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COMMUNITY
SERVICES

6.2.3 Complaints

Scope:

This policy applies to program participants, their families, caregivers, referring agencies, donors, and other service delivery stakeholders. It applies to all complaints that arise regarding any aspect of the services that PLEA provides.

See also the related policy for employees *3.1.20 Complaints – Management and Excluded Employees*.

Policy Statements:

1. PLEA is committed to building the trust and respect of all its stakeholders through providing quality services in an open and accountable manner. PLEA respects the right of stakeholders to raise concerns and make complaints regarding the application, interpretation or administration of the organization's policies and procedures, program services or rights.
2. Complainants are entitled to have concerns addressed and complaints resolved quickly, fairly, and constructively.
3. All concerns and complaints will be kept confidential to the greatest extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct a fair investigation as advised by the PLEA Privacy Officer.
4. All complaints are treated uniformly regardless of who makes them and whether they are verbal or written.
5. An informal (local resolution) approach to resolving concerns and complaints is endorsed whenever possible.
6. The right of program participants to use an advocate, either from their own support system or through advocacy organizations, is respected.
7. Formal complaints will be investigated, and corrective action may be considered, if required. A written record is maintained of all formal complaints.
8. Complaints are reviewed to consider trends, areas needing improvement and the actions taken.

Definitions:

A complaint is when a program participant, family member, caregiver, referring authority, donor or other party raises a concern or makes an objection.

A formal complaint is when an individual raising a concern either is dissatisfied with Step 1 of the process (local resolution) or when they wish to make a formal complaint. Formal complaints may be verbal or in writing.

Procedures:

1. Whenever someone has a concern or complaint about any aspect of PLEA's services, every effort is made to resolve the issue informally with the PLEA personnel that the individual chooses to approach with the issue. There will be no recrimination against anyone for presenting a complaint or discussing a problem in good faith.

2. Complaints can be made in person, in writing by mail or email as well as over the telephone to any PLEA staff. Contact details for the agency can be found on our website

Caregivers: PLEA encourages all Family Caregivers to discuss problems that arise openly, candidly, and courteously with their Services Coordinator. Personnel who receive a complaint from a Caregiver are required to inform their Services Coordinator as soon as practically possible.

3. Personnel who receive a concern or complaint are required to inform their Program Manager as soon as practically possible.

4. Personnel are responsible for listening carefully to the individual's concern and trying to resolve it within 5 calendar days. This is Step 1 of PLEA's procedure for responding to complaints. All individuals are entitled to file a formal complaint at any point in this process and should be assisted to do so.

5. If the concern or complaint is not resolved through this informal process, individuals are encouraged to present their complaint to the Program Manager responsible for the services they are concerned with. Individuals may make their complaint either verbally or in writing. Managers are responsible for maintaining a written record of all the complaints that they receive. This is Step 2 of PLEA's procedures.

6. The Program Manager will meet with the individual and respond to their complaint within 5 calendar days of receiving it. The response will include both decisions made, and actions taken. All formal complaints will be responded to in writing. If the complaint is not resolved at this step, the Program Manager informs the individual that they may take their complaint to the Program Director or the CEO.

7. If the individual chooses to proceed, the Program Manager forwards the complaint to the Program Director or the CEO. The complaint may be made verbally or in writing depending on the preferences of the individual.

8. Within 3 business days of receiving the complaint, the Program Director or the CEO will contact the individual to notify them that they have received the complaint. Within 30 days of receiving the complaint the Program Director or the CEO will contact the individual and inform them of the decisions made and actions taken. The individual will also be informed that this is the last step of the process and that the decision made at this level are final. The individual will be notified in writing of the decision made and action taken, if appropriate.

9. Program Managers, the Program Director or the CEO are responsible for contacting the PLEA Privacy Officer regarding all complaints that reach Step 2 of these procedures, for providing details on the nature

of the complaint and the outcome and providing a copy of all the written materials. The Privacy Officer keeps a record of all complaints that reach Step 2 of the process.

10. All complaints that reach Step 2 of the process are reviewed semi-annually by the Risk Management Committee to identify possible trends or areas needing improvement. The Risk Management Committee will make recommendations for any follow-up actions and will track progress on those actions.
11. The CEO informs the Board at least annually of the number, type and disposition of formal complaints received.