

## CODE OF ETHICS POLICY

### Philosophy/Purpose:

ME/CFS Australia (Victoria) aims to:

- Ensure that participants' needs are dealt with in a sensitive manner.
- Ensure equity, access, participation and the rights of people within the community.

### Specific Goals:

- Ensure the provision of a non-threatening environment.
- Ensure services are accountable to users, staff and Committee of Management.
- Ensure programs and services operate within funding and equal opportunity guidelines.
- Ensure confidentiality and privacy.

### Strategies/Procedures:

For the purpose of the Code of Ethics the term 'worker' refers to both paid and unpaid workers, including Committee of Management members.

ME/CFS Australia (Victoria) will:

- Ensure appropriate standards of conduct are established and maintained by workers at all times.
- Ensure staff behaviour contributes to and supports appropriate standards of conduct.
- Intervene in cases of inappropriate workers' conduct, except where this could put staff members in danger.

### Responsibility:

The Committee as a whole is responsible for ensuring the policy objectives are achieved although it may delegate particular duties to its members.

The CEO will be responsible for ensuring that all staff, including volunteers, comply at all times with Government legislation and this policy.

### Guidelines/Strategies:

#### Confidentiality and Privacy

1. Committee of Management and workers will respect the confidentiality of information obtained in the course of any meetings or discussions.
2. Information obtained from any person seeking information or support from the Society will be kept confidential by all workers.
3. Workers will not discuss or talk about personal information given by clients or service users, without that person's informed consent. Peer support and debriefing within the Society is not regarded as a breach of confidence.

4. When conditions of funding demand the keeping of information and statistics the client/user will be informed.
5. When personal information is not legally required to be kept, the Society will shred, or return all information to the individual.
6. The exception to this Code of Ethics is where State or Federal Laws prescribe otherwise, e.g. mandatory reporting or where a criminal act has been committed. If this is the case the client/user must be informed directly that any information they give (i.e. on violent crimes, child abuse) may need to be reported to the relevant authority as per relevant Victorian State Laws.
7. All files established by a worker remain the property of the Society.

#### Professional Conduct

1. Workers are responsible to implement the philosophies and aims of the Society.
2. Personal values contradictory to those stated in the philosophies and aims and Code of Ethics must not be practiced within the Society.
3. Actions and beliefs that do not support the State and Federal Equal Opportunity legislation and Federal Racial Vilification Bill must not be practiced at the Society. Nor are such beliefs and action to be expressed at forums where workers or Committee of Management are representing the Society.
4. Workers will show respect for the diversity of cultures, race and religions amongst the community and within the Society.
5. Workers will not use sexist or racist language while representing the Society.
6. Workers will be aware of other people's sensibilities and will not tolerate any form of sexual harassment.

**Policy Endorsement Date: 23/9/2008**

**Policy Review Date: 2010**