



Policy and Procedure # 215

Client Abusive and Destructive Behaviors

Approval: _____ Effective Date: 5/7/24

POLICY:

It is the philosophy of EFI to provide our clients with the most supportive environment possible physically, socially and emotionally. Keeping in mind that the clients homes are their own personal space, clients should feel safe and at liberty to be themselves when in their own home. However, behaviors may still occur and employees shall be prepared to take action based on the severity of the behavior and dealt with in the least intrusive manner possible. If a client should become a victim of a crime or a perpetrator of a crime, EFI will provide support and advocacy immediately following the event, through the legal process, and during any resulting trauma.

REFERENCE: RCW 70.129
DDA Policy 5.06
DDA Policy 15.03

PROCEDURE:

1. EFI employees are not to use "consequences" or "punishments" of any sort in response to the behavior of a client.
2. Difficult behaviors will be at a minimum in an environment that supports and encourages:
 - A. Personal autonomy, including the right to make choices regarding one's own personal space.
 - B. The right to free expression, including the right to express affection, anger, disappointment, or disagreement with employees or roommates. Free expression also includes the availability of any alternative means needed to communicate, i.e. communication devices or employees trained in facilitated communication.
 - C. Friendships with family and peers, and the ever present opportunities to make new friends and community affiliations.
 - D. New learning. All individuals have the ability to learn throughout their life span and should have the opportunity to take measured risks and even to experience failure in the pursuit of new learning.
3. Be aware of differences in personalities, motivators, and behavioral triggers. Client files contain incident reports and other background information which will be helpful. In some cases, clients will have behavior plans or contracts which will provide necessary instruction in handling disruptions. Employees should familiarize themselves with all client files. Client files are available for all employees to review at the clients homes and at the EFI office.
4. If there are no individual-specific guidelines available:
 - A. Determine what the person is attempting to communicate through his or her behavior. Sometimes it is merely the inability to communicate effectively which causes the outburst.



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- B. If the request or need is legitimate, accommodate the person.
 - C. If it is not possible to honor the request (because it is an unreasonable request or an inappropriate place or time to make the request) explain briefly why the request cannot be granted.
 - D. Redirect the client's attention to another topic or task or to return to work if at a job site.
5. Positive Behavior Support Plans (PBSP)
- A. Any time a client consistently exhibits behavior that is seriously troubling to others, does not recognize the rights of roommates or presents a danger to self or others, a Positive Behavior Support Plan should be developed. Refer to EFI Policy and Procedure #325, Positive Behavior Support for more information.
6. Minor Behaviors:
- A. Disagreements which are not disruptive should be left to the individuals to work out themselves. Employees should not be in the position of always being the problem solver otherwise clients will not learn problem solving skills for themselves.
 - B. If a disagreement begins to threaten the harmony of the home, work or community environment due to shouting, cursing, or aggressive acts the employee must step in. If the level of disagreement is not too severe and if the individuals are not people who are likely to become violent, redirect them to their room or another quiet place. Here, you should act as a facilitator to help them work out the problem.
7. Violent, Abusive or Destructive Behaviors:
- A. The best alternative is for employees to not place themselves or clients in a position of being assaulted. It is appropriate for the employee to protect themselves from physical attack, however; it is usually possible to avoid physical altercations by avoiding a power struggle. The clients get nothing to feed their anger when the employee does not respond to negative comments or destructive acts.
 - B. The preferred method of dealing with confrontation is to try to redirect the assailant.
 - C. If attempts to redirect fail, and a client exhibits behaviors that may endanger people or property of employees or other clients, the following procedures should be implemented.
 - 1. If the client is endangering another person the first course of action must be to put space between the client and the any other person the client may endanger.
 - 2. Take measures to ensure the safety of any persons endangered or bystanders.
 - 3. Invite the client to leave the area.
 - 4. If the client will not leave the area, employees and other clients should leave and assistance should be summoned.
 - 5. Please refer to EFI Policy and Procedure #303, Client Abuse, Neglect and Mandated Reporting for additional guidance on incident reporting requirements.



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8. Suicide Gestures or Attempts:
 - A. Clients with a Cross system crisis plan should follow that plan if applicable.
 - B. When responding to suicidal and self-harming behavior, the physical and emotional safety of the client, staff, students and volunteers is paramount.
 - C. Employees must notify their supervisor or AOC if a client is at risk of suicide or self-harm. Supervisors will assist with developing a plan for further assessment and intervention.
 - D. A client that is at risk of suicide or self-harm is to be monitored frequently. Employees are encouraged to assist in identifying potential supports.
 1. Let the client know that they can talk with you about what they are going through.
 2. Make sure that you are actively and openly listening to the things the client says. Try providing positive reinforcement.
 3. Active listening techniques such as reflecting feelings and summarizing thoughts can help the client feel heard and validated.
 - E. If the risk of suicide or self-harm is imminent, contact emergency services. The client is not to be left unsupervised.
 - F. Once an immediate suicide and/or self-harm crisis has passed, clients are assisted to develop a safety plan which identifies a particular course of action they can follow if they are again at risk of suicidal or self-harming behavior.
 - G. Suicide gestures or attempts must be reported in within 24 hours to the case manager