[Insert organisation name/logo]

SAFER SPACES POLICY

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***Note\****

*This template was developed through a co-design process with people with lived and/or living experience of accessing alcohol and other drugs services.*   
  
*This policy template has been developed to meet the needs of a diverse range of services and includes items for consideration in your policy/procedure templates.* ***Not all content will be relevant to your service.******Organisations are encouraged to edit, add and delete content to ensure relevancy.***   
  
*All material provided by the Network of Alcohol and other Drugs (NADA) is for guidance purposes only. While this template has undergone pro bono legal review, NADA does not accept legal responsibility for the implementation of this document within services- nor does the independent legal reviewer.*

*The* [*NADA Policy Toolkit*](https://www.nada.org.au/policy-toolkit/policy-toolkit/) *provides templates for policies and supporting documents referenced within this template.*

*All notes (like this one) should be considered and deleted before finalising the policy. Additionally, the table of contents should be updated.*

*\*Please delete this note before finalising this policy.*

***\*Note***  
*To update the contents list when all content has been finalised, right click on the contents list and select ‘update field’, an option box will appear, select ‘Update entire table’ and ‘Ok’. To use the contents list to skip to relevant text, use* ***Ctrl and click*** *to select the relevant page number.*

*\*Please delete this note before finalising this policy.*

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**SECTION 1:** **SAFER SPACES POLICY FRAMEWORK**

* 1. **Policy statement**

**[Insert organisation name]** is committed to fostering safer alcohol and other drug (AOD) service provision through being respectful of people accessing the service and working to meet their healthcare needs. This policy promotes person-led practice and positive collaboration between AOD workers and those accessing **[insert organisation name].**

**1.2** **Purpose and scope**

This policy demonstrates a commitment and responsibility towards creating safer spaces for people accessing **[insert organisation name]**’s services, by supporting the empowerment, respect and autonomy of people using the service.

The policy applies to people who use **[insert organisation name]** and all workers, including permanent, contract and casual employees, Board members, contractors, volunteers and students.

This policy does not include content on creating safer spaces for staff - please refer to the Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-discrimination policy.

**1.3** **Definitions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Anti-discrimination** | Not tolerating discriminatory practice. Under Federal and State anti-discrimination laws, discrimination against people using services on the following grounds is unlawful:   * relationship or parental status * race * religious belief or activity * political belief or activity * disability * trade union activity * pregnancy * breastfeeding needs * family responsibilities * gender * sexuality * age |
| **Autonomy** | Autonomy is the right of a group or person to be independent and govern themselves. |
| **Diversity** | The practice of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, etc |
| **Empowerment** | The [process](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/process) of [gaining](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/gain) [freedom](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/freedom) and [power](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/power) to do what you [want](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/want) or to [control](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/control) what [happens](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/happen) to you. Supporting the person using the service to reach their own self-described goals. |
| **Inclusion** | The [act](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/act) of [allowing](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/allow) many different [types](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/type) of [people](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/people) in service activities and [treating](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/treat) them [fairly](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/fairly) and [equally](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/equal) |
| **Informed consent** | Informed consent involves explaining the benefits, risks, outcomes and expectations for the person so they can decide if the service is suitable prior to obtaining their consent. |
| **Paternalism** | The practice by people in authority of restricting the freedom and responsibilities of those subordinate to or otherwise dependent on them in their supposed interest.  Paternalism includes assuming people who use AOD services are incapable of making decisions for themselves and acting independently. |
| **Reasonable adjustments** | Reasonable adjustments are changes introduced to a service that considers a person’s disability (including mental health concerns). Service adjustments are based on reasonably accommodating the disability of the person using services so that they can use the service without causing unjustifiable hardship. |

**1.4** **Principles**

Creating safer spaces for people accessing **[insert organisation name]** involves:

* Person-led care
* Trauma-informed practice
* Being flexible and working at the pace of people accessing the service
* Access to, and knowledge of, people’s rights and responsibilities
* Flexibility in service delivery for differing learning styles. **[Insert organisation name]** recognises neurodiversity and differing cultural needs of communities.
* An environment that promotes learning and the capacity to make mistakes and learn from them
* Continuous professional development and learning
* Engaging people to get a better understanding of their needs
* Recognising the knowledge and decision-making capacity of people who use services
* Respecting diversity and promoting inclusive practice
* A bullying, harassment and discrimination free zone where everybody has responsibility for creating this psychologically and physically safe environment
* A commitment to best practice in AOD service provision
* Continual learning for staff and people using services
* Utilising the knowledge and voices of people with lived experience of accessing services
* Asking people for feedback about the service

**1.5** **Outcomes**

* The creation of inclusive, non-discriminatory and non-stigmatising AOD services
* Exhibiting best practice approaches to AOD support
* Embedding the voice and knowledge of people who use services in the functioning of the service- for instance through focus groups

**1.6** **Delegations**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Board of directors** | * Endorse Safer Spaces policy * Comply with Safer Spaces policy and relevant legislation * Identify issues and opportunities to make AOD services safer for people accessing them. * Ensure staff are trained in inclusive practice - for instance, Aboriginal cultural awareness, trauma-informed practice and LGBTQ+ inclusive practice. * Self-educate about inclusive and safe practice for AOD services- for instance, through identifying and undergoing training. * Responsibility to reflect on own biases and how they influence their work |
| **Business services/ management** | * Comply with Safer Spaces policy. * Identify program or services areas that require change to create safer spaces for people accessing the service * Consult people with living and/or lived experience of accessing services, stakeholders and relevant organisations to inform workplace efforts to create a safer AOD service * Seek out professional development opportunities regarding diversity, inclusion and anti-discrimination. Put in place a professional development plan and update it. * Responsibility to reflect on own biases and how they influence their work * Engage the NADA audit tool to assess the safety of spaces for people who use them. Services are also encouraged to assess the safety of their services in consultation with groups or Networks like NUAA, the Aboriginal Corporation Drug and Alcohol Network (ACDAN), and ACON Health. * Develop a Consumer Engagement policy * Develop a Consumer Engagement Group. The group should have representation from a variety of community members. * Advocate for an adequate budget for staff training around safer, inclusive and non-stigmatising practice   **CEO (or delegate)**   * Organisational alignment with inclusive and non-discriminatory practice |
| **Program services/clinical** | * Compliance with Safer Spaces policy. * Identify program or services areas that require change to create safer spaces for people who use services. * Consult people with lived and/or living experience of accessing AOD services, stakeholders and relevant organisations to inform workplace efforts to create a safer AOD service. * Seek out and participate in professional development opportunities around inclusive and non-discriminatory practice. Put in place a professional development plan and update it. * Reflect on own biases and how they influence their work * Advocate for an adequate budget for staff training regarding safer, inclusive and non-stigmatising services * Develop a Consumer Engagement Group. The group should have representation from a range of community members. * Independent clinical supervision opportunities available to staff to support the creation of safer AOD services |

**1.7** **Policy implementation**

This policy is developed in consultation with employees and approved by the Board of Directors. All workers are responsible for understanding and adhering to this policy.   
  
People who use services need to be informed of their rights and responsibilities set out in section 2 of this policy. Given people who use services have different needs and learning styles, regular reminders should be included as part of service delivery.

Specific monitoring and support activities to promote policy implementation include:

* Workers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with, and revisit, the policy at events such as staff meetings.
* **[Insert organisation name]** provides workers with access to the library of policy documents applicable to them
* Revising the policy in line with the policy review schedule and legislative requirements, in addition to reviewing associated policies where necessary
* Referencing this policy in relevant policies, procedures and other supporting documents to ensure it is familiar to workers and actively used
* **[insert mechanism/system/activity- for example, quarterly workplace environment audits]**

***\*Note***  
*To support policy implementation, your organisation might introduce a ‘policy of the month’, session at staff meetings, which provides dedicated time for workers to familiarise themselves with policy content.*

*Organisations might also introduce an item in staff meetings where they discuss diversity, inclusion and/or anti-discrimination work they’re partaking in to promote safer spaces for people using their service.*   
*\*Please delete this note before finalising this policy.*

**1.8** **Risk management**

This policy is informed by and complies with relevant legislation, including commonwealth and state anti-discrimination legislation.

For guidance on risk management in service provision, refer to the Risk Management

policy.

Workers should undertake professional development opportunities around creating safer spaces for people accessing services to minimise risks of non-inclusive and stigmatising service provision.

**1.9 Consequences of breach of policy**

Disciplinary action will be taken against a staff member or person using a service who harasses or bullies a worker or other person accessing the service. Disciplinary action will also be taken against workers or people using the service who victimise people using the service who have made, or are witness to, a complaint. Complaints of alleged bullying or harassment in services found to be malicious, frivolous or vexatious may make the complainant liable for disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action for discrimination, harassment or non-inclusive practice against people using a service may involve a warning, counselling or service user being asked to leave the service, depending on the circumstances.  If being asked to leave, **[insert organisation name]** should follow their ‘Client exit and re-entry' procedure. **[Insert organisation name]** advises the person leaving the service of alternative organisational supports. People accessing **[insert organisation name]** who participate in illegal activity (for instance, perpetrating sexual assault) may be subject to legal action.

**SECTION 2: RIGHTS AND responsibilities of people using service**

**2.1 Rights**

People using **[insert organisation name]**’s services have the right to:

* Be treated with dignity, respect and courtesy by all workers.
* Receive competent care and be involved in their treatment planning.
* Change treatment goals without judgment.
* Ask questions about what they are consenting to and the information they are providing.
* Have their needs, cultural values and beliefs acknowledged and considered where appropriate.
* Have full confidentiality of their health and personal details, unless consent is provided to share information, or there is risk of harm to the client or others.
* Give or refuse to give consent for treatment without experiencing any adverse consequences.
* Not be held accountable for any consent provided while intoxicated.
* Provide feedback on services provided and make a complaint without experiencing any adverse consequences.
* Withdraw participation from the service/program at any time.
* Be free of discrimination, intimidation, abuse and harassment.
* Be informed of drug use policies and procedures, including abstinence or drug-free environment requirements for participating in the service/program.
* Contribute to the functioning of the service- for instance, through focus groups, feedback and a service audit
* To be clearly informed of complaints, grievance and feedback procedure
* **[Insert any other rights that apply to your organisation]**

***Note\****

*Examples of other rights might include the right to:*

*-Reapply for a program or service according to the Client Exit and Re-entry Section of the Client Clinical Management procedure*

*-Access services only based on their needs and the capacity of the service to meet those needs.*

*-Access personal files according to the Client File Management Section of Service and Program Operations Procedure.*

*-Access advocacy services.*

*-Participate in the development of policy and represent their interests*

*-Be informed of costs and standards associated with services provided by the organisation.*  
*\*Please delete note before finalising this policy.*

**2.2 Responsibilities**

The responsibilities of people using **[insert organisation name]**’s include:

* To respect the rights, privacy, independence and dignity of workers and other people using the service.
* Provide honest information about their own health and drug use as accurately as possible without fear of judgment and repercussions.
* Participate in and contribute to the treatment process.
* Be accountable for the results of any individual decisions made.
* Treat staff without discrimination, intimidation, abuse and harassment
* Ask questions if they do not fully understand issues or process.
* Follow WHS Procedures as requested. Information about Work Health and Safety is to be included in the Client Orientation Pack and is explained to people upon admission to the service. For more information, please refer to the Work Health and Safety policy
* **[Insert here any other client responsibilities that applies to your organisation and programs].**

***Note\****

*Examples of other responsibilities include:*

*-To provide details of an advocate, guardian or carer if required.*

*-Use program premises with respect and only during set program hours.*

*-Be as highly involved as possible in designing and participating in their treatment plan.*

*-Provide information that enables the worker to provide adequate advice and support.*

*\*Please delete note before finalising this policy.*

**2.3 Communication of rights and responsibilities**

Rights and responsibilities set out in sections 2.1-2.2 should be revisited with people using the service and be available in multiple forms. Offering differing ways in which people are informed of their rights and responsibilities accommodates diverse learning styles and needs.

**SECTION 3: REFERENCES**

**3.1** **Related policies**

* Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination policy (this policy has a worker focus)
* Client Clinical Management policy
* Consumer Engagement policy
* [Service](file:///P:/Policies/External%20Relationships%20Policy/Policy%20in%20use/ExternalRelationshipsPolicy.pdf) and Programs Operations policy
* [Communications policy](file:///P:/Policies/Communications%20%20Policy/Policy%20in%20use/Communications%20Policy%202017%20vs%201.pdf)
* [Reconciliation Action Plan](http://www.nada.org.au/media/94971/nada_rap_v4.2.pdf)

**3.2** **Legislation**

* [*Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)*](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/ada2004174/)
* [*Disability Discrimination Act 1992*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2004A04426) *(Cth)*
* [*Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)*](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/fwa2009114/)
* [*Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2013C00274) *(Cth)*
* [*Racial Discrimination Act 1975*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2014C00014) *(Cth)*

* *[Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/sda1984209/)*
* *[Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1977-048)*
* [*Crimes Act 1900 (NSW)*](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1900-040)
* [*Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)*](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2011-010)

**3.3** **Other resources**

* [LGBTQ+ inclusive and affirming practice guidelines](https://nada.org.au/resources/aod-lgbtiq-inclusive-guidelines-for-treatment-providers/)
* [Australian Charter of healthcare rights](https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/partnering-consumers/australian-charter-healthcare-rights)
* [Inclusive workplace toolkit](https://huecolourtheconversation.com/shop/p/inclusive-workplace-tookit)
* [Guide on including people with intersex variations](https://interaction.org.au/wp-content/uploads/key/Intersex-inclusion.pdf)
* [Trauma-informed practices for responding to difficult situations](https://nada.org.au/resources/trauma-informed/)
* [Working with diversity in alcohol and other drug settings](https://nada.org.au/resources/working-with-diversity/)
* [Working with women engaged in alcohol and other drugs treatment](https://nada.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/working_with_women_engaged_in_aod_treatment_web.pdf)
* [Language Matters](https://nada.org.au/resources/language-matters/)
* [Trans affirmative language guide](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d8c2136980d9708b9ba5cd3/t/5fc9a8282f5dbb44b77798d1/1607051305514/)
* [Bathrooms](https://www.transhub.org.au/allies/bathrooms)
* [Is your Building inc-loo-sive](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/60c7edcb37b54354d320486b/t/60d2b335192cd04ad00f5277/1624421175890/interbuild_fact_sheet+%281%29.pdf)
* [Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet](https://healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/)
* [ADARRN](https://www.adarrn.org.au/)
* [ACDAN](https://www.acdan.org/)
* [TransHub (to support trans and gender diverse people](https://www.transhub.org.au/))
* [ACON](https://www.acon.org.au/)
* [NUAA](https://nuaa.org.au/)
* [AIVL](https://aivl.org.au/)