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Revised Date: 4/15/09
Review Date:

North Sound Mental Health Administration

Section 4500 – Consumer Affairs: Functional Independence

Authorizing Source: WAC 388-865-250

Cancels:

See Also:

Providers must “comply with” NSMHA policy

Responsible Staff: Deputy Director

Approved by: Executive Director

Signature:

Date: 4/15/09

POLICY #4504.00

SUBJECT: FUNCTIONAL INDEPENDENCE

POLICY

This shall set forth guidelines for assuring that Ombuds and Quality Review Team (QRT) personnel provide services with functional independence. NSMHA shall contract with an organization independent of NSMHA to operate the Ombuds/QRT program to assure functional independence.

This policy will enable Ombuds and Quality Review Team members to perform their primary duties with functional independence and without fear of retaliation from the North Sound Mental Health Administration (NSMHA), its contractors, and their sub-contractors. This policy provides definition to functional independence and establishes the parameters of responsibilities to Ombuds Lead, Ombuds/QRT and Skagit Community Action Agency.

Overall, supervision for this policy and procedure rests with Skagit Community Action Agency. Skagit Community Action Agency provides personnel functions for Ombuds and QRT including hiring, salary and benefits determination, supervision, accountability, and performance evaluations.

Ombuds and QRT staff who have concerns about whether the Policy is being appropriately implemented are expected to follow the chain of reporting process as defined in this policy and the contract between Skagit Community Action Agency and NSMHA.

PROCEDURE

The Ombuds and QRT staff has the ability to perform the job specific responsibilities enumerated below while utilizing independent judgment and discretion as to the best way to achieve the desired results. The staff has the ability to carry out job specific responsibilities without retaliation. Ombuds and QRT staff has the ability and responsibility to bring issues and concerns to the NSMHA, in accordance with the chain of reporting process, as defined below.

NSMHA will put no pressure on Ombuds and QRT staff to overlook any part of a case or potential systemic problem. NSMHA will not seek to influence or change an Ombuds or QRT's chosen course of action on a case or issue. NSMHA will remain uninvolved in Ombuds and QRT cases, surveys and other specific job-related activities unless Ombuds or QRT staff specifically request NSMHA support, or initiates a complaint, RSN grievance or appeal, or fair hearing.

OMBUDS

Primary responsibility: Ombuds are advocates who receive, investigate and report complaints and help ensure that individual rights are respected and that services respond to consumer needs and wishes for RSN contracted services. .

Functional Independence applies when performing the following tasks:

1. Deciding whether or not to initiate a complaint, grievance, appeal or fair hearing request in accordance with the decision of the consumer regarding any RSN contracted service.
2. Determining the type and extent of assistance or representation to be provided for the client, in accordance with the wishes of the consumer regarding any RSN contracted service.
3. Determining the content of all Ombuds case documentation, including conclusions and recommendations.

QUALITY REVIEW TEAM

Primary responsibility: Monitor and articulate consumer and cross system satisfaction with the quality of RSN contracted mental health services and provide suggested service changes to the NSMHA.

Functional Independence applies when performing the following tasks:

1. When performing QRT reviews, designing and conducting surveys designed to measure satisfaction with RSN contracted services and quality.
2. Recommending changes to NSMHA.
3. Determining the content of all QRT activity reports, including conclusions and recommendations.

REPORTING PROCESS

Ombuds and QRT staff has the authority and the responsibility to report issues and concerns that arise as a result of performing the duties enumerated above. If an issue has been brought to the attention of NSMHA Leadership and Leadership has been non-responsive, the Ombuds and QRT staff is expected to bring the issue to the attention of the NSMHA Executive Director and/or the NSMHA Advisory Board and/or NSMHA Board of Directors.

NOTE

This policy replaces all previous policies and definitions regarding Functional Independence.

ATTACHMENTS

None