



'Protecting children against sexual assault'

Code of Conduct

Bravehearts Inc.

Education ♥ Advocacy ♥ Research ♥ Therapy ♥ Awareness

Forward

Good conduct and professionalism are fundamental to the mission of Bravehearts as an organisation devoted to counselling, education, awareness, research and advocacy for all survivors of child sexual assault. The principles in this *Code of Conduct* apply to the whole Bravehearts organisation, including staff, Board members and volunteers.

All employees, Board members and volunteers will be provided with a copy of this Code. As a condition of employment or professional association with Bravehearts individuals are required to abide by the conditions outlined in this *Code of Conduct*.

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Bravehearts' Values

The principles of effective service provision and the administration of these services lies at the heart of the confidence the survivors of child sexual assault and the community has in the way Bravehearts meets its objectives. A clear *Code of Conduct*, as well as a clearly defined *Policies and Procedures Manual*, assists us in ensuring that we provide a dedicated and professional service to our clients and to the community.

Bravehearts' *Code of Conduct* does not simply reflect aspirational statements of intent. All Bravehearts employees are required to uphold the values within this *Code of Conduct*. Board members and volunteers are also required to promote the values within this Code. Failure to do so may attract sanctions.

Key Values

Bravehearts' values that underpin this document are summarised below. These values reflect the core principles of the provision of our services and the administration of those services.

Values are reflected in our relationships and behaviour; they establish the culture in which we operate with integrity that connects us to our core business. This is the essence of values-based management and parallel practice between service delivery and internal relations.

It is helpful to consider our values and our *Code of Conduct* in terms of relationships and behaviour between:

- Bravehearts staff
- Staff and volunteers
- Staff and Board members
- Staff and clients
- Board members
- Board members and volunteers
- Board members and clients
- Volunteers
- Volunteers and clients
- Anyone associated with Bravehearts and the community and its representatives

Bravehearts is apolitical and has no religious standing, performing its functions in an impartial and professional manner and is openly accountable at all levels of association.

Bravehearts delivers services fairly, effectively, impartially and courteously to all survivors of child sexual assault, irrespective of age, gender, or cultural or economic group and is sensitive to the diversity of the Australian public.

Bravehearts is an organisation in which employment decisions are based on merit, providing a workplace that is free from discrimination and recognises and utilises the diversity of the Australian community it serves. Internal practices have been established based on workplace relations that value communication, consultation, cooperation and input from employees on matters that affect their workplace. The Organisation provides a fair, flexible, safe and rewarding workplace, which focuses on achieving results and managing performance. In keeping with this, a fair system of review exists with respect to decisions made under this Code.

Bravehearts operates under the highest ethical standards and expectations, based on leadership that is accountable and models the desired 'culture' and workplace practice. Valuing the *highest ethical standard* reflects the expectation of the clients of Bravehearts, their families, support persons and the general community. This *Code of Conduct* is informed by and structured specifically around this value.

Sanctions for Failure to Comply with the Code of Conduct

Bravehearts is committed to the highest standards of conduct, principles and practice of quality assurance and the continual improvement of our practices and services. Bravehearts also recognises that it is sometimes hard to interpret specific cases. Therefore, it is intended that management and/or the Board will deal with minor breaches by employees, Board members or volunteers, explaining procedures or requirements more clearly or taking other remedial action within.

Serious breaches will be addressed through formal disciplinary procedures. Such sanctions may include censure, suspension, and expulsion/termination from Bravehearts as allowable under this Code and informed by the relevant State Awards and Federal Industrial Relations legislation.

Bravehearts' Code of Conduct

A Bravehearts employee, Board member or volunteer must comply with any conduct requirement that is prescribed by this *Code of Conduct*. Failure to comply with the Code may attract sanctions.

General Conditions

1. A Bravehearts employee, Board member or volunteer, when acting in the course of their association with Bravehearts, must comply with all applicable Australian laws, and state and federal legislation. In addition to this, given the nature of our core business, those associated with Bravehearts Inc. are required to behave at all times in a manner that will not bring the Organisation into disrepute. Doing so may contravene this code, and may attract sanctions.
2. Bravehearts embraces the ideal of fair and open discussion, recognising the rights of individuals to their own opinions, and supporting the principles of freedom of speech. However, it is expected that public expression of opinion or comment be restricted to matters that will not risk damage to Bravehearts reputation, or the relevant position/policy taken; and will avoid representing a personal viewpoint as being that of Bravehearts. Employees, Board members and volunteers must also refrain from using a Bravehearts title or their respective position when expressing personal views or presenting in a forum/medium except when officially authorised to comment on behalf of Bravehearts.
3. Staff, Board members and volunteers must never give advice, counsel or public comment outside of their area of professional membership, unless expressly endorsed by management. Doing so might otherwise jeopardise Bravehearts integrity and professional standing and potentially be harmful to the community. Limits are outlined in the Position Description and Procedures Manual.
4. Bravehearts management will not tolerate gossip or underhanded criticism of colleagues. If this becomes an issue, it may be raised with the colleague in a non-confrontational manner (not a public setting). If this isn't appropriate, the matter is to be brought to the attention of the person's line supervisor, or in writing to the President of the Board. If the matter concerns the person's line supervisor, the matter should be brought to the attention of the next supervisor in-line, or in writing to the President of the Board.
5. Bravehearts facilities and equipment are provided so we can achieve our Mission and agreed Goals. Employees, Board members and volunteers can only use them for approved purposes and never for private purposes without express permission. No one is approved to use Bravehearts facilities or equipment for private commercial, personal interest, or party political purposes other than as expressly approved.
6. In order to promote and maintain a professional service and culture, staff, Board members and volunteers will be permitted "on site" only in the capacity with which they are associated and only during times which have been negotiated by management. This also meets workplace health & safety requirements of the Organisation.

Managing Information

1. A Bravehearts employee, Board member or volunteer must not, give or disclose, directly or indirectly, to any person any information about clients or anything of which he or she has knowledge by virtue of their involvement with Bravehearts, except in the course of his or her official duties or with the express authority.
2. It is an offence under copyright law and contravenes this Code to utilise intellectual property of Bravehearts, or material generated as part of the persons employment/service to the Organisation.
3. A Bravehearts employee, Board member or volunteer must not make improper use of information, his or her duties, status, power or authority in order to gain, or seek to gain, a benefit or advantage for themselves or for any other person.
4. A Bravehearts employee, Board member or volunteer must maintain appropriate confidentiality about dealings that he or she has with any representative of Bravehearts, client, member of an external agency or department (Government or other), or member of the community. This is in keeping with the Confidentiality Agreement that must be signed and adhered to as a condition of employment/acceptance of service.

Working with Colleagues and the Community

1. A Bravehearts employee, Board member or volunteer, when acting in the course of their association with Bravehearts, must treat everyone with respect and courtesy, and without harassment.
2. A Bravehearts employee, Board member or volunteer will respect the differences in opinions and cultural practises among colleagues and will treat with respect their experiences, views and actions. No person should be denigrated or made to feel inferior amongst their peers.
3. A Bravehearts employee, Board member or volunteer will endeavour to cooperate with colleagues to enhance understanding of one another and working relationships. All members will share knowledge, skills, experience and ideas in order to improve the quality of the service. In the spirit of this code and its values, no member will monopolise information or relationships for the benefit of personal gain or power.
4. If the inappropriate behaviour, inefficiencies, or unprofessionalism, of a colleague is evident the matter is to be raised with the colleague in a non-confrontational manner (not a public setting). If this isn't appropriate, it remains the responsibility of the member to raise the matter with the person's line supervisor, or in writing to the President of the Board. If the matter concerns the persons line supervisor, the matter should be brought to the attention of the next supervisor in-line, or in writing to the President of the Board.
5. A Bravehearts employee, Board member or volunteer will respect the appropriate professional boundaries when working and interacting with colleagues. A Bravehearts employee, Board member or volunteer will not make or accept any offers that will compromise these boundaries.
6. If a Bravehearts employee, or Board member becomes personally involved with another employee or Board member, the management must be made aware of this relationship. Under this Code, one, or both parties may be required to step down from their position/s. Relationships between individuals where there is a real or perceived power imbalance are considered to be of concern and the Bravehearts

management and/or the Board reserve the right to determine whether the relationship will impact on the organisation.

7. Counsellors employed by Bravehearts will follow the ethical conduct codes set out by relevant counselling, social work or psychological associations. Should any discrepancy occur between the Organisation policy and that of a member association, it remains the responsibility of the staff member to raise this with management prior to any action that may contravene policy.

Personal Behaviour

1. A Bravehearts employee, Board member or volunteer must act with care, diligence, and honesty in the course of their association with Bravehearts.
2. A Bravehearts employee, Board member or volunteer must at all times behave in a way that upholds Bravehearts' values and the integrity and good reputation of the Organisation. This includes adherence at all times to Organisational:
 - Policy, Principles and Procedures
 - Values
 - Language
 - Dress code

Dress Code

1. Bravehearts staff, volunteers and Board members must ensure appropriate dress code when attending their roles at work, functions and any events in which they are attending as a representative.
2. Clothing worn during these times must be suitable to attend work related activities, should be comfortable and non-restrictive with consideration to our workplace health and safety policy.
3. The following types of attire will not be deemed appropriate;
 - a. Low cut blouses
 - b. Skirts shorter than knee length
 - c. See-through garments (where undergarments are exposed)
 - d. Low rise trousers / hipster pants
4. Staff and volunteers attending Bravehearts events and functions in a working capacity are required to wear Bravehearts uniforms;
 - a. For corporate events:
 - i. Name badge
 - ii. Bravehearts shirt / White business shirt/blouse
 - iii. Females: Black trousers / skirt and shoes
 - iv. Males: Business trousers and leather shoes
 - b. For general events:
 - i. Name badge
 - ii. Bravehearts shirt / White or Purple t-shirt/polo shirt
 - iii. Suitably attired knee length shorts/skirt, slacks/trousers or jeans.

Child Protection Code

1. Bravehearts' staff, volunteers and Board members must acknowledge and accept that it is inappropriate (unless they are a parent, family or guardian) to:
 - Spend time alone with children away from others except where prescribed in the relevant procedure manual;
 - Take children to their own home, especially where no parent/guardian will be present;
 - Smack, hit or use physical force with children;
 - Have a child or children stay, or visit at their home unsupervised; or
 - Do things for; or give things to children of a personal nature, that may be construed as crossing moral or ethical boundaries.
2. Bravehearts' staff, volunteers and Board members must never develop relationships with children that could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive; or act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.
3. Bravehearts' staff, and Board members will at all times act in accordance with relevant child protection legislation and mandatory reporting requirements (see section under *Reporting*, in Bravehearts Policy Manual). If staff or Board members become aware, or concerned about any behaviour that contravenes this code, it becomes their responsibility to immediately notify their supervisor (exclusively), as directed by the Organisational Policy and Procedures Manual.
4. Bravehearts' staff, volunteers and Board members must avoid actions or behaviour that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive, which includes:
 - Using language, making suggestions or offering advice that is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
 - Behaving physically in a manner that is inappropriate or sexually provocative towards a child.
 - Condoning, or participating in, behaviour of children that is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
 - Acting in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children.
 - Showing unfair differential treatment, or favouring particular children to the exclusion of others in the same group.

Adult Protection Code

All items covered in the Child Protection Code should be applied to adult clients.