NORTHERN NEVADA ADULT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (NNAMHS) POLICY AND PROCEDURE

 SUBJECT:
 PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR OF EMPLOYEES

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 APPROVAL:
 Cody L. Phinney
 , Agency Director

I. PURPOSE

To promote a healthy and therapeutic environment by assisting employees to avoid dual relationships with consumers

II. POLICY

Clear and transparent interpersonal boundaries between employees and consumers are essential for healthy emotional and therapeutic support of consumers. In order to provide the highest quality of care to all consumers, NNAMHS will address all ethical issues brought to the attention of Administration.

III. REFERENCES

A. Division of Mental Health and Developmental Services Policy #4.037 Professional Behavior of Division Employees

IV. DEFINITIONS

Employee: For the purposes of this policy 'employee' refers to individuals employed by the State of Nevada, individuals contracted by NNAMHS, interns and externs, and volunteers.

V. PROCEDURE

- 1. All new employees will be trained on ethics and professional behavior in new employee orientation.
- 2. All licensed and certified professional employees, including but not limited to nurses, counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, physicians, social workers and therapists shall be accountable for following the ethical standards, statutes and regulations of their respective licensing boards, as well as NNAMHS policy.
- 3. Expectations of healthy professional behavior include, but are not limited to:
 - a. No involvement in dual relationships that could lead to emotional engagement or exploitation.
 - b. Employees shall not impose their personal values or attempt to convert agency consumers to adopt or affiliate with any organized group, sect, religious or political ideology or organization.
 - c. Employees shall avoid revealing their personal information with consumers. This includes address or home phone number. If there is a specific therapeutic reason for disclosing this information, the supervisor will approve and the reason for disclosure will be documented in the consumer's record.
 - d. If an individual known to an employee is admitted to treatment, the supervisor should determine steps to assure that professional boundaries are maintained and no conflict of interest occurs.
 - e. An employee shall not knowingly establish or engage in a personal relationship with agency consumers, family members, or the consumers' significant others.
 - f. Personal relationships are prohibited between an employee and former agency consumers with whom a therapeutic relationship has occurred.
 - g. Employees shall not engage in romantic relationships or sexual activity with agency consumers or former agency consumers with whom a therapeutic relationship was established, regardless of the time lapse since termination of the therapeutic relationship.

- h. Employees shall not engage in sexual activity within the agency or on the property where they are assigned to work.
- i. Employees shall not engage in business relationships with agency consumers or former consumers as long as there is or has been a therapeutic relationship, including, but not limited to loaning or borrowing of money, trading, bartering, or profiting from sale of goods to the consumer.
- j. As a general rule, employees shall not accept money, gifts, services, or special privileges in any amount from agency consumers or others with whom those consumers have close personal relationships. Exceptions include personal interactions that occur in the context of events in which staff, consumers, and families participate together, such as holiday partiers, social events connected with the therapeutic environment, agency, or unit.
- k. Employees who wish to donate money or tangibles to agency consumers shall do so anonymously through designated non-profit contractor or vendor agency.
- I. Employees shall not perform work related activities on behalf of consumers on their personal time without prior permission from their supervisor.
- 4. Violations of these described behaviors may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. A romantic relationship or sexual activity with current or former agency consumers when a therapeutic relationship exists or has existed will require a recommendation of dismissal by the Agency Director.
- 5. Ethical violations will be reported through the NNAMHS incident reporting system.
- 6. Ethical issues are discussed at the monthly Core Leadership Meeting. The Core Leadership team will determine any actions required as a result of an ethical incident.
- 7. The Performance Improvement Coordinator will monitor the completion of any corrective action plan.
- 8. Personnel issues will be discussed in general terms and the name of the involve employees or consumers will not be shared during the review of these events. This information is the purview of the Human Resources Department.