

Zero Tolerance Policy

Introduction

The Relationships Centre is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and professional environment for all clients, staff, contractors, and visitors. We operate a strict Zero Tolerance Policy towards any form of abuse, aggression, harassment, or intimidation, whether physical, verbal, written, or non-verbal.

This policy exists to protect our team and clients from any form of behaviour that threatens their safety, wellbeing, or emotional security within our therapeutic setting.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Clearly communicate that aggressive or abusive behaviour towards staff or clients will not be tolerated.
- Provide a consistent and fair approach to managing unacceptable conduct.
- Protect the wellbeing, mental health, and safety of our counsellors, support staff, and clients.
- Set out the procedure for responding to incidents and the consequences of breaching this policy.

Definition of Violence and Abuse

For the purposes of this policy, "violence and abuse" includes but is not limited to:

- Verbal abuse, including shouting, sarcasm, threats, or persistent rudeness
- Physical violence or threats of violence, such as pushing, hitting, or throwing objects
- Harassment or intimidation, including sexual harassment and bullying
- Discriminatory behaviour or hate speech related to race, gender, sexuality, disability, religion, or other protected characteristics
- Damage to property belonging to the organisation, staff, or clients
- Inappropriate or persistent contact through personal channels such as social media, personal email, or text
- Unrealistic demands, including repeated appointment changes, excessive communication, or service manipulation
- Non-verbal aggression, including hostile body language or intimidating presence

Expectations of Clients and Visitors

We expect all clients and visitors to:

- Treat staff and other service users with respect and courtesy
- Engage with staff in a cooperative and non-threatening manner
- Refrain from making repeated, unrealistic demands or using abusive language
- Respect boundaries set by the organisation and the therapeutic process

Failure to meet these expectations may lead to formal warnings, withdrawal of services, or immediate removal from the premises.

Reporting and Response Procedures

Any member of staff who experiences or witnesses' behaviour covered by this policy should report the incident to a manager immediately. The organisation will:

1. Document the incident with full details, including statements where necessary.
2. Review the situation and determine the appropriate level of response.
3. Issue a formal warning letter, if appropriate, detailing the unacceptable behaviour and required change.
4. Offer a behavioural agreement, which must be signed within 30 days if services are to continue.

In cases of serious breaches, the client may be immediately barred from the premises and terminated from all services without a warning.

Police Involvement

If a situation escalates to where staff feel unsafe or threatened, the Police will be contacted immediately. If the person has left the premises, the organisation may still report the incident for record-keeping and future safeguarding purposes.

Warning System

- After an incident, a formal warning will be issued and retained on record.
- A behavioural agreement must be signed within 30 days to continue services.
- If the client fails to sign, or if behaviour is repeated, the organisation may permanently withdraw services.
- For serious cases (e.g., physical threats, harassment), services may be

terminated without warning.

Withdrawal of Services

Withdrawal of services will occur when:

- There is a repeated or serious breach of this policy.
- The client refuses to engage constructively after a warning.
- The client's continued access to services poses a risk to staff or others.

The client will be **formally notified in writing**, and no further engagement will take place. In cases of severe breach, the person will be barred from contacting or visiting the organisation in any capacity.

Household/Family Members

In circumstances where one member of a household has breached the Zero Tolerance Policy and others in the same household are also receiving support, the organisation reserves the right to withdraw services from all related individuals if the situation poses an ongoing risk to staff or complicates service delivery.

Appeals

Appeals against removal of services may be made in writing to the CEO or Clinical Lead. Each case will be reviewed independently, though in cases involving safety concerns, the organisation's decision is final.

Policy Enforcement

Breaches of this policy are taken seriously. Staff are trained to de-escalate conflict where possible, but will not tolerate abuse or threats under any circumstances. The organisation reserves the right to involve legal support, the police, or safeguarding authorities where required.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if there is a significant incident or change in relevant legislation.