



AMIS DE LA SANTÉ MENTALE
FRIENDS FOR MENTAL HEALTH

CODE OF ETHICS

FRIENDS FOR MENTAL HEALTH

PRACTICES AND EXPECTED CONDUCT OF STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND USERS

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The words and expressions that follow when they appear in this *Code of Ethics* are interpreted according to the definitions given below:

Intervention team

Refers to all counsellors in a program of *Friends for Mental Health (West Island)*;

FMH, organism or organization

Refers to the organization *Friends for Mental Health (West Island)*;

Staff

Refers to anyone who works at *Friends for Mental Health*, including professionals, volunteers and trainees;

User

Refers to anyone who receives or has received services from *Friends for Mental Health*.

CONDITIONS OF APPLICATION AND RESTRICTIONS

The *Code of Ethics* applies to FMH staff, members of the FMH Board of Directors, volunteers, and users who benefit from FMH services.

The practices and conduct defined herein are exercised within the framework of the functions of each.

For staff members of a professional order, this *Code of Ethics* applies in complement to that of the concerned profession.

Certain articles of the *Code of Ethics* may, for just and reasonable grounds, be limited in their application. In the event that such grounds exist, they must be documented and shared with the authority.

FMH is a public non-profit organization (NPO) within the meaning of the *Act respecting health services and social services*. As a result, the available human and financial resources may limit, in some cases, access to certain services.

A LOOK AT OUR ACT

This revised *Code of Ethics* reaffirms the values that drive the organization. Whether administrative, clinical or humanitarian, the shared values set out below give a particular insight into the decisions and

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behaviours of each value. The purpose of this *Code of Ethics* is to guide staff, board of directors, volunteers and members of the organization with respect to the FMH's philosophy of intervention. The *Code of Ethics* also equally serves to clarify the organization's expectations in terms of behaviours and attitudes.

This document not only includes the rights of users, but above all it determines the conduct and practices expected of staff, volunteers and trainees practicing within FMH.

This document is in some way a guide reflecting the state of mind that must be common to all people who have to intervene with users. It is the expression of a consensus around an ideal of qualities that is reflected daily in the relationship between staff and users as well as in the services offered by the organization.

MISSION OF FRIENDS FOR MENTAL HEALTH

FMH is a non-profit, bilingual, community organization in the West Island of Montreal. It is dedicated to supporting the entourage of those living with mental health issues to allow them to better UNDERSTAND the mental illness of a loved one and develop a more positive approach for themselves and for their beloved. Through a personalized relationship based on trust and mutual respect, these people receive the psychosocial support, training and information they need to improve their quality of life and face the challenges of daily living within their families and their communities.

FMH strongly believes that the entourage is very much involved in the well-being of the person with a mental health problem. More specifically, FMH is convinced that the entourage needs support and encouragement to actively participate in the recovery of their loved ones. For all these reasons, FMH has the responsibility of supporting and helping the families and caregivers in their commitment to their loved ones. Better understanding of the problem by caregivers and family members is a guarantee of their capacity for positive action. Families and caregivers deserve the support of society. Support that contributes to the development of an inclusive society.

With regard to services, FMH is committed to providing quality services based on best practices, as quickly as possible. These reliable, personalized, coordinated, continuous, complementary, fair, and safe services must comply with each individual's needs and aspirations.

The user, that is to say the entourage of a person with a mental health problem, is at the heart of the concerns of the organization. We firmly believe that the user deserves our full consideration with respect to their freedom, individuality, dignity, private life, autonomy and abilities. It must be handled in a responsible manner, with authenticity, courtesy, fairness, understanding and empathy. Finally, all of the organization's stakeholders encourage family and loved ones to participate and support their beloved in their recovery process, without neglecting their own needs.

SHARED VALUES

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The three great values upon which FMH relies to guide its decisions and actions are: authentic humanism, professionalism, and dynamism, each of which can be defined as follows:

Authentic humanism: Respect for the dignity and autonomy of the individual, with solidarity, authenticity and commitment.

Professionalism: Knowledge, know-how and expertise that allows FMH to offer, provide and maintain high quality services.

Dynamism: Creativity and action. Taking action to build, create, innovate, dare, accomplish, achieve and to ensure leadership.

WORK CONTEXT

Acting alone as a counselor poses limits and constraints, and in this regard, cooperation and collaboration between counselors and external partners are necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the organization in its mission.

Certain decisions and behaviours may present a danger for ourselves or to others. FMH prioritizes the security of every one of the users and staff members, at all times.

All information obtained, recorded and exchanged is done in complete confidentiality.

Laws and regulations specify the rights of users and provide specific contexts for intervention. Thus, they remain an imperative must.

EXPECTED CONDUCT

Driven by shared values, all are entitled to expect that the counsellors, volunteers, including board members, employees, and users of FMH embody these values in non-negotiable behaviours, affirmed below as ethical standards, namely:

- Opt for mutual respect between counselors and users and between colleagues within the organization;
- Avoid any situation of conflict of interest and not take advantage of his function to obtain, for himself or for a third party, services or benefits to which he would not otherwise be entitled.
- Opt for openness to shared and concerted work;
- Take the necessary means to ensure beyond any doubt his competence;
- Believe in coaching the clientele;

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- Act with transparency and a clear, honest attitude;
- Act with authenticity in his relations, with respect and expression of their limitations;
- Promote in all circumstances the reduction of prejudices against mental illness;
- Maintain a fair professional and relational distance between the counsellor and the user;
- Act with politeness, respect and open-mindedness; and
- Have the ability to self-evaluate and be evaluated from a perspective of development and continuous improvement.

PHILOSOPHY OF MANAGEMENT

- Everyone expects to have all the information required for the performance of their duties;
- Everyone expects respect and consideration from others;
- Everyone wants support and cooperation;
- Everyone wants to benefit from trust; and
- Everyone wishes to benefit from the means and opportunities to develop their skills

CONFIDENTIALITY

It is imperative to guarantee the strictest confidentiality to the user, everywhere and at all times. No one may be released from professional privacy except with the express authorization of the user or where permitted by law. To this end, here are the different behaviours and measures to apply, namely:

- Keep private all confidential information obtained in the course of their work;
- Inform the user that relevant information will be given to members of the team of counsellors in order to provide the services offered. Where appropriate, the user may refuse the authorization to disclose certain information;
- Inform the user of any information obtained about him and any steps taken for him;
- Hold discussions in an appropriate place ensuring confidentiality to prevent indiscreet conversations about the user and the services rendered to him;
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- Respect and ensure the right of the user to take cognizance of the documents concerning themselves in their own file, except to the extent that the exercise of this right is prejudicial to the user;
- Watch that all means used to transmit information about the user (eg: notebook and other communication tool) are subject to strict and defined confidentiality rules;
- Take notice of information contained in the user's file only if the counsellor is authorized to do so;
- Inform the user that they may be solicited by the organization to make a donation or to answer a survey. At any time, the user may ask not to be solicited by FMH. To this end, a form is made available to management. At no time is the organization allowed to solicit minor users.

AUTONOMY AND PARTICIPATION

- Allow the user to express their needs, expectations and constraints, taking into account their opinion as to the duration and the content of the services they require to ensure their full participation and, if necessary, refer the user to specialized services.
- Inform the FMH support modalities, encouraging participation according to the established course, and allow the user to accept or refuse a service or services;
- Recognize the right of the user, employees and volunteers to express dissatisfaction or complaint.
- Encourage the family and caregivers as well as employees and volunteers

PROTECTION AND SECURITY

- Be concerned at all times about the health, well-being and safety of the user and the counsellor;
- Have an irreproachable conduct, without violence, either verbal or physical, and be vigilant against any form of economic, social, sexual or other harassment of which the user, employee, volunteer, or member of the Board, could be subject to.
- In the event of such a situation, the incident must be discussed between the concerned persons before any other step is taken. If the situation cannot be resolved, the immediate superior must be notified and the parties involved should refer to the FMH policy against harassment and abuse;
- Ensure, before ceasing to offer services to the user, that this cessation is not prejudicial to the user.

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USER RIGHTS OF RECOURSE

- Recognize the user's right to express or make criticisms of services rendered to them;
- Inform the user of the recourses available to him in case of dissatisfaction or if they wish to lodge a complaint; and
- Accompany and assist the user in the exercise of their rights as a user and as a citizen.

BREACHES

In the event that you are aware of a breach to this FMH *Code of Ethics* by a staff member, board member, volunteer, or user, please report this breach to management at the Friends for Mental Health by phone at **514-696-0972**, or by email at info@asmfmh.org, or file a complaint on the FMH website at www.asmfmh.org.

You may also report this breach to the Board of Directors at ca@asmfmh.org. If after all these steps, you still have concerns, please contact the local Complaints Commissioner at 1-844-630-5125 or commissariat.plaintes.comtl@ssss.gouv.qc.ca.

Adopted by the Board of Directors, August 30th, 2018



President of the Board of Directors

Friends for Mental Health

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