

CONNECTICUT VALLEY HOSPITAL OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE MANUAL

SECTION II:	ORGANIZATION FOCUSED FUNCTIONS
CHAPTER 8:	Management of Human Resources
PROCEDURE 8.42:	Guidelines Concerning the Prohibition on Sexual or Otherwise Exploitative Relationships Between Employees and Patients/Clients (DMHAS Work Rule #24)
REVISED:	03/20/00; 03/23/07; 04/13; 3/28/16; Reviewed 06/18
Governing Body Approval:	04/25/13; 4/28/16; 07/02/18(<i>electronic vote</i>)

PURPOSE: To provide guidelines that define the therapeutic relationship between employee and patient/ client and delineate appropriate boundaries to safeguard the well-being of employees and patients/clients and prevent the development of non-therapeutic and potentially harmful relationships. DMHAS Work Rule #24 is, “The development of sexual or otherwise exploitative relationships between employees and clients is prohibited.”

SCOPE: All CVH staff

PROCEDURE:

Employees who provide services to patients/clients at Connecticut Valley Hospital (CVH) or patients/clients of other programs operated or funded by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) shall adhere to the following Code of Conduct guidelines which, although not all inclusive, shall inform the manner in which patients/clients are treated and shall be considered to be in adherence to the Code of Conduct as it applies to the employee/ patient/ client relationship. In all cases, the conduct of the employee shall be designed to advance the recovery of the patient/client and facilitate rapport in a therapeutic alliance.

1. A key factor in the appropriateness of an action between patients/clients and employees is the context in which it occurs. Typically, conflicts concerning boundary violations tend to occur in one or more of the following areas: Role, Place, Time, Behavior and Use of Funds. For guidance, the employee must consider whether his/ her actions are consistent with facility policies, procedures and usual practice. In addition, the employee must consider whether the action is being done openly. If there is a question regarding propriety, the issue should always be discussed with the employee’s manager with documentation of such discussions in the record. In general, employees are required to seek guidance from their manager anytime they depart from common practice.
2. For situations in which a relationship existed prior to the admission of a patient/client or employment of a staff member into CVH or another facility or program of DMHAS, this relationship shall not interfere or appear to interfere with the treatment to one individual. Employees who will be engaged in treatment or support services to the patient/client have an obligation to disclose any existing relationships to a clinical or program manager who will

then ensure the employee is not assigned in a clinical, supervisory or advocacy relationship to the patient/ client. Such disclosures should be documented in the care record or in the supervisory record, as appropriate.

If an employee develops a relationship outside of a work situation with someone who they subsequently learn is a patient/client, the employee will follow the same procedure of disclosing such relationship to a clinical or program manager as described above. The clinical or program manager will have the same responsibilities for ensuring the employee is not assigned in a clinical, supervisory or advocacy relationship to the patient/client, and for documentation, outlined in the previous paragraph.

These guidelines are an interpretation of Work Rule #24 and are in addition to any of the existing DMHAS General Work Rules which involve patient/ client/employee issues, interactions, or treatment and Professional Codes of Ethics.

Issues regarding potential violations of this Work Rule may be referred to the Facility Director of Human Resources.

These guidelines shall apply for two years subsequent to the discharge of a patient/client from CVH or another agency, facility or program of DMHAS or in accordance with professional licensing standards or Codes of Ethics when such standards or codes require a longer period of applicability.

Violations of this procedure, and of the agency work rules, may subject an employee to serious disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from State service.

Definitions:

1. Employee: As defined in CT General Statutes, Section 5.196, any person employed by the State of CT, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services engaged or involved in the care, treatment, or support of patients/clients and services.
2. Patient/Client: Any person who is the current recipient of treatment, support or therapeutic services through contract, funded or state operated programs in CVH or DMHAS, whether on an in-patient or out-patient basis.

References: DMHAS Policy/Procedure AC-23-, D-31, "DMHAS Work Rule #24"