interaction Policy

The Manager and Deputy Executive Director must then decide if a real or potential conflict exists and whether or not any action needs to be taken to eliminate it. The Manager must keep a record of discussion and should ensure that all such reports and their decisions are appropriately filed.

If a health or safety concern has been breached, then it must be immediately reported to the Deputy Executive Director and a report filed. Any client also has the right to register a concern about inappropriate behaviour from a staff. These issues must be brought forward to the appropriate manager immediately and a report filed.

Code of Ethics

Along with the core competencies, all staff, volunteers and students who have contact with clients should abide by the following suggested code of ethics, which is consistent with those of the Canadian (1994) and United States (1980) Social Work Associations, and OCISO (2001). The code of ethics is presented with the understanding that specific conduct will be further guided by the professional judgment and circumstances.

1. A settlement practitioner's primary responsibility is to the client, and the practitioner must therefore avoid or declare any conflict of interest.
2. A settlement practitioner shall respect the privacy of clients and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of service provision, unless explicitly and appropriately authorized to do otherwise.
3. A settlement practitioner shall make every effort to foster maximum self determination on the part of the client.
4. A settlement practitioner shall not exploit the relationship with a client for personal benefit, gain, or gratification.
5. A settlement practitioner shall carry out their professional duties and obligations with integrity and objectivity.
6. A settlement practitioner shall maintain competence and promote excellence in the provision of settlement services to a client.
7. A settlement practitioner shall advocate change in the best interest of the client and for the overall benefit of society.
8. A settlement practitioner shall model and promote an inclusive society that is free of racism and all forms of discrimination.
9. A settlement practitioner shall uphold the vision, goal and objectives of the employing organization.