

Policy & Procedure Manual

FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS PROCESS – AD-III-2

POLICY:

OPTIONS NORTHWEST encourages feedback, including complaints, related to supports provided to persons receiving services and practices of the organization. Reviewing and responding to feedback in a timely manner is an important part of providing quality support services that are responsive to the needs of each person supported by OPTIONS NORTHWEST.

A feedback process will be readily available to persons receiving services, persons acting on their behalf, our employees, volunteers, students and the general public and a copy of this policy is available upon request and posted on the OPTIONS NORTHWEST website.

A person who submits a complaint or provides feedback is not at risk of having their services and supports or employment negatively impacted as a consequence of submitting the feedback and/or complaints.

Information on the feedback process will be provided in plain language and in a manner with a level of support that is appropriate to the capacity of all persons receiving services and/or the person acting on their behalf (where applicable).

OPTIONS shall take all feedback/complaints seriously but will not attempt to resolve any that are determined to be frivolous or vexatious. Whenever possible, feedback/complaints will be reviewed, investigated and reasonable efforts will be made to resolve the situation in a timely manner to the mutual satisfaction of both the person who has provided the feedback/complaints to OPTIONS.

This policy does not replace or supersede avenues already in place to deal with certain identified processes (i.e. grievance procedure, collective bargaining.)

Definitions: “Feedback” may be positive or negative (including complaints) and is related to the services and/or supports that are provided by a service agency. Feedback may be solicited (such as information and comments collected through a satisfaction survey or a comment box) or unsolicited (such as a letter from a person or family member about the services and supports that the agency provides). Feedback may be formal (like the survey or letter noted above) or informal (such as a verbal complaint expressed to an employee).

“Complaint” is an expression of dissatisfaction related to the services and/or supports

that are provided by a service agency. A complaint may be expressed by a person with a developmental disability who is receiving services and supports from the service agency, or a person acting on their behalf, or by the general public, regarding the services and supports that are provided by the service agency. A complaint may be made formally (such as a letter written to the agency) or informally (such as a verbal complaint expressed to an employee). A complaint does not include feedback on matters unrelated to the agency and the services and supports that it provides.

PURPOSE:

1. To identify a process for eliciting, receiving, addressing, responding to and resolving complaints and acknowledging and addressing feedback about agency services and supports.
2. To address and/or encourage all feedback and complaints with a view to improve administrative practices, supports provided to persons receiving services, support continuous improvement in service delivery, and to recognize and celebrate successes and achievements.
3. To identify issues and alleviate risk to the organization where it may fail to meet expectations of the person supported, the persons acting on their behalf, employees, the public, funding ministries or other stakeholders.
4. To comply with reporting requirements set out in the **Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008**, Regulations and Policy Directives.

PROCEDURE:

A) NEW PERSON RECEIVING SERVICES

1. During the admission/at service intake, the person requesting services and/or the person acting on their behalf will be advised of OPTIONS NORTHWEST's feedback process. They will be provided with contact information of the immediate Supervisor/Manager/Director and an outline of the process described within this policy (see Appendix A).
2. New persons coming to OPTIONS NORTHWEST for service and/or the person acting on their behalf will be given an opportunity, during the admission/intake process, to provide feedback on the organization's orientation practices.
3. Persons and/or the person acting on their behalf who are already receiving services from OPTIONS NORTHWEST at the time of approval of this policy will be advised of the feedback process by the appropriate supervisor/designate.

B) SOLICITING/GATHERING FEEDBACK

PERSONS RECEIVING SUPPORT AND PERSONS ACTING ON THEIR BEHALF

1. Feedback will be solicited from the person receiving support/family/advocate during annual planning, admission and intake processes and with the Community Resource Team when services are terminated in order to identify how satisfied they are with the supports they receive.
2. Every year, during the annual review of the organization's Mission, Vision, Philosophy, Abuse Policy and Service Principles and Statement of Rights, persons receiving support and the person(s) acting on their behalf will be given the opportunity to give feedback.
3. Feedback from persons receiving services and the person(s) acting on their behalf is encouraged, and can be submitted via email (under "Contact Us" found on OPTIONS NORTHWEST website at www.optionsnorthwest.com) verbally, in written note, or on the OPTIONS NORTHWEST Feedback and Complaints form (see Appendix B) and forwarded to any Supervisor/Manager/Director. If unsure who to direct comments to, a suggestion box is available at the 95 North Cumberland Office.

C) EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK

1. Feedback from employees is encouraged, and can be submitted via email (under "Contact Us" found on OPTIONS NORTHWEST website at www.optionsnorthwest.com), verbally, in written note, or on the Feedback form forwarded to any Supervisor, Manager, or Director. Mailboxes for all Supervisors, Managers and Directors are located in the reception area at both Cumberland Offices. If employees are unsure who to direct their comments to, a suggestion box is available at the 95 North Cumberland Office.
2. Feedback may be anonymous, although employees are encouraged to acknowledge authorship. This will allow OPTIONS to clarify information, properly address the feedback and provide a personal response.
3. If deemed appropriate, feedback will be reviewed at Senior Management meetings.

D) RECEIVING AND DOCUMENTING FEEDBACK

1. Employees who receive feedback either verbally or in writing shall respond to the situation in a respectful, tactful and professional manner ensuring all agency policies are followed, that it is free from coercion, intimidation, and bias and will provide the person with the contact information of their immediate Supervisor, Manager, or Director.
2. As required, the employee will complete section A of the Feedback Form (see Appendix B) providing as much detail as possible and, will advise their Supervisor, Manager, or Director of the feedback as soon as possible leaving the form in a sealed envelope for them.

E) INVESTIGATING FEEDBACK

1. Any feedback or complaints are to be dealt with in a timely fashion. The initial response to the complaint will be the responsibility of the Direct Supervisor/Manager/Director who will initiate section B of the feedback form verifying the details of the feedback and explore satisfactory resolutions. This contact should occur within 10 business days of receiving the feedback/complaint. Depending on the nature of the feedback/complaint, exceptions to this timeline could be considered acceptable if the Supervisor/Manager/Director is away from work during this period.
2. If a conflict of interest arises between the person providing the feedback/complaint and the person involved in reviewing/investigating the feedback/complaint, the form will be forwarded to the appropriate Director. If this is also a conflict, the feedback form will be forwarded to the Executive Director and Board of Directors if necessary.
3. The investigation of any feedback will be conducted in a respectful, tactful and professional manner ensuring all agency policies are followed and that it is free from coercion, intimidation, and bias.
4. The Supervisor/Manager/Director will document the complaint and ensuing discussion with the person providing the feedback/complaint and present this to the Executive Director preferably within 5 business days of contact with the person. Depending on the nature of the complaint, exceptions to this timeline could be considered acceptable if the Executive Director is away from work during this time period. If the Supervisor/Manager/Director cannot come to a resolution of the complaint, the matter is to be brought to the attention of the Director/Executive Director, and a further attempt to resolve the situation will occur within 5 days.

5. Feedback is to be presented at the next scheduled Senior Management meeting, and, at the next scheduled Board Meeting and will be a standing agenda item "Feedback" to ensure an appropriate response, resolution and follow-up was attained.
6. Based on the nature of the feedback/complaint and, if it falls under the definition of a Serious Occurrence it will be reported to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services according to Serious Occurrence Reporting and Follow Up Policy AD-I-7 and, should it constitute a criminal offence (i.e. alleged, suspected or witnessed abuse) will be reported to the Police as directed in Abuse Policy AD-II-1 both of which supersedes the timelines and process outlined above.
7. If a resolution cannot be reached the Executive Director will discuss the issue with the Board of Directors. A decision will be made to use other resources, either at the local level, or more broadly, such as the Ombudsman of Ontario or the Human Rights Commission in an attempt to come to a resolution.
8. The completed Feedback/Complaints form will be scanned and placed in the Feedback and Complaints folder on the Administration shared directory on the agency computer network system.

F) ANNUAL ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK

1. In January every year, Senior Management team will meet to review all feedback/complaints received from January 1st to December 31st of the previous year in order to determine the effectiveness of services, supports, policies and procedures. The results of this review will be reported on the Annual Feedback/Complaints Review Summary and Analysis Report (see Appendix C) which will be scanned and filed in the Feedback Folder on the shared Administration directory. This report will be reviewed with the Board of Directors at the next board meeting and documented in the Board meeting minutes.
2. The Annual Feedback/Complaints Review Summary and Analysis Report will be available for review, upon request by the Ministry.
3. The Director of Community Services will complete this report.

G) PERSONS RECEIVING SERVICES IN THE FEEDBACK PROCESS

1. Persons on the Rights Committee will be responsible to review any feedback received related to potential rights issues in accordance to Rights Assessment/Management Policy R-I-11.

POLICY: AD-III-2
DEPARTMENT: Administration
CATEGORY: Support Principles
EFFECTIVE DATE: March 2023
SUPERSEDES VERSION DATED: April 2022
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RECOMMENDED BY: Administration

APPENDICES: 3

OPERATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY: Administration, Community Services (all),
Human Resources, Finance

ORIGINAL POLICY DATE: November 1991

AUTHORIZED BY: Executive Director

SIGNATURE: 



OPTIONS NORTHWEST FEEDBACK/COMPLAINT PROCESS

OPTIONS NORTHWEST encourages feedback, including complaints, related to our supports and practices of the organization. Reviewing and responding to feedback is an important part of providing quality support services that are responsive to the needs of each person supported by OPTIONS NORTHWEST.

OPTIONS NORTHWEST has written policies and procedures for collecting, receiving and addressing complaints and acknowledging feedback about services and supports the agency provides. A copy of this policy will be given to any person who requests it. This sheet outlines information related to this process and, if you have any questions or are unsure of what to do; you can talk to any OPTIONS employee.

A feedback process will be readily available to persons receiving services, persons acting on their behalf, our employees, volunteers, students and the general public.

A person who provides feedback or submits a complaint is not at risk of having their services and supports withdrawn or negatively impacted as a consequence of submitting the feedback.

OPTIONS NORTHWEST takes all feedback seriously, and will review any and all comments. Every reasonable effort will be made to resolve or address any complaints and in a timely manner. Investigation into any feedback will be conducted respectfully, professionally and will be free from intimidation.

Persons receiving services and the persons acting on their behalf will be given the opportunity to provide feedback during the Annual Support Planning and intake process, during the annual review of policies and when services are terminated, however, feedback can be given at any time.

Your feedback can be submitted through; email by going to our website at www.optionsnorthwest.com under "Contact Us"; verbally and in writing to employees, the supervisor, manager, or the director; or by completing section A of the feedback form which is attached.

If you are unsure of whom to direct your comments to, a suggestion box can be found at OPTIONS NORTHWEST 95 North Cumberland Street office.

All feedback will be reviewed and responded to in a timely manner by the area supervisor, manager, or director and every effort will be made to resolve or address the feedback to a mutual satisfaction of both the person who has given the feedback and OPTIONS NORTHWEST.

You may request a copy of OPTIONS NORTHWEST Feedback Policy in person at our 95 North Cumberland Street Office, by writing, or by calling OPTIONS NORTHWEST:

95 N. Cumberland Street
Thunder Bay, Ontario
P7A 4M1
(807) 344-4994

I _____ have read and understood the information provided to me in this form.

Signatures:

Person receiving services

Date

Person acting on their behalf

Date



SECTION B

A) Supervisor/Director follow – up (to be completed within 10 business days of receipt):

1. **Date Received by Supervisor/Director:** _____
2. **Date Supervisor/Director Contacted Person Providing Feedback:** _____
3. **Details of Discussion:** _____

4. **Recommendations:** _____

5. **Follow-up:** _____

B) Executive Director Follow – up as required: (to be completed within 5 days of date of contact by Supervisor/ Director):

1. **Date Received by Executive Director:** _____
2. **Date Executive Director Contacted Person Providing Feedback:** _____ ☐ N/A
3. **Details of Discussion:** _____

4. **Recommendations:** _____

5. **Follow-up:** _____

Once this form has been completed, scan to Feedback folder on shared Administration directory.



**OPTIONS
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live life your way

POLICY: AD-III-2
APPENDIX C

ANNUAL FEEDBACK/COMPLAINTS REVIEW SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS REPORT

Period of Report: (Jan 1-Dec 31) _____

Summary of Feedback Received:

Type of Feedback	Total # Reported	Followed Up/Resolved
1. Positive feedback received.		
2. Complaints related to the interactions between OPTIONS staff and recipients of service and/or person(s) acting on their behalf.		
3. Complaints related to service provided by OPTIONS.		
4. Complaints concerning properties or safety standards of the organization.		
5. Complaints related to the organization's policies and procedures.		
6. Suggestions made related to organizational operations		
Number of Feedback/Complaints Received		

	Summary of Feedback Process
	Feedback Followed up within 14 days: #
	Positive Resolution Reached: #
	Feedback/Complaints requiring additional resources outside the organization: #

Analysis of Feedback:

1. Based on an analysis of all positive feedback received during the reporting period, describe any issues, trends or patterns relating to staff, clients, equipment and physical site that contributed to the feedback:

- 2. What actions were and can be taken to promote the positive feedback identified above:**

- 3. Based on an analysis of all complaints received during the reporting period, describe any issues, trends or patterns relating to staff, clients, equipment and physical site that contributed to the feedback:**

- 4. What actions were and can be taken to reduce complaints of a similar nature as identified above:**

- 5. What actions were and can be taken as a result of suggestions received:**

Date Completed by Senior Administration : _____

Date Reviewed by Board of Directors : _____