



Grievance Policy*

POLICY

A. It is the policy of Carolina's Creative Counseling, PA, that consumers served are encouraged to state complaints and/or grievances if they believe their rights have been violated, and to pursue a resolution to their concerns in a structured format that provides fair and equitable results through due process.

PROCEDURES

A. Consumers served will be fully informed of the grievance procedures during their orientation to services. In addition, they will receive a copy of their rights that will provide an overview of this process for later reference.

B. Day-to-day issues affecting the consumers served shall be resolved informally between the consumer served and the primary staff member responsible for his/her service coordination. If the problem or complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the consumer served, the Clinical Director will adhere to the guidelines contained in this policy and assist the consumer served in accessing the procedures necessary to resolve the concern.

C. Consumers served have the right to due process with regard to grievances, and the organization will afford every reasonable opportunity for informal and/or formal resolution of the grievance.

D. Consumers who may bring grievances include, but are not limited to:

1. The consumer.
2. The guardian of the consumer.
3. Any other adult representative, including a staff member, who has been designated by the consumer and given written consent to bring a grievance on his/her behalf.

E. A grievant shall in no way be subject to disciplinary action or reprisal, including reprisal in the form of denial or termination of services, loss of privileges or loss of services as a result of filing a grievance.

F. Notices summarizing a consumer's right to due process in regard to grievances, including the process which grievances may be filed and copies of forms to be used for such purpose shall be available within each facility and program area.

G. Each consumer served will be informed of his/her right to grieve and the right to be assisted throughout the grievance process by a representative of his/her choice, in a manner designed to be understandable to the consumer served.

H. During a formal grievance procedure, the consumer served will have the right to the following:

1. Assistance by a representative of his/her choice.
2. Review of any information obtained in processing the grievance, except that which would violate the confidentiality of another consumer served.
3. Presentation of evidence of witnesses pertinent to the grievance.
4. Receipt of complete findings and recommendations, except those that would violate the confidentiality of another consumer served.

I. In all grievances, the burden of proof shall be on Carolina's Creative Counseling to show compliance or remedial action to comply with the policies and procedures established to ensure the rights of consumers served.



J. All findings of a formal grievance procedure shall include:

1. A finding of fact.
2. A determination regarding the adherence of the organization, program, or employee, or the failure to adhere, to specific policies or procedures designed to ensure the rights of consumers served.
3. Any specific remedial steps necessary to ensure compliance with organizational policies and procedures.

K. The steps of a formal grievance are as follows:

1. Formal grievances shall be filed first with the supervisor/director of the program in which the grievance arises.
2. The supervisor/director is responsible for ensuring that a copy of the grievance is forwarded to the Clinical, Program and Quality Management Directors.
3. The supervisor/director of the program will meet with the grievant, and/or representatives, immediately following the filing to brainstorm resolution of any related issues that may get in the way of full participation in services. Actions may include, but not be limited to, a change in direct care providers or an adjustment in programming schedules and/or program environments.
4. Carolina's Creative Counseling will issue a formal written response to the grievant, and/or the designated representatives within five business days of the complaint, excluding weekends or holidays.

L. The steps to appeal a written response to a grievance:

1. If the grievant is unsatisfied with the findings of the written response to a grievance, he or she may appeal the decision to the Clinical Director within five days, excluding weekends or holidays.
2. The Clinical Director will issue a formal written response to the grievant, and/or the designated representatives, within five working days of the complaint, excluding weekends or holidays.
3. If the grievant is unsatisfied with the findings of the written response, he/she will be referred to a third party outside of the organization. Third parties may include organizations such as children's or adult protective services, professional licensing boards, nursing home ombudsmen or other appropriate organizations that may serve as an advocate for the consumer served.

M. All staff members of Carolina's Creative Counseling will be trained in the implementation of this policy and procedures during orientation and will receive ongoing training of the procedures to ensure the process is applied in a comprehensive manner if a grievance is filed.

N. Grievances regarding the actions of specific staff members will be handled in accordance with personnel rules and contract provisions. No disciplinary action may be taken, nor facts found with regard to any alleged employee misconduct, except in accordance with applicable personnel rules and contract provisions.

O. A Grievance Log will be maintained by Carolina's Creative Counseling detailing the nature of the complaint, relevant information obtained in the investigation and the outcome of the process. All information contained within will maintain the confidentiality of the participants in the process. This record will be reviewed annually by the QA/QI and Human Rights Committees to determine if there are trends in the complaints and to identify areas to initiate performance improvement activities.

See Grievance Policy Addendum: *Using Grievances as an Advocacy Tool.