



Dear Prospective Volunteer,

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Southern Peninsula Community Support (SPCS). This pack contains information about the services provided by SPCS and information about volunteering opportunities.

If you have any questions regarding the application process, please don't hesitate to contact the Volunteer Support Coordinator on the details below.

Regards,

Karen Peters
Volunteer Support Coordinator
03 5986 1285
karen@spscic.org



Southern Peninsula Community Support VOLUNTEER APPLICATION PACK INDEX

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Volunteering with Southern Peninsula Community Support

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

878 Point Nepean Road, PO Box 91, Rosebud, VIC 3939

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Welcome to Southern Peninsula Community Support

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Southern Peninsula Community Support (SPCS). This pack contains information about the services provided by SPCS and information about volunteering opportunities.

Volunteers enable us to provide assistance to the community that we would otherwise be unable to attempt. Volunteers bring a wealth of skills and abilities much appreciated at SPCS and your interest is both welcome and appreciated.

SPCS operates under a guiding set of values and ethics, which form the backbone of all service delivery. We thank you for taking the time to understand these ethics prior to making a commitment to SPCS. Our goal is to provide a happy, challenging and fulfilling environment for our volunteers.

This volunteer information pack includes information about volunteering opportunities at SPCS, a volunteer application form, the CISVIC Confidentiality and Impartiality and Objectivity Policy and SPCS Codes of Ethics and Conduct. After perusing this information, if you are interested in becoming part of the SPCS volunteering team, please complete the Volunteer Application Form as well as the Photography consent and Codes of Ethics, Conduct and Child Safety, and return your application to SPCS at 878 Pt Nepean Rd Rosebud, or mail to:

Volunteer Support Coordinator
Southern Peninsula Community Support
PO Box 91
Rosebud, VIC 3939

Or email us on: admin@spsic.org

A Volunteer Support Coordinator will contact you to arrange an interview time.

If you have any questions regarding the application process please don't hesitate to contact the Volunteer Support Coordinator on 5986 1285. We look forward to welcoming you to our team.



Volunteer Roles & Training

There are many volunteer roles at SPCS which can be matched to your interests and skills. With the exception of Community Support Worker, most roles require only on-the-job training.

Client contact roles:

- **Community Information Worker** – General reception and administrative duties.
- **Community Support Worker** – Interviewing clients to provide support, information, referral and Emergency Relief services.
- **No Interest Loan (NILS) Volunteer** – Assisting clients to submit NILS applications.
- **Fresh Food Program Volunteer** – program set up and general delivery
- **Southern Peninsula Shower and Laundry Program (SPLaSh) Volunteer** – program set up and general delivery.
- **Tax Help Program Volunteer** – assist clients to lodge straight forward tax returns.
- **Energy Mentor Program** – assist clients with lowering energy bills and getting support with outstanding bills.

Community Support Workers are required to complete a 50-hour nationally accredited unit of competency: Assess Co-existing Needs (CHCCCS004). The 50 hours comprises 36 hours of training and 14 hours of placement at SPCS. This is followed by a period of supervised interviewing, during which you will receive support, guidance and assistance to enable you to carry out the role of a Community Support Worker. This role may include:

- Interviewing people who need assistance with a range of issues
- Advocating on behalf of clients where appropriate
- Sourcing information using a range of information resources including databases, the internet, directories and pamphlets
- Providing practical assistance, through advocacy and negotiation, filling out forms and referring to other services
- Record keeping and statistical recording
- Working as a team member to support the aims and objectives of the agency
- Keeping informed of agency policies and procedures
- Attending training sessions organised by the agency or other organisations
- Keeping up to date with relevant community, state and national issues.

Once you have successfully completed the training requirements you will receive a statement of attainment from the training provider, and after the placement period has concluded you will receive a certificate of accreditation from CISVic (Community Information and Support Victoria).



Non-client contact roles include:

- Development and management of information resources
- Statistical collation and Data Entry
- Membership of the Board of Management
- Centre maintenance
- Fundraising support
- Administration and IT
- Mentoring & supporting other volunteers
- SPCS pantry program



Volunteer rights and responsibilities

As a volunteer you have the right:

- To receive accurate information about the organisation and its policies and philosophies
- To receive a clearly written, comprehensive job description.
- To have an understanding of the lines of accountability.
- To be seen as belonging – through inclusion at meetings, social functions, etc.
- To receive support while performing your role.
- To receive proper training, initially and on an on-going basis.
- To know who to turn to with problems and difficulties.
- To have your work valued by the organisation.
- To regularly receive constructive feedback.
- To be trusted with confidential information if it is necessary to carry out your work.
- To be safe on the job and to be covered by insurance.
- To have choice and be able to negotiate.
- To be listened to and to be able say no.
- To carry out your role without being exploited.
- To be informed of the organisations policy on reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses incurred while on the job.
- To be consulted on matters which directly or indirectly affect you and your work.



Volunteer rights and responsibilities

As a volunteer you have the responsibility to:

- Understand and respect confidentiality.
- Have a non-judgemental approach.
- Respect the rights of clients and other workers in the organisation.
- Be reliable.
- Arrive on time.
- Notify the appropriate person in the organisation if you are not available or if you are running late.
- Agree to organisational policies regarding volunteers.
- Represent the interests of the organisation – not yourself.
- Carry out the specified job description.
- Give feedback and communicate relevant and important information.
- Be accountable and accept evaluation.
- Be committed to the program.
- Recognise personal and external limitations on commitment.
- Acknowledge decisions made by staff.
- Undertake training and have a good understanding of the organisation.
- Address areas of conflict with the appropriate staff member – the co-ordinator of volunteers or similar worker.
- Ask for support when it is needed.



General Information

Recruitment and Selection

Any individual wishing to volunteer will complete an application form and have an initial interview with the Volunteer Support Coordinator (VSC). A further interview may be arranged if deemed necessary. The interview will discuss the focus of the centre and the ethics and values under which the centre operates. The interview will also look at the areas of interest and skill of the volunteer with a view to matching those to the most appropriate area at the centre.

Commitment

Volunteers are asked to be realistic in their commitment of time to the centre. For example, volunteers wishing to train to be Community Support Workers are asked to commit to at least 12 months after completion of training. It can take many months to become fully familiar with the Community Support role. Other volunteering roles have different time commitments and volunteers need to understand this commitment before agreeing to undertake the role.

Mentoring

All new volunteers are mentored by an experienced volunteer who will provide guidance, support and training during the initial period of volunteering. The length of time taken for this mentoring process differs for each new volunteer and is designed to ensure the long-term success of new volunteers.

Ongoing Training

Ongoing training and information sessions are offered to volunteers at the centre on a regular basis. It is expected that volunteers attend training opportunities when possible.

Confidentiality

SPCS volunteers may be privy to confidential information about clients and other centre business. All volunteers, regardless of their role, are required to sign a confidentiality undertaking. It is important to always remember that all information regarding clients is strictly confidential and should not be discussed outside the organisation. Client matters may be discussed with the volunteer's mentor, the Volunteer Support Coordinator (VSC), Program Coordinator or CEO at any time. Volunteers must ensure that they do not enter into agreements of secrecy with clients that would not allow them to divulge information to SPCS staff. This is to ensure that both volunteers and clients are protected at all times. If a volunteer is uncertain about any aspect of confidentiality, a Volunteer Support Coordinator (VSC) should be contacted immediately to provide clarification.

SPCS recognises the right of volunteers to have their personal information kept strictly confidential. Volunteers' personal information will be kept locked, both electronically and in a locked filing cabinet and accessed by authorised personnel only.



SPCS Commitment to Child Safety

SPCS is committed to being a child-safe organisation, with zero tolerance for child abuse. We are working towards compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards. We all play an important role in protecting children, and any concerns for a child's safety must be discussed with a VSC, Program Coordinator or CEO. We aim to create a culture of child safety that reduces the opportunity for harm and gives SPCS workforce members a clear process to follow when someone raises concerns about child safety or reports abuse. Our Child Safe Statement of Commitment applies to all employees, volunteers, students on placement, contractors and contract employees.

Grievances

SPCS has official grievance policies and procedures which outline the avenues through which staff, volunteers, students, trainers and clients can resolve work, training or service-provision related complaints as they arise. This process pertains to all complainants, including clients, and enables the resolution of issues or concerns at the earliest opportunity with the Program Coordinator or CEO.

Parties involved in a dispute are encouraged to approach the grievance procedure with an open view, having made appropriate attempts to resolve problems through discussion and conciliation. Volunteers are directed to the location of all SPCSIC policies and procedures during the orientation program.

Insurance

All volunteers are covered by insurance whilst volunteering for Southern Peninsula Community Support. Department of Human Services (DHS) provides this coverage through an insurance broker. The insurance includes the following classes:

Public Liability and Products Liability

Professional Indemnity

Directors and Officers Company Reimbursement

Malpractice Liability

Personal Accident – Volunteers Only

Police Check & Working with Children Check

All staff and volunteers are required to undergo a Police Check and a Working with Children Check. The Working with Children Check must be linked to SPCS and needs to be renewed every five years. Any costs associated with obtaining these checks for staff and volunteers will be covered by SPCS.

Occupational Health and Safety

Staff, volunteers, clients and any persons who visit the Centre have a general responsibility and duty to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others and to co-operate with management in meeting these responsibilities. Volunteers are required to familiarise themselves with SPCS Occupational Health and Safety policies and procedures during their orientation program.



Any accident or injury, regardless of its severity must be reported to a VSC who will assist volunteers in completing an incident/injury report.

Any concerns regarding health and safety whilst volunteering should be reported to a VSC, Program Manager or CEO.

Incident Reporting

Incident report forms are official documents to be completed when incidents occur, involving clients, staff members, students, volunteers or members of the public.

If you are involved in an incident or have injured yourself whilst undertaking SPCS duties you must report to the Daily Operations person immediately and complete an incident report form.

Emergencies & Incidents

Here are some basic steps to take if you are involved in an incident:

1. stay calm
2. assess the situation – is anyone in imminent danger?
3. alert other staff and Emergency Responder of the situation either verbally or by use of the incident alarm
4. if necessary alert appropriate emergency services (police/ fire/ambulance)

Reimbursement

SPCS will reimburse staff and volunteers for costs incurred during approved travel while on SPCS business. Approval for travel cost reimbursement must be obtained by a VSC, Program Coordinator or CEO **prior** to the travel being undertaken.



Southern Peninsula Community Support Volunteer Position Description

Preamble

Southern Peninsula Community Support (SPCS) is a community based and managed not-for-profit agency located in Rosebud. Core functions undertaken by the agency include the provision of information, support and referral.

The Centre is managed by a Board of Management who employs a CEO to be responsible for the day-to-day management of the agency. All services provided are free, confidential and impartial.

Key Position Objective

To provide information, support and referral services to clients in a confidential and impartial manner, whilst operating within agency policies, procedures and standards and the relevant government legislation, laws and acts, and at all times maintaining the client's right to make their own choices and decisions.

Volunteers undertake a number of roles at SPCS, including reception, client interviewing, fresh food program, administrative tasks and data entry.

Duties and Responsibilities – all volunteers

- To identify and assess clients' requests/needs and provide practical support, crisis intervention and advocacy as required and as appropriate.
- To refer clients to other agencies that can provide assistance and support to best meet the client's needs.
- To provide accurate up-to-date information to clients by accessing agency information resources.
- To accurately record details of enquiries handled and to follow administrative procedures as per agency requirements.
- To be available to volunteer on a regular basis, generally one session per week.
- To maintain an up-to-date knowledge of issues and developments that impact on clients and the broader community.
- To attend training sessions as required by the agency.
- To have read, understood and agreed to comply with agency codes, policies and procedures.
- To have an understanding of the relevant acts, laws and legislation that impact on the volunteer role and the agency. This includes the Information Privacy Legislation 2000, and the Occupational Health and Safety Legislation 2004.
- To work co-operatively with other staff members, providing support and assistance where necessary and appropriate.

Qualifications Required – volunteer interviewers only

- To have successfully completed the nationally accredited unit of competency **CHCCCS004 Assess Co-existing Needs**.



Selection Criteria

Essential:

- To be able to work co-operatively with other staff.
- To demonstrate empathy and a non-judgmental attitude to clients at all times.
- To have good self-management skills.
- To be open, accepting and able to relate to people from various socio-economic levels and cultural backgrounds.
- To be willing to develop new skills as needed.
- To possess literacy and writing skills to an administrative level as required by the agency.
- To attend training sessions as required by the agency.

Desirable:

- A sense of humour.
- To be able to undertake and accept change.
- To be creative and flexible.

Responsible to:

The Board of Management through the CEO/Coordinator.

Hours of Work and Conditions

A rostered session as negotiated with Coordinator / CEO. The position is on a voluntary basis.

Training

All staff are encouraged to attend training sessions as arranged by the agency. Any staff member undertaking a course of study may request an exemption from attending certain training sessions.

Appraisal

All staff are required to assist with agency planning, evaluation and appraisal as required by the agency.

Police Check & Working with Children Check

All staff are required to undertake a police check and a Working with Children Check before commencing duties with the agency.

Grievance Procedure

As per Community Information Victoria Standards and Policies.



Southern Peninsula Community Support Volunteer Application Form

Name: Date of Birth:

Address:
.....

Phone Numbers:

Email address:

Emergency Contact:

Name: Contact number:

Emergency contact relationship to volunteer:

How did you hear about SPCS?

It now is a requirement of community workers to have a COVID-19 vaccination. Please advise:
Are you vaccinated? YES / NO and if so can you provide us with your certificate? YES / NO

What general experience (paid or unpaid) have you had since leaving school?

.....

.....

.....

What skills or qualifications do you have? (E.g. Skills in office work, Languages etc.)

.....

.....

.....

.....

Why are you interested in working for Southern Peninsula Community Support?

.....

.....

.....



Current SPCS Volunteering Opportunities

Role	Information	Please indicate if you are interested.
Community Information Worker	General reception and administrative duties	
Community Support Worker	Interviewing clients to provide support, information, referral and emergency relief	
No Interest Loan (NILS) Volunteer	Assisting clients to submit application for NILS program	
Fresh Food Program Volunteer	Set up and delivery of offsite Fresh Food program at Rosebud	
Southern Peninsula Laundry and Shower program (SPLaSh) Volunteer	Set up and delivery of offsite SPLaSh program at Rosebud	
SPCS Pantry Program	Receiving pantry warehouse deliveries and donations, managing stock and filling food parcels for clients	
Administration roles	Including areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ development and maintenance of information resources ▪ statistical collation ▪ data entry 	
Information & Technology	Including areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ social media ▪ website ▪ computer management ▪ software development 	
SPCS Board of Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentoring to becoming a board member ▪ Assisting in Board activities eg minute taking, public speaking 	
Centre maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gardening ▪ General maintenance ▪ Special building projects 	
SPCS fundraising team	Fundraising, donation seeking & recognition of donors	



Do you have any specific areas of interest you feel could be fulfilled through volunteering at Southern Peninsula Community Support and Information Centre?

.....
.....
.....
.....

How many days are you available to volunteer?

Which days would you prefer?

When would you like to commence volunteering?

.....

Please sign if you agree to the following conditions:

- 1. Your application will be followed by a selection interview.

(If Selected:)

- 2. Before you can interview a Community Information Client you must have successfully completed a training course approved by Community Information & Support Victoria (CISVic).
- 3. You will be available for a weekly rostered session at Southern Peninsula Community Support and Information Centre
- 4. You will be able to attend ongoing training sessions organised by Southern Peninsula Community Support and Information Centre.
- 5. You will abide by the code of conduct, code of ethics, child safety code of conduct and rules of Southern Peninsula Community Support & Information Centre, which is an incorporated association (codes are attached, to be signed and returned to SPCSIC).

Signature: Date:

References - Please give the details of **two** people we can contact for a reference, at least one must be a work (paid or unpaid) reference:

1. Name:.....

Phone:..... Relationship to you: **work / personal** (please circle)

2. Name:.....

Phone:..... Relationship to you: **work / personal** (please circle)

Southern Peninsula Community Support (SPCS) is committed to being a child-safe organisation, with zero tolerance for child abuse. Our Child Safe Statement of Commitment applies to all employees, volunteers, students on placement, contractors and contract employees. All reference checks include questions designed to uphold child safety at SPCSIC.



Southern Peninsula Community Support PHOTO AND VIDEO AUTHORISATION FORM

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Southern Peninsula Community Support (SPCS) occasionally takes photographs or videos of places, workforce and events in its day-to-day activities. These are used in SPCS reports and other publications, on our web site and social media.

We seek your permission to use images taken of you / your child.

SPCS collects personal contact details to ensure our promotional activities comply with the Privacy Act. Should you have any queries, or wish to gain access to your information, please phone our Manager on: 5986 1285.

Please indicate your permission preferences in the authorisation form below.

You can rescind this authority at any time by letting the SPCS Manager know via phone 5986 1285, email admin@spscic.org or post PO Box 91 Rosebud VIC 3939

AUTHORISATION FORM (if under 18, parent or guardian must complete authorisation)

Name:

Address:

.....

Phone:

I give permission for photographs of me / my child

.....to be used in SPCS publications, website or social media.

I understand that it will not be used for commercial purposes. I understand that I can rescind this authority at any time by letting SPCS Coordinator know via phone 5986 1285, email admin@spscic.org or post PO box 91 Rosebud, VIC 3939

.....
Signed (*to be signed by Guardian/Parent if subject under 18years*) Date



Southern Peninsula Community Support

CODE OF ETHICS

I, agree to abide by the Code of Ethics of Southern Peninsula Community Support as expressed in the following statements:

1. CONFIDENTIALITY

I will respect and safeguard the rights of agency clients to confidentiality, as stated in the CISVic policy on Confidentiality, which I have read and understood.

I will not give any information about a client to anyone outside the CISVic service unless I have the permission of the client concerned.

I will maintain confidentiality after the termination of my connection with the agency.

2. IMPARTIALITY

I will accept the responsibility of providing an impartial service, as stated in the CISVic policy on Impartiality and Objectivity, which I have read and understood.

I will relate to clients impartially, regardless of factors such as race, creed, political views or lifestyles.

I will give information and advice impartially on any subject.

I agree that the agency has a responsibility to collect and store information in an impartial manner.

3. SELF DETERMINATION OF THE ENQUIRER

I affirm the right of agency clients to make their own decisions.

4. ROLE OF AN SPCS WORKER

I will provide only those services for which I have received training.

5. PROTECTION OF VOLUNTEERS' PRIVACY

I will operate as a community information interviewer only at times and places officially approved by the Board of the agency and will not give my address or telephone number to any clients.



6. GRATUITIES, PERSONAL FINANCIAL/MATERIAL ASSISTANCE TO CLIENTS

I will in no circumstances receive payment or gratuities from clients for services rendered.

I will not provide clients with any material or financial assistance from my personal resources but will refer them to appropriate agencies.

7. PUBLIC STATEMENTS

I will not make public statements about the agency, its personnel, policies or services without the authority and permission of the agency Board.

8. RESPONSIBILITY TO BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

I will at all times be subject to the agency Rules of Incorporation, the policies and decisions of the agency Board of Management and any other rules or regulations that the Board may from time to time make current and operative.

If the Board terminates my services, or if I resign from the service, I will regard as binding upon me all pledges of trust and confidence appropriate to my previous position as a member of the agency.

In the event of my contravening any of the provisions of this Code of Ethics, the Board of management may terminate my services.

9. ACCEPTANCE OF THE CODE OF ETHICS

I will subscribe to this Code of Ethics. I will, upon appointment and prior to the commencement of duties, sign this Code of Ethics and copies shall be retained by the agency Board and myself.

Responsibility

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation and review of this policy.

All Board members, casual, permanent and contract staff and volunteers are responsible for adhering to all applicable clauses.

Signed:

Date:



Southern Peninsula Community Support **CODE OF CONDUCT**

I, agree to abide by the Code of Conduct of Southern Peninsula Community Support (SPCS) as expressed in the following statements:

SPCS workers are committed to providing community information and support services to their local community in a professional manner, without bias or judgement.

When representing SPCS, either in the agency or in the wider community, workers should conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the aims of the service.

Workers (paid and unpaid) shall:

- Support the organisation and each other, acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of others and acting with courtesy and respect.
- Act honestly and in good faith at all times in the interests of the organisation and its objectives, ensuring that all stakeholders, particularly those who are recipients of services, are treated fairly according to their rights.
- Perform their duties as best they can, taking into account their skills, experience, qualifications and position. They shall act in a safe, responsible and effective manner.
- Be punctual and reliable in their attendance and adhere to their prescribed and authorised hours of duty.
- Comply with the prescribed terms and conditions of their employment/engagement.
- Notify the organisation of any inability to attend duty as early as possible so as not to inconvenience others or delay the work of the organisation.
- Carry out their duties in a lawful manner and ensure the organisation carries out its business in accordance with the law, and recognise both legal and moral duties of their role.



- Respect and safeguard the property of the organisation, the public and colleagues; and observe safe work practices so as not to endanger themselves or others. [Refer to SPCS Occupation Health and Safety Policies for more information.]
- Maintain confidentiality regarding any information gained through their work and not divulge personal information or the address or phone numbers of staff, committee or service users. [Refer to SPCS Privacy Policy for additional information.]
- Ensure that all transactions, agreements and records that flow from relationships with Southern Peninsula Community Support’s stakeholders will be accurately and openly recorded in Southern Peninsula Community Support’s books and records, and no entries will be made which obscure the true nature of a transaction.
- Ensure that personal and financial interests do not conflict with the duty to the organisation.
- Work within Southern Peninsula Community Support’s policies and principles.

Responsibility

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation and review of this policy.

All Board of Management members, casual, permanent and contract staff and volunteers are responsible for adhering to all applicable clauses.

Signed:

Date:

Southern Peninsula Community Support

Child Safety Code of Conduct



All workforce members (staff, volunteers, contractors and board members) of Southern Peninsula Community Support (SPCS) are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

All workforce members of SPCS are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- adhering to SPCS Child Safe policy at all times, upholding SPCS Statement of Commitment to Child Safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that non-guardian adults are **not** left alone with a child, particularly in private or isolated areas where predation could occur
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to SPCS Volunteer Support Coordinator, Program Coordinator, CEO or Board, and ensure any allegation is reported to the police or child protection
- reporting any child safety concerns to SPCS Volunteer Support Coordinator, Program Coordinator, CEO or Board
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

Southern Peninsula Community Support Child Safety Code of Conduct



Workforce members must not:

- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps. Sitting on laps could be appropriate sometime, for example while reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family outside of our organisation without SPCS Volunteer Support Coordinator, Program Coordinator, CEO or Board written consent (for example, no babysitting). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate
- have any online contact with a child or their family (unless necessary, for example case worker emailing appropriate relevant information to a parent)
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to SPCS Volunteer Support Coordinator, Program Coordinator, CEO or Board.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

I agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

1. Confidentiality policy

Preamble

The Policy document on the aims and principles of Community Information & Support Victoria Incorporated (CISVic) states that members provide a free, confidential, impartial and independent service.

Staff obtain information about clients which they would not have if they were members of the public. They gain this information because of their position in providing a confidential service. Therefore, confidentiality procedures apply to this information. This in no way means that staff condone any illegal matters or plans of a client. If a client commits a crime on an agency's premises, they forfeit all rights to confidentiality.

Definition

The Macquarie Dictionary defines "confidential" as "spoken or written confidence; in secret; entrusted with secrets or private affairs."

Confidentiality exists when private matters are revealed in complete trust. To keep that trust, member agencies provide a confidential service.

Policy statement

No details learned from a client, or the fact that the client has contacted the agency, will be passed on to anyone outside the service without permission from the client.

Implications of the confidentiality policy

This principle has consequences in a number of situations:

1) Client interviews

Agencies should provide such facilities as are necessary to ensure that interviews with clients cannot be overheard by any other person.

2) Discussion of cases

All agency members (including the Committee of Management) must sign the CISVic Code of Ethics.

a) Within the agency

Since the client's approach is to the service rather than to an individual worker, discussion of cases either with colleagues or ancillary service workers who have signed the CISVic Code of Ethics, is acceptable. Case discussion can be a useful way of ensuring the provision of a high quality service to clients.

b) Within the Committee of Management

If matters of concern relating to a client need to be brought to the attention of the Committee of Management, the client must not be identified unless absolutely necessary.

c) With trainees and students

Trainees, students and anyone else working in the agency in a similar role should sign the CISVic Code of Ethics because they may have access to confidential material. Trainees must be informed that they must not discuss specific clients in any training session.

d) Between agencies

Discussion of cases or clients between member agencies is acceptable provided all participants have signed the CISVic Code of Ethics. It is recommended that clients be advised that such communication will take place. Any agency has the right to withhold information from another agency if they consider it to be in the client's interest.

e) Between an agency and CISVic

CISVic staff and members of the Board and its Sub-Committees all sign the Code of Ethics. Therefore, discussions of cases between member agencies and CISVic is acceptable.

3) Safekeeping of agency records

All client records are treated as confidential and must be locked away at all times when the agency is not staffed.

Care must be taken in the handling of records when the agency is open. Confidential material should not be able to be seen by members of the public.

The Statute of Limitations for civil actions is six years. Client records should therefore be retained for at least six years. Arrangements should then be made for the secure destruction of confidential records, preferably by burning, shredding or commercial disposal.

Ancillary service workers or specialist advisers are restricted to their own case records or only such client information as is directly relevant to matters being handled by those workers.

An agency's resource file may be accessible to individuals or community groups. Therefore, no client information should be held in the same location.

Such an arrangement should extend to the addresses of women's refuges or similar services, whose location must be kept secret.

4) Client statistics

One of the aims of member agencies is “to exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services” by making statistical information available for planning and advocacy. During the transfer of such information, no details must be given which would breach confidentiality by enabling clients to be identified.

5) Negotiation, advocacy and referral on behalf of a client

When a staff member is acting on behalf of a client, it may be considered necessary to supply the name, address or telephone number of the client to a third party. If permission is not given, the staff member must respect the client’s right to withhold those details. The staff member must be careful not to breach confidentiality when seeking information from another agency by inadvertently identifying the client either by name or by description without their permission.

6) Emergency relief

In the administration of Emergency Relief, the client’s right to confidentiality must be respected. In seeking assistance from another agency for a client, no details concerning the client may be given without the client’s permission.

7) Disclosure of information to other agencies

Should approaches be made by non-member agencies or organisations for information about a client, they should be advised about the CISVic policy of confidentiality, where information cannot be given without a client’s permission.

8) Procedure to follow in exceptional circumstances

It is extremely rare for there to be any justification for a breach of confidentiality. What appears, at the time, to be a reason for a breach of the policy may prove to be have been unnecessary. On further examination alternative action may be more appropriate.

If a staff member has any doubt about the maintenance of confidentiality in any situation, the following procedures should be followed:

- a) A staff member who is faced with a situation where there appears to be a conflict between the duty of a responsible citizen and the need to preserve confidentiality, must first consult the Co-ordinator or some other person nominated within the agency.
- b) If a decision is made to breach confidentiality CISVic must be contacted.
- c) If time constraints make contact with CISVic impossible, and staff decide that action is imperative, any breach of confidentiality must be reported to CISVic as soon as possible thereafter.
- d) All enquiries to CISVic about possible breaches of confidentiality must go directly to the Executive Officer or the President. If present, the Executive Officer or President will give priority to answering such enquiries. If absent, the enquiry will be referred to a member of the CISVic Executive who will act instead.

9) Criminal offences in an agency

a. Precautionary measures.

Agencies should take all possible precautionary measures to prevent an offence being committed on the premises.

These measures should include:

- keeping all bags and valuables out of sight;
- rostering more than one person at a time;
- organising the layout of interview rooms so that agency staff are within easy access of each other and have an easy exit;
- installing, if necessary, an alarm system between parts of the building.

b. Violence

If a staff member appears to be in imminent danger of injury from a client which cannot be resolved with the assistance of co-workers, it may be necessary to call the police. The physical protection of the agency and all people therein is a consideration which overrides confidentiality.

If an act of violence is committed on agency premises, staff should contact the police. If there is any question of proceedings being taken against the offender, the police may take the names and addresses of those present. It must be made clear that these are disclosed solely because an offence has been committed. The CISVic Confidentiality Policy must be explained to the police who should be asked not to record the names of those not directly involved.

c. Other criminal offences within the agency

In the case of any other offence within the agency, consideration should be given to involving the police only when there is definite evidence rather than a suspicion of an offence having been committed. In such a case, the procedure in Section 8 should be followed.

10) Disclosure of information to the police or courts

There is no legal duty on the part of the agency or its staff to disclose information about clients to the police. If a client provides information to a staff member which indicates involvement in criminal activity, information must be kept confidential. Discussions of options should include the possibility of the client going to the police or other authorities.

In situations where it appears that a client's intended course of action may involve a criminal offence, the staff member should encourage the client to consider other possible actions. If a client persists in an intention to be involved in a criminal offence, the staff member may wish to tell the client that they feel uneasy about discussing a criminal action and would like to terminate the interview.

There is no duty in law to disclose a criminal offence, committed or intended. It is an offence to assist a criminal, or intending criminal, or to withhold information for a reward of some kind.

If an agency is approached by the police for information about a client, the agency should explain the policy of confidentiality, point out that no detail learned from a client, including the fact of any visit they have made, can be divulged without the client's permission.

If the police are convinced that information being withheld from them by the agency is vital to their case, they can apply to the court of a subpoena.

A staff member subpoenaed as a witness has no privilege to protect themselves from divulging in court any matter which has come to their knowledge in the course of their agency work. In this respect, they stand in exactly the same relation to the courts as any other individual, except a lawyer. When called to give evidence they should first make a statement that the information was obtained during a confidential interview and ask the judge or magistrate whether, after such an explanation, they are required to give evidence. If the judge rules that evidence must be given, the staff member would then be in contempt of court if they refused.

During legal proceedings relating to the defendant's visit to the agency, the protection of the confidentiality of other clients who have visited the agency on a particular day is essential. If records are ultimately produced in court as a result of subpoena, the court should be asked to treat them in such a way that only the pertinent matter is revealed to the court.

3. Impartiality and objectivity policy

1. Member agencies of Community Information & Support Victoria are available to everyone, and information about services is provided in an impartial and objective manner. This includes the collection and provision of community information.
2. The provision of an impartial and objective service requires that agency staff should recognise their own prejudices and take action to control their feelings and opinions when dealing with a particular enquirer.
3. Services shall be provided in a non-judgemental manner regardless of a person's cultural background, religion, political beliefs, gender, sexuality etc.
4. Service shall be provided without prejudice and in the best interests of the client.
5. The image of Community Information & Support Centres should reflect the impartial nature of the service and be accessible to all members of the community.
6. When parties involved in a dispute approach agencies for advice, each party should be advised in an impartial and objective way.