

PSYCHODRAMA AUSTRALIA LTD COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The Institute aims to offer high quality training and supervision which generates valuable learning for trainees. To this end we are committed to continuous learning and transparency in our dealings with trainees, trainers and in other matters. Our complaints policy and complaints procedures reflect this commitment.

WHO FOR

All trainees of Psychodrama Australia or those seeking to enroll in a course of study with Psychodrama Australia are entitled to access the Complaints Procedures set out in this policy.

NATURE OF THE COMPLAINT

The Institute recognizes that complaints can be of an academic or non-academic nature.

Academic-related complaints may involve issues such as admissions, credit for prior study, trainee assessment, curriculum and other course-related matters. All trainees of Psychodrama Australia can use these procedures to submit a complaint about an academic matter.

Non-academic complaints may involve the following:

- Administrative matters such as institutional practices, financial issues, resources, marketing and access
- Issues of public behaviour and the relationships that develop between and among colleagues, trainees, and members of the public which may be covered by the AANZPA's Code of Ethics (included in this handbook).
- Professional practice and other ethical or practice issues covered by AANZPA's Code of Ethics.

VICTIMISATION OR DISCRIMINATION

The complainant and the respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against at any stage of addressing a complaint.

SUPPORT FROM A THIRD PARTY

The complainant and/or the respondent in a complaints process may be accompanied and assisted by a third party such as a family member, friend, counsellor or other professional support person if they so desire at any stage throughout the process.

COSTS

Each stage of the complaint procedure outlined below is free of cost to the parties involved. Psychodrama Australia will not bear the cost of any external consultant that the complainant invites to join her/him in this process.

RECORDS

Records of complaints and their outcomes will be kept strictly confidential and be filed in a separate file (not kept on the trainee or staff file) and stored in a Psychodrama Australia campus office for a period of five years. Parties to the complaint will be allowed

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supervised access to these records.

COMMUNICATION OF THE POLICY

This policy is communicated to teaching staff and support staff. The Director of Training at each Campus of Psychodrama Australia is responsible for the training of staff in the application of the policy. Each member of staff has been informed of Psychodrama Australia's complaints procedures in writing and has been directed to inform the trainee or potential trainee of Psychodrama Australia's complaints procedures in the event of a trainee or potential trainee expressing a complaint about any element of the program or their treatment within the program.

LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under statute or any other law.

STATEMENT REGARDING COMPLAINTS RELATING TO THE TRAINER/DIRECTOR-TRAINEE RELATIONSHIP

In a training institute the most common form of complaint may result from a breakdown in the relationship between the trainer/Director of Training and the trainee. Psychodrama Australia acknowledges that such a relationship breakdown needs to be addressed in a sensitive and comprehensive manner and that resolution strategies recognise power issues that are inherent in the trainer – trainee relationship.

Trainers and directors of training have a position of authority within the training program, in that they observe, assess and give feedback to trainees on their progress within the training. They support and give guidance in a variety of ways. They also make recommendations as to a trainee's suitability for entry to and progress within the program.

Accordingly the Institute makes known to its trainees its willingness to address trainees' concerns in a supportive and professional manner. It does this verbally when working with trainees and in written form in the trainee handbook. The Institute also makes public the trainee's right to take their complaint to Psychodrama Australia's formal complaints procedure.

Firstly, the local Campus of Psychodrama Australia works towards the resolution of conflict through an informal resolution of difference process. Trainees are invited to bring their complaints to the person involved or if this is difficult to another trainer or the Director of Training.

When a trainee has approached a trainer/Director of Training with a complaint the trainer/Director of Training encourages the trainee to voice his or her complaint. When this is difficult for the trainee, a trainer/Director of Training other than the person to whom the complaint is directed may assist the trainee to voice the complaint.

A trainer/ Director of Training who is involved in a breakdown of relationship with a trainee is supported by another trainer and/or the Director of Training in order that this trainer/Director of Training may work appropriately towards conflict resolution and not become isolated or defensive or over-protective.

Appropriate time will be put aside for the communication and resolution of the conflict.

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Resolution of the conflict may involve a process of facilitation of communication between the persons involved by another trainer/Director of Training. The person chosen must be an agreeable person to both persons involved in the conflict.

The trainee and trainer may bring a third party with them to the resolution process. If the breakdown in relationship between the trainer/director of training and trainee cannot be resolved through the above informal resolution process the trainee and/or trainer will be asked if they wish to enter into the formal Complaints Procedure and both will be given a copy of Psychodrama Australia's Complaints Policy and Procedure and information as to how to activate a formal Complaints Procedure.

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COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

OVERVIEW

The complaints procedure has four stages at which a complaint may be addressed. Complainants and/or respondents will also be provided with reasons and full explanations in writing for decisions and actions taken at every stage of the complaints process if they request this.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE IN DETAIL

Informal Resolution of Difference

- If a person has a complaint about any aspect of the training or how he or she has been treated, they are encouraged to talk directly with the person involved.
- However, if this is impracticable, the complainant should communicate his/her concerns with a trainer who is delivering the program or the Director of Training.
- The Director of Training, trainer or staff member is to listen to the complaint from the person and to respond using the tools of conflict resolution. Directors of Training, trainers and staff members are requested to work towards a resolution of the process. They may need to draw on further resources to do this. Towards the end of this informal process, the Director of Training, trainer or staff member will ask the person who has made the complaint if he or she is satisfied with the resolution. If the person expresses that they are not satisfied then the Director of Training, trainer or staff member will invite the person into the formal complaints process as described below.
- Every effort will be made to make a decision within fourteen days.
- A person may wish to skip this Informal process and move immediately into the formal complaints process.

Formal Complaint STAGE 1

- The Complainant communicates his/her concern in writing to a staff member, trainer or Director of Training stating that he or she has entered into a formal complaints process. The complainant will describe the nature of the complaint.
- The Director of Training (or in their absence the Acting Director of Training) is informed that a complaint has been made formally. The complainant and the staff member, trainer or Director of Training work towards a resolution of the complaint. They may need to draw on further resources to do this.

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- The Director of Training will make every effort to make a decision within fourteen days. This decision will be communicated to the complainant together with an invitation to take the next step.

Formal Complaint STAGE 2

- If unsatisfied with the response to the complaint or the time taken to resolve the matter, the complainant may submit the complaint in writing to the Executive Director Psychodrama Australia (or if the complaint is with this person then with the Deputy Chair of Psychodrama Australia) and ask that the matter be dealt with at a meeting of their committee.
- On receiving such a letter the Executive Director will call for a meeting of the Deputy Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, and Program Coordinator, within a reasonable time, normally within 30 days of receipt of the complaint. Every effort will be made to make a decision within 30 days.
- The Executive Director will communicate the decision to the complainant together with an invitation to take the next step.
- This committee may elect that the matter goes to the third stage in order that the matter is dealt with closer to the ground.

Formal Complaint STAGE 3

- If not satisfied with the decision as communicated from the Executive Director the complainant may request that the matter be dealt with through an external dispute resolution process by a person/body appointed by Psychodrama Australia to investigate the complaint issues fully. They may be people of standing within AANZPA, within PACFA or individuals who specialise in handling complaints and mediation. The choice of person available must be acceptable to both parties.
- The external dispute person will be contracted to interview the trainee or potential trainee and representatives from Psychodrama Australia who are involved in the complaint. They will be contracted to write a report on the matters at hand and to make a recommendation as to how the complaint can be resolved. The result of the external investigation will be communicated to the trainee or potential trainee within 30 days.
- If the external review person makes recommendations in relation to a complaint they have reviewed, they will forward their recommendations to the Director of Training within 14 days. The Director of Training will ensure that the recommendations are implemented within 30 days.