

# BRIDGES TO LIFE

## Non-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Safeguarding Policies

### **Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policies.**

Bridges To Life (BTL) is committed to equal opportunity for all persons without regard to sex, age, race, color, religion, creed, national origin, marital status, disability or sexual orientation. It is the policy of BTL to comply with all federal, state and local laws and regulations regarding equal opportunity. In keeping with that policy, BTL is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of unlawful discrimination and harassment. Accordingly, BTL will not tolerate unlawful discrimination against or harassment of any of our employees or others present at our facilities by anyone, including any supervisor, co-worker, vendor, or client of BTL.

1. **Unlawful discrimination** includes treating someone less well in opportunities for work, promotions, shifts, overtime or other conditions of employment because of his or her race, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability or other protected attribute.
2. **Harassment** consists of unwelcome or unwanted conduct, whether verbal, physical or visual, that is based upon a person's protected status. Examples of unlawful harassment include words, gestures, stories, jokes or nicknames that are derogatory, demeaning or insulting to a person based upon his or her race, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion or other protected attribute.
3. **Sexual harassment** deserves special mention. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:
  - (a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
  - (b) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual;
  - (c) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.
  - (d) Examples of sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to the following conduct by any employee, whether male or female:
    - (i) unwanted sexual advances or propositions;
    - (ii) offering employment benefits in exchange for sexual favors;
    - (iii) making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances, sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, sexually oriented "kidding" or "teasing;"
    - (iv) jokes about gender-specific traits, making sexual gestures or comments;
    - (v) displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons or postures;
    - (vi) impeding or blocking another's movement;
    - (vii) physical contact, such as patting, pinching, or brushing against another's body;
    - (viii) continued requests for a date after a rejection.

### **Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy.**

Bridges To Life is committed to the safety and well-being of all children and vulnerable adults who interact with BTL staff members. The achievement of a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults requires the commitment of all members of the BTL community. Activities and behavior of all BTL staff members must contribute to the safety and well-being of children and vulnerable adults and not expose them to harm. Harm can be caused by action or inaction. Therefore, all BTL staff members share responsibility for the safety and well-being of children and vulnerable adults by complying with this Policy and other components of the BTL commitment to protecting children and vulnerable adults. BTL does not tolerate any behavior by any BTL staff member which is inconsistent with this commitment.

The protection of children and vulnerable adults includes the following components:

1. Conduct interactions in the presence of other adults

- a) To help children feel safe, avoid being alone with children. Ensure that another adult is present, or close by and able to observe interactions when providing one-on-one services to children or vulnerable adults.
- b) Always conduct interactions in professional spaces and not in a home environment.
- c) Do not transport unaccompanied children unless parental consent is provided.

2. Avoid unnecessary physical contact

- a) Do not initiate, encourage or accommodate unnecessary physical contact.
- b) Deal sensitively with inappropriate physical contact and report it to a supervisor.
- c) Ensure that any physical contact with a child or vulnerable adult is appropriate and can be explained in terms of the appropriate activity and needs of the child or vulnerable adult.

3. Behave professionally at all times

- a) Only make contact in an official capacity and as part of duties.
- b) Avoid discussing personal details.
- c) Be a positive role model.
- d) Do not show favoritism and treat all children and vulnerable adults equitably and respectfully.
- e) Any steps taken to manage disruptive or unsafe behavior should not be humiliating or isolating.
- f) While in hearing range of children, avoid conversations with other adults on adult or personal subject matter (e.g. relationships, lifestyle, alcohol consumption).

4. Use technology appropriately

- a) Ensure that photographing, audio recording or filming via any medium is authorized in writing by the parent or guardian of the child or vulnerable adult, and is used solely for the purposes for which they have been authorized.
- b) Ensure that there is no identifying personal information in photographs or film footage of children or vulnerable adults, e.g. name tags.
- c) Take steps to encourage the responsible use of personal equipment e.g. mobile devices should not be used to photograph, record or film.
- d) Do not provide personal contact details and always use BTL email and telephone for communication.
- e) Do not “friend” or “connect” via social media unless for purposes related to the work and with the consent of the parent or guardian.
- f) Be aware of issues associated with online safety.

5. Listen and act

- a) If a child or vulnerable adult raises a concern, ask open questions, listen patiently, be compassionate and reassure them; and then take appropriate action to address the concern.
- b) If a child or vulnerable adult reports concerning behavior which has occurred at BTL or elsewhere, take action to report the behavior.

6. Seek parental consent and assent from the child or vulnerable adult, where appropriate

- a) Seek consent from a parent or guardian of a child or vulnerable adult where prudent to do so.
- b) Where appropriate, seek assent written from the child or vulnerable adult to participate in an activity e.g. a research study.