



NURTURE + STRENGTHEN + CONNECT OUR COMMUNITY

GRIEVANCE POLICY

What is a Grievance?

A grievance is a complaint or concern formally expressed by an individual or group in an organization about a personal or workplace issue. It may be about any act, omission, situation or decision that is considered unfair, discriminatory or unjustified.

Values Statement:

At the commencement of any formal grievance process the parties involved will be required to acknowledge a list of values, and to sign them as a basis for moving forward. (See list attached).

Grievance Handling Procedure for Staff and Volunteers:

Step 1: Try to sort it out directly with the person involved.

At times people offend or hurt others intentionally, but it is far more common for people to unintentionally hurt or offend others. However, regardless of whether it was intentional or unintentional, it is not acceptable for people to behave in a way that hurts or offends others.

Therefore, if someone behaves inappropriately, it is important for you to tell the person who is acting in a hurtful or unsuitable manner that their behaviour is not acceptable. This gives them the chance to stop or change what they are doing.

If you find this step too difficult to take alone, you may find a trusted friend in the organization to accompany you. This person is to be a supportive companion, but not to speak for you.

Step 2: If Step 1 is not successful, referring to the LIVEfree PROJECT Organisational Structure go to your direct supervisor, preferably accompanied by the other person involved.

Your supervisor can assist in sorting out problems related to your immediate role or organizational environment. They can advise about the best way to tackle the problem. All parties involved in the complaint are to handle the complaint confidentially.

If the complaint involves the person to whom you are responsible, and you have carried out Step 1 without resolution, then take your grievance to the next level of authority. (Step 3).

Step 3: Go to the next level of authority as outlined in the Organisational Structure

Most grievances will have been resolved in the first or second steps. However, if this has not happened, take your grievance to the next level of authority. This may be the Program Coordinator, or the Director.

In Steps 2 and 3, once the person to whom you go decides if they are the right person to deal with the complaint they may:

- Explain the grievance handling procedure; including what may happen if there is enough evidence to support the complaint or what will happen if there is not enough evidence to support the complaint.
- Arrange for mediation between the complainant and the person against whom the complaint is made, in order to seek agreement on acceptable future behaviour.
- Explain where you can go if either party is not happy with the way the complaint is being dealt with.
- Explain other places to go for more information.
- File a written record of the complaint, normally provided by the complainant.
- Ensure that whatever has been agreed/decided upon actually happens.

Step 4: Refer the matter to the Board.

Very serious grievances, or those that have an unsatisfactory outcome from Steps 1- 3 above, may be referred to the Board, who will ensure its proper hearing from all parties and a fair and equitable decision based on its findings.

Grievance Handling Procedure for Participants:

Step 1: Informal Complaint and Informal Resolution

In the first instance complaints/grievances or problems will be dealt with by either the Program Coordinator or Director. Clients should telephone the Program Coordinator/Director and make an appointment to discuss the matter informally

Step 2: Formal Complaint

Lodging a written complaint. All efforts will be made to resolve the complaint through informal processes before lodging a formal written complaint. Formal complaints must be made in writing, on the Participant Complaint Form.

Once a Participant Complaint Form is received, the Program Coordinator/Director will attempt to resolve the complaint by setting up another meeting between themselves and the complainant.

The Program Coordinator/Director will notify the participant in writing the outcome of formal resolution

Step 3: Third Party

Should the matter not be resolved in Steps 1 and 2, the Program Coordinator/Director will seek to resolve the matter.

If the complaint is unable to be resolved, the participant will be provided with the contact details for their appropriate external body, such as, the NDIS Commission. Support to make the complaint will be offered and provided if required.

The complaint will be tracked in process, and this will be documented. The complaints register will be checked regularly to ensure that all active complaints are followed up

All feedback including complaints will be used to inform changes to the operation of our services.

Responsibilities:

Each person involved in the Grievance Procedure has the responsibility:

- To take steps to resolve the issue according to these procedures.
- Not to make malicious complaints.
- To maintain confidentiality and avoid gossiping about complaints being dealt with.
- To avoid involving another third party in the grievance process, other than has been outlined above.
- To minimise interference with other responsibilities in relation to the programs within the organisation.

Endorsement of Basic Values:

It is important that the following values be endorsed by each party involved in a conflict or disagreement. Doing so will provide a basis for a healthy and satisfactory resolution to the situation.

1. I accept that people are different and will have differences with one another.
2. I accept that conflict or disagreement will be an experience of life and that it can be helpful and useful.

3. I recognize that avoiding issues or relationships solely for the reason that there may be conflict is not good.
4. I will seek to have conflict dealt with quickly.
5. I will show love, respect and self-control towards the other person/people seeking to do so in a fair and equitable way.
6. I will focus discussion on issues, relationships or descriptions of feelings. I will not resort to inappropriate behaviour including, but not limited to:
 - Name calling or labeling
 - Guilt making ("Look how you made me feel")
 - Rejecting or discrediting another person
7. I will listen well and not override or interrupt.
8. I will recognize that change may need to take place in me first before progress can be made.
9. I commit myself to honesty, openness and have a willingness to seek to understand.
10. I will work towards resolution and reconciliation, accepting differences where appropriate.
11. I will not gossip to others, and will seek to build the kind of trust upon which a resolution may be built.
12. I will not use information from confidential sources, nor indicate that such information exists.
13. If I feel progress not being made I will seek competent, skilled help.