



*A Center for Success and Independence*

**TITLE:** Clients, Families and Referral Sources Grievances and Appeals

**APPROVED:** Facility Director

**DATE:** October 17, 2017

**PURPOSE:** To protect and safeguard the legal rights of all clients, families and referral sources by establishing a policy & procedure for clients, families and referral sources to file a written grievance, or appeal to a management disposition of same: along with a process that is unbiased and timely for management to create a fair and equitable resolution and communication of same.

**POLICY:** It is the policy of MRYH to provide a grievance and appeal procedure that promotes the fair and equitable resolution of clients, families and referral sources grievances and appeals in an unbiased and timely manner including communication of same.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Grievance** – a complaint a client, family member, or referral source has against MRYH, its personnel, policies, procedures, practices, care, treatment, environment of care, or state licensing rules, regulations or standards in which the client, family member, or referral source deems himself/herself, the client, or family member as having been treated in an unfair, unreasonable or unethical manner.

## **GOAL**

It is the goal of MRYH to: 1) reach a clear understanding of the nature of the complaint or grievance, and to quickly find a resolution 2) protect the legal rights of all parties, and 3) resolve any complaint or grievance in a professional, reasonable, fair, equitable and timely manner at the appropriate level of supervision or management when possible. However, it is acknowledged that some grievances should go directly to the Assistant Facility Director who shall be the designated Grievance Coordinator for resolution.

## **CLIENT ROOM SANCTION FOR BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE**

1. Before the room sanction of a client for behavior management begins, **but not later than 24-hours after confinement of the client to their room**, the Grievance Coordinator (as long as he/she has no personal knowledge of the case or incident, has the authority to override a staff decision regarding a room sanction, and has the requisite training, experience and credentials) shall meet with the client to listen to the client's story and make disposition as to their continued room sanction or to issue a decision to terminate the room sanction thereof.
2. The client may request staff assistance in preparing and presenting his/her grievance or defense.
3. The Grievance Coordinator shall also interview staff regarding the client and the room sanction and behavior management case in order to have the pertinent facts and information necessary.
4. The Grievance Coordinator shall provide the client a written copy of the grievance resolution.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

1. Grievance forms are available on each unit and in administration and may be requested by a client, family member or referral source at any time. These forms are titled **Muskegon River Youth Home Client Grievance Form**.
2. Clients and family members shall have the option of how they wish to submit a written grievance. Completed grievance forms can be submitted by: A) turning it in directly to the Assistant Facility Director (who is the designated Grievance Coordinator) B) directly to administration C) directly to a staff person, or D) place into a confidential locked box on the unit which will be accessed by the Grievance Coordinator. All grievances shall then be promptly reviewed, investigated and disposition rendered per this policy and procedure. Alternatively, staff can assist any client, family member or referral source in completing and submitting a grievance form as needed or requested.
3. MRYH's goal is to review, make resolution and respond to any client grievance within five (5) business days of said grievance being received and ten (10) business days for family grievances being received by the Grievance Coordinator. It is acknowledged there may be extenuating circumstances to management's ability to respond within the five-business day and ten-business day time periods: for example, if the grievance is filed against a specific supervisor or manager who is out sick or on vacation at the time.
4. The Grievance Coordinator shall investigate the grievance by reviewing all documents, data or information appropriate, and interviewing clients, family members, referral sources and staff as appropriate, and render a disposition and

response to the person filing the grievance. Typically, the Grievance Coordinator shall communicate the decision regarding the disposition of said grievance verbally, and then follow-up with a written communication of same that is dated, signed and delivered to the grievant within the stated timeframes. However, it shall be the Grievance Coordinator's decision as to whether said resolution and response to the grievance shall be made verbally or in writing as appropriate.

## **APPEALS PROCEDURE**

1. If the party filing the grievance receives the resolution made by the Grievance Coordinator and feels it has not been adequately resolved, he/she may file a written appeal to the Facility Director within five (5) business days of receiving said response. This appeal must be made in writing, dated and signed by the grievant, and specify the exact nature of the complaint or grievance; exactly why the Grievance Coordinator's resolution and response is not found acceptable; names of any other employees or managers, if any, the Facility Director should meet with to interview regarding the complaint or grievance (if appropriate); any supporting data or information believed to support the grievance; any written resolution or response previously made by the Grievance Coordinator; and the party's specific request as to resolution that he/she believes is fair and equitable to all parties concerned.
2. The Facility Director shall have ten (10) business days from receipt of the appeal to complete any interviews, investigation or gathering of any other information or data necessary to complete due diligence and to render a final resolution to said appeal.
3. The Facility Director shall then provide a written resolution and response to the grievant that is dated, signed and delivered (via mail if to a family member or referral source) within this ten-business day time period. In addition, the communication shall include a signature and date line for the grievant to sign, date and return to acknowledge their receipt of same.
4. The Facility Director's final decision regarding resolution to the grievance appeal shall be considered final.

## **POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

1. MRYH takes all client, family or referral source complaints and grievances seriously, with the goal of treating all parties who file a grievance with respect, courtesy and professionalism at all times.
2. It is acknowledged that clients, families and referral sources may communicate a grievance to others prior to ever communicating same to MRYH or its management. However, all grievances filed with management shall only be shared or communicated internally by management on a need-to-know basis, while maintaining the respect for the grievant's privacy and confidentiality of same.

3. Sexual abuse or sexual harassment may be reported on behalf of clients and families via telephone to the Facility Director at any time at the following telephone number: 231.734.6254.

I have read and understand the Grievance and Appeals Policy and Procedure as written.

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Signature

Date