



## ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Section: Quality

Client Complaint Process	Date Approved:	Jan 2020
	Director Responsible:	Director of Quality & Privacy Officer
	Date for Review:	Jan 2024

### PURPOSE

KidsAbility is committed to providing high quality programs and services. The voice of clients and families is important in helping us make improvements. Careful and prompt attention to complaints can help us understand the needs of our clients and stakeholders, prevent further problems, increase client satisfaction and improve performance.

We want to ensure that clients and families know that we value their input, and they understand how to provide feedback or express any concerns they might have, and that staff know what to do with this information. This policy sets out the steps to successfully manage client feedback and complaints consistently, fairly and reasonably, and within a reasonable timeframe.

### DEFINITIONS

Complaint:

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction. Complaints present in a variety of ways including direct verbal complaints to a service provider or other staff members in the organization, letters, client surveys, written correspondence; through healthcare professionals or ombudsmen from other organizations; media, etc. An attempt should be made to acknowledge and address complaints received from all sources.

Complainant:

A person who lodges a complaint with KidsAbility.

Anonymous Complaint:

A complaint received from a complainant who does not wish to identify themselves. An anonymous complaint must be recorded and every attempt made to resolve it.

### SCOPE

Entire Organization

### POLICY

KidsAbility welcomes feedback from its clients and their families and uses this information to support the organization-wide, continuous quality improvement process. Despite best efforts to meet the needs and wishes of clients and their families, it is normal to expect that on occasion complaints will arise. KidsAbility is committed to reviewing and resolving these complaints in a fair, non-adversarial and expedient manner.

Complaints are a valuable source of feedback that help us find opportunities for improvement. We will regularly review and analyze client feedback to identify where processes and systems can be improved.

We will be alert to people who might require additional help of different approaches to provide feedback such as our young clients, people with a disability, people living in remote areas, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **1.0 Identification of Complaints**

#### **1.1 Examples of types of complaints**

Complaints typically fall within one of five different categories:

1. Communication issues (e.g. lack of communication, misunderstanding or inappropriate communication, access to language of choice)
2. Service Delivery (e.g. timeliness and quality of services received)
3. Facilities (e.g. issues pertaining to the facilities where the service was offered.)
4. Administrative (e.g. decision made by KidsAbility or process issues)
5. Privacy (e.g. complaint about proper handling of personal information, including how it is collected, stored, secured, accessed, amended, used and disclosed).

\*All privacy complaints must be immediately referred to KidsAbility's Privacy Officer to manage.

#### **1.2 How clients and families learn about the complaint process:**

Information about our complaints process and the value we place on client and family input is broadly publicized. It appears:

- on our Website
- in Welcome Packages provided to families at Intake
- at Reception in each of our sites

All families of clients admitted to KidsAbility are provided with a client and family Information package that includes a section on client and staff responsibilities. If clients or families have questions or concerns about a service, they are asked to let the appropriate staff person or their Manager know as soon as possible, either verbally or in writing. This process is reinforced at intake and throughout the care process by the therapist and receptionist.

#### **1.3 How a complaint can be registered:**

Clients and families as well as other members of the public may provide feedback to KidsAbility in the following ways:

- A direct comment to a service provider or other staff member
- A written or verbal complaint at the front reception of each site
- Through the website KidsAbility info.ca
- Through the client satisfaction surveys

### **2.0 Complaint Evaluation:**

Complaints can be assessed according to the potential impact of the complaint and the required level of administrative support in its management.

- Low risk - Can be managed with normal procedures at staff or supervisor level
- Medium risk - Risk mitigation and ongoing monitoring required. Involvement of the Manager.
- High risk - Leadership involvement or attention is necessary.
- Critical risk - Immediate action required. Inform the Chief Executive Officer and Board of Directors.

The risk of a complaint is elevated if:

- there is actual or potential harm to the client;
- there is potential for litigation;
- there are ethical concerns;
- there are clusters of minor complaints that develop significance when grouped together and;
- there is possible negative impact to KidsAbility's reputation

### 3.0 Complaint management:

All KidsAbility staff will exercise their best judgment when responding to a complaint. All complaints, verbal and written will be addressed in an objective, timely, consistent and fair manner. Complaints will be resolved using a non-adversarial, problem-solving approach.

#### 3.1 Stages of Resolution

##### 3.11 First Level of Resolution – **Front Line Staff**

When a complaint is received by a front line staff and the risk level is low they will:

- Address the complaint at the place and time of the occurrence;
- Complete the Client Complaint Form and provide to the Supervisor or Manager to add their comments;
- Refer serious complaints, or those they are unable to resolve, to their Supervisor or Manager.
- If a client or family member makes the complaint to a staff member not involved in the complaint (e.g. to their social worker or receptionist), this individual should bring the complaint forth to the Supervisor or Manager (then it becomes a 2<sup>nd</sup> level complaint)

##### 3.12 Second Level of Resolution – **Supervisor/Manager**

When the front line staff is unable to manage the complaint or the complaint risk level is medium, they will take it to their Supervisor/Manager who will:

- Contact the complainant within two business days (At least three attempts will be made to contact the complainant);
- Investigate the complaint as required (involving others in the investigation as appropriate);
- Inform the Director of the complaint if there are concerns about legal liability or political sensitivity;
- Contact the complainant when the investigation is complete;

- Complete the Client Complaint Form (listing actions taken and system/process improvements recommended)

### 3.13 Third Level of Resolution - **Director**

If the complaint cannot be resolved by the Supervisor/Manager or is considered to be a high risk complaint, they will take it to the Director who will:

- Contact the complainant within two business days (at least three attempts will be made to contact the complainant);
- Meet with staff to discuss the complaint and subsequent action taken;
- Conduct a meeting with the complainant and the staff if appropriate;
- Ensure recommendations and follow-up actions are implemented;
- Follow-up with the complainant at a later point, to review improvements made as a result of the concerns being brought forward;
- Update the Client Complaint Form with action taken and resolution with the client/family

### 3.14 Fourth level of resolution- **CEO / Board of Directors**

If the complaint: 1) cannot be resolved at any other level; 2) is considered to be a critical risk level complaint; and/or 3) is made directly to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or representative, then the CEO or designate will:

- Respond to the complainant within two business days (At least three attempts will be made to contact the complainant).
- Inform the Board of Directors if the situation is critical.
- Inform KidsAbility insurers and legal advisors if there are concerns about liability.
- Consult with managers and staff regarding the complaint and any action taken.
- Where appropriate, arrange a meeting with the complainant.
- Develop a plan of response and ensure follow-up of recommendations.
- Provide updates to the Board of Directors as appropriate.
- Follow-up with the complainant at a later point, to review improvements made as a result of the concerns being brought forward.

## 4.0 Complaint Reporting and Routing

The complaint management process is intended to facilitate continuous quality improvement. A **Client Complaint Form** will be initiated as soon as possible after a complaint is registered and sent to the Director of Quality and Privacy Officer. It should include:

- The complainant's name
- The nature of the complaint (type and brief description)
- The name of the staff member(s) involved
- Assessment of the complaint and follow-up action plan
- Identify areas for service improvement

The Client Complaint Form will continue to be updated by the different levels of management, up the chain of command, until the complaint has been resolved and required follow-up action is completed to the extent possible.

Where appropriate, relevant information should be documented in the client's electronic health record.

The Director of Quality and Privacy Officer will analyze the complaints received and generate a quarterly report including trends and any resulting improvements made to service. This report will be presented and discussed with the Leadership, the Quality Improvement Committee, the Quality and Safety Committee and the Board of Directors.

On an annual basis, KidsAbility will publish information about complaint trends and ways we have used this information to improve our services on its website.

## **REFERENCES**

Guiding Principles for Complaint Management

## **APPENDICES**

Client Complain Form

Website – link to Client Complaint Form

Contact List

Privacy Policies

Privacy Officer – Job Description

Client Complaint Schematic Diagram