



Mental Health Australia

Code of Conduct

Mentally healthy people,
mentally healthy communities

mhaustralia.org

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1 Introduction

Mental Health Australia is the national, independent peak body for the mental health sector. We unite the voices of the mental health sector, and advocate for policies that improve mental health.

High standards of integrity and ethical behaviour are required of any person who is carrying out duties for or on behalf of Mental Health Australia.

This Code of Conduct provides a framework of ethical principles, obligations and standards that guide work performance, professional standards, and the conduct of relationships with others. Given the diverse range of activities in which workers are involved on a day-to-day basis, the Code does not attempt to provide a detailed and exhaustive list of what should be done in every work situation. Instead, the Code represents a broad framework for ethical conduct.

Workers must also have regard to the policies, directives, procedures and guidelines issued by Mental Health Australia and as amended or replaced from time to time, which may set out more detail on matters referred to in this Code.

If there is any doubt about the application of the Code of Conduct, or the appropriate course of action to be adopted in a particular situation, the worker is expected to discuss the matter with an Authorised Person.

2 Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to the Board and its committees, all employees, contractors, consultants, Lived Experience Representatives engaged by Mental Health Australia, and any other persons who undertake duties for, or who otherwise represent, Mental Health Australia.

3 Key terms and definitions

Authorised Person: means, for the purposes of this Code:

- for employees – their manager
- for contractors, consultants and other persons – their engagement or contract manager
- Lived Experience Representatives – their Mental Health Australia contact, project manager or representative
- for Company Secretary – the Board Chair and CEO



- for CEO – the Board Chair
- for Board – the Board Chair

Gifts and benefits: include the transfer of money, or other property or benefits, without payment or for a payment less than the normal market value. The term may also include a loan of money made on a permanent or indefinite basis.

Interest: includes pecuniary interest, political ties, family relationships or involvement with commercial, political, religious, or other organisations.

Pecuniary interest: is an interest that a person has in a matter because of a reasonable likelihood or expectation of appreciable financial gain or loss to the person. Pecuniary interest may include, but is not limited to, real estate, shares, debts, business interests and investments.

Workers: includes the Board and its committees, all employees, contractors (including temporary contractors), consultants, Lived Experience representatives engaged by Mental Health Australia, and any other persons who undertake duties for, or who otherwise represent, Mental Health Australia.

4 Principles of appropriate behaviour

Workers of Mental Health Australia are required to adhere to the following principles.

4.1 Behave Fairly and Equitably

- 4.1.1 Observe fairness, transparency and integrity in all dealings with employees, members, stakeholders, and the public.
- 4.1.2 Strive to earn and sustain trust.

4.2 Act in the Public Interest

- 4.2.1 Promote confidence in the integrity of Mental Health Australia by always acting in the public interest and not private interest
- 4.2.2 Protect the reputation of Mental Health Australia in all circumstances both at work and outside work

4.3 Refuse Improper Rewards or Gifts

- 4.3.1 Not accept a gift, reward or benefit that is intended to, or appears to be aimed at, influencing decisions or behaviour



- 4.3.2 If a gift is offered, the gift must be declared on the Gift/ Benefit Declaration Form so a decision can be made to retain, dispose or return the gift. The gift will be recorded on the Gift Register

4.4 Avoid Conflicts of Interest¹

- 4.4.1 Take reasonable steps to avoid any conflict of interest, real, apparent or perceived².

4.5 Act Responsively and Responsibly

- 4.5.1 Work in a prompt and responsive manner
- 4.5.2 Accept responsibility for own decisions and actions and for any reasonably foreseeable outcome of those decisions and actions
- 4.5.3 Promote Mental Health Australia's values and objectives
- 4.5.4 Where any conflict arises between this policy and the law, the law will override the policy.

4.6 Treat People with Respect and Courtesy

- 4.6.1 All people are to be treated with respect
- 4.6.2 All dealings are to be fair, consistent, and non-discriminatory
- 4.6.3 Must not harass or bully any person
- 4.6.4 All Board members and staff have a responsibility to ensure that the workplace is free from all forms of harassment and bullying³

4.7 Observe The Principles of Equity, Diversity & Social Inclusion

- 4.7.1 Treat all people equally regardless of race; pregnancy or breastfeeding status; marital or relationship status; family responsibility; age; disability (physical or psychological); sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, or intersex status; union affiliation, political conviction, religious belief; or some other characteristic specified under any relevant State and Commonwealth anti-discrimination or human rights legislation
- 4.7.2 Create a work environment where people can participate fully, find a sense of belonging and engage meaningfully with colleagues

¹ Refer to Mental Health Australia Conflict of Interest Management Policy

² Refer to Conflict of Interest Management Policy

³ Refer to Mental Health Australia Sexual Misconduct and Acceptable Workplace Behaviours Policy and Procedure



- 4.7.3 Ensure that the workplace is free from all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment, sex-based harassment and victimisation.
- 4.7.4 Integrate the principles of equality of opportunity, natural justice and inclusivity into their day-to-day practices and behaviours.

4.8 Exercise Caution When Making Public Comment

- 4.8.1 Only make public comments when authorised to do so by the Chair or CEO, and in line with the Delegations Authority Policy. It is important to ensure casual comments and conversation are not interpreted as being authorised comments. Authorised public comments should only be based on facts gained from reliable sources

4.9 Confidential Information⁴

- 4.9.1 Not disclose or divulge any confidential information without proper authority. Confidential information includes stakeholder data, personal and sensitive information, commercial performance data, corporate strategies and business plans, marketing and pricing strategies, intellectual property, and the like
- 4.9.2 Take precautions to ensure confidential information cannot be disclosed by accident or negligence, or through the deliberate action of others
- 4.9.3 Any unauthorised disclosure of confidential information must be immediately reported to an Authorised Person
- 4.9.4 The collection of personal, sensitive and health information must only be done in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles as described in the Privacy Act 1988, and such information must only be used for the intended work-related purpose

4.10 Work Diligently and Efficiently

- 4.10.1 Comply with the prescribed terms and conditions of the position and act within the powers pertaining to the role.
- 4.10.2 Display skill, care and diligence required of the role.
- 4.10.3 Keep up to date with advances and changes and always look for ways to improve performance and achieve higher standards.
- 4.10.4 Ensure work is centred on the needs of the organisation and within constraints of time, funding and availability of resources.

⁴ Refer to Mental Health Australia Privacy Policy



- 4.10.5 No alcohol is allowed on worksites unless prior approval has been given by the CEO.
- 4.10.6 The use, sale, possession, manufacture, dispensing or distribution of illicit drugs is strictly prohibited.
- 4.10.7 Use authority, resources, information, plant and equipment, only for the intended work-related purpose.
- 4.10.8 Not use Mental Health Australia equipment or facilities to make, receive, or send fraudulent, unlawful, discriminatory, defamatory, obscene or abusive information, calls or messages. On becoming aware of any of these matters immediately advise an Authorised Person.
- 4.10.9 Report any threatening, intimidating or harassing information and communications to an Authorised Person.

5 Compliance

All workers of Mental Health Australia are required to comply with this Code.

Breaches of standards or obligations in this Code will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action, which may also involve the possibility of dismissal, demotion or suspension and/or criminal or civil proceedings.



6 Supporting Documents

The following documents support the Code of Conduct as amended from time to time:

- Acceptable Workplace Behaviour Policy and Procedure
- Board Charter
- Confidentiality and IP Agreement
- Conflict of Interest Management Policy
- Constitution
- Contract Management Procurement Guidelines
- Delegations Authority
- Fraud Prevention Policy
- Gift Benefit Register Guidelines
- Governance Manual
- Online Publishing Policy
- Performance and Development Guidelines
- Privacy Policy
- Sexual Misconduct Policy
- Whistleblower Policy
- Work Health and Safety Policy



7 Documentation & Approvals

7.1 Document location

| Document Title Equal | SharePoint Location |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Code of Conduct | [insert URL] |

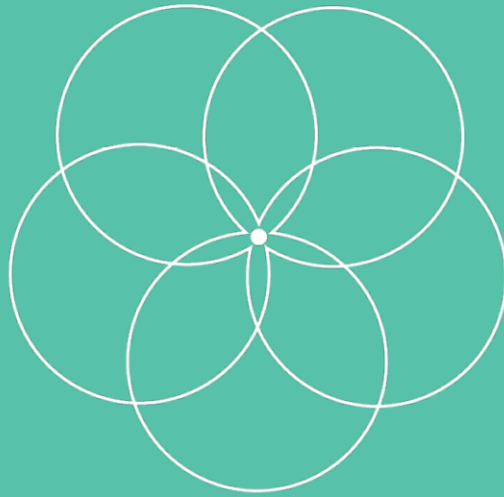
7.2 Document history

| Version | Date | Description | Author |
|---------|----------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | 28 August 2011 | Board Approval | HR Manager |
| 5 | 2 August 2019 | Revision for Governance Committee and Board consideration | Company Secretary |
| 5.1 | 10 August 2019 | Minor amendments including Board feedback; Board-endorsed 2 August 2019 meeting | Company Secretary |
| 7 | June 2021 | Minor amendments | HR Manager |
| 7.1 | August 2022 | Review by Governance Committee and approved by the Board | Company Secretary |
| 8 | November 2025 | Reviewed by the Governance Committee and approved by the Board | People & Culture Manager |

7.3 Date for review

| Review period | Date for next review |
|---------------|----------------------|
| Triennial | August 2028 |





Mental Health Australia

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Mental Health Australia is the peak independent national representative body of the mental health sector in Australia.

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