

# Challenge Code of Conduct Policy

**The Purpose:** To provide definition for employees about the values, ethical principles and standards of conduct in their interaction with service recipients.

**Summary:** Employees of Challenge Industries interact on a continual basis with service recipients at Challenge and in the community. Challenge provides a number of very visible programs in the community and it is very important that employees conduct themselves with extraordinary discretion in both their public and private life so that Challenge and its mission are not compromised in any way. It is expected for all employees to provide positive, professional role models for service recipients. In all situations, Challenge employees must assure that the rights and safety of service recipients are respected at all times. The policy has been developed to provide guidance to Challenge employees in their interactions with individuals who currently, or in the past, have received services from Challenge.

## ***1. Clarification of Service Recipient and Employee***

Service recipients are individuals with disabilities and other barriers to employment who currently receive, or have received, services from Challenge. Many service recipients also work in Challenge administrative offices, services and business operations and thus are also employees of Challenge. The ability of service recipients to advocate and ensure their safety at work in the community varies significantly as does the nature of their relationships with other Challenge employees and service recipients. Several factors must be considered in clarifying the responsibilities and boundaries involving interactions with employees and service recipients at Challenge. These factors include level of supervisory responsibility, involvement in service provision, and skill/ability of the individuals involved. As such, there are four classifications for employees that will be utilized to provide more specific guidance regarding relationships and behavior both at work and personal time.

- Employees in management or supervisory positions
- Employees providing services to program participants
- Employees (who do not receive services) in hourly positions (that don't supervise or provides services)
- Employees (who do receive services) in hourly positions (that don't supervise or provide services)

Board and Committee members, interns, volunteers, contractors and others involved in Challenge services, business and administrative operations are expected to follow the guidelines for employees in management, supervisory or service position roles.

As these classifications are not always known or understood by all employees, it is the responsibility of managers and supervisors, in consultation with Human Resources, to provide guidance to all employees and monitor and intervene in situations that have the potential to be out of compliance with this policy.

## ***2. Professional Conduct:***

All Challenge employees shall not use derogatory language in their written or verbal communications to or about service recipients. Employees shall use accurate and respectful language in all communications to and about service recipients. Slurs, including all racial, ethnic, religious and gender-based insults along with slang used to describe sexual acts, body parts and body functions are considered inappropriate language in the workplace.

It is the policy of Challenge to maintain the right to privacy and the confidentiality of information regarding service recipients served by the agency. It is also our policy to use the information held in case records and obtained in assessments, interviews, during service provision and at work in the service recipient's best interest. Refer to the Confidentiality Policy for complete policy detail.

Challenge employees may not 'friend', 'follow', approve or list as an approved contact on a social media site or other service, any individual that receives services, or has received services, from Challenge. Social media

includes, but is not limited to, forums, chats, chat rooms, internet relay chats (IRC), and social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and MySpace.

When a Challenge employee acts on behalf of a service recipient who lack the capacity to make informed decisions, the employee should take steps to safeguard the interest and rights of the service recipient by seeking out guidance by consultation with other Challenge employees, Challenge supervisors and managers, Case Managers, Service Coordinators, family members or advocates.

There shall be no financial obligations between Challenge employees and service recipients. Therefore, Challenge employees and service recipients shall not give, loan or borrow money (of any significant monetary value) from one another. Likewise, employees shall not give to or accept gifts or favors of any significant monetary value from Challenge service recipients.

### ***3. Personal Relationships between Employees and Service Recipients:***

Challenge employees in a management or supervisory positions and employees who provide services to service recipients hold positions that yield power and influence over the continued employment and service provision of service recipients involved with Challenge. As such, these employees need to limit the nature of their relationships at work and in their personal time so as to not create the appearance or reality of preferential treatment, inappropriate behavior, or potential or actual psychological, physical or other abuse.

At no time is an employee in a management or supervisory position, an employee who provides services to service recipients, intern, volunteer, contractor or other individual associated with Challenge to engage in any behavior or contact of a sexual nature with a consumer. Any sexual contact between a person receiving services and the before mentioned employees (and any intern, volunteer or contractor of Challenge) is always considered sexual abuse and is prohibited. Physical contact must be limited to contact that is acceptable to both parties, is appropriate to the relationship and location, and is non-sexual in nature. Service recipients who have difficulty with physical touching, or inappropriate sexual behavior will have limit setting and education regarding appropriate social distance. In addition, the before mentioned employees should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with service recipients' relatives or other individuals with whom service recipients maintain a close personal relationship when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the service recipient.

Personal relationships including more intimate relationships outside of work between two employees in which one or both employees are service recipients is also prohibited unless all of the following conditions are met:

- The employee(s) who receives services is capable of giving consent to the relationship
- The skills, abilities and judgment of the employee(s) who receive services is such as to not be at risk of being taken advantage of by the other employee
- Neither of the employees is in a management or supervisory position or provides services to program participants

All employees of Challenge who are not service recipients are prohibited from engaging in a sexual relationship with program participants enrolled in Challenge's work center or Life Options program.

### ***4. Drug and Alcohol Use:***

Challenge is committed to providing a safe working environment and fostering the well-being and health of service recipients and employees. Illicit drug use and improper alcohol use conflict with our mission and pose a serious safety and health risk to all service recipients and employees. It also hinders our commitment to provide quality services. Therefore, as a condition of employment and continued employment, the following drug and alcohol-free workplace policy has been established.

All employees are prohibited from any use of illicit drugs or illegal use of prescription drugs. The appropriate use of prescription medicines under medical supervision is allowed, provided that it does not impair an employee's ability to perform his/her job, or affects job safety.

Working while one's ability is impaired (i.e. by use of drugs or alcohol during personal time) may subject an employee to disciplinary action.

All Management, Supervisors and employees providing services to program participants are prohibited from engaging in alcohol consumption with service recipients during both work and personal time.

Engaging in alcohol consumption outside of work is prohibited when one or both employees are service recipients is also prohibited unless all of the following conditions are met:

- The employee(s) who receives services has no medical or other restrictions that prohibit the consumption of alcohol
- The skills, abilities and judgment of the employee(s) who receive services is such as to not be at risk of being taken advantage of by the other employee
- Neither of the employees is in a management or supervisory position or provides services to program participants

All employees of Challenge who are not service recipients are prohibited from engaging in alcohol consumption with program participants enrolled in Challenge’s work center or Life Options program.

This policy applies to all employees, interns, volunteers, contractors and other individuals associated with Challenge. Violation of this policy is considered professional misconduct and will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge, depending upon the nature and seriousness of the incident. Failure to report a possible violation of this policy is also considered misconduct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Employee/Intern/Volunteer or Contractor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Human Resources Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date