

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

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### **PURPOSE**

The Male Survivors Aotearoa ('MSA') Code of Conduct ('Code') defines the minimum professional standards of integrity and conduct that apply to peer-workers, trustees and advisors who are engaged by MSA and its Member Organisations (MMO's). It establishes the standards of conduct that male survivors in particular, and the public in general, can expect from peer-workers who are providing support services on behalf of MSA or an MMO.

This is not a code of ethics. A code of ethics is a guide of the desired values and standards to use when making decisions or taking action (for example, 'try to work in the best interest of the survivor'), whereas a Code of Conduct is more specific about what actions are appropriate and inappropriate (for example, 'never breach survivor confidentiality...').

### **SCOPE**

This Code applies to all trustees, managers, employees, volunteers, contractors and consultants (advisors) working for or with MSA or an MMO to enable or provide support services to male survivors. It provides a useful guideline for promoting good conduct and a framework for addressing issues relating to misconduct including the resolution of internal and external complaints.

This Code is not exhaustive, as it is not practical to list all behaviours expected of peer-workers, trustees and advisors. If an unsatisfactory behaviour or action is not specifically listed, that does not mean it will not be in breach of the Code. Peer-workers, trustees and advisors are expected to uphold exemplary standards of conduct in their roles. Because they are in positions of trust and confidence they must also have high standards in their personal lives. MSA expect that every peer-worker, trustee and advisor will understand and adhere to this Code.

### **OBJECTIVES**

Applying the Code will:

- Educate MSA member organisations, male survivors and the public regarding the ethical behaviours required of, and to be practised by, peer-workers, trustees and advisors;
- Enable and encourage peer-workers, trustees and advisors to operate ethically in their dealings with male survivors, colleagues, agencies and the wider community.
- Enable and encourage peer-workers, trustees and advisors to evaluate and regulate their own ethical practices and behaviours.
- Enable MSA and MMO's to evaluate the ethical practices and behaviours of peer-workers, trustees and advisors;
- Assist MSA to resolve grievances concerning the professional practices and ethical behaviour of peer-workers, trustees and advisors.

### **REFERENCES**

This Policy references several other MSA national policies, which peer-workers, trustees and advisors are expected to be familiar with:

- The MSA Code of Ethics
- The MSA Confidentiality Policy

- The MSA Child Protection Policy
- The MSA Supervision Policy

The necessary linkage of these policies will result in some duplication of other policy information within these policies. This is necessary to ensure that the Code of Conduct can be read as a complete document, amplified by other policies, but not dependent on them for clarity of the following principles. The policy references survivor-survivor-s as a convenient way of naming/linking a survivor that is being supported by a peer-worker.

## PRINCIPLES

The Code consists of a framework of eleven overarching principles, which are a general guide to professional conduct. Each principle has statements describing the standards of professional conduct and practice required of peer-workers, trustees and advisors.

### 1. Always act with integrity and honesty:

- Act honestly and ethically in all personal and professional behaviour;
- Comply with all legal, professional, and ethical obligations (Code of Ethics) and any other relevant standards (e.g. Child Protection Policy);
- Be responsible for your own actions and decisions;
- Be reliable, dependable, and trustworthy;
- Communicate in an appropriate, open, accurate, and straightforward way;
- Decline any request to be a legal representative or power of attorney for a survivor-client:
- If they are a former survivor-client, you should not be their legal representative or power of attorney if you gain, or looks like you gain, personal benefit from this relationship
- Talk with your manager, relevant trustees or MSA or seek legal advice in this situation.
- Do not work in a situation where there is a conflict of interest:
- Discuss potential or actual conflicts of interest (both professional and personal) with your survivor-client and take all reasonable steps to protect their interests as much as possible
- Tell your manager or relevant trustees about any potential or actual conflicts of interest and if they cannot be resolved then end the relationship and refer your survivor-client appropriately.

### 2. Respect the status of Māori as tangata whenua

- Work in partnership with Māori survivors and their family/whānau;
- Work in a culturally appropriate manner while recognising the diversity within the Māori population;
- Have an understanding of Te Ao Māori and be able to state and use bicultural practice models;
- Promote the rights of Māori to use Māori peer-workers and/or bicultural models of practice to protect the integrity of Māori as tangata whenua;
- Promote access to services that meet the needs of Māori survivors; and
- As a supervisor, endeavour to ensure supervision is culturally relevant if the supervisee is Māori; and safe, and responsive to Māori survivors.

### 3. Respect the cultural needs and values of survivors

- Respect the diversity between and within different cultures, including diversity of ethnicity, disability, economic status, age, sexuality, gender, faiths, and beliefs;
- Understand as much as possible and support your survivor-client's cultural identity, recognising the significance of cultural identification and beliefs;
- Consider and work with any support service(s) that may help in providing culturally appropriate service make sure that your survivor-client understands the language being used and use a competent interpreter where practical if they do not understand;
- Be aware of any personal or religious beliefs or moral positions you have and make sure these do not override a survivor's right to self-determination and to receive quality support services; and
- Maintain professional objectivity and if this is not possible, discuss this with your survivor-client and if necessary refer them to another appropriate person or service.

#### **4. Be competent and responsible for your professional development**

- Meet relevant MSA and/or MOM standards of practice, which includes being competent in bicultural practice;
- Work in accordance with the law and in a safe way;
- Provide good quality, effective survivor support services and be accountable for the quality of your work;
- Provide survivor-clients with details of the extent and nature of the services to be provided by you and your MOM;
- Maintain and improve your knowledge and skills, including those required for using any form of technology and be responsible for, and engage in, continuing professional development;
- Know and work within the limits of your own practice and seek supervision and guidance where necessary;
- Comply with the MSA Code of Ethics;
- Actively participate in supervision and critically reflect on practice; and
- Take responsibility for your own emotional, mental, and physical health, and practise appropriate self-care – seeking help if your performance, practice, or judgement is affected by health concerns.

#### **5. Protect the rights and promote the interests of survivors**

- Advocate for the human, legal, and civil rights of your survivor-client while also making sure that their behaviour does not harm themselves or others;
- Support the survivors' right to self-determination – if their capacity and/or circumstances limit the possibility of self-determination, you must where possible protect the survivor's rights and welfare;
- Facilitate fair access to appropriate services, resources, and other professionals where it is in the interests of the survivor and make appropriate referrals where possible;
- Never engage in or become a party to any discriminatory behaviour, harassment, coercion, or sexual or financial exploitation of survivors ;
- Never abuse, neglect, harm, or exploit survivors in any way;
- Maintain personal and professional boundaries and do not form inappropriate relationships with survivor-clients or those close to them;

- Abstain from sexual relationships or any form of sexual interaction with survivor-clients or with those close to them – including any behaviours or comments which might reasonably be interpreted as being a sexual advance or sexually demeaning;
- Do not form a sexual relationship or have any form of sexual interaction with former survivor-clients or those close to them, where you have (or it could appear that you have), used any power imbalance, knowledge, or influence obtained while you were their peer-worker to exploit, coerce, or manipulate, intentionally or unintentionally, the person with whom the sexual relationship or interaction occurs;
- Report any dangerous, abusive, exploitative, or discriminatory practice of any other peer-worker, trustee or advisor to the appropriate authority;
- Advise survivor-clients of how to make a complaint if they are unhappy with the service provided; and
- End the relationship with the survivor-client if it is clear a continued relationship would not benefit them and provide for alternative professional help if necessary.

## **6. Establish and maintain the trust and confidence of survivors**

- Always treat survivors with respect and dignity, behave in a professional manner and never abuse the survivor's trust;
- Never encourage or ask survivor-clients or former survivor-clients to give, lend, or bequeath money or gifts that will benefit yourself or those close to you – decline gifts or benefits that will place you under any obligation or perceived influence and do not put pressure on survivor-clients or former survivor-clients or their families/whānau to make donations to other people or organisations:
  - Receiving small token gifts (for example, chocolates or flowers) for sharing with colleagues may be acceptable, but cash gifts or items of larger value should never be accepted .
- Honour work commitments, agreements, and arrangements and when it is not possible to do so, explain to survivor-clients why this is not possible;
- Recognise, understand, and honour a survivor's right to make informed choices and give informed consent to any support service they receive, except where the law provides otherwise:
  - If a survivor cannot give informed consent because they are unable to fully understand and/or communicate their decision, make sure you take reasonable steps to find out their views and seek consent from a person legally empowered to do this on their behalf (where such a person exists);
  - Ask to see any relevant legal documents, such as an enduring power of attorney and its activation document if someone other than the survivor-client is trying to make decisions on the survivor-client's behalf.
- Take complaints seriously and respond to them in an appropriate, professional, and constructive way.

## **7. Respect the survivors' privacy and confidentiality**

- Protect the privacy of the survivors' personal information;
- Treat information gained in the course of the peer-worker/survivor relationship as confidential information and use it for professional purposes only;
- Inform survivors of the extent to which any other person will be able to access client records;

- Inform survivors of the extent of confidentiality and the situations where the information may need to be disclosed and wherever possible advise your survivor-client of any such a situation;
- Store records securely and make sure these are only accessed or removed for peer-support work purposes;
- Use technology with diligence and care to protect survivor privacy and take special precautions to protect survivor information in any electronic records, emails, documents, notes, or any other place where client information is held; and
- Maintain survivor confidentiality and privacy by not referring to any survivor or survivor-client issue in any public places including in social media, as even if identifying data such as names or place of residence are not included or referred to, the client may still be recognisable.

## **8. Work openly and respectfully with colleagues (peer-workers, trustees and advisors)**

- Communicate with colleagues with courtesy, openness, and honesty;
- Work cooperatively with colleagues especially when such cooperation serves the well-being and the best interests of survivors ;
- Resolve any conflict with colleagues respectfully and constructively;
- Never bully, harass, or discriminate against colleagues;
- Abstain from sexual relationships or any form of sexual interaction with supervisees;
- Respectfully challenge any discriminatory practices by colleagues;
- Do not discuss colleagues in public places or on social media;
- Do not undermine or damage the reputation and character of colleagues by making malicious or unfounded criticisms of them – this may undermine survivors' trust in the peer-support (and other) services they may have received or may receive;
- Share knowledge, experience, and ideas to promote further education and training; and
- If confronted by a colleague's professional negligence, misconduct or unethical behaviour, address the matter through established organisational channels. If it is unable to be resolved through discussion or the matter is serious, report it to a relevant trustee or to MSA or the appropriate authority, especially if the matter is dangerous, discriminatory, abusive, or exploitative.

## **9. Maintain public trust and confidence in professional peer-support practices**

- Maintain a high standard of professional and personal behaviour – avoid activities, work, or non-work that may in any way bring the peer-support practice into disrepute; the same standards of conduct are expected when using social media and electronic forms of communication;
- Refrain from acting in ways that can be interpreted as, or actually result in you (or those close to you) gaining personal benefit from your peer-worker, trustee or advisor position;
- Provide accurate, factual information about your knowledge, skills, statutory status, training, qualifications, and experience;
- Protect yourself and other people from unnecessary risk;
- Never use or condone the use of violence;
- Work cooperatively with, and be honest, open, and constructive in your dealings with your colleagues, MSA and other agencies and authorities;

- Cooperate fully with any formal inquiries or investigations of any kind subject to the requirements for confidentiality of survivor information;
- Inform your manager, a relevant trustee or MSSAT | ANZ, without delay, if anywhere in the world you have been charged with or found guilty of a criminal offence, have been dismissed or suspended from work, or have resigned for reasons relating to competence or conduct.

## 10. Keep accurate records and use technology effectively and safely

- Keep clear and accurate records;
- Make these records at the same time the events being recorded or as soon as possible afterwards and clearly attribute them to yourself;
- Do not tamper with original records in any way;
- Take special care to protect survivor privacy and survivor information when using technology and/or electronic records;
- Be proficient in the skills required to use any technology when providing peer-support services and seek appropriate training to stay current with emerging technologies to ensure competent and safe practice;
- Be aware of the dynamics, advantages, and limitations of technology-based interactions and the ways in which technology-based peer-support services can be safely and appropriately provided – it is your responsibility to:
  - Manage any associated risks when using technology – consider the destiny of data and be aware that all posts on social networking sites are public and permanent;
  - Set and maintain clear and appropriate personal and professional boundaries in all forms of communication, including face-to-face contact, written, telephone, and online communications.
- Act in accordance with the MSA Code of Ethics, this Code, and any other relevant regulations, policies, or laws when providing any support services by electronic means, including the telephone;
- Follow the standards that would be applied in a face-to-face supervisory relationship when using or providing supervision by technological means.

## 11. Be responsible in publications and research

- Always publish any material or undertake any research in an ethical way and in compliance with MSA Code of Ethics;
- Comply with all the obligations in this Code when engaging education and training or research;
- Gain informed consent from any survivors included in publications and from all participants in research;
- Take all possible steps to protect publication and research participants from discomfort, harm, danger, or deception;
- Accurately acknowledge all sources of information and ideas; and
- Do not assert that personal statements made by you are made on behalf of other peer-workers, survivors, any MOM or MSSAT | ANZ, or other organisations unless these parties have given the necessary informed consent in advance.