NORTHERN NEVADA ADULT MENTAL HEALTH POLICY AND PROCEDURE

SUBJECT: CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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APPROVAL: Cody L. Phinney, Agency Director

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a recommended process of managing conflict between staff in the organization.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of NNAMHS to assist staff in managing conflicts in a manner that promotes individual and organizational growth and respect.

III. PROCEDURES

- a. Conflict Prevention and Resolution Procedures
 - i. Conflict is the clash of opposing attitudes, desires, interests, ideas, behaviors, goals and needs. It is recognized that within the work environment conflict may exist and is a necessary component to growth and change. The goal of resolving conflict is to achieve resolution while maintaining the working relationship.

- ii. It is absolutely imperative to develop an environment of open, honest communication to mitigate conflicts. Every attempt should be made to assist employees in developing mechanisms to manage conflict and to defuse issues before the conflict occurs.
- iii. Conflict should be addressed at the lowest possible level appropriate for the type of conflict. NNAMHS promotes the expectation that employees will resolve conflict exercising professional, respectful behavior. By doing so, we will develop a culture of conflict management and help employees build problem-solving skills instead of dependence on managerial staff.
- iv. Recommended Process for Conflict Management
 - 1. Level One: Employees engage in self –resolution:
 - a. Define the situation and identify why there is conflict.
 - b. Identify the root cause of the problem. Employees should focus on behaviors, not personalities.
 - c. Determine alternative solutions which focus on resolution and future practices. Review the advantages and disadvantages of each solution. Maintain open, honest respectful conversation. Utilize mechanisms such as the Employee Assistance Program.
 - d. Mutually agree on a solution with a future focus.
 - e. Follow through on agreed upon actions.
 - f. Matters of safety should be referred to the supervisor.
 - 2. Level Two: Supervisor
 - a. If attempts at self-resolution have failed, the situation of conflict should be brought to the supervisor.
 - b. Supervisors will engage in facilitation and assist in ensuring open discussion continues. By acting as a facilitator, the supervisor will

help the individuals understand common objectives and assist them to plan to achieve those objectives without taking a particular position in the discussion. The facilitator will try to assist the group in achieving a consensus on solutions.

3. Level Three: Personnel

- a. If previous attempts at peaceful reconciliation have failed, conflicts may be advanced to the Personnel Analyst who will act as a facilitator/mediator. The ultimate goal at level three is that the parties involved will come to understand common objectives and by consensus arrive at a solution. If necessary the Analyst will seek to open and/or improve dialogue between disputants, aiming to help the parties reach an agreement with concrete effects on the disputed matter. The Analyst will be impartial and will seek resolution of the conflict
- If an agreement is reached, the content of that agreement is determined by the parties involved rather than imposed by a third party.

4. Level Four: Formal Mediation

- a. The State of Nevada Mediation Program is available to all State employees and supervisors. Employees and supervisors are encouraged to utilize this process under appropriate circumstances.
- b. Mediation is an informal, confidential and voluntary process in which a neutral third party(s) assist disputing parties reach a resolution. The primary purpose of the Mediation Program is to maintain an environment that is responsive, informal, and confidential to resolve conflicts as an alternative to formal proceedings.

- c. Any party who may have questions or feel this process may assist in resolving their issues or concerns are encouraged to contact the Personnel Analyst or the Mediation Program Administrator at (775) 684-0104.
- 5. Level Five: Agency Director designates a resolution
 - a. If all prior attempts at resolving conflict have been unsuccessful, the conflict can be referred to the Agency Director. The director will:
 - Contact appropriate personnel for assistance;
 - ii. Take all of the information from previous efforts into consideration and make a decision;
 - iii. Explain the decision made on behalf of the conflicted parties;
 - iv. Advise all parties in writing of the decision and obtain signatures acknowledging receipt;
 - Determine consequences if parties do not conform to the decision;
 - vi. Communicate consequences.
- 6. Level Six: Formal Grievance Process
 - a. If satisfaction is not gained through all other mechanisms, parties to the conflict may engage in the formal grievance process through the NEATS Incident Reporting mechanism progressing through the formalized steps. A formal grievance must be filed within 20 working days following the origin of the grievance or the date an employee who feels aggrieved learns of the problem.
 - Supervisors will be trained in conflict prevention and will be expected to offer training opportunities and coaching for their employees.
 Training will include:

- i. Communication
- ii. Problem Solving
- iii. Teambuilding and Collaboration
- iv. Celebration and Appreciation
- b. Supervisors will communicate the understanding that conflict will be managed and resolved at the lowest level possible. Efforts will be made to create a culture that values conflict management. Open communication and managing conflict will be viewed as core job competencies for all employees.
- c. Supervisors will maintain an open door policy and remain available to coach employees to assist with communication.
- d. Management must always be notified and involved in certain types of conflicts, especially where there are indications of physical violence, harassment, theft, or illegal substance use or possession. Nonmanagerial employees should never be expected to confront violations of the law or to enforce organization policy without management's knowledge.