

### Revision of Policy 22 – Ethical Principles

**Background:**

CBH staff have reviewed the CBH Ethical Principles (Policy #22) and are pleased to recommend revisions to the Board of Directors for review.

A primary theme of the recommended changes is the movement of several portions of the Policy to the level of procedure. These changes are made without compromising the intent or integrity of the Policy itself.

This policy and accompanying revisions have been reviewed and endorsed by the agency’s lawyer, Pat McDermott.

**Summary of Changes: It should be noted that peers are required by code to have a separate list of ethical principles based on the guidance from DBHDS.**

Current Confidentiality Policy	Proposed Changes to Policy
Investigation Section, “Completed within <b>in</b> ”	The second word in was removed. Now reads “The investigation will be completed within 10 business days”
No other changes to the policy.	

**Motion from the CBH Executive Committee:**

That the Board approve the revisions to the Ethical Principles policy as presented.

## COLONIAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

### COUNSEL REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY

**Name of Policy: Ethical Principles**

**Category: Administration and Operations**

**Policy No.:22**

**Review Date: February 20, 2026**

**Name of Counsel: Patrick B. McDermott, Esq.**

#### **Comments of Counsel:**

- 1. Virginia Code Compliance: No violations**
- 2. Federal Law Compliance: No violations**
- 3. Grammer and Punctuation: Acceptable**
- 4. Comments: I note on page 6 of 13 that employees are prohibited from witnessing legal documents. A good policy. Query, are employees, particularly field employees, made aware of this policy in their orientation?**

*Patrick B. McDermott, Esq.*

**Signature of Counsel**

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### Policy Statement

In keeping with our Mission and related policies and procedures, Colonial Behavioral Health subscribes to the following Ethical Principles for all employees, board members and representatives. The Ethical Principles are communicated to all employees, board members, representatives and individuals that are served as part of orientation to the agency. They are posted in key areas throughout the agency in order to promote general awareness.

### Source of Authorization

Board of Directors

### Legal/Regulatory References

12VAC35-405-150 – Compliance with applicable laws, regulations and policies

12VAC35-250-40 - Minimum standards for certifying bodies

### Ethical Principles

#### Responsibility

We bear the responsibilities of our professional actions and recognize their impact on the lives of the individual we serve and the community at large.

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### Competencies

We are aware of our competencies and their limitations with regard to the services we provide. As Providers, we will accurately represent our competencies, education, skills, and abilities to all individuals we serve and the community.

### Trust

We assume the trust placed upon us by the public to conduct ourselves in ways that are moral, ethical, and legal. We will not participate in or condone activities which conflict with the interests of the individuals we serve or the organization, or which are illegal, discriminatory, or which violate or diminish the legal and civil rights of the individuals we serve. In the event an Individual presents as a harm to self or others and in accordance with state and/or federal law, the above aforementioned statement may not apply.

### Public Statements and Marketing

When providing public statements, announcements, promotional and marketing activities pertaining to the agency, its business practices, human resources and recruitment, services, and the individuals we serve we will provide accurate information supportive of informed choices. Individually identifiable health information regarding individuals served by the agency will not be used for public statements or marketing, except as authorized in writing by the individual and/or guardian.

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### Confidentiality

We will safeguard information about all individuals served, their family members, and individuals who receive prevention, education, and consultation services. We will not communicate information about the individuals we serve without their written consent, unless otherwise determined by law.

### Consumer Welfare

We will protect the welfare of the individuals we serve and make every effort to act in their best interest. When individuals are receiving services from outside providers, we will take the necessary steps to coordinate care and avoid duplication of service. We will involve individuals and as appropriate, their family members in developing the plan of service, which includes discharge planning. When an individual have achieved the expectations of the plan or when it is clear they are not benefiting from services, we will coordinate the discharge plan.

### Advocacy

We value individual, family, and stakeholder input for purposes of planning, service development, and performance improvement. CBH plans for individual, family, and stakeholder input by providing encouragement to attend and public notice of all Board of Directors meetings, public hearings on behalf of biannual planning and needs assessment, individual and family advocacy meetings, and CBH Recovery Team meetings and activities. Likewise, employees and Board of Directors members are encouraged to participate in local advocacy associations, coalitions, and venues. Information acquired through these activities is used in organizational decision making. We are committed to developing corporate partnerships to promote a

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healthy community. The goal is to reduce stigma, promote inclusion, equity, diversity, health, wellness, and recovery. CBH adheres to a mission to facilitate recovery and resilience to the individuals we serve.

### Professional Conduct

We will conduct ourselves in ways that consider the needs and values of individuals served, coworkers and the community at large. We will avoid conflicts of interest. We will disclose and disqualify ourselves from any agency business transaction in which we have a personal interest. We will not accept gifts, money, gratuities and/or participate in personal fundraising. We will safeguard an individual's personal property and property owned by Colonial Behavioral Health. We respect the commitments and standards of the agency, its viability and reputation. We adhere to all professional codes of ethics as applicable to our professional licenses and certifications. We adhere to maintaining professional relationship boundaries governed by the code of ethics to our professional licenses, certifications and Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services Human Rights Regulation. Employees are prohibited from witnessing legal documents for individuals, guardians, family members of person served and authorized representatives. Legal documents include power of attorney, guardianship, and advance directives. We encourage employees not to post information about CBH on social media and to follow all policies regarding confidentiality, harassment, and discrimination. Employees may not claim or imply any statement posted on social media is the opinion of CBH. If we become aware of unethical conduct by a coworker, we will immediately attempt to rectify the situation and address the matter with appropriate personnel according to the Investigation Procedure for Ethics Violations.

### Assessment Instruments

If we utilize psychometric instruments to assess individuals, we will follow the standards and guidelines set forth according to the respective instrument. We will provide the opportunity to report and discuss the results of

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these assessments to the individual and as appropriate their family members, including interpretations, judgments, recommendations, and the factors on which these are based. Our reports will be communicated in a manner that the person can understand.

### **Clinical Studies and Outcome Measurements**

To the degree practical, we will participate in clinical studies and outcome measures that contribute to the welfare of individuals and the improvement of services. Clinical studies and outcomes in which we participate are carefully planned, take into consideration ethical acceptability, conform to our research policy, and are administratively approved.

### **Billing, Coding and Documentation**

We are committed to documenting complete, timely and accurate services in the individual's health record to ensure the integrity of CBH's documents and records. We are committed to code and bill services with accuracy based on the documentation of treatment services delivered to include the diagnosis, medical and clinical necessity. We do not allow duplicate billing or upcoding of services. We prohibit fraud, waste, abuse, and unethical practices that will impact CBH, and individual served.

### ***Education and training***

We are committed to education and training of employees, individuals served, contractors and stakeholders on CBH's compliance expectations, policies, ethical principles, and promote healthy educational information for the community.

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### Non-Retaliation and Reporting

We are committed to ensuring employees, students, volunteers, and contractors comply with federal, state, and external entities regulations and standards. No retaliatory or disciplinary action will be taken against an employee, individual, guardian, family member and authorized representative for reporting in good faith any compliance concern. Good faith requires that the persons report information to be factual, without fabrication. We will maintain confidentiality within the limits of the law the identity of the person making a report of possible misconduct.

### Peer Recovery Support Code of Ethics

#### Principle: Recovery First

My primary obligation and responsibility is my recovery. I will immediately seek outside counsel and if applicable, notify my supervisor if alcohol, drug use, mental illness, or anything else gets in the way of my recovery.

#### Principle: Sharing Personal Recovery Story

I will share my lived experiences to help others identify resources and supports that promote recovery and resilience.

#### Principle: Service Approach

I affirm the rights and dignity of each person that I serve.

The services I provide will be guided by the principle of self-determination to assist others in achieving their

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needs and goals. This includes advocating for the decisions of the peers regarding professional and other services.

I will advocate for the right of peers to self-select their own recovery pathways and recovery communities and will promote the individual's inherent value to those communities and pathways.

### **Principle: Confidentiality**

I respect the privacy of those I serve, and I will abide by confidentiality guidelines as required by the law.

### **Principle: Non-Discrimination**

I provide recovery support services regardless of someone's age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, marital status, political belief, language, socioeconomic status or mental or physical condition. If differences that impact the motivation for recovery occur, I seek consultation and, if necessary, make referral to another Certified Peer Specialist.

### **Principle: Conduct**

I act in accordance with the law.

I never use physical force, verbal, or emotional abuse; intimidate, threaten, harass, or make unwarranted promises of benefits.

I will fairly and accurately represent myself and my capabilities to the peer and the community.

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I will not accept money, gratuities, or items of significant value from people that I serve.

I will not participate in personal fund raising.

I will not lend or borrow from the peers that I serve.

I will not engage in sexual activities or intimate relations with peers that I serve.

I will not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with former clients within a minimum of two years after terminating services.

I will not provide services to individuals with whom I have had a prior sexual or intimate relationship.

### **Principle: Integrity**

I will not discontinue services to a peer without his or her knowledge and will make a referral for continued services when appropriate.

I will report violations of the Code of Ethics by other Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists to the appropriate certifying entity.

### **Principle: Conflict of Interest**

I will not use my role as a CPRSS to promote any treatment, procedure, product or service, which would result

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in my personal gain.

### Principle: Scope of Practice

I will not perform services outside of my area of training, expertise, competence, or scope of practice.

### Principle: Personal Development

I will improve my recovery service knowledge and skills through ongoing education, training and supervision.

Peer Support Code of Ethics was adopted from Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services

## Investigation Procedure for Ethics Violations

### Reporting Violations

- Employees and representatives should report violations according to the agency's Incident Report Policy.
- Individuals served, persons acting on behalf of individuals, or other persons who receive services should report violations according to the agency's Human Rights Policy.
- All ethical violations will be reported to the appropriate licensing board.

### Investigations

The Executive Director will direct an investigation of all reported ethical violations. In most instances, investigations will be conducted by the designated CSB Human Rights Advocate. During the investigation period,

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the Executive Director may place employees accused of violation on administrative leave pending outcome of the investigation. The investigation will be completed within 10 business days.

### Actions

Remedial and disciplinary actions will be addressed according to the agency's Personnel Policy Manual.

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### Diary of Changes

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#### Date of Origin

07/01/1997

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#### Dates of Review

03/03/2026	02/20/2026	03/12/2022	12/14/2021	
10/15/2020 – COVID 19 Protocol		04/08/2019	10/10/2016	08/04/2016
10/27/2015	04/16/2014	03/16/2013	10/01/2010	

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#### Dates of Revision

03/03/2026	02/20/2026	09/12/2022	10/10/2016	08/04/2016
10/27/2015	09/28/2008	09/05/2007	10/28/2004	04/14/2004
04/14/2003	01/31/2001			

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**Approved By**

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Signature	Effective Date
<u>Ryan Ashe</u>	<u>CBH Board Chair</u>
Printed Name	Title