



DOWN SOUTH THERAPY

Personal Relationships and Sexuality Policy

Version 1.0
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Personal Relationships and Sexuality Policy

1.1. Purpose

Down South Therapy (DST) recognises that people with disability have the right to develop and maintain personal relationships, and explore their own sexuality. Down South Therapy is committed to developing a sensitive and consistent approach towards our responsibilities in the area of friendships, relationships and Sexuality.

1.2. Application of Policy

The Policy applies to all full-time employees, part-time employees, casual employees, contractors and students of Down South Therapy. These employees can be prospective, current or former employees.

1.3. Scope

Personal relationships are not only about sexuality and sexual relationships, they are the interaction of personal, social and sexual development that influences a person's relationship with themselves and others.

Sexuality is much more than sex or reproduction, it is a part of who we are, what we think and feel about ourselves and our bodies and how we act towards others. A person's sexuality is unique and individual to them. It can be shaped by culture, environment, gender characteristics, life experiences, family background, personal beliefs and much more. It is the sum of a person's inherited make up, knowledge, experiences, values, attitudes, feelings and behaviour as they relate to being a woman or a man. It includes those ways of behaving which enrich the personality and enhance the relationships between people.

1.4. The Role of Down South Therapy

The role of Down South Therapy in relation to personal relationships and sexuality is to assist the people we support to identify their needs in these areas, develop appropriate options and responses and to assist them in implementing an agreed set of goals. This process may be carried out in conjunction with family members, friends, advocates, and other community organisations depending on the wishes of the individual concerned.

Down South Therapy has a responsibility to:

- Assist people with disability to develop self-esteem and a positive image by informally encouraging and supporting personal development and social skills in all environments;
- Actively encourage and assist the people we support to access community services that provide:
 - I. Information about sexual development, contraception, menstruation, sexual orientation, appropriate expression of sexuality, rights and responsibilities and how to exercise these
 - II. Encouragement and support to develop positive self-image and self-esteem

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- through personal development and the acquisition of appropriate social skills
- III. Encouragement and support to develop sound decision making skills
 - IV. Knowledge and skills in the creation, maintenance and ending of relationships
 - V. Assistance in understanding what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual assault and how to safeguard themselves where necessary;
- Refer to appropriate and qualified professionals to determine capacity for consent for people that we support with a decision-making disability if required;
 - Balance duty of care with dignity of risk, reducing potential for duty of care breaches by;
 - a) Providing knowledge and experiences which empower the people we support to make their own decisions and be as personally responsible as possible
 - b) Supporting people to take informed risks where measures have been taken to minimise harm
 - c) Consulting with senior workers and significant others for advice and support if unsure
 - d) Documenting decisions and reasons for actions;
 - Ensure that workers have a clear understanding of their own values, attitudes and beliefs and be conscious of not imposing these onto the people we support;
 - Ensure that workers have the skills appropriate to the level of support they provide through the provision of training, particularly in the area of personal relationships and sexuality.

Down South Therapy will assist the people we support and their families to find sex workers who have been trained to work with people who have disability. Down South Therapy Therapists will not take a client that we support to visit a sex worker, but Down South Therapy will assist the clients that we support and their families to find appropriate specialist staff to undertake this if appropriate.

