

NUMBER: 2.6
TITLE: COMPLAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURE - SERVICE USERS AND COMMUNITY
APPROVED: March 24, 2015 **REVISED:**
SECTION: Overarching Policies, Procedures and Protocols

SACHA strives to offer high quality services. As such, if service users and/or community members have any concerns about our work, SACHA strongly encourages feedback. SACHA will treat all complaints seriously.

SACHA acknowledges that there are significant power differentials between service users (current and former) and SACHA members that will make it challenging for them to bring a complaint forward. All staff, volunteers and students are expected to be mindful of this reality and to provide service users who wish to make a complaint with full access to information and support.

Every effort will be made to manage complaints using an informal process.

PROCEDURES:

Informal

- 1) The SACHA member who receives a complaint will notify the service user/community member of the name of the immediate supervisor and/or appropriate staff member to whom the concern should be directed.
- 2) If the person does not wish to share the complaint with this person, the SACHA member will receive the information, thank the service user/community member for the feedback and bring the information to the immediate supervisor/appropriate staff member.
- 3) The appropriate SACHA member will investigate and respond in a timely and appropriate manner to the concern. They will also respond to the complainant if they request follow-up information or contact.
- 4) The complainant will be informed of the option of making a formal complaint if they are unsatisfied with the outcome.

Service users are encouraged to and will be supported in determining their own informal complaint process, which may include some form of communication with the SACHA member involved in the complaint and/or their supervisor. Support may include assisting the service user in writing a letter to the member, or having a Coordinator/Director/Chair of the Management Committee sit in on a meeting between the service user and the member.

If the service user wishes to share their complaint in person, they may bring a support person with them.

Formal

Step One: Discussion with a Coordinator/Director

1. The person(s) making the complaint will contact the Coordinator/Director to inform them that the informal procedure was unsuccessful or not appropriate and that they wish to make a formal complaint. The Coordinator/Director will attempt to resolve the issue over the telephone and will speak to the staff/volunteer/student to see what steps they have taken to resolve the issue.
2. If this does not resolve the issue, the complaint must be put into writing. The service user/community member can prepare a written complaint on their own or the Coordinator/Director can write it and the complainant will sign it after reading it or having it read to them.
3. The Coordinator/Director will arrange a meeting with the complainant and the staff/volunteer/student involved. The complainant may bring a support person to the meeting, but for confidentiality reasons, this cannot be another SACHA staff or a current SACHA client.
4. If a successful resolution is reached, the outcome will be documented in writing and provided to the complainant and the staff/volunteer/student involved.
5. If no resolution is reached, the matter will proceed to the Director (if she is not already involved) or the Management Committee

Step Two: Meeting with the Director or a member of the Management Committee

- 1) The complainant and the staff/volunteer/student involved will meet with the Director or a member of the Management Committee who will be apprised of the situation beforehand. The complainant may bring a support person with her to this meeting, but for confidentiality reasons, this cannot be another SACHA staff or a current SACHA client.
- 2) The Director/MC member will facilitate a conversation between the complainant and the staff/volunteer/student involved and may offer specific solutions to the complaint.
- 3) Every effort will be made to strive for a successful resolution; if this is achieved, the outcome will be documented in writing and provided to the complainant and the staff/volunteer/student involved.
- 4) If a successful resolution did not occur, the matter will be brought to the Management Committee for further discussion and possible action. Information about any possible actions or outcomes from this meeting will be shared with the complainant in a timely manner.