

Philosophy of Service

The Family Dynamix Association aims to be a growing, learning, supportive place where people are comfortable seeking assistance in dealing with issues they face, or simply to drop in, share, learn, revitalize, and enjoy.

Counselling provided is supportive and educational and is not intended as therapy or treatment. The counsellor's role is:

- to listen without prejudice or judgment to provide opportunity for individuals to organize their thoughts and feelings.
- to provide guidance and encouragement as individuals develop and enhance additional communication and conflict-resolution skills.
- to provide information regarding individual and family development.
- to enhance clients' problem-solving, coping, and developmental capacities.
- to link clients with appropriate resources, services, and opportunities.

VALUE STATEMENT

The Family Dynamix Association board of directors and senior management commit to upholding the integrity of the organization through communicating and practicing the following values and preferences:

- compliance with all applicable laws, statutes, and regulations.
- compliance with all contractual obligations.
- a professional approach to financial reporting.

- integrity of transactions and records, through the process of a review engagement or audit by a chartered accountant.
- conflict of interest guidelines.
- respect for the public trust.
- respect for the privacy of client, organization, and employee information.
- truth and fair dealing; fairness and equity.
- quality and competence.
- leadership by example.
- fair treatment of, and respect for, individuals.
- compliance with the Code of Ethics which may include, but not be limited to, the above statements.

CODE OF ETHICS

Objective:

To ensure the maximum adherence to the stated ethical principles and practices of the Family Dynamix Association, to protect persons served from behavior on the part of service providers which may be misguided or unethical.

Rationale:

High standards of conduct by service providers are essential to ensuring high quality, safe, and professional services to clients of the Family Dynamix Association.

Policy:

1. All staff and volunteers delivering services on behalf of the Family Dynamix Association will adhere to the Code of Ethics (attached) and their

behavior while delivering those services will be congruent with the principles and practices expressed in the code.

2. Highlights of the Code of Ethics will be posted in a conspicuous place in the Family Dynamix Association for clients to read.
3. The counsellor/case manager and/or the executive director will respond to any questions or concerns about the Code of Ethics by a client or prospective client.
4. Complaints relating to the behavior of service providers covered in the Code of Ethics will be dealt with under the agency's normal complaint procedure.

CODE OF ETHICS

Preamble

The Family Dynamix Association is committed to excellence in its services to the community. The Code of Ethics provides a set of guidelines to which service providers must adhere in the performance of their duties. The Code is intended to support service providers in making ethical decisions, while protecting the users of the service who are, by the nature of the situation, in a less powerful position than the service providers.

“Service provider” in the Code refers to counselors, front-line support staff, clerical and administrative staff, supervisors and managers, and any others who have contact with the public on behalf of the Family Dynamix Association. Service providers will adhere to this Code irrespective of whether they are also subject to a Code of Ethics of their professional

organization or of an organization by which they are certified. It is the responsibility of service providers to identify potential conflicts between this Code and those of their respective professional organizations, and to discuss these with their supervisors.

“Client” in the Code refers to anyone who accesses the services of any of the programs administered by the Family Dynamix Association.

This Code covers all activities undertaken on behalf of the Family Dynamix Association, including, but not limited to, reception, intake, counselling, support work, brief interventions, casual conversations, research, and educational sessions. Service providers are expected to follow not only the letter of the Code, but the spirit as well, in all interactions with members of the public.

The Code is based on the following values:

- Excellence in service to the public
- Fairness
- Respect for human rights and the dignity of all people
- Accountability

The cornerstone of this Code and of all human rights policies and guidelines is the requirement that no one will be discriminated against or refused service on any prohibited basis, including gender, race, ethnicity, religion, national ancestry, sexual orientation, marital

status, socio-economic status, age, physical disability (including carrying of a communicable disease) or political affiliation.

Principle One: Responsibility to Clients

The Code reflects the belief that clients have the right and capacity to determine how they would like to change their lives, and the strength to make those changes. Fostering the well-being of clients is at the very heart of the Family Dynamix Association’s purposes.

The Family Dynamix Association service providers will:

1. Provide clients with accurate and complete information regarding the extent, nature, and limitations of any services available to them, and on their rights and obligations in accessing these services.
2. Ensure that clients’ best interests are paramount within professional relationships and advocate for those interests as circumstances require.
3. Demonstrate acceptance of clients as unique and valuable persons.
4. Provide a safe service environment that is free of all forms of abuse, including physical punishment or restraint, and psychological abuse.
5. Minimize the impact of their personal attitudes, beliefs and needs on their professional relationships with clients.
6. Terminate professional service to clients when such service is no longer required, requested, or serves client needs.
7. Be prepared to account for and explain

their opinions, recommendations and actions when asked to do so by a client or a supervisor.

Principle Two: Professional Competence

Service providers must maintain a reasonable standard of professional practice in their respective fields.

Service providers will:

1. Limit their practice to their demonstrated areas of job competence. Clients whose needs are determined to fall outside this domain of competence will be referred to, or assisted in finding, appropriate professional services by the service provider.
2. Remain up to date in knowledge and practice in their respective fields. Those service providers in counselling positions will use only those techniques having clearly demonstrated effectiveness.
3. Represent their professional recommendations or opinions accurately in all communications, and not make false, misleading, or exaggerated claims of efficacy regarding past or anticipated achievement with respect to clients or services to them.
4. Recognize when their personal problems and conflicts have the potential to interfere with professional effectiveness. If such personal problems occur, service providers will take reasonable care in determining whether professional activities should be limited, suspended, or terminated.

Principle Three: Integrity

Integrity is essential to responsible professional practice. It means acting honestly and in good faith in dealings with clients, colleagues, and the public.

Service providers will:

1. Not engage in any form of intimate/sexual relationship with a client to whom he/she is providing Family Dynamix Association program services; this prohibition extends to the client’s immediate family members.
2. Not engage in an intimate/sexual relationship with a former client prior to six months after the client’s file is closed.
3. Avoid dual relationships (familial, social, financial, business, or personal) with clients which could impair professional judgment or increase risk to the client. Where dual relationships cannot be avoided, the exact nature of the relationships are identified and documented with the program supervisor. These relationships may be initiated with former clients once six months have elapsed from the time of file closure.
4. Not engage in sexual relationships with supervisors, employees, volunteers, or practicum students.
5. Not use their position of authority to coerce or harass clients, employees, students, volunteers, research participants, colleagues, or former clients. Service providers will not condone or ignore physical, verbal, or psychological abuse, whether oral, written, or behavioral,

including sexual harassment.

6. Not misrepresent professional qualifications, education, skills, or professional affiliations.
7. Not be involved in or ignore conflicts of interest. Service providers will distinguish between actions undertaken as private citizens and actions undertaken in the course of their employment. “Conflict of interest” includes taking an action in an official capacity which generates a benefit to the service provider as a private citizen; influence peddling; soliciting clients from one’s employer for private practice purposes; and using information received from clients to acquire, directly or indirectly, an advantage or material benefit. Service providers do not accept gifts or remuneration in the form of money, discounts, tickets or other gratuities from clients or their families (with the exception of small tokens of gratitude, such as flowers or thank you notes).

Principle Four: Confidentiality

Creating and maintaining records is integral to professional practice. Family Dynamix Association’s service providers must ensure that records are accurate, up to date and managed in such a manner as to ensure client privacy.

Service providers will:

1. Follow the confidentiality procedures set out in the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and agency policies and procedures.

2. Take responsibility for informing clients of the limits to confidentiality.
3. Impress upon all participants in groups where client information is discussed the need to respect confidentiality.
4. Maintain the confidentiality of information acquired while providing services on behalf of the Family Dynamix Association after leaving such employment.

Principle Five: Ethical Responsibilities to the Work Environment

1. Where a serious ethical conflict continues after it has been brought to the attention of one’s supervisor, the service provider will continue to bring attention to the conflict through the next appropriate channel.
2. A service provider will refrain from outside employment (“moonlighting”) where any of the following occurs:
 - the outside activity is in direct competition with the activities of the employer
 - the work performance of the service provider is adversely affected
 - the position creates an apparent conflict of interest
3. Service providers will not use agency property (including, but not limited to, photocopiers, video machines and computers) for any activities that are not work related without specific prior authorization.

Ethical Decision-Making Model

Employees recognize their responsibility for becoming familiar with the Code of Ethics, while also recognizing their own personal and professional limitations. When a given situation or course of action presents an ethical dilemma which cannot be resolved by reference to these or other appropriate professional standards, employees should consult with knowledgeable colleagues or other authorities (without undermining the agency’s confidentiality policy). The use of the ethical decision-making model will also be of assistance.

1. Identification of ethically relevant issues and practices.
2. Development of alternative courses of action.
3. Analysis of likely short-term, ongoing, and long-term risks and benefits of each course of action on the individual(s)/group(s) involved or likely to be affected.
4. Choice of course of action after examination and application of existing values and standards.
5. Action, with a commitment to assume responsibility for the consequences of the action.
6. Evaluation of the course of action.
7. Assumption of responsibility for consequences of the action, including correction of negative consequences if any and if possible, or re-engaging in the decision-making process if the ethical issue is not resolved.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Objective:

To ensure that information concerning the affairs of the society and about clients of specific programs is kept confidential.

Rationale:

The assurance of privacy is an important factor in facilitating the supportive alliance between staff and clients since the fiduciary nature of that relationship places clients in positions more vulnerable than that of the staff.

Policy:

Client Information:

1. Information about clients of the Family Dynamix Association which is learned by an employee during the course of employment, must, as a condition of continued employment, be treated as strictly confidential. All documents or other relevant material relating to the client shall be retained exclusively in client files set up and maintained by the Family Dynamix Association. All employees, the board of directors and other volunteers will sign the “Oath of Confidentiality”.
2. Limits to confidentiality include:
 - a) when a client has authorized the release of information externally by signing an “Exchange of Confidential Information” form
 - b) when staff has reasonable grounds to believe that a child is in need of protection.
 - c) when staff has reasonable grounds to believe that a client is in danger of harming him/herself or others, e.g., suicide, homicide, operating vehicle while intoxicated.

d) When staff and/or records are subpoenaed by a court of law

e) When a statute or regulation requires staff to disclose information, e.g., Coroners Act, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Health Act Communicable Disease Regulation, Medical Practitioners Act, Workers Compensation Act

f) When staff require case supervision or peer consultation, where is in the best interest of the client.

NOTE: The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act allows for (but does not require) the sharing of information with other health care providers without the consent, or contrary to the expressed wishes of the client, when it is required to ensure that the client receives the care they need. However, as a matter of good clinical practice, service providers should attempt to obtain written consent from the client. Service providers may contact a family member or friend if the client is seriously ill, injured, or deceased, if the family member or friend needs to be informed or if their assistance is required.

3. Clients will be made aware of the nature of the confidential relationship and the limits of confidentiality, upon commencement of services at the Family Dynamix Association.
4. Client confidentiality in a group counseling session may be more difficult to maintain, but should be managed by:
 - a) obtaining a verbal or written agreement from group members to keep all matters

- discussed in the group confidential.
- b) advising group members those aspects of their private lives may be revealed in the group and that there are no absolute guarantees of confidentiality in this situation.
 - c) keeping case notes of the group that do not identify individual members of the group.
5. Further information can be accessed through “A Guide to the Privacy Charter”

Society Information:

1. All requests from the communications media for any information respecting the Family Dynamix Association and its programs will be directed to the executive director or his/her designate.
2. All requests from the general public for detailed information that is confidential will be directed to the executive director or his/her designate.
3. All written or verbal requests for information respecting an employee, or former employee, will be directed to the executive director or his/her designate.
4. Employee personnel files are to be treated as confidential files, under the custody and control of the executive director or his/her designate.