

## Code of Ethics

*We require all personnel to know and follow the codes of ethics of their respective professions. A manager may request a copy of any related professional code of ethics from a new employee to file in their personnel record. The John Howard Society Code of Ethics, below, must be read and followed by all employees, contractors and volunteers.*

### Statement of Values

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The John Howard Society of North Island (John Howard) exists to provide programs and support to help children, youth, and families lead safer, healthier lives.

John Howard staff are accountable to the Society, the funding bodies for which we deliver service, and the clients whom we serve. Failure of staff or managers to fulfill the obligations of this Code of Ethics may result in disciplinary procedures and appropriate consequences as laid out in the Collective Agreement, and reasonable management practices.

The John Howard Code of Ethics draws significantly from, and is consistent with, the BC Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.

### John Howard Staff Declaration

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***As an employee of John Howard I commit myself to fulfill to the best of my ability the following obligations:***

1. I will regard the well-being of the people I serve as my primary professional obligation.
2. I will fulfill my obligations and responsibilities with integrity.
3. I will be competent in the performance of the services and functions I undertake on behalf of the people I serve.
4. I will act in a conscientious, diligent and efficient manner.
5. I will respect the intrinsic worth of persons I serve in my professional relationships with them.
6. I will respect the intrinsic worth of all John Howard employees and will work towards building a positive team environment. I will communicate appropriately and effectively with my colleagues – managers and staff.

7. I will treat the personal information of individuals served by John Howard as confidential and share such information only as required by law or for consistent purposes as outlined in John Howard policies.
8. I will ensure that my outside interests, including other employment, do not jeopardize my professional judgment, independence or competence, or bring John Howard into disrepute.
9. I will work for the creation and maintenance of workplace standards and policies consistent with the standards of practice set by this code.
10. I will act to promote excellence in practice within John Howard.
11. Within the mandate of the Society, I will act to effect social change for the overall benefit of the community.

## Interpretation

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### ***1. I will regard the well-being of the people I serve as my primary professional obligation:***

John Howard employees will be able to accept the differences they find among their clients. They will practice acceptance of the clients' rights to self-determination and individuality and will not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, language, religion, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age, abilities, socio-economic status, political affiliations or national ancestry.

John Howard employees will ensure they support the well-being of their clients in all dealings with other professionals and agencies.

"Clients" means the individuals, families, and social groups served by the employees for the purpose of trying to achieve specific psychosocial outcomes.

### ***2. I will fulfill my obligations and responsibilities with integrity:***

John Howard employees will possess moral principles that recognize the importance of truth and fair dealing in their interaction with clients, the public, other John Howard employees, other professionals and organizations. They will have personal qualities of honesty and sincerity and these qualities will underlie all dealings with others in the performance of their work as employees of John Howard.

John Howard employees will accurately present themselves and their qualifications in their dealings with clients, the public, professionals, and organizations.

There may be occasions where, due to personal affiliations, a conflict of interest arises in the performance of an employee's duties. In these instances the employee is expected to act in a manner consistent with the standard of practice set out in this code. Where a situation of conflict of interest arises, the employee will advise his or her supervisor of this conflict and indicate how they are addressing this conflict.

John Howard acknowledges that all potential conflict situations cannot be easily recognized. In the realm of good practice, where an employee is uncertain about the presence of a conflict, he or she is encouraged to discuss the situation with his or her supervisor.

**3. *I will be competent in the performance of the services and functions I undertake on behalf of the people I serve:***

John Howard employees recognize that competence goes beyond formal qualifications and they will make reasonable efforts to upgrade and use their knowledge and skills.

John Howard employees recognize that personal self-care makes a significant contribution to their ability to consistently perform their duties in a competent manner.

**4. *I will act in a conscientious, diligent, and efficient manner:***

John Howard employees will undertake any reasonable work assignments unless there is an honest belief in their lack of competence to handle it. Where time constraints require the employee to take action, and no competent person is available, they will obtain the client's consent to act. Where it is possible to delay interaction, the employee will seek client consent to collaborate with, or to refer to, another professional.

**5. *I will respect the intrinsic worth of persons I serve in my professional relationships with them:***

John Howard employees will work to ensure that the dignity, individuality and rights of the person served are safeguarded. John Howard employees will respect, and will demonstrate respect for, the client's intrinsic worth, and will advocate for the client when appropriate.

John Howard employees will ensure the appropriate maintenance of professional relationships with clients.

The professional relationship between John Howard employees and their clients will be based upon voluntary, and in some cases involuntary, mutual agreements between the employee and the client. John Howard employees will maintain a reasonable level of self-awareness that will allow them to manage their own feelings, values, and limitations in the context of the professional relationship, the planned interaction, and the outcomes. The employee and the client will share responsibility for working toward attainment of the identified client goals.

John Howard employees will respect client motivation, capacity, and opportunity for change and will use this knowledge appropriately to facilitate change.

John Howard employees will act to ensure there is a clear understanding and respect of the difference between a professional and personal relationship with a client, and that the employee's behaviour is appropriate to this difference. Sexual intimacy with a client is unethical.

John Howard employees will not touch the persons they serve without carefully considering the context and the effect physical contact may have on the individual, and on the professional relationship. Examples where touching may be necessary are recreational activities and emergency situations.

John Howard employees will not exploit relationships with clients, supervisors, students, and other employees or engage in sexual harassment. For example, employees will avoid business transactions with the person served when either party would directly benefit. Individual employees will not hire the people they serve, require them to provide personal services or accept free services. Money or other gifts should be firmly but kindly refused. If the client or their family insists and the gift is of a minor nature, discuss this with your program manager or the executive director to determine if it is appropriate to accept it.

***6. I will respect the intrinsic worth of all John Howard personnel and will work towards building a positive team environment. I will communicate appropriately and effectively with my colleagues:***

This policy promotes respectful communication. All John Howard employees belong to teams and by respecting and developing each other's strengths the likelihood of synergy is increased. Mutual respect among John Howard employees will strengthen a positive team environment.

All employees will be treated, and will treat each other, in a fair and respectful manner. Employees will communicate in a manner that respects the individual and recognizes that there may be differences in role, position, background or experience. By this we mean being respectful of privacy, not involving ourselves in gossip or name calling, and managing anger appropriately. There is a need to communicate promptly and effectively with one another, share information and ideas, and alert colleagues to difficulties or danger as well as opportunities. Effective communication includes listening.

When an employee feels another colleague is not acting in a respectful manner, and direct efforts to remedy the situation are unsuccessful, the employee shall report those concerns to a supervisor, who will work towards a resolution.

This principle is not intended to replace either anti-discrimination principles or harassment policy, as violations of those should be pursued through the channels laid out in the respective policies.

***7. I will treat the personal information of individuals served by John Howard as confidential and share such information only as required by law or for consistent purposes as outlined in John Howard policies:***

John Howard employees will take reasonable care to keep confidential all information learned and observed about a client. They may, however, disclose information to persons who, by virtue of their responsibilities, have an identified need to know.

Clients will be the primary source of information about themselves, unless the client is incapable of giving reliable information or corroboration of information is necessary. When a client is asked to provide information, John Howard employees will ensure the client understands why the information is required, and to what purpose it will be used. John Howard employees will ensure that clients understand the policies about confidentiality. Where information is required by law, John Howard employees will assist the client to understand the requirement and the consequences of refusing to provide the information.

When it is necessary to obtain information from other sources, John Howard employees will assist the client to understand why the information is required, and the client and the John Howard employee will determine where and how to obtain that information.

John Howard employees will ensure that information recorded on client files is relevant to the service plan of the client or is needed by others who are also serving the client. Information that is not pertinent to the best interests of the client will not be recorded.

John Howard employees will allow clients, in accordance with Society policies and procedures, to review their file for accuracy of all information that is recorded as fact. The client's access to information in the file may be refused for just and reasonable cause; for example, if the information refers to another family member. Individuals will only be allowed to check the accuracy of information pertaining to them.

John Howard employees will avoid unnecessary sharing of information about their clients and their affairs. Confidential information about a client may be divulged with written consent of the client or in special circumstances when sharing information is important for the well-being of the client and/or is essential to the client's or the community's safety. Within the context of family work, confidential information provided by one family member will not be disclosed to another family member without the consent of the family member who originally provided the information.

When employees are obliged to provide information to prevent a crime or to prevent clients from doing harm to themselves or to others, they must act with reasonable care and follow Society policies and procedures.

When the court requires disclosure, the employee should not divulge more information than is required.

John Howard employees will retain paper and electronic records in a manner that safeguards their confidentiality.

***8. I will ensure that my outside interests, including other employment, do not jeopardize my professional judgment, independence or competence, or bring the Society into disrepute:***

John Howard employees do not engage in activities outside of their employment that could place themselves, their profession or their employer into disrepute.

***9. I will work for the creation and maintenance of workplace standards and policies consistent with the standard of practice set by this code:***

John Howard employees are responsible and accountable to their employer and their clients for their efficient performance of duties. If there is conflict between the employees' responsibilities to their client and to their employer, John Howard employees will bring this situation to the attention of their supervisor. In these situations John Howard employees will seek to safeguard the needs of the client.

Where John Howard employees are responsible for employing and evaluating the performance of others, they will perform this role in a fair, considerate, and equitable manner, based on clearly understood criteria. In all cases the evaluation of an employee will be shared with the employee. Evaluations and other personnel records will be maintained in a confidential manner.

John Howard employees will use John Howard resources only for the purpose for which they were intended.

***10. I will act to promote excellence in practice within John Howard:***

John Howard employees will promote excellence in their place of employment and competence of all employees. Employees have a responsibility to confront colleagues respectfully and openly about suspected or observed unethical behaviour.

John Howard employees will not assume responsibility for clients of another agency or a colleague without appropriate communication with their supervisor.

***11. Within the mandate of the Society, I will act to promote social justice for the overall benefit of the community:***

John Howard employees will take reasonable action to prevent or eliminate discrimination against any person or group on the basis of race, ethnicity, language, religion, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age, abilities, socio-economic status, political affiliation, national ancestry, or any other personal characteristic, condition or status. They will advocate for the individual's right to equitable access to resources, and will work to make reasonable choices and opportunities available to all people.