CENTER FOR DISABILITY SERVICES

POLICY

SUBJECT: CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

EXPLANATION: The Center for Disability Services is dedicated to maintaining integrity and high ethical standards. The code of ethics provides guidance and is intended to support our provision of quality services to all individuals served. Maintaining integrity and high ethical and legal standards require commitment and hard work from all agency personnel and each employee must accept responsibility for compliance with this code. The code of ethics is not intended to duplicate or paraphrase law, statute, or agency personnel policies. Rather, it is intended as a tool to guide employees to perform their job functions in an ethical manner. It is the policy of CDS to provide training regarding principles of ethical conduct to all new employees and to provide a copy of this code of ethics during orientation. The principles below are not presented in any order of importance, and no hierarchy is implied by this code or the agency. However, the safety of individuals’ served will always be a priority.

PRINCIPLES REGARDING ETHICAL CONDUCT

1. Service Delivery: The following standards for employee conduct apply to treatment of individuals served:
   a. CDS staff members recognize that their first responsibility is to the individuals served and their first priority is to meet the needs and interests of individuals served. Services will be delivered with the safety, health and wellbeing of individuals served always as the first concern, avoiding any conflicts of interest.
   b. CDS staff support and encourage each individual served to participate in his or her community, with the belief that everyone deserves to be part of a community, a family, or a group of friends and that community participation for individuals served, enhances the strength and quality of the community.
   c. CDS staff members recognize and respect the uniqueness and potential of everyone served and their cultural identity.
   d. CDS staff members respect each individual’s right to make choices and provide opportunity to do so within the parameters of contract provisions, accreditation standards, agency and university policies and the person centered plan. In addition, CDS staff will support individuals served to speak for themselves, and when needed to support the views of individuals served by speaking on their behalf. Input from individuals served will be respectfully considered and treated with paramount importance.
e. CDS staff will treat individuals served fairly and with dignity and respect, regardless of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, national origin, health status, socio-economic status or lifestyle.

f. CDS staff will comply with all standards for confidentiality, including recipient rights and HIPAA, and witnessing of documents signed by individuals receiving service. Staff will also respect the privacy of individuals served.

g. CDS staff will be sensitive to barriers to participation in services and will revise service models and activities as needed.

h. CDS activities will promote the well-being, self-esteem, and independence of individuals served. CDS staff will promote an atmosphere where individuals served may learn and grow.

i. CDS activities will be legal, prudent and ethical and will be consistent with Mental Health Code, accreditation standards, and the mission, vision and values of CDS.

j. CDS staff members are forbidden to sell items or services to individuals served.

k. CDS staff members may not solicit, accept, or agree to accept, anything of value including gifts, money or gratuities under circumstances that could reasonably be expected to influence the manner in which the employee performs work or makes decisions.

l. CDS staff members are responsible for maintaining appropriate boundaries between themselves and individuals receiving services and ensure any position of power, perceived or real, is not abused at any time.

m. CDS staff members shall not act as a witness to documents such as Power of Attorney, guardianship, advance directives, and/or agency contracts without the expressed written approval of the WMU legal counsel. Personnel are authorized to countersign documents such as intake forms, authorizations (i.e., release of information form), treatment plans, etc. as directly related to their job duties.

2. **Human Resources:** CDS staff will seek consumer input when making human resource decisions and will consider consumer preference when assigning staff members.

3. **Conflicts of Interest:** CDS staff members have a responsibility to manage, reduce or eliminate conflicts of interest that may be presented in the performance of their duties, and to put the interests of CDS and its individuals served ahead of their own interests. Therefore, every staff member shall disclose as soon as possible to their Supervisor or the CDS Director any facts which could create a conflict of interest or even give an appearance of a conflict of interest in the performance of their duties.

4. **Professional Responsibilities:** The following professional standards for employee conduct apply to each employee’s responsibility to the agency and colleagues:
a. CDS staff will perform their job assignments in a manner such that CDS meets the needs of the individuals served. CDS staff members are expected to approach their work with integrity and conscientiousness.

b. CDS staff members are to be committed to achieving high standards and strive to be as competent, skilled and informed as possible.

c. CDS staff will work to establish a cohesive team approach and maintain a positive working atmosphere. This includes respecting the rights and views of colleagues and treating them with fairness, courtesy, good faith and without discrimination. Staff will conduct themselves in a manner with consideration for the interest, character and reputation of the agency and co-workers.

d. CDS staff will follow the WMU Employee Rules of Conduct and Healthy Workplace Standards.

e. CDS staff will follow the Code of Ethics governing their specific discipline, including but not limited to the following:
   - National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals
   - American Psychological Association (APA) Code of Ethics
   - Nation Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics
   - American Counselor’s Association (ACA) Code of Ethics
   - American Medical Association (AMA) Code of Ethics
   - American Society for Public Administration Code of Ethics

f. CDS supervisors will communicate and model standards of care and standards of conduct clearly, accurately and consistently to the staff they supervise.

g. CDS staff will do their best to create and maintain a climate of loyalty, trust and mutual respect and support a work atmosphere that respects the work of each employee.

h. CDS staff will respect the personal property of others and will not steal, intentional destruct, or deface the property of the University, another employee, or individual served.
   i. CDS staff will not use or allow the use of CDS property or equipment, or the property or equipment of individuals served, for other than activities approved by the organization.
   ii. Theft and destruction of property by individuals served may be addressed through treatment planning, disciplinary action (personnel), and/or by contacting law enforcement, as appropriate.
   iii. CDS is not responsible for personal property that is not safeguarded or is left unattended.
5. **Business, Finance, Contractual Relationships**: The following expectations apply to ethical conduct in regards to business and finance:

a. All financial practices will be handled in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws.

b. All financial practices will be consistent with the mission of CDS and will promote the fiscal stability of the organization.

c. All financial matters shall be conducted according to commonly accepted standards of sound financial management.

d. All business and financial practices will comply with contractual obligations, accreditation standards, and the policies and procedures of Western Michigan University and CDS.

e. All contractual relationships will comply with the policies and procedures of Western Michigan University.

f. All business, finance and contractual relationships will be managed in such a way to avoid conflicts of interest.

6. **Prohibition of Healthcare Fraud, Waste, Abuse**: CDS will maintain an active corporate compliance program to eliminate healthcare fraud and abuse.

   i. All CDS staff and students should understand what Health Care Fraud and Abuse is, how to detect it and how to report suspicious activities or make an inquiry if they are unsure about healthcare fraud and abuse.

   ii. CDS will make available Fraud and Abuse Training and this training.

   iii. CDS staff shall comply with all laws governing its activities, including those, which address fraud and abuse in the health care industry.

   iv. Under the law, no one may offer, give, solicit or receive anything of value as an inducement for referrals to CDS. “Anything of value” is a broad term that encompasses payments, gifts, discounts and rebates.

   v. CDS staff should not knowingly file any false or fraudulent claim. The following practices apply to ethical marketing.

7. **Marketing & Social Media**: All marketing practices will respect the dignity and privacy of individuals served and will honestly represent the programs and services of CDS to the public.

   a. Fund-raising and receipt of donations will comply with WMU policies.

   b. Marketing activities will uphold the integrity of CDS and be accountable to the public.

   c. Solicitation of CDS staff members by outside agencies or individuals is not allowed during working hours in any manner, including by way of email messages. CDS staff members are expected to obtain approval from their supervisor before canvassing other CDS employees.

   d. Information regarding CDS published on any internet websites including a personal blog(s), web site, or web page should comply with HIPAA, and the CDS
confidentiality and disclosure policy. This also applies to comments posted on other blogs, forums, and social networking sites.

i. Information posted should be respectful to CDS, other employees, consumers, partners, and competitors.

ii. An employee’s or student intern’s questionable actions captured via images, posts, or comments on-line can reflect on the agency and have consequences for the employee.

iii. An employee or student intern should not reference a consumer or a consumer’s family members.

iv. An employee or student intern should not establish a website or maintain a social media account on behalf of a consumer, such as a GoFundMe website

v. CDS logos and trademarks may not be used without consent from Western Michigan University.

8. **Community Relations**: The following practices and standards of conduct are in regard to community relations:

   a. All CDS staff members are representatives of CDS will be respectful and dignified when interacting with members of the community. Staff should consider the public perception of their personal and professional actions, in regards to the reputation of CDS and individuals served.

   b. CDS staff will treat community members in a manner that creates trust in the agency and promotes community support for individuals served.

   c. CDS staff will communicate to community members in a manner that promotes community understanding of the capabilities and potential of individuals served.

   d. Valid requests for information from community members will be responded to in a timely manner. Input (concerns, complaints, suggestions, etc.) will be welcomed and responded to in a respectful manner.

   e. CDS employees will demonstrate loyalty to the agency and refrain from conduct that might discredit the agency.

   f. CDS staff will perform their work assignments in a prudent manner and as a responsible steward of the agency’s resources.

9. **CDS Board**: The following principles of ethical practice apply to functions of the board

   a. CDS Board will act in the best interest of CDS, putting such interest over self interest.

   b. The CDS Board will endeavor to eliminate conflicts of interest when advising and providing input to staff regarding the overall operation of CDS.

   c. Every Board member shall disclose as soon as possible to the Board or the CDS Director any facts which could create a conflict of interest or even give an appearance of a conflict of interest.
d. A family member’s participation on the CDS Board shall never be deemed a conflict of interest.
I have read the Center for Disability Services Policy on Code of Ethics and understand and agree to comply with this Ethical Code of Conduct. I understand that these principles are fundamental to all the operations and services of CDS, and are incorporated in the Policies and Procedures of CDS.

I understand that ethical conduct is always expected, however I may be in positions which require my judgment to discern an ethical situation and process resolution. I am familiar with tools such as the RADAR ethical decision-making process to use when a situation calls for resolution of a conflict between principles of ethics. When in doubt, I understand it is appropriate to contact my supervisor (or their supervisor) for support and guidance. In cases of eminent danger, I understand that at CDS the safety of individuals served is the first priority, and when in doubt, the expectation is to minimize the risk to the health of individuals served.

_________________________ Employee/Volunteer/Student

_______________Date