



The Core focus and service of Friends with Dignity is to support Survivors of Domestic Violence. We do this by providing practical services in which clients are assisted to start their new journey, free from abuse. Clients that are referred to us are in situations that have caused great trauma and the need for confidentiality, respect and professionalism is of the upmost importance to us.

As part of our service we ensure that at no time we have any personal contact with clients we are assisting. A referring agency will act as the liaison between the client and Friends with Dignity.

1. PURPOSE OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

All Friends with Dignity volunteers have a responsibility towards ensuring that the safety of our clients remains paramount.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct ("The Code") is to provide volunteers with guidance on the standards of behaviour expected of them in performing their duties and in their dealings with fellow volunteers, management, referring agencies and members of the community.

The Code provides a general framework of principles to be adopted by volunteers with respect to their conduct while volunteering with FWD. The Code is not intended to address specific situations that may arise with respect to what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

The standards of conduct required to be met under the Code exist alongside the standards of behaviour required of volunteers under the specific Friends with Dignity policies and procedures.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES GUIDING VOLUNTEERS CONDUCT

All volunteers have a responsibility to:

- Respect and uphold the good name of the organisation (that being Friends with Dignity);
- Treat other volunteers with fairness, courtesy, respect and without discrimination;
- Act honestly, avoiding situations which may give rise to a conflict of interest or the perception of such a conflict;
- Carry out their duties in a professional, responsible and diligent manner.
- Volunteer for the good of the clients we are assisting, not primarily for personal gain or benefit
- Ensure any personal information pertaining to a client being assisted is kept confidential

3. STANDARDS TO BE OBSERVED IN PERFORMING DUTIES

In performing their duties, volunteers are expected to observe the following obligations:

1. Be familiar with and observe the policies, procedures and rules of the organisation.
2. Observe and comply with all the laws of the State and Commonwealth;
3. Be aware of the position of trust they hold and the increased obligation on them when dealing with client information and at all times act honestly and with integrity;
4. Protect and respect the rights and reputations of other persons within the organisation
5. Avoid behaviour that could reasonably be perceived as harassment, intimidation, discrimination on any basis, bullying or threatening in any other way;

6. Avoid conflict of interest situations and disclose any perceived conflict of interest risk;
7. Not accept any direct or indirect pecuniary or other benefit from a third party in connection with volunteering duties. Not engage in any scandalous behaviour;
9. Take reasonable steps to protect and not disclose confidential information, in particular:
 - Any information pertaining to the operations of Friends with Dignity; and
 - Any information relating to clients, client organisation, donors or corporate sponsors.
10. Demonstrate the highest professional and ethical standards. When making public comment, volunteers must clearly identify any views expressed as their own and not those of FWD
11. Maintain and observe all safety and health procedures while carrying out duties. Volunteers must not do any act or omission which may cause injury or harm to any other person;

4. ADDRESSING A POSSIBLE BREACH OF THE CODE

To promote and maintain the standards of conduct expected of FWD, it is important that any volunteer who has a concern about the conduct of another volunteer is able to raise their concern freely and without fear of intimidation or repercussion. To encourage volunteers to come forward with any concern, the FWD Board will:

- Consider all complaints seriously;
- Investigate, where appropriate, formal complaints immediately;
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure any volunteer who makes a complaint in good faith is protected against any disadvantage, victimisation or discrimination because he or she reported a breach of the Code;
- Follow the appropriate procedures.

If, upon investigation, those responsible for conducting the investigation form the opinion that the complaint is untrue, frivolous or made maliciously or with intent to harm the volunteer to whom the complaint was made against or for some other reason was not made in good faith, the complaint itself may give rise to a breach of the Code by the volunteer who made the complaint.

Friends with Dignity may initiate disciplinary action against any volunteer responsible for making the untrue, frivolous, malicious or harmful complaint.

5. PROCEDURE FOR PERCEIVED BREACHES

Where the Board of Management becomes aware of conduct which, in the Management's view, gives rise to a breach of the Code, the Management will follow the steps outlined below:

1. Management will provide the volunteer with written information as to their concerns of the perceived breach.
2. The volunteer will have the opportunity to address the concern and provide evidence for/against the alleged breach
3. If the breach is deemed true then the Board of Management will advise the volunteer of the course of action.
4. This course of action may involve termination of volunteer role.

6. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

If at any time a volunteer (where this be a general volunteer or member of the Board) have a grievance they are to follow the following process:

1. Attempt to resolve the issue with the other party (if appropriate)
2. If the issue remains unresolved, formally bring the issue to the attention of the Board of Management who have a commitment to investigating the issue
3. The complainant will be informed of the outcome and given an opportunity to respond.
4. If the issue still remains unresolved or the volunteer is not satisfied with the decision, they have the option to make a complaint to the relevant complaints body.

GUIDANCE NOTES ON SOME SPECIFIC AREAS OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

1. INTRODUCTION

Volunteers may benefit from some more specific guidance on their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct. It is important for volunteers to be aware that where they have concerns about what is acceptable or unacceptable behaviour and cannot identify or resolve their concerns by application of the standards outlined in the Code, the volunteer should always consult a member of the Board of Management for assistance.

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The potential for a conflict of interest arises when a volunteer is placed in a situation where their private or personal interests conflict or appear to conflict with the volunteer's obligations to the organisation. Put simply, conflict of interest arises where some external interest of a volunteer may influence a decision made by, or conduct of, a volunteer in performing their duties of volunteering.

The Code requires volunteers to avoid situations that give rise to a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest. Where a situation arises that could give rise to a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest, a volunteer must:

5. a) Refrain from taking part in any further conduct, discussion or decision-making that might be associated with the matter;
6. b) Disclose the actual, potential or apparent conflict of interest to the Board of Management immediately.

Examples of situations which may give rise to a conflict of interest include:

1. Where a volunteer, their family or someone with whom they have a personal relationship receive some financial interest or other benefit as a result of performing their duties or undertaking work outside their volunteering duties.

For example, where a volunteer has a financial interest in a company that is providing paid services to FWD or the volunteer has a financial interest in a company which FWD intends to engage in business with and the volunteer is in a position to influence either directly or indirectly in the FWD's decision to engage that company.

3. HARASSMENT

Every volunteer is entitled to volunteer in an environment free from harassment, bullying or discrimination. The Code expects that all volunteers will treat other volunteers, client organisations and members of the community equally with courtesy and fairness. Friends with Dignity will not accept behaviour by volunteers that could be considered:

- Offensive, humiliating, intimidating, bullying, or construed as harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, sexual preference, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, family responsibilities, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin; or
- Unfairly causing harm to the reputation of other volunteers.

All volunteers in a Management role are under an increased obligation to ensure that they act in a way to protect volunteers from harassment, discrimination or any other form of bullying from others. FWD will not tolerate any form of harassment, discrimination or any other form of bullying (psychological or physical) among volunteers.

A volunteer who witnesses harassment, discrimination or any other form of bullying by another volunteer must report that behaviour to the Board of Management immediately.

Examples of conduct that might be considered as harassment are:

- A volunteer because of their racial or religious background, has a dislike towards another racial or religious group. The volunteer refuses to work with another volunteer for this reason.
- A volunteer who thinks they are making a joke makes remarks that are seen by another volunteer as rude,
- Sexual or offensive.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

Due to the sensitive nature of the organisation, volunteers are required to ensure they consistently demonstrate and abide by strict confidentiality protocols. This includes respecting others' rights to privacy and maintaining the integrity, confidentiality and privacy of any information concerning clients, client organisation, other volunteers, management and processes they may be privy during the course of their volunteering duties. Accessing, collecting or disclosing confidential information is only allowed where that disclosure is authorised by Management or required by law. Volunteers should be aware that the obligations placed on them not to disclose confidential information continue to apply to them following the termination of their volunteering role with Friends with Dignity.

Confidential information includes:

Information entrusted to Friends with Dignity such as

- Referring agency and support worker's name and personal details;
- Client information including make up of the family (ages and gender of children) and address of residence;
- Information produced by Friends of Dignity such as policies and procedures
- Information pertaining to potential funding sources or corporate sponsorship offers
- All non public information where disclosure to third parties may not be in the best interests of Friends with Dignity

Examples of unauthorised disclosure or use of confidential information could be where:

- A volunteer discloses details of a client family including their genders/ages to a donor donating an item
- A volunteer providing the personal details of another volunteer to a potential donor without their prior consent
- A volunteer providing the address of the client's property to a potential donor
- A volunteer provides information to another organisation about specific funding applications Friends with Dignity has made

I _____ (full name of volunteer) acknowledge that I have read and agree to abide by the Friends of Dignity Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement. I agree to inform the Board of Management immediately if I believe any violation (unintentional or otherwise) of the agreement has occurred. I understand that violation of this Code could possibly lead to termination of my service with Friends with Dignity and that I may be subject to further legal action being brought upon me if the breach is deemed serious in nature.

Licence Number _____

State _____

Expiry Date _____

Signature _____

Date _____

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