

# ARROWSMITH COMMUNITY JUSTICE SOCIETY

## Code of Ethics Agreement



Adopted: 14 Oct 2014

### **FORWARD:**

1. A Code of Ethics to govern volunteers active within the Arrowsmith Community Justice Society (ACJS) providing guidelines for conduct; a tool to assess performance; and a basis for support and corrective measures.
2. It is hoped that this Code will enable volunteers to be effective and that it will help those involved in the conference process to have confidence in their work.

### **APPLICATION AND ENFORCEMENT:**

1. This Code applies to a person who has been selected, trained, and approved as a volunteer.
2. To practice restorative justice, as a volunteer of ACJS, requires explicit agreement to:
  - a) Abide by:
    - i. The Constitution, By-laws, Policy and Procedures of ACJS,
    - ii. This Code of Ethics,
    - iii. The training, support and corrective procedures developed and adopted by the ACJS Board of Directors, and
  - b) Support:
    - i. The work and philosophy of the Arrowsmith Community Justice Society
3. The following rules are intended to govern the volunteer in their relationship with their client (victim or offender), their client's supporters and/or family, other agencies involved in cases, and the ACJS, so that all will benefit from high standards of practice on the part of the volunteers
4. It is the obligation of the volunteer to report and to encourage their clients to report, in writing, any real or apparent breaches of this code, forthwith, to the ACJS Coordinator which could be forwarded to the Standard & Ethics Committee for resolution.

### **GOAL OF THE COMMUNITY CONFERENCE PROCESS:**

1. Goal of the community conference:
  - a) The goal of the community conference process is to ensure that the offence at hand is addressed by helping both the victim(s) and offender(s) to be heard, and by holding the offender(s) accountable to the victim(s) by taking responsibility for their actions and being willing to repair the harm caused to the victim(s) and the community.

- b) The volunteer must recognize and embrace their role in assisting the ACJS in its development and application of conferencing as a resolution and peacemaking mechanism for conflict in the community.

### **ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER:**

1. The role of the volunteer as part of a conference team.
  - a. The duties of a conference team member are outlined in the ACJS Community Conference Model as to Pre-Conference, Conference and Post-Conference.
  - b. Designated team member(s) act as neutral organizer and facilitator of the community conference process and provide a one-to-one support that focuses on the needs of their clients.
  - c. While these designated roles are determined by the conference team, at no time does this mean a volunteer should work in isolation. Team members support one another throughout the conference process until the contract is completed and debriefing held.
  - d. The volunteer shall be dedicated to the principle that the clients have a right to express their own views, limit the personal information they disclose and determine their own solution.
  - e. The volunteer help the clients to:
    - i. Express and analyze problems and issues arising as a result of the offense,
    - ii. Build understanding of the rights and responsibilities of all parties,
    - iii. Consider options to ensure that resolution is feasible and that harm done is repaired,
    - iv. Develop an agreement for resolution.
  - f. If, during the community conference process, a need arises for additional information or other services, the volunteer will assist by identifying community resources.
  - g. A volunteer must be aware that their duties and obligations relate to the victim(s), the offender(s), to ACJS, and to the restorative justice community conference process.
  - h. The volunteer shall explain the community conference process clearly to the involved parties. In particular, the volunteer should at the outset:
    - i. Define restorative justice in terms of a community conference
    - ii. Explain the roles of facilitator & conference team member.
    - iii. Discuss the appropriateness of using restorative justice in light of the person's particular circumstances.
    - iv. Explain the conditions of confidentiality.
  - i. A volunteer should not enter any restorative justice process which is being handled by another volunteer without first confirming participation with the ACJS Coordinator and the volunteer responsible for the case.

- j. In situations where more than one volunteer is participating in a particular case, each volunteer has the responsibility to keep the other(s) informed of developments essential to a cooperative effort and should extend every courtesy to co-worker(s). Should disagreements occur, the matter shall be dealt with in a private meeting. Unresolved disagreements are to be taken to the Coordinator.
2. The role of the volunteer pertaining to withdrawal of services.
    - a. The volunteer will be obliged to withdraw their services, after consultation with the coordinator, if during the process the volunteer becomes aware of any of the following:
      - i. That the restorative justice process is not working or is inappropriate
      - ii. That an irreconcilable conflict has arisen between the volunteer and one or more of the clients.
      - iii. That the personal involvement of the volunteer is not in the best interests of the parties involved.
    - b. The volunteer shall not withdraw services except for good cause and with the approval of the coordinator.
3. The role of the volunteer pertaining to self-monitoring and self-improvement.
    - a. The volunteer
      - i. Shall share any concerns identified through the process with the coordinator.
      - ii. Shall not become involved in a relationship with any client which might in any way exploit that person.
      - iii. Shall be limited to representing ACJS only in the capacity which has been expressly delegated to them.
      - iv. Shall pursue knowledge and understanding of restorative justice and ensure personal awareness of changes and trends.
      - v. Shall follow all guidelines, procedures, and process outlined by ACJS and participate in training, debriefing and networking.
4. The role of the volunteer in respect to ACJS Core Values
    - a. ACCOUNTABILITY
      - i. DEFINITION: to be committed to; to be incumbent on; ethical; conscientious; responsibility. *“Knowing that we are responsible – “response-able” is fundamental to effectiveness”*. (Stephen Covey). It means we are acutely aware of what is going on, see and accept our part in it.
      - ii. The volunteer:
        - a) Must recognize that because everyone carries personal biases, they must continually monitor their beliefs and behaviours in order not to influence or judge either the victim or the offender.
        - b) Shall perform all services in a conscientious, diligent and efficient manner in accordance with this Code.

b. RESPECT

- i. DEFINITION: Regard for and appreciation of worth; honour and esteem; value and consideration; courteous regard. I honour myself and others. I believe that all human beings have equal worth.
- ii. The volunteer shall respect the rights of others involved in the process.

c. HONESTY OR TRUTHFULNESS

- i. DEFINITION: The quality of uncompromising honesty; sincerity, frankness. *“My relationships depend on being honest with other people. My life depends on being honest with myself.”* (Unknown) When we are being genuinely truthful intentional deception or dishonesty is not an option.
- ii. The volunteer shall not make any false, misleading, or unfair statements or claims regarding the restorative justice process or their role, skills and qualifications.

d. FORGIVENESS

- i. DEFINITION: Reconciliation, to conciliate. To forgive is to cease to feel resentment. When we forgive ourselves or others, we heal ourselves. *“I can have peace of mind only when I forgive rather than judge.”* –Jampolsky.
- ii. The volunteer recognizes that holding onto resentment harms the unforgiving more than the unforgiven. When we forgive ourselves and others we let go of resentment and give ourselves peace of mind.

e. COMPASSION

- i. DEFINITION: empathy, fellow-feeling, humanity. Sorrow for the suffering or trouble of others accompanied by a strong urge to help. *“If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.”* –Dali Lama. Compassion is a feeling of deep empathy for another... given freely, with no hidden motive, respecting the inner wisdom of the other.
- ii. The volunteer recognizes compassion which allows us to connect powerfully with others.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

1. Any information received by the volunteer from her clients or other parties is confidential and shall not be voluntarily disclosed to anyone who is not assigned to the case unless:
  - a. The ACJS Coordinator has:
    - i. Determined that the information is non-identifying and is to be used for research or educational purposes.
    - ii. Obtained the written consent of the party or parties involved allowing the release of specific case and/or personal information.

- b. The volunteer:
  - i. Suspect child abuse,
  - ii. Receives disclosure of another crime that the volunteer feels compromises public safety or order,
  - iii. Is ordered to do so by a judicial authority with jurisdiction to compel such disclosure, or is required to do so by legislation or law.
2. If possible, the volunteer should discuss with the coordinator their belief that they have a duty to report, prior to taking action. Any information divulged shall be limited to what is absolutely necessary to accomplish the purposes which have been determined.
3. Confidentiality shall be discussed with the clients at the outset of the process.
4. The volunteer shall maintain confidentiality of client files at all time.
5. The volunteer must recognize that they may be considered personally liable for any loss or injury that results from a breach in confidentiality. The 2000 edition of "*Volunteers & The Law*" states (pg15) that "*To protect confidentiality and prevent liability, volunteers should inform participants if they feel there is a chance they might have to reveal confidential information in the future. Participants can then make an informed choice about what to disclose.*"
6. The volunteer also owes a duty of confidentiality to ACJS.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

1. The volunteer shall disclose a perceived Conflict of Interest to the Coordinator at the earliest opportunity after discovery. It will be the Coordinator's decision if withdrawal from the case is warranted.

### **SUPPORT, CORRECTION AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURE**

1. This Code of Ethics will be administered by the ACJS Board of Directors. The board appointed Standards & Ethics Committee shall be a standing committee whose activities shall be congruent with the values, philosophy, beliefs and practices of ACJS.
2. Because most volunteers are lay people who are volunteering their time to provide restorative justice services, it is intended that measures be corrective rather than punitive. Each case will be dealt with on its own merits and will take into consideration the volunteer's past record. Measures may range in scope from in depth debriefing and mentoring, increased training and support, a verbal reprimand, to dismissal as an ACJS volunteer.
3. It is hoped that this approach will encourage volunteers to comply voluntarily with the Code of Ethics and will enable them to achieve the high standards necessary to be both effective and accountable to victims and offenders, the ACJS, and any others involved in the restorative justice process.

**STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING**

I, the undersigned, on becoming a volunteer under the Arrowsmith Community Justice Society, have read, have understood, and agree to abide by the Code of Ethics set out in this document. I also agree to abide by any corrective or disciplinary measures that may be taken by the Arrowsmith Community Justice Society should I be found to have breached this Code.

**ARROWSMITH COMMUNITY JUSTICE SOCIETY**    **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Volunteer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address of Volunteer:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_    **E-Mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Witness Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_