



Transforming lives and communities through hope and quality mental health since 2007.

COUNSELING CONNECTIONS FOR CHANGE, INC
NON-DISCRIMINATION, ANTI-HARASSMENT, CIVIL RIGHTS POLICY

Equal Employment Opportunity

Our Company provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, amnesty or status as a covered veteran in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws. Our Company complies with applicable state and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment in every location in which the company has facilities. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation and training.

The Company expressly prohibits any form of unlawful employee harassment based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, genetic information, disability or veteran status. Improper interference with the ability of Company employees to perform their expected job duties is absolutely not tolerated.

The agency ensures all employees understand their civil rights and requirements as outlined by the DOJ/OCR Online Training, which is made available through the internal employee online training portal. Additionally, at the time of hiring, employees, contractors, and all volunteers are informed of this Non-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, Civil Rights Policy.

Non-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, & Civil Rights Compliance

Our Company is committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits unlawful discriminatory practices, including harassment. Therefore, the Company expects that all relationships among persons in the office will be business-like and free of bias, prejudice and harassment.

As a recipient of federal funding in compliance with DOJ regulations pertaining to civil rights and nondiscrimination - 28 C.F.R. Part 38, this recipient agrees to adhere to Part 38 Rules that prohibit specific forms of discrimination on the basis of religion, a religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice.

It is the policy of the Company to ensure equal employment opportunity without discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, amnesty or status as a covered veteran. The Company prohibits any such discrimination or harassment.

Our Company encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination or harassment. It is the policy of the Company to promptly and thoroughly investigate such reports. The Company prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or who participates in an investigation of such reports.

Definitions of Harassment

Sexual harassment constitutes discrimination and is illegal under federal, state and local laws. For the purposes of this policy, sexual harassment is defined, as in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidelines, as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when, for example: a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; b) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or c) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not-so-subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies; leering, whistling or touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

Harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristic is also strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment is verbal, written or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by law or that of his/her relatives, friends or associates, and that: a) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment; b) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or c) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; and written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group and that is placed on walls or elsewhere on the employer's premises or circulated in the workplace, on company time or using company equipment via email, phone (including voice messages), text messages, tweets, blogs, social networking sites or other means.

Our Company is committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits discriminatory practices, including harassment. Therefore, the Company expects that all relationships among persons in the workplace will be business-like and free of bias, prejudice and harassment. The Company prohibits any such discrimination or harassment. Appropriate disciplinary action may be taken against any employee willfully violating this policy.

Individuals and Conduct Covered

These policies apply to all applicants and employees, and prohibit harassment, discrimination and retaliation whether engaged in by fellow employees, by a supervisor or manager or by someone not directly connected to the Company (e.g., an outside vendor, consultant or customer).

Conduct prohibited by these policies is unacceptable in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, such as during business trips, business meetings and business-related social events.

Retaliation Is Prohibited

The Company prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or participates in an investigation of such reports. Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participating in an investigation of a claim of harassment or discrimination is a

serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination itself, will be subject to disciplinary action.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Reporting an Incident of Harassment, Discrimination or Retaliation

The Company requires the reporting of all incidents of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position. Individuals who believe they have experienced conduct that they believe is contrary to the Company's policy or who have concerns about such matters must file their complaints with their immediate supervisor **and** the CEO before the conduct becomes severe or pervasive. Individuals should not feel obligated to file their complaints with their immediate supervisor first before bringing the matter to the attention of the other designated representatives identified above.

Whistleblower Protections

The recipient (and any subrecipient at any tier) must comply with, and is subject to, all applicable provisions of 41 U.S.C. 4712, including all applicable provisions that prohibit, under specified circumstances, discrimination against an employee as reprisal for the employee's disclosure of information related to gross mismanagement of a federal grant, a gross waste of federal funds, an abuse of authority relating to a federal grant, a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety, or a violation of law, rule, or regulation related to a federal grant.

The recipient also must inform its employees, in writing (and in the predominant native language of the workforce), of employee rights and remedies under 41 U.S.C. 4712.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL EMPLOYEES:

Employees who have experienced conduct they believe is contrary to this policy have an obligation to take advantage of this complaint procedure. An employee's failure to fulfill this obligation could affect his or her rights in pursuing legal action. Also, please note, federal, state and local discrimination laws establish specific time frames for initiating a legal proceeding pursuant to those laws.

Early reporting and intervention have proven to be the most effective method of resolving actual or perceived incidents of harassment. Therefore, while no fixed reporting period has been established, the Company strongly urges the prompt reporting of complaints or concerns so that rapid and constructive action can be taken. The Company will make every effort to stop alleged harassment before it becomes severe or pervasive, but can only do so with the cooperation of its employees.

The availability of this complaint procedure does not preclude individuals who believe they are being subjected to harassing conduct from promptly advising the offender that his or her behavior is unwelcome and requesting that it be discontinued.

The Investigation

Any reported allegations of harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be investigated promptly, thoroughly and impartially. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and, where necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have other relevant knowledge.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigatory process to the extent consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action.

Discrimination Findings

The recipient (and subrecipient) assures that in the event that a Federal or State court or Federal or State administrative agency makes a finding of discrimination after a due process hearing on the ground of race, religion, national origin, sex, or disability against a recipient (or subrecipient) of victim assistance formula funds under this award, the recipient (or subrecipient) will forward a copy of the findings to the Office for Civil Rights of OJP. NOTE: Subrecipients must also forward a copy of the finding to the PSO.

Responsive Action

Misconduct constituting harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be dealt with promptly and appropriately. Responsive action may include, for example, training, referral to counseling, monitoring of the offender and/or disciplinary action such as warning, reprimand, withholding of a promotion or pay increase, reduction of wages, demotion, reassignment, temporary suspension without pay or termination, as the Company believes appropriate under the circumstances.

If an employee making a complaint does not agree with its resolution, the employee may appeal to the Company's President.

Individuals who have questions or concerns about these policies should talk with the Company Director of Human Resources.

Finally, these policies should not, and may not, be used as a basis for excluding or separating individuals of a particular gender, or any other protected characteristic, from participating in business or work-related social activities or discussions in order to avoid allegations of harassment. The law and the policies of the Company prohibit disparate treatment on the basis of sex or any other protected characteristic, with regard to terms, conditions, privileges and perquisites of employment. The prohibitions against harassment, discrimination and retaliation are intended to complement and further these policies, not to form the basis of an exception to them.

Accommodation of Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act, known as the ADAAA, are federal laws that prohibit employers with 15 or more employees from discriminating against applicants and individuals with disabilities and that when needed provide reasonable accommodations to applicants and employees who are qualified for a job, with or without reasonable accommodations, so that they may perform the essential job duties of the position.

It is the policy of the Company to comply with all federal and state laws concerning the employment of persons with disabilities and to act in accordance with regulations and guidance issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Furthermore, it is our company policy not to discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in regard to application procedures, hiring, advancement, discharge, compensation, training or other terms, conditions and privileges of employment.

The Company will reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with a disability so that they can perform the essential functions of a job unless doing so causes a direct threat to these individuals or others in the workplace and the threat cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation and/or if the accommodation creates an undue hardship to the Company. Contact the Human Resource department with any questions or requests for accommodation.

P.O. Box 841656
Pearland, TX 77584
281-485-9280
www.counselingconnections.org