

CLIENT RELATIONS

POLICY STATEMENT:

Reflective of our humanitarian role, personnel will treat all clients and their families/friends in a respectful manner and will establish and maintain professional relations which will facilitate client-focused and client-directed care and the attainment of mutually established goals.

PURPOSE:

The effectiveness of appropriate personnel behaviour is required to maintain professional client-focused relations.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all personnel

DEFINITIONS:

Client means the primary customer of Canadian Red Cross programs and services, and as such, may also be considered a beneficiary.

Personnel means all CRCS employees, volunteers and delegates.

PROCEDURE AND APPLICATION:

The relationship between personnel and clients of Red Cross programs and services requires personnel to understand their unique position of authority, power and provision.

A. Appropriate personnel behaviour

In all situations, personnel will ensure that their behaviour reflects the philosophy and values of the organization, and that they will:

- establish a standard of behaviour which meets or exceeds the minimum standard required by law;
- provide a safe environment by maintaining a duty of care to act responsibly;
- follow fair practices and procedures as established by the programs and services;
- respect human rights and the right to privacy;
- comply with child protection legislation;
- avoid and report criminal actions.

When providing service, personnel are expected to:

- continually act in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality;
- treat clients with respect and dignity;
- provide assistance within the organization's guidelines and standards;
- understand the client's vulnerability and dependency on the employee or volunteer to provide assistance and to act accordingly. personal relationships outside the scope of the professional employee/ volunteer-client role, while in the course of this role, are strictly prohibited;
- respect the client's belongings and property; and,
- maintain confidentiality of client information at all times.

B. Inappropriate personnel behaviour

When providing service, personnel are not allowed to:

- involve themselves socially, personally, intimately or sexually with the client. Where there is the possibility of such involvement, employees and volunteers must declare the conflict to their supervisor/manager, and if deemed appropriate will be removed from the case.
- solicit, accept gifts (other than token items of appreciation), or purchase items from the client;
- take or borrow any money or belongings/property from the client;
- accept payment for services;
- perform duties outside of the scope of the personnel's post requested by the client or the client's family, unless approved by the supervisor/manager;
- take the client on social outings unless approved by the supervisor/manager;
- discuss personal matters such as religious beliefs, political views, finances or personal problems with the client;
- discuss the client's personal matters with those outside of the organization or with those who have no professional requirement to be informed; and
- smoke in the client's home or personal area;

Where there is a question specific to situations of client relations, refer to Appendix A – Crossing the Boundary: Warning Signs.

C. Training

Personnel whose position require regular dealings with clients will receive familiarization on the importance of establishing and maintaining professional relations, appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, appropriateness and inappropriateness of accepting and/or giving gifts, and appropriate and inappropriate means of communicating with clients. Personnel will also be trained on more

specific protocols related to their program or service. Specialized training will be given to those who work with minors.

BREACH OF POLICY:

In cases where personnel do not maintain a professional position of respect, effectiveness and safety when dealing with clients, the supervisor/manager will intervene to prevent and/or stop the unprofessional relations/ behaviour. If required, disciplinary action up to and including termination will be taken and/or authorities involved.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. The National Director, People Services, is responsible for advising stakeholders, maintaining, monitoring, and revising this policy; and for authorizing exceptions.
2. Members of the Organizational Leadership Team and/or applicable national program directors are responsible for applying and implementing this policy in each of their respective areas.

REFERENCES:

1. 3.12 Appendix A – Crossing the Boundary: Warning Signs.