

Aging & Disability Resource Center of Portage County  
Participant Code of Conduct Policy

The purpose of the ADRC Participant Code of Conduct Policy is to outline the preferred and acceptable behavior to be displayed by all those who participate in programs at the Aging & Disability Resource Center of Portage County, and the process for correcting unacceptable behaviors.

**A. Statement of Philosophy**

All ADRC programs shall be friendly and inviting places for older adults and adults with disabilities to congregate and socialize. All participants including those served at remote locations or in their homes are also expected to follow the following guidelines. Patrons are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times while taking part in programs and services provided or sponsored by the agency. Acts of violence, sexual assault, disrespect for authority, anti-social conduct, misuse or abuse of equipment and facility, and use of foul language or gestures will not be tolerated. We reserve the right to remove patrons from facilities, programs, and services via suspension periods determined by designated representatives. Behavior which inhibits older people and adults with disabilities from using and enjoying ADRC programs or where volunteers feel unsafe or mistreated, is inappropriate. Inappropriate behavior will be addressed and handled on a case-by-case basis with consequences deemed appropriate.

The program operates under “*Promises*” that govern all ADRC programs. Additionally, we provide participants of our programs with reasonable guidelines and expectations of behavior, enforced for the benefit of all participants, staff and volunteers. The policy includes all interior areas of the ADRC, outdoor spaces, off site programs as well as sponsored activities and delivery of services to a person’s home. We are committed to providing a safe and welcoming atmosphere for our patrons, volunteers, guests, and staff. Consequently, all patrons of all ADRC programs will be expected to adhere to a Code of Conduct when taking advantage of the services or facilities.

**B. Department Responsibilities**

- To foster a pleasant and upbeat environment
- To promote a nonjudgmental atmosphere
- To provide quality program services to all eligible participants
- To maintain participant confidentiality
- To treat individuals with dignity and respect
- Listen and respond to concerns and suggestions for improving the program

**Participant Responsibilities (Code of Conduct):** To ensure a comfortable and safe setting for all who visit our facility, our off site programs and our services provided in people’s homes.

Unacceptable behavior will not be tolerated. Unacceptable behavior includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Engaging in behavior that is potentially unsafe or harmful to self or others.
- Exhibiting any threatening or intimidating behaviors, such as:
  - Using profane, abusive, obscene, threatening, harassing, insulting, or sexually suggestive language.
  - Threatening or using violence.
  - Harassing patrons, volunteers or staff.
  - Using hate speech or epithets (e.g., racial, ethnic, sexist, homophobic and religious slurs).
- Violating any federal, state, county or city laws and ordinances.
- Failing to comply with lawful direction given by staff acting in the performance of their duties.
- Possessing, using, or selling alcohol or controlled substances. (at dining sites)
- Fighting or challenging others to fight.
- Touching another person in any way that is unwelcome or uncomfortable.
- Misusing, misappropriating, damaging, stealing, or obstructing use of equipment, resources or facilities.
- Selling, soliciting, petitioning, posting or distributing materials without permission.
  - Examples include selling products or services, circulating a petition, survey or letter, or selling tickets for an organization or event.
- Failing to maintain a level of personal hygiene that is non-offensive in a social environment

**The simple philosophy behind this policy is the Golden Rule:**  
*Treat everyone the same way that you want to be treated.*

**C. Procedures for ADRC Staff for Participant Violations of Code of Conduct:**

Concerns about inappropriate behavior should be channeled to the immediate program coordinator or site manager, the division manager or the ADRC Director. Action consistent with this policy will be taken as appropriate. The above code shall be enforced by all program coordinators and site managers or division managers and ultimately by the ADRC Director whose authority shall prevail in all cases. A violation of the Code will result in a disciplinary action determined by the division manager and ADRC Director. The disciplinary action will range from a verbal or written reprimand to suspension or expulsion, depending on the nature of the offensive conduct.

1. Any staff member or volunteer of the program may request that the inappropriate behavior cease. If the inappropriate behavior continues;
  - a. **All Programs:** The program coordinator or site manager will talk with the individual one on one to explain and discuss the inappropriate behavior and work to establish a resolution that is agreeable for both parties. If this is not successful, the program coordinator or site manager may require that the individual leave the building and inform the participant of the process outlined in *Offense and Penalty* below will be initiated. If the situation is emergent or if the program manager or site manager feels their safety or the safety of participants is in danger, they shall tell the offender that the police will be called if they do not leave at once. If the individual refuses to leave, the police shall be called.
  - b. **In Home Services:** A phone call will be made to the individual and their family/emergency contact to explain and discuss the inappropriate behavior and work to establish a resolution that is agreeable for both parties. If this is not successful, the program coordinator or division manager will inform the participant and their family of the process outlined in *Offense and Penalty* below will be initiated. If the situation is emergent or if the volunteer or staff member feels their safety is in danger, they shall contact the ADRC Director immediately so further action can be determined.
2. **Emergency situations** shall be acted upon immediately and may be referred to the police for assistance. An Emergency situation includes, but is not limited to the following:
  - Any situation in which an individual's actions are perceived to present an imminent danger to the life or safety of the individual or third parties.
  - Incidents including assault and other crimes of violence, or the threat or attempt to commit such crimes.
  - The intentional destruction of ADRC property or the property of others.
3. Any patron who commits or attempts to commit any of the offenses listed above, or any other behaviors illegal under state or federal law, is subject to sanctions, which may include:
  - Being asked to leave the premises
  - Having privileges suspended or revoked
  - Being banned from ADRC programs
  - Being reported to the police
  - Legal prosecution
  - Restitution, when appropriate.

It is our sincere desire that situations never warrant the removal of an individual from the program, any activity, event or facility. However, in the unfortunate event that infractions occur, be aware that the following consequences may apply:

**Offense and Penalty (to include but not limited to)**

- **Level 1**
  - Offense: Inappropriate behavior, non-physical, or non-unlawful violations of the Code of Conduct.
  - Penalty:
    - First Offense: Verbal Warning
    - Second Offense: Written warning letter shall be sent by the ADRC Director to the participant informing the participant of the infraction and the potential consequences for continued violations.
    - Third Offense: Immediate removal from ADRC premises or suspension from in home services with a minimum fifteen (15) day suspension. The governing body may vote to suspend the participant from ADRC Programs for a period not exceeding 30 days, as well imposing other reasonable conditions that the Committee deems necessary to prevent future infractions.
    - Fourth or more Infraction and Serious Infractions: The governing body shall suspend the participant from ADRC Programs for a minimum of 91 days up to the maximum of a permanent expulsion from all ADRC programs. A face to face meeting with the ADRC Director will be required before allowing the participant to have access to the facility, programs or activates. The governing body may also impose other reasonable conditions that they deem necessary to prevent future infractions. For those infractions that are considered by the governing body to be so serious in nature, they may impose penalties equivalent to a fourth infraction without the requirement of having prior infractions.
  
- **Level 2 – *Verbal***
  - Offense: Malicious, obscene/profane/vulgar verbal abuse; verbal epithets related to race, color, religion, creed, gender or sexual orientation; verbal threats or acts intended to offend, defame or embarrass.
  - Penalty: Immediate removal from ADRC Programs and a minimum thirty (30) day suspension.
  
- **Level 3 – *Physical***
  - Offense: Physical aggression towards another participant, staff or volunteer; pushing, shoving, striking or touching another individual with the perceived intent to incite, inflict or cause harm; invading another individual's personal space during a dispute, or touching another participant in a way that is unwelcome and inappropriate.
  - Penalty: Immediate removal from ADRC Programs and a minimum one hundred eighty (180) day suspension.

- **Level 4 – Unlawful**

- Offense: Any violation of Wisconsin law; theft, vandalism, being under the influence of alcohol, narcotics, controlled substances, or assault with or without a weapon.
- Penalty: Immediate removal from the premises and a minimum one (1) year suspension.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Depending on the nature of the Code violation, the ADRC Director reserves the right to suspend a violator beyond those periods listed above, up to and including a permanent ban from ADRC programs.

**D. Due Process for Participants Alleged to Have Violated Code of Conduct:**

1. Upon any infraction of the Code of Conduct rules herein, ADRC Program Coordinators and Site Managers shall prepare a written report detailing such infraction and shall provide a copy to their division manager and the ADRC Director. A copy shall be sent in the mail to the participant within 10 business days. For all first infractions, a warning letter shall be mailed by the ADRC Director to the participant.
2. For all second or subsequent infractions, after receipt of the written report, the ADRC Director shall notify the Commission on Aging/Aging and Disability Resource Center governing board and take up the matter and shall allow the Program Coordinator or Site Manager, the participant, and any other relevant third party an opportunity to be heard. A written copy of the action taken shall also be sent in the mail to the participant.
3. A written letter shall be sent from the COA/ADRC Board to the participant within 5 business days after the meeting detailing the outcome and the reasons for taking such actions.

**E. Appeal Process:**

1. **Notice of Appeal:** Participants may appeal a decision by utilizing the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Portage County's Complaint and Grievance Process.

Approval Date: