BERRIEN MENTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY
-- PROCEDURE --

SUBJECT: DIGNITY & RESPECT/FAMILY RIGHTS	SECTION: 01-57-01 Page 1 of 2
APPLICATION: All Staff EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/27/99 APPROVED BY: _____ Chief Executive Officer REVISED: 3/02, 6/03, 2/05, 5/25	REQUIRED BY: MHC 704, 708, 711, 752

POLICY:
It is the policy of Berrien Mental Health Authority (BMHA), that the dignity and respect to which a recipient of mental health services is entitled, is promoted and protected.

PURPOSE:
To ensure that consumers and their family members are treated with dignity and respect by BMHA staff and the staff of any contracted agencies. To clearly define for staff what constitutes dignity and respect, ensuring that all individuals are treated considerately, respectfully, and with full regard for their dignity and privacy.

STANDARDS:
BMHA & Contract staff shall *at all times,* treat the people we serve and their family members, in a dignified and respectful manner.

DEFINITIONS:
Recipient: An individual who receives mental health services from Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health (SWMBH) or from a provider that is under contract with SWMBH.

Family Members: A parent, step-parent, spouse, sibling, child, or grandparent of a primary consumer, or individual upon whom a primary consumer is dependent for at least 50% of his or her financial support.

Mental Health Service: Care, treatment support, service provided to an individual with severe mental illness, severe emotional disturbance, or severe developmental disability, particularly those services identified and defined in the Mental Health Code.

Dignity: To be treated with esteem, honor, politeness; to be addressed in a manner that is not patronizing, condescending or demeaning; to be treated as an equal; to be treated the way that any individual would like to be treated.

Respect: To show regard for; to be treated with esteem, concern, consideration or appreciation; to protect the individual's privacy; to be sensitive to cultural differences; to allow an individual to make choices.

Privacy: The right or condition of being free from unauthorized observation, intrusion, or interference. It encompasses the ability of individuals to control access to their personal information, communications, body, and spaces.

PROCEDURE:

1) Staff shall conduct themselves at all times in a professional manner, which promotes dignity and respect to *all people* – other staff, consumers, or consumer's family members.

2) Family members shall be given an opportunity to provide information to treating professionals, if desired.

3) Family members shall be provided an opportunity to request and receive educational materials about the nature of disorders, medication and its side effects, available support services, advocacy and support groups, financial assistance and coping strategies.

4) While dignity and respect to consumers and family members is to be a primary expectation, it shall always be provided with respect to the consumer's confidentiality wishes and expectations under provisions for protected health information sharing. *See related procedures: 01-07-01 Confidentiality & Disclosure; 01-31-10 Safeguarding Protected Health Information.*

Key Aspects of Privacy:

1. **Informational Privacy** – Protection of personal data and the right to control how it is collected, used, and shared (e.g., online data privacy, health information).
2. **Physical Privacy** – Protection of a person's physical space from unwanted intrusion (e.g., home or body privacy).
3. **Communicational Privacy** – Protection of communications from being intercepted or monitored without consent (e.g., mail, emails, phone calls).
4. **Decisional Privacy** – The right to make personal decisions without interference (e.g., reproductive choices, religious beliefs, choices for daily life decisions).
5. **Associational Privacy** – The freedom to choose who you associate with and to keep those associations private, while being provided a private space to visit or communicate.

Reviewer: Office of Recipient Rights
Reviewed: 5/07, 3/08, 7/09, 6/10, 9/11, 9/12, 7/13, 5/14, 7/15, 3/16, 3/17, 3/18, 3/19, 4/2020, 9/2021, 7/2022, 8/2023, 8/2024, 5/2025