COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL				
Chapter **Organizational Quality**	**Section** **Organizational Leadership**	**Chapter** **01**	**Section** **02**	**Subject** **09**
Subject **Code of Ethics**	**Authorization**		**Approved: 11/26/19** **Replaces: 12/18/18**	

Updated: October 2024; Reviewed/No Updates: October 2025

I. PURPOSE: To convey Gogebic Community Mental Health Authority's (GCMHA) expectations and procedures relating to ethical codes of conduct.

II. APPLICATION: All GCMHA Board members, employees, contracted providers, volunteers and interns.

III. DEFINITIONS: Ethical Standards: Conforming to professional standards of conduct.

IV. POLICY: All GCMHA Board members, employees, contracted providers, volunteers and interns shall adhere to the ethical standards of behavior. Ethical standards include professional responsibilities, human resources (personal behavior), business, marketing, contractual relationships, conflicts of interest, use of social media, service delivery, organizational fundraising, and the prohibition of waste, fraud, abuse and other wrongdoing.

V. PROCEDURE: The Code of Ethics, Violations of Ethical Standards, and Conflicts of Interest policies will be provided to Board members employees, volunteers, and interns during new employee orientation; contracted providers will receive a copy of such via the Provider Manual.

A. Professional Responsibilities: The Board, employees, contracted providers, volunteers, and interns will:

1. protect consumer's rights including non-discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, height, weight, economic condition, political beliefs or any other protected characteristic as established by law.

2. protect confidential information shared by its consumers and will inform consumers of their right to confidentiality.

a) Consumer information must be kept safe from access, use or disclosure that is not appropriate. Sensitive information regarding GCMHA, employees, consumers and those who do business with GCMHA must be kept confidential. GCMHA must comply with federal and state privacy and security laws and to facilitate this, GCMHA maintains policies to protect the confidentiality, integrity and availability of Protected Health Information and Personally Identifiable Information that is created, maintained, transmitted and received via GCMHA. Failing to follow the policies governing privacy and security may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

b) Except as otherwise required by law (i.e., Mental Health Code, 42 CFR Part 2 relative to substance abuse services, HIPAA), consumer identifying and confidential information shall not be released without an appropriately signed consent/authorization or official judge's court order after legal consultation.

c) Except as otherwise required by law (i.e., Freedom of Information Act), personnel information and business information about the operations of GCMHA acquired by any personnel from any source shall be disclosed within GCMHA only on a minimum necessary, need to know basis and solely for purposes related to the performance of job duties. Such information may be disclosed outside of GCMHA only as permitted or required by law and GCMHA policy.

3. actively work on eliminating barriers to services.
4. adhere to agency policies and procedures.
5. be receptive and respective to the views and actions of others.
6. clarify personal opinions and actions as an individual from those representing the agency.
7. recognize boundaries and limitations of their competencies and not offer services or use techniques outside of their scope of practice. An employee who is a member of a health care profession required to be licensed, certified or registered under the Michigan Public Health Code and Administrative Rules is responsible for obtaining his/her license, certification or registration and renewals ensuring there is no lapse. A health care professional shall render professional services only within the scope of his/her license, certification or registration and in a manner that confirms to applicable standards of care and to the ethics of his/her profession. Employees are not permitted to render professional service unless he/she possesses all valid, current and unrestricted (i.e., suspended) state and federal licenses, registrations, or certifications necessary to legally practice his/her profession and has been credentialed and privileged as outlined in GCMHA policy.

B. Human Resources (Personal Behavior): The Board, employees, contracted providers, volunteers and interns shall refrain from all conduct which will reflect adversely on their personal reputation and/or that of the GCMHA program.

C. Business: The Board, employees, contracted providers, volunteers and interns will:

1. inform consumers of their right to appeal and grieve services and/or denial of services.
2. utilize consumer input in program planning, policy development and consumer satisfaction.
3. inform consumers of their financial obligations. Services will not be denied based on a person's inability to pay.
4. prioritize providing programs/services to people with mental illness, intellectual/ developmental disabilities, serious emotional disturbance and/or co-occurring disorders.
5. continue to assure credentialing and privileging and support continuing education of staff.
6. manage resources responsibly in accord with professional standards that safeguard the best interests of the consumer and the agency.
7. not use one's relationship with consumers for personal gain or for the profit of the agency or any commercial enterprise of any kind.
8. conduct and update a strategic planning process at least annually.
9. review and implement an accessibility plan at least annually.
10. encourage and support continuous quality improvement.

11. work in a collaborative manner with community partners.

D. Marketing: The Board, employees, contracted providers, volunteers and interns will:
1. promote the strengths and abilities of consumers.
2. focus on reducing the stigma toward individuals with mental illness, intellectual/ developmental disabilities, serious emotional disturbance and/or co-occurring disorders.
3. educate the community about programs and services offered.
4. utilize consumer input in creating and updating marketing materials.
5. write or deliver marketing materials at a level that is understood by the consumer.
6. ensure all marketing and/or advertising materials are not deceptive or misleading by omission or commission.

E. Contractual Relationships: GCMHA should not sign contracts containing provisions that tend to undermine their ethical obligation to advocate for consumer welfare. Therefore, before entering into contractual agreements to provide services that directly or indirectly impact consumer care, GCMHA should negotiate the removal of any terms, such as financial incentives or administrative conditions that are known to compromise professional judgment or integrity.

F. Conflicts of Interest: The Board, employees, contracted providers, volunteers and interns will follow procedures as outlined in the agency's Conflicts of Interest policy (#01-02-08).

G. Use of Social Media: The Board, employees, contracted providers, volunteers, and interns will follow procedures as outlined in the agency's Social Media policy (#01-02-15) and the Leadership policy (#01-01-02), specific to Procedure Section E "Designation of Gogebic GCMHA Spokesperson".

H. Service Delivery: Employees, contracted providers, volunteers, and interns will:
1. provide services utilizing the person-centered-planning process.
2. promote programs and services that in turn promote recovery, independence and inclusion in the community.
3. be trained to respond to emergency situations and ensure appropriate professional treatment.
4. take care to provide services in an environment which will ensure the privacy and safety of the consumer at all times and ensure the appropriateness of service delivery.
5. discuss the information obtained in clinical, consulting or observational relationships only in the appropriate settings for professional purposes that are in the consumer's best interest.
6. witness documents (i.e., powers of attorney, guardianship, advance directives, etc.) upon consumer request, and as applicable.
7. utilize the Practice Guidelines.
8. respect and safeguard personal property of the persons served, visitors, personnel and property owned by GCMHA.
9. not exploit relationships with current or former consumers for personal gain, including social or business relationships.

10. not under any circumstances engage in sexual behavior with current or former consumers.
11. not accept as clients anyone with whom they have engaged in sexual behavior.

I. **Organizational fundraising**: GCMHA does not practice or participate in any form of organizational fundraising.

J. **Prohibition of waste, fraud, abuse and other wrongdoing**: The Board, employees, contracted providers, volunteers and interns will follow agency policies and procedures pertaining to waste, fraud, abuse and other wrongdoing as designated in agency Compliance policies (policy section 05-04).

K. **In addition to the above, Peer Support Specialists (PSS) will:**
1. maintain high standards of personal conduct in a manner that fosters recovery.
2. practice and promote Person-Centered-Planning and Self-Determination with those they serve.
3. advocate for the full integration and/or re-integration of individuals into the communities of their choice and will promote the value of these individuals in those communities. PSS will be directed by the knowledge that all individuals have the right to live in a safe and the least restrictive environment.
4. actively pursue recovery in their own lives as well as role model recovery for others.
5. keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to recovery and openly share this knowledge with their colleagues and those they serve.
6. when appropriate, openly share their recovery stories and be able to identify and describe the supports that promote their recovery.
7. respect the privacy and confidentiality of those they serve.
8. at all times, respect the rights and dignity of those they serve.
9. not practice, condone, facilitate or collaborate in any form of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, mental or physical disability, or any other preference or personal characteristic, condition or state.
10. never intimidate, threaten, harass, use undue influence, physical force or verbal abuse, or make unwarranted promises of benefits to the individuals they serve.
11. never engage in sexual/intimate activities with the consumers they serve.
12. not exchange gifts of significant value with those they serve.
13. not abuse substances under any circumstances.
14. honor all agency guidelines, policies, and principles of conduct.

VI. REFERENCES AND LEGAL AUTHORITY: CARF Behavioral Health Standards; American Medical Association (Report of the Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs - Professionalism and Contractual Relations - CEJA Report 2-I-03); NorthCare Network Code of Conduct; Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Certified Peer Support Specialists Code of Ethics

VII. EXHIBITS: None