

FINAL
Sistering – A Woman’s Place
Policy and Procedure – Workplace Relationships

Sistering strives to foster an environment that is ethical, equitable and inclusive for all women. For this to be achieved, all employees, students, volunteers and program participants must be treated in a fair and equitable manner, with dignity and respect.

Due to the nature of services provided by Sistering, there is an inherent power imbalance between staff, students, volunteers and program participants. This power imbalance can lead to potential misuse and consequently requires that clear standards of conduct be maintained. Sistering staff, students and volunteers must maintain the highest standards, judgment and care when dealing with participants of Sistering programs. By maintaining professional relationships between staff, students, volunteers and program participants the right to equitable treatment and services are ensured. Anything other than this can lead to conflict of interest, breach of trust, and inappropriate use of confidential information, unequal treatment, favoritism or the perception of favoritism.

Relations with Program Participants:

- Staff, students and volunteers must not be involved in sexual and intimate relationships with program participants. Where such a relationship develops or was part of past history outside the organization, the staff, student or volunteer has a duty to inform their supervisor.
- Staff, students and volunteers are expected to be respectful of boundaries in their relationship with program participants. They are not to meet with program participants outside of Sistering or after program hours unless it is work related. If this occurs the staff team and/or supervisor must be informed.
- Staff, students and volunteers are expected to discourage program participants from the use of alcoholic beverages while at a social and recreational outing. Social and recreational outings are Sistering programs that take place “off site”; however, the rules regarding the use of drugs and alcohol for both programs still apply.
- Staff, students and volunteers must neither borrow money from nor lend their own money to program participants. Employees must utilize the

appropriate loan mechanisms set out by the organization to provide program participants with monetary loans.

Relations with other Sistering Employees, Students and Volunteers

- Sistering staff, students and volunteers are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect. They must not engage in conversations or actions, which seek to directly or indirectly, undermine or demean another staff, student or volunteer or their work.
- Sistering staff, students or volunteers who have concerns with another staff, student or volunteer should discuss those concerns directly and constructively with the person involved, or the appropriate supervisor. If employees are not able to resolve a conflict between them they should go to a supervisor to assist them in finding a resolution. If the issue cannot be resolved, it is the supervisors' responsibility to mediate a resolution with both staff. All concerns or issues of conflict should be raised with the staff, student or volunteer and or a supervisor in a timely way.
- Staff, students and volunteers must not be involved in a sexual or intimate relationship with another staff, student or volunteer who is within their scope of supervision.
- Intimate relationships among peer staff, students and volunteers are not encouraged, and if such relationships occur staff, students and volunteers must disclose information to the supervisor and/or Executive Director. If such relationships with peer staff, students or volunteers develop in the same department or team, one of the parties may be relocated, to minimize conflict of interest and negative impact on the department/team.
- Where Sistering staff, students and volunteers in the same department decide to share a common household, the Manager and/or Executive Director will review the circumstance and may relocate one of the parties.

Staff, students and volunteers must maintain professional boundaries and always consider the impact of their relationships on the participants. It is the responsibility of staff, students and volunteers to ensure that a therapeutic relationship is established and maintained. The responsibility falls on the staff, student and volunteer to recognize issues of power & control, to respect physical and emotional boundaries and to work in a manner that preserves the trust of the participants as well as each other.

Human Resources Cmte. Approved Nov/03