



# **WELLNESS SUPPORTS**

## **CONSUMER HANDBOOK**

# **IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**

## **Wellness Supports' Hours of Operation:**

Wellness Supports office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30am until 5:00pm. Special arrangements may be made for weekend appointments. Please refer to your First Responder materials for after hours contact information.

## **How Can You Provide Input to Wellness Supports about your services?**

You can always speak with any staff person from Wellness Supports who is working with you or your family about the quality of your care, the achievement of your goals, and satisfaction with the services you are receiving from us.

In addition, you may call Wellness Supports and speak to a supervisor, the Quality Improvement Director, or the Program Director to provide input.

## **Expectations:**

Wellness Supports has certain expectations of the individuals receiving care from us, just as you have expectations about the care we will provide to you.

## **These expectations include, but are not limited to:**

- Wellness Supports expects that you will attend scheduled appointments on a regular basis. We understand that sometimes problems occur that may cause you to have to reschedule. We ask that you will call as soon as you are aware you will need to reschedule and make arrangements with your assigned staff person.
- Wellness Supports expects that if you are receiving medication management services with us, that you will attend therapy appointments regularly. We believe that therapy and medications work together to help you in your recovery.
- Please call the office at least three days in advance if you are going to need a prescription refill before your next appointment.
- Please treat staff and other consumers with respect and consideration.
- Please respect the confidentiality and privacy of other consumers.
- Please talk to Wellness Supports staff and others on your planning team often about your needs, preferences and goals and how you think you are doing at meeting your goals.
- Please tell your staff person when you are experiencing problems.
- Please let Wellness Supports know if you decide to discontinue services.

## **Wellness Supports' Code of Ethics:**

- **Wellness Supports will conduct its business honestly and ethically.**
- **Wellness Supports will maintain ethical standards when marketing its services to consumers and to other stakeholders. Wellness Supports will present its services and the agency truthfully and will not promise specific outcomes or results.**
- **Directors, managers and employees will obey all Equal Employment Opportunity laws and act with respect and responsibility towards others in all of their dealings.**
- **Wellness Supports will respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person. Wellness Supports will treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity.**
- **Wellness Supports recognizes the central importance of human relationships. Wellness Supports understands that relationships between and among people are an important Vehicle for change.**
- **Wellness Supports will engage people as partners in the helping process.**
- **Wellness Supports' staff and employees will behave in a trustworthy manner.**
- **Wellness Supports' primary responsibility is to promote the well-being of consumers.**
- **Wellness Supports will respect and promote the right of consumers to self-determination and assist consumers in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals.**
- **Wellness Supports' staff will understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.**
- **Wellness Supports will be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment.**
- **Wellness Supports' staff will not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further their personal, religious, political, or business interests.**
- **Wellness Supports' staff will not engage in dual or multiple relationships with consumers or former consumers in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the consumer.**
- **Wellness Supports' staff will under no circumstances engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with current consumers, whether such contact is consensual or forced.**
- **Wellness Supports' staff will not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with consumers' relatives or other individuals with whom consumers maintain a close personal relationship when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the consumer.**
- **Wellness Supports' staff will not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with former consumers because of the potential for harm to the consumer.**
- **Wellness Supports' staff will not provide clinical services to individuals with whom they have had a prior sexual relationship. • Wellness Supports' staff will not engage in physical contact with consumers when there is a possibility of psychological harm to the consumer as a result of the contact (such as cradling or caressing consumers). Wellness Supports' staff who engage in appropriate physical contact with consumers are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern such physical contact.**

## **Code of Ethics (continued):**

- Wellness Supports' staff will not sexually harass consumers or others with whom they have professional contact. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, sexual solicitation, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
- Wellness Supports' staff will not use derogatory language in their written or verbal communications to or about consumers. Wellness Supports' staff will use accurate and respectful language in all communications to and about consumers.
- When setting fees, Wellness Supports will ensure that the fees are fair, reasonable, and commensurate with the services performed. Consideration will be given to consumers' ability to pay.
- Wellness Supports will avoid accepting goods or services from consumers as payment for professional services.
- Wellness Supports will make reasonable efforts to ensure continuity of services in the event that services are interrupted by factors such as unavailability, relocation, illness, disability, or death.
- Wellness Supports will terminate services to consumers and professional relationships with them when such services and relationships are no longer required or no longer serve the consumers' needs or interests.
- Wellness Supports will take reasonable steps to avoid abandoning consumers who are still in need of services.
- Wellness Supports, in fee-for-service situations, may terminate services to consumers who are not paying an overdue balance if the financial contractual arrangements have been made clear to the consumer, if the consumer does not pose an imminent danger to self or others, and if the clinical and other consequences of the current nonpayment have been addressed and discussed with the consumer.
- Wellness Supports' staff who anticipate the termination or interruption of services to consumers should notify consumers promptly and seek the transfer, referral, or continuation of services in relation to the consumers' needs and preferences.
- Wellness Supports will refer consumers to other professionals when the other professionals' specialized knowledge or expertise is needed to serve consumers fully or when Wellness Supports believes that they are not being effective or making reasonable progress with consumers and that additional service is required.
- Wellness Supports' staff will not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception.
- Wellness Supports will work toward the maintenance and promotion of high standards of practice.

***\*\* Please note that this is not the full text of Wellness Supports Code of Ethics. The sections of the Code of Ethics presented in this handbook are most closely related to consumer care. If you would like to review the entire Code of Ethics, please visit our website at: <http://www.wellnesssupports.com>, or call the office to schedule a time to come in and review the full text.***

## **Financial Obligations and Fees:**

### **Confidentiality Policy:**

#### **POLICY:**

Wellness Supports believes in a consumer's rights to privacy and the practice of confidentiality in the delivery of service by staff members. Consequently, all employees, students, and volunteers are required to abide by the confidentiality regulations.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION:**

#### **Guiding Principles Concerning Confidentiality**

Agencies or individuals with access to consumer information, whether recorded or not, that was received in connection with the performance of any function of the agency, shall take affirmative measures to keep consumer information confidential. Release or disclosure of consumer information shall be prohibited except under the following conditions:

When the consumer gives written authorization for release;

When a Program Manager determines that imminent danger exists to the health or safety of any individual or suspects that a crime has been committed; or

When a judge issues an oral order or a written court order that explicitly directs the release of consumer information.

When in the best interest of the consumer, for purposes of filing a petition for involuntary commitment or adjudication of incompetence for the appointment of a guardian.

To an attorney representing Wellness Supports or an employee of Wellness Supports, if the information is rele-

vant to litigation, to the operations of the facility, or to the provision of services by the facility.

In an emergency medical situation.

All Wellness Supports staff must agree to hold all information regarding the consumer confidential except in those instances outlined above. Accordingly, all employees of Wellness Supports will sign upon employment, annually on anniversary date, and whenever revisions are made to the form, an Assurance of Confidentiality Statement in accordance to the Confidentiality rules and General Statutes 122C-52 through 122C-56. This statement will be kept in the personnel file of the employee (See Appendix D-1 for Confidentiality Statement). In addition, all employees will be trained at orientation on the Confidentiality Regulations.

#### **Confidentiality and Record Maintenance Policies**

Wellness Supports abides by the following confidentiality policies, which are explained to all Wellness Supports staff members, consumers, and families.

Information about the consumer will be disclosed only to the Wellness Supports staff that is delivering the service to the consumer and to the referring

source. The consumer is aware of those individuals or organizational representatives who may need to share information in order to deliver effective services to the family.

## **Confidentiality and Record Maintenance Policies (continued):**

The consumer/family must be made aware that supervisory case discussion will occur between staff members in order to ensure quality service delivery. Any other case staffing generated by Wellness Supports staff must be discussed with the consumer/family and the consumer/family must be included in the decision to have a staffing and must be invited to attend.

The Qualified Professional and Program Manager will keep written information received from other agencies or generated by Wellness Supports staff regarding the consumer/family in a file or files. This original file will be kept separately from other items not subject to confidentiality requirements. Confidential files will remain locked at all times, even during transport. Files will be located in a convenient location in order to provide easy accessibility. The Medical Records Supervisor will hold the medical records key.

Current and historical consumer and administrative records will be safeguarded at all times to ensure confidentiality and protection from loss. Administrative and consumer records will be reasonably protected against damage by fire, water or other hazards. No food or drink can be used near records or in computer areas. A fire extinguisher will be available for use in the records room.

Consumer records will be retained if there is reason to believe that they may be subject to an audit, investigation, or litigation.

Consumer records will be retained and destroyed according to state law. Adult consumer records will be retained until 11 years after the date of the last encounter. Child and adolescent consumer records will be retained until 12 years after the consumer has reached the age of 18. All other records supporting the expenditure of state and federal funds will be retained for a period of no less than five years.

The consumer may request to see Wellness Supports records at any time. Wellness Supports staff may share only information that has been generated by the Well

ness Supports staff. Information gathered from other sources remains under the jurisdiction of those sources. The consumer must make a request to that other source in order to view information gathered by that source. This information will be kept confidential under the same requirements of Wellness Supports consumer information in accordance with Confidentiality rules. When the consumer views the Wellness Supports record, the Wellness Supports Program Director, or Program Manager must be present to explain and protect the record. The Program Director or Program Manager must document the review in the consumer's record.

The consumer, consumer's legally responsible person(s) or staff may request a review of any decisions made regarding confidentiality requirements and rules. The Program Director or designee would do this review.

A consumer or a consumer's legally responsible person(s) may contest the accuracy, completeness, or relevancy of information in the consumer record and may request alteration of such information.

Alterations shall be made as follows:

If Wellness Supports clinical staff concurs that such alteration is justified, the contested portion of the record will be identified and an addendum will be inserted in that portion of the consumer record; however, the original portion of the written record may not be deleted; or if Wellness Supports clinical staff does not concur that such alteration is justified, the agency shall identify the contested portion of the record and allow a statement relative to the contested portion to be added to the consumer record which shall be recorded on a separate form and not on the original portion of the record which is being contested. Such statement shall be made a permanent part of the consumer's record and shall be released or disclosed along with the contested portion of the record.

## **Seclusion and Restraint Policy:**

Wellness Supports does not use any form of restrictive interventions, whether physical or mechanical. Wellness Supports contract providers and staff may not attempt to use any force to stop or divert a consumer's behavior. Wellness Supports will ensure that any methods used to de-escalate consumers' behavior are administered in a safe manner, taking into account the physical, developmental and abuse histories of the persons served. Wellness Supports does not approve of any methods of seclusion in the care of consumers.

## **Smoking, Licit and Illicit Drugs and Weapons Policies:**

It is against the policy of Wellness Supports for any employee to possess or to be under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol while on the job. It is a condition of employment at Wellness Supports that employees avoid the use, possession, or sale of any illegal drug. It is against the policy of Wellness Supports for any consumer to possess or to be under the influence of any illegal drug or alcohol while on Wellness Supports' premises.

If a consumer is observed to possess an illegal substance or alcohol on Wellness Supports premises, the consumer will immediately be asked to leave. If the consumer refuses to do so, law enforcement may be called to assist. It is possible that a consumer may be in possession of prescription medications when attending an appointment at Wellness Supports. Prior to attending an appointment with Wellness Supports' psychiatrist, the consumer should be counseled by Wellness Supports' staff to bring a list of medications rather than the actual medications. If the consumer insists on bringing prescription medications to Wellness Supports, they should be counseled by staff to bring the medication in original bottles, including labels, from the pharmacy.

Wellness Supports will only allow use of tobacco products by staff or consumers aged 18 or older. Tobacco products may only be used out of doors, and may not be used by any employee at the time that a consumer is being transported. Wellness Supports' employees may not use tobacco products when in the presence of a Wellness Supports' consumer.

***\*\* Please note that this is not the full text of Wellness Supports policies on confidentiality, seclusion and restraint, smoking, licit and illicit drugs and weapons. The sections of the policies presented in this handbook are most closely related to consumer care. If you would like to review the entire text of the policies reviewed in this handbook, please call the office to schedule a time to do so.***

## **Information on Fees:**

Wellness Supports is required by law to charge you any co-payments or co-insurance as applied by your insurance carrier, the State of North Carolina or Medicaid.

## **ASSESSING THE SITUATION: MEDICAL EMERGENCY**

1. **Remain Calm.** You will be able to assess the situation more effectively. Remember, emotional support is also important.
2. **Survey the Scene.** Make sure you are safe before taking any action (look out for fire, downed electrical wires, etc.).
3. **CALL 911.**
4. **DO NOT move an injured person** unless situation is life threatening. Keep victim still, quiet, and warm (except in cases of heat exhaustion or sunstroke). Victims with broken bones should not be moved until a splint has been properly applied.
5. **Check for bleeding.** Using universal precautions, apply direct pressure to the wound and elevate injured limb(s).
6. **Look for signs of shock and broken bones (fractures).**
7. **Check for emergency medical identification on the victim.**
8. **Loosen any clothing** that may restrict the victim's breathing or interfere with circulation.
9. **Never give an unconscious person anything by mouth.**

**Poison Control Center: (800) 222-1222**

Call if you or your child ingests something concerning, or your child reports having done so.

## **GUIDE FOR EMERGENCY/ DISASTER**

### **Steps to follow in the event of an emergency:**

Tune to an Emergency Broadcast Station (EBS) on local a television or radio station for information and updates about areas affected, steps to take to maintain safety, and possible evacuation instructions and locations.

### **Stay Indoors**

1. Stay tuned to the radio station.
2. Keep your family and pets inside the house
3. Close the windows and doors
4. Turn off all air conditioners and other ventilation systems
5. Put out fire in the fireplace
6. Stay off the roads, unless told to leave the area. You will be safer indoors
7. Don't use the phone, except to call for medical help

### **Evacuation**

In some situations, leaving the area would be the safest thing to do. A major fire, explosion, flood, possible release of radiation, or other material that could lead officials to advise residents to leave certain areas temporarily.

1. Remain calm- you will be given ample time to leave
2. Ignore rumors. Stay tuned to an EBS for OFFICIAL instructions
3. Don't use the phones, so lines will not be on overload
4. Gather the items that you would like to have with you for a 3-day stay
5. Offer a ride to your neighbors, friends, relatives, or co-workers who may not have transportation
6. Close the windows and air vents of your car and do not operate the air conditioner until you have left the emergency area
7. Travel by roads announced by the EBS
8. If you do not have transportation, listen to the EBS instructions concerning local bus pick-up points in your area
9. Pets are not allowed in public reception areas. If you plan on using a public emergency area please do not bring your pets
10. The relocation centers will be professionally staffed and will provide food, medical care, and communication facilities.

11. If you are not in an emergency area – do not enter that area until the EBS has declared an all clear.

**Please use the following guide to know when to expect to hear from your assigned Wellness Supports staff regarding your services:**

**Event:** Snow, sleet, hale, heavy winds, work stoppage

**Action:** Staff visits will be made as soon as strikes, ravel and road conditions allow.

**Event:** Fire, tornado, civil disruption, telephone failure, electric/gas emergency, chemical spill, earthquake

**Action:** Emergencies should be called in to your local 911, or area phone company and electric/gas company.

**Event:** When roads are passable and phones are working.

**Action:** Wait for your QP/therapist, etc. to call and arrange a visit.

**Event:** Roads are impassable and phones are not working.

**Action:** You will be contacted by agency staff as phone service is restored, and your visit will be made as soon as road conditions allow.

In the event of a medical emergency during this time seek medical attention via transportation by ambulance to your local hospital by calling 911.

In the event of a psychiatric emergency, please contact the appropriate Wellness Supports First Responder number:

**Community Support and Therapy Services – (919) 810-5718**

**Intensive In-Home Services – (919) 810-5500**