



CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy (**the Code**) is to outline the behaviour and conduct expected of all Mental Health Lived Experience Peak Queensland (**MHLEPQ**) employees and volunteers.

2. Rationale

This policy supports employees and MHLEPQ and their ability to serve members, be sustainable, and impact change by:

- clarifying the standards of behaviour that is expected of employees and volunteers.
- providing a framework for employees to follow when working with members and stakeholders.

3. Scope

This policy applies to employees, volunteers and contractors of MHLEPQ:

- (a) At any location or premise where work or volunteering is performed.
- (b) In all contexts where there is a work connection including after-hours social functions where co-workers may be present.
- (c) On social media where employees and volunteers interact with each other, and their actions may affect them directly or indirectly.

4. MHLEPQ Values

Employees, volunteers and contractors are expected to adhere and embed MHLEPQ values in practice. MHLEPQ values are:

- **Safety** – ensuring cultural, psychological and organisational safety in all interactions.
- **Respect** – courageously curious about the strengths, resilience and capabilities of others.
- **Intentionality** – cultivating intentional and meaningful interactions.
- **Integrity** – promoting accountability, transparency and accessibility.
- **Outcomes** – striving for real, tangible and human centred outcomes that matter to people with lived and living experience.

5. Lived Living Experience Values

MHLEPQ employees are also part of the lived and living workforce, which has the following values under the National Guidelines:

- **Hope** - belief in people's fundamental capacity to overcome challenges.



- **Equality/equity** - working from a place of common humanity and vulnerability. Actively working to minimise power imbalances.
- **Mutuality** - being in a relationship with another person where both people learn, grow and are challenged through the relationship.
- **Empathy** - understanding another's experience from a point of common experience and genuine connection.
- **Choice** - acknowledging and respecting each person's choices, dignity of risk and boundaries. Acknowledging that the person is the expert of their own experience.
- **Respect** - Honouring another's view and experience without judgement or making assumptions.
- **Authenticity** - Integrity, being open, honest, trustworthy, and transparent in work practices and relationships.
- **Belonging/inclusion** - respecting and understanding the value of inclusion and impact of exclusion. Recognising intersectionality and valuing diversity culture, spirituality, membership in chosen groups and community.
- **Interdependence/ interconnectedness** - recognition that we exist in relationships and that the relationships with families and/or social networks are often impactful in our lives and important to healing.
- **Justice/Human Rights** - Understanding the impact of social justice/inequity on identity and opportunity e.g. race, culture, sexual orientation. Recognising that equal access to resources and support is an important factor in everyone's recovery and healing. Recognising the consumer movement as a response to the history of social injustice and discrimination towards people with lived experience.

6. Code of Conduct

(a) All employees, volunteers and contractors of MHLEPQ must:

- uphold and embed MHLEPQ Values and Lived Living Experience Workforce Values in practice.
 - uphold and embed MHLEPQ and Lived and Living Experience values in practice.
 - act honestly, in good faith and in the best interests of the organisation.
 - maintain professional conduct, uphold ethical standards, and engage respectfully with peers and external partners.
 - act in a safe, responsible manner adhering to established workplace safety practices to prevent harm to oneself or others.
 - demonstrate respect and support toward colleagues, recognising the unique contributions each individual brings to the organisation.
 - not engage in conduct likely to bring discredit the organisation.



- abide by internal policies, procedures and follow the lawful directions provided by the organisation.
- disclose and take reasonable steps to avoid any conflict of interest (real or apparent) in connection with their duties.
- exercise discretion in the responsible use of the organisation's information, funds, equipment and facilities.
- take personal accountability for understanding your professional boundaries (see below) and how they apply to your position and not operate outside those boundaries.
- embrace continuous improvement by accepting and learning from mistakes and valuing learning opportunities when they are presented.
- be fit for work by ensuring you are not affected by alcohol or illegal drugs that may affect your ability to perform work to the required standard and levels of safety.

(b) The MHLEPQ Code of Conduct does not permit you to:

- bully, harass, sexually harass, discriminate, intimidate or behave aggressively towards another person.
- engage in behaviour that would likely result in a conviction being recorded on a National Police Check.
- accept gifts, money or favours from a stakeholder or member.
- use the internet or MHLEPQ equipment to access or send sexually explicit, suggestive, racist, offensive, harassing or other inappropriate material.
- conduct personal business during work hours, unless during designated breaks or if approved by the your direct report / CEO in advance.
- release confidential MHLEPQ information to stakeholders, third parties or the media.

7. Professional Boundaries

- (a) Employees, volunteers, and contractors are expected to understand and uphold professional boundaries in all interactions with stakeholders and members, ensuring their conduct remains within the defined scope of their role.
- (b) Examples of operating outside of professional boundaries and developing unprofessional relationships can be:
- becoming overly involved, including being intimately involved, with a person, member or stakeholder that conducts business at and/or with MHLEPQ.
 - having physical contact with a person, member or stakeholder. In some limited contexts, supportive physical contact (e.g. touching on the hand or shoulder to show empathy) may be appropriate, however consent must be given before engaging in any supportive physical contact.
 - being available and contactable by a member or stakeholder outside of office hours.



- meeting a member or stakeholder outside of work hours without an appointment, or without the approval of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
 - entering a personal business or financial relationship with a member or stakeholder, such as borrowing or lending money, or investing in a business or hobby owned by an external person.
 - accepting gifts, money or favours from a member or stakeholder.
- (c) MHLEPQ recognises that we are part of a collective movement grounded in shared lived experience. In those circumstances relationships may exist outside of the workplace. Where these exist, staff are expected to:
- Ensure that personal relationships and professional roles are clearly defined and communicate
 - Ensure that time spent working in MHLEPQ is devoted to your professional role and the organisation's objectives and responsibilities
 - Disclose any potential, perceived or actual conflicts of interest to the CEO as soon as they arise
- Ensure that any relationship does not compromise the safety, wellbeing, reputation or trust of others at MHLEPQ, or in the integrity and reputation of MHLEPQ's work.

8. Fraudulent Behaviour

- (a) MHLEPQ do not tolerate fraud in any context and will advise the relevant authorities if any fraud is suspected by board members, employees or volunteers.
- (b) Fraud is an extreme form of unethical conduct and is generally a deliberate action or behaviour involving the use of deception to gain from a position of trust or authority.
- (c) It constitutes a criminal act, negatively impacts workplace morale and undermines the financial viability of our organisation.

9. Self-Disclosure Responsibilities

- (a) Employees and volunteers are expected to uphold the integrity of MHLEPQ.
- (b) If an employee and volunteer is charged with a criminal offence that results in a custodial sentence (whether served or suspended) or revocation of their Working with Children Check or Blue Card, they are required to notify the CEO as soon as reasonably practicable.
- (c) This ensures transparency, supports risk management, and enables appropriate organisational responses in line with legal and ethical obligations.

10. Dress Code

- (a) MHLEPQ's objective in establishing a safe and comfortable environment includes setting some standards for workplace dress code.
- (b) Employees are expected to wear neat and clean clothing appropriate to their individual working conditions and duties.

11. Responsibilities

- (a) The CEO will have responsibility to:
- Adopt and promote the Code within the organisation.
 - Behave in a manner that reflects the standards of the Code.
 - Address conduct that is inconsistent with the Code.
- (b) Employees and Volunteers have a responsibility to:
- understand and behave in a manner that reflects the standards of the code.
 - take personal responsibility for working within the professional boundaries outlined in this code.
 - refer any potential conflict of interest to the CEO.
 - challenge the conduct and thinking of their peers when it is inconsistent with the code
 - report suspected breaches of the code.

12. Breaches of the Code

- (a) All employees and volunteers have a responsibility to report to the CEO any breach or potential breach of the Code, or any matter of serious concern.
- (b) Breaches of this Code will be regarded as a serious matter and may result in disciplinary action. The action taken will depend on the seriousness of the breach, but may include issuing of a formal warning, or termination of employment, or separation from MHLEPQ for volunteers.

Related Documents

- Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment Policy
- Work Health and Safety Policy
- National Lived Experience (Peer) Workforce Development Guidelines – National Mental Health Commission

Related Legislation

- *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth)
- *Fair Work Regulations 2009* (Cth)
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Qld)
- *Psychosocial Hazards at Work Code of Practice 2022* (Qld)
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld)



We are informed but not regulated by *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld)

Policy Governance	
Policy Approved By	MHLEPQ Board
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