



**Mental Health  
Australia**

# **Code of Conduct**

August 2022

**Mentally healthy people,  
mentally healthy communities**

[mhaustralia.org](https://mhaustralia.org)

# Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Scope	2
3	Key terms and definitions	2
4	Principles of appropriate behaviour	3
4.1	BEHAVE FAIRLY AND EQUITABLY	3
4.2	ACT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST	3
4.3	REFUSE IMPROPER REWARDS OR GIFTS	3
4.4	AVOID CONFLICTS OF INTEREST	3
4.5	OBSERVE THE LAW	4
4.6	ACT RESPONSIVELY AND RESPONSIBLY	4
4.7	TREAT PEOPLE WITH RESPECT AND PROPER COURTESY	4
4.8	OBSERVE THE PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY, DIVERSITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION	4
4.9	EXERCISE CAUTION WHEN MAKING PUBLIC COMMENT	4
4.10	PROTECT CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION	5
4.11	WORK DILIGENTLY AND EFFICIENTLY	5
5	Compliance	6
6	Supporting Documents	7



<b>7</b>	<b>Documentation &amp; Approvals</b>	<b>8</b>
7.1	Document location	8
7.2	Document history	8
7.3	Date for review	8



# 1 Introduction

Mental Health Australia is the peak, national non-government organisation representing and promoting the interests of the Australian Mental Health Sector. Our mission is to create the best mental health system in the world.

High standards of integrity and ethical behaviour are required of any person who is carrying out duties for or on behalf of Mental Health Australia.

This Code of Conduct provides a framework of ethical principles, obligations and standards that guide work performance, professional standards, and the conduct of relationships with others. Given the diverse range of activities in which workers are involved on a day-to-day basis, the Code does not attempt to provide a detailed and exhaustive list of what should be done in every work situation. Instead, the Code represents a broad framework for ethical conduct.

Workers must also have regard to the policies, directives, procedures and guidelines issued by Mental Health Australia and as amended or replaced from time to time, which may set out more detail on particular matters referred to in this Code.

If there is any doubt about the application of the Code of Conduct, or the appropriate course of action to be adopted in a particular situation, the worker is expected to discuss the matter with an Authorised Person.



## 2 Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all workers, including the Board, managers, employees, contractors, consultants, participants on consumer and carer forums or groups, and any other persons who undertake duties for, or who otherwise represent, Mental Health Australia.

## 3 Key terms and definitions

**Authorised Person:** means, for the purposes of this Code:

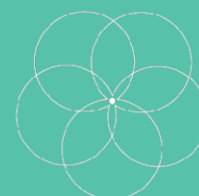
- for employees – their manager
- for contractors, consultants and other persons – their engagement or contract manager
- consumer and carer forums or groups – their Mental Health Australia contact, project manager or representative
- for managers – the Director or CEO
- for Director – the CEO
- for Company Secretary – the Chairperson and CEO
- for CEO – the Chairperson
- for Board – the Chairperson

**Gifts and benefits:** include the transfer of money, or other property or benefits, without payment or for a payment less than the normal market value. The term may also include a loan of money made on a permanent or indefinite basis.

**Interest:** includes pecuniary interest, political ties, family relationships or involvement with commercial, political, religious, or other organisations.

**Pecuniary interest:** is an interest that a person has in a matter because of a reasonable likelihood or expectation of appreciable financial gain or loss to the person. Pecuniary interest may include real estate, shares, debts, business interests and investments.

**Workers:** includes all employees, Board, contractors (including temporary contractors), consultants, participants on consumer and carer forums or groups, and any other persons who undertake duties for, or who otherwise represent, Mental Health Australia.



## 4 Principles of appropriate behaviour

Workers of Mental Health Australia are required to adhere to the following principles.

### 4.1 BEHAVE FAIRLY AND EQUITABLY

- 4.1.1 Observe fairness, transparency and integrity in all dealings with employees, members, stakeholders, and the public
- 4.1.2 Strive to earn and sustain trust

### 4.2 ACT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

- 4.2.1 Promote confidence in the integrity of Mental Health Australia by always acting in the public interest and not private interest
- 4.2.2 Protect the reputation of Mental Health Australia in all circumstances both at work and outside work

### 4.3 REFUSE IMPROPER REWARDS OR GIFTS

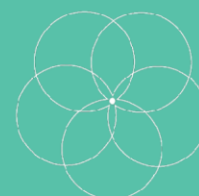
- 4.3.1 Not accept a gift, reward or benefit that is intended to, or appears to be aimed at, influencing decisions or behaviour
- 4.3.2 If a gift is offered, the gift must be declared on the Gift/ Benefit Declaration Form so a decision can be made to retain, dispose or return the gift. The gift will be recorded on the Gift Register

### 4.4 AVOID CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- 4.4.1 Take reasonable steps to avoid any conflict of interest (real or apparent)
- 4.4.2 If such situations cannot be avoided, notify an Authorised Person of the conflict of interest. Authorised Persons must take appropriate action to separate the Worker from the matter giving rise to the conflict of interest and ensure no actual benefits accrue to the Worker

Examples that may give rise to a conflict of interest include:

- Personal financial interest in a matter involving Mental Health Australia
- Personal beliefs or attitudes that influence the impartiality of advice given
- Personal relationships with the people Mental Health Australia is dealing with that go beyond the level of a professional working relationship
- Outside employment that compromises the integrity of the Worker and Mental Health Australia



## 4.5 OBSERVE THE LAW

- 4.5.1 Comply with applicable Australian laws

## 4.6 ACT RESPONSIVELY AND RESPONSIBLY

- 4.6.1 Work in a prompt and responsive manner
- 4.6.2 Accept responsibility for own decisions and actions and for any reasonably foreseeable outcome of those decisions and actions
- 4.6.3 Endeavour to always promote Mental Health Australia's values and objectives

## 4.7 TREAT PEOPLE WITH RESPECT AND PROPER COURTESY

- 4.7.1 All people are to be treated with respect
- 4.7.2 All dealings are to be fair, consistent, and non-discriminatory
- 4.7.3 Must not harass or bully any person
- 4.7.4 All staff have a responsibility to ensure that the workplace is free from all forms of harassment and bullying

## 4.8 OBSERVE THE PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY, DIVERSITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION

- 4.8.1 Treat all people equally regardless of gender; race; pregnancy or breastfeeding status; marital or relationship status; family responsibility; age; disability (physical or psychological); sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, or intersex status; union affiliation, political conviction, religious belief; or some other characteristic specified under anti-discrimination or human rights legislation
- 4.8.2 Create a work environment where people can participate fully, find a sense of belonging and have the opportunity to engage meaningfully with the broader community
- 4.8.3 Ensure that the workplace is free from all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to integrate the principles of equality of opportunity, natural justice and inclusivity into their day-to-day practices and behaviours

## 4.9 EXERCISE CAUTION WHEN MAKING PUBLIC COMMENT

- 4.9.1 Only make public comments when authorised to do so by the CEO. It is important to ensure casual comments and conversation are not interpreted as being authorised comments. Authorised public comments should only be based on facts gained from reliable sources



## 4.10 PROTECT CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

- 4.10.1 Not disclose or divulge any confidential information without proper authority. Confidential information includes stakeholder data, personnel data, commercial performance data, corporate strategies and business plans, marketing and pricing strategies, intellectual property, and the like
- 4.10.2 Take precautions to ensure confidential information cannot be disclosed by accident or negligence, or through the deliberate action of others
- 4.10.3 Any unauthorised disclosure of confidential information must be immediately reported to an Authorised Person
- 4.10.4 The collection of personal, sensitive and health information must only be done in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles as described in the Privacy Act 1988, and such information must only be used for the intended work-related purpose

## 4.11 WORK DILIGENTLY AND EFFICIENTLY

- 4.11.1 Comply with the prescribed terms and conditions of the position and act within the powers pertaining to the role
- 4.11.2 Display skill, care and diligence required of the role
- 4.11.3 Keep up to date with advances and changes and always look for ways to improve performance and achieve higher standards
- 4.11.4 Ensure work is centred on the needs of the organisation and within constraints of time, funding and availability
- 4.11.5 Be fit and able to perform assigned duties
- 4.11.6 No alcohol is allowed on worksites unless prior approval has been given by the CEO.
- 4.11.7 The use, sale, possession, manufacture, dispensing or distribution of illicit drugs is strictly prohibited
- 4.11.8 Use authority, resources, information, plant and equipment, only for the intended work-related purpose
- 4.11.9 Not use Mental Health Australia equipment or facilities to make, receive, or send fraudulent, unlawful, discriminatory, defamatory, obscene or abusive information, calls or messages. Report any threatening, intimidating or harassing information and communications to an Authorised Person





## 5 Compliance

All workers of Mental Health Australia are required to comply with this Code.

Breaches of standards or obligations in this Code will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action, which can involve the possibility of dismissal, demotion or suspension and/or criminal or civil proceedings.



## 6 Supporting Documents

The following documents support the Code of Conduct and may be updated from time to time:

- Constitution
- Governance Manual
- Delegations Authority
- WHS Policy
- No Bullying Policy
- Equal Employment, Discrimination and Harassment Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Online Publishing Policy
- Confidentiality and IP Agreement
- Performance Management Guidelines
- Fraud Prevention Policy
- Board Charter
- Board Director Position Description
- Contract Management Procurement Guidelines
- Gift Register & Gift/ Benefit Declaration Form



## 7 Documentation & Approvals

### 7.1 Document location

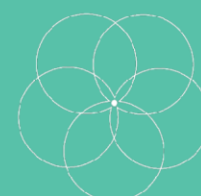
Document Title	ECM Location
Code of Conduct	14/5297

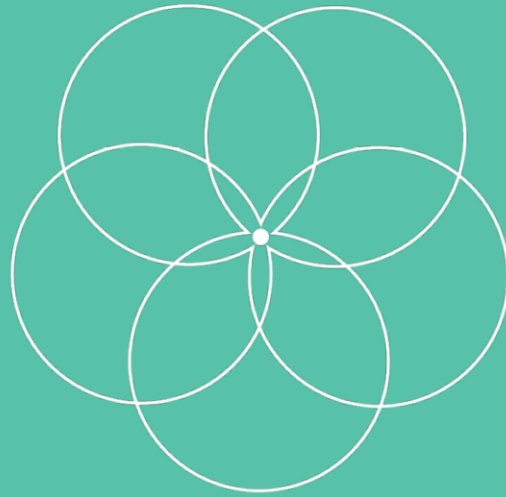
### 7.2 Document history

Version	Date	Description	Author
1	28 August 2011	Board Approval	HR Manager
2	27 October 2014	Review	HR Manager
3	22 March 2016	Review	HR Manager
4	31 May 2019	Review	Deputy CEO
5	2 August 2019	Revision for Governance Committee and Board consideration	Company Secretary
5.1	10 August 2019	Minor amendments including Board feedback; Board-endorsed 2 August 2019 meeting	Company Secretary
7	June 2021	Minor amendments	HR Manager
7.1	August 2022	Review by Governance Committee and approved by the Board	Company Secretary

### 7.3 Date for review

Review period	Date for next review
Triennial	August 2025





# Mental Health Australia

Mentally healthy people,  
mentally healthy communities

[mhaustralia.org](http://mhaustralia.org)

Mental Health Australia is the peak independent national representative body of the mental health sector in Australia.

**Mental Health Australia Ltd**

9-11 Napier Close  
Deakin ACT 2600  
ABN 57 600 066 635

**P** 02 6285 3100  
**F** 02 6285 2166  
**E** [info@mhaustralia.org](mailto:info@mhaustralia.org)