

**Cottonwood, Inc.
Policies and Procedures**

SECTION: Consumer Related

POLICY NO: 05-022

SUBJECT: Human Sexuality

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EFFECTIVE DATE: August 1988

Policy:

It is Cottonwood, Inc.'s policy that sexual activity be dealt with in a manner consistent with the individual's right to privacy, sexual preferences, ability to give consent and the dignity to make personal choices, even if risk is involved. Counseling and information will be offered to ensure the individual's awareness of the implications of his/her behavior and to maximize the development of appropriate and responsible behavior. At all times, confidentiality is to be maintained.

Procedures:

1. Teaching of appropriate socio-sexual behaviors can occur in a variety of times, places, and activities. Whenever possible, all staff are to use "teachable" moments to train responsible behavior, (e.g., consent, contraception, disease prevention).

2. When intervention is necessary to stop an inappropriate display of sexual behavior, a respect for the dignity and privacy of the individual will be stressed. A person's right to privacy should be upheld to the maximum extent possible, following established supervision guidelines for each individual. This policy extends to both the physical environment and staff routines. Private space may be entered by staff without consumer permission when there is evidence of danger, the evidence of aggressive behavior or property destruction or the belief that a consumer's rights are being violated.

Cottonwood, Inc. recognizes that due to an individual's access to the community and the above opportunities for privacy and expression, there is no realistic way to fully monitor an individual's inappropriate behavior at all times. Consensual sexual activity in the residence is not sufficient reason to interrupt a consumer's right to privacy. Intervention due to suspected abuse or coercion should be documented on an Incident Report. Possible follow-up may include a risk assessment, Behavioral Support Plan, referral to outside resources, a report to APS, or law enforcement involvement.

3. Information about birth control and safe sex practices will be available. Those consumers needing counseling or medical assistance will be directed to their case managers who will make the appropriate referral. The use of birth control is a personal decision. Risky behavior may initiate a risk assessment process.

4. Consumers who have expressed an interest in marriage will be counseled as to the legal and social requirements associated with marriage.

5. Cottonwood, Inc. will assist the person or the person's guardian with understanding the consumer's rights with regard to sexuality, as well as the potential risks or negative consequences associated with sexual behavior. As sexuality is an inherent part of all adults' lives, the Person Centered Support Plan (PCSP) process will address this aspect. The case manager will document necessary information including consent issues and risk issues as appropriate.
6. Ability to give informed consent will be determined by the team in the event that a risk assessment, sexual behavior, or other evidence of sexual curiosity indicates that the individual is interested in sexual activity. A referral to a therapist or other trained individual may be necessary or advised to help ascertain ability to give consent.
7. The "Sexuality Issues Manual" will be maintained. Case managers and other responsible parties will consult the manual as needed.
8. All staff and consumers must ask permission before touching another person to make sure the touch is welcome and appropriate. Staff should redirect or intervene if they witness a touch that is unwelcome or inappropriate for the work setting. Redirecting to a more appropriate greeting or show of affection is essential.
9. Staff including production workers, are not permitted to date or have physical relations with consumers.