



POLICY – SEXUALITY AND INTIMACY

ID No: FBC-18-532

Version: 1.0

- Applies to:
- All staff
- Applicable Standards:
- Aged Care Quality Standards
 - NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework
- Applicable Legislation:
- Aged Care Act 1997
 - National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013
- Contractual Obligations:

Introduction

Closeness and intimacy are basic aspects of the human experience. Not only do they make life worth living, these ties also act as a protection against illnesses such as depression and anxiety, and offer security, support, and connectedness. With age or a significant disability, however, may come many significant lifestyle changes, such as the loss of a spouse or loved ones, physical decline, and mobility issues, and maintaining social connections may become more difficult over time.

Loneliness and social isolation are not an inevitable part of ageing or living with a disability and, with the appropriate support from staff, new and existing friendships and intimate relationships may flourish.

Purpose

This Policy is designed to support a client's choices to make connections with others and maintain relationships, and details how Family Based Care Tasmania staff can best respect and support the intimacy and sexuality of clients in our care.

Definitions of Intimacy and Sexuality

- **Intimacy:** the relationship between two individuals and how they connect (gentle touch, intellectual and emotional closeness, romance, intercourse, etc).
- **Sexuality:** how an individual experiences and expresses themselves as a sexual being (their biological sex, gender identity, sexual behaviours, orientation, sexual activity, etc).

Initial Approach for New Clients

On admission to a Family Based Care Tasmania program new clients will undergo a detailed needs assessments. One need that may be overlooked is the client's sexuality.

When staff are assessing a new client it is important to note that every client's sexuality and intimacy is different, and support should be individualised to reflect this.

Clients with Dementia

Dementia can affect how people think, behave, and communicate. Clients living with dementia may still have feelings of intimacy and sexuality, and how they express this will vary across a wide spectrum, from normal, to 'problem' sexual behaviour. It is important that staff remain aware of this sometimes unpredictable nature and to note that it may be different across individuals.

Consent and Sexual Abuse

Consideration should be given to issues of consent and sexual abuse in the in-home care environment, both for the protection of clients and staff members.

Staff must be aware that Family Based Care Tasmania has mandatory reporting provisions for unlawful sexual contact (ie suspected non-consensual sexual activity involving clients). **If an individual staff member witnesses any unlawful sexual contact they have a duty to report it.**

Non-judgemental Care

Some clients will be particularly conscious of societal expectations and norms around sexual activity, which may make the subject potentially taboo between client and family. Staff must therefore remain sensitive to the needs and wishes of clients.

All care should be non-judgmental. It is important that the values and beliefs of individual staff do not interfere with the rights of clients to express their sexuality when it does not harm others

Authorised by:



Date:

18/11/2020

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Chairman of the Board