

***THE
GATHERING
PLACE
MEMBER
POLICIES &
PROCEDURES***

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

As a member of The Gathering Place, I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of and read the Member Policies and Procedures of The Gathering Place. I agree to refer to these policies and procedures for direction when I have questions about personnel matters that may arise during my day-to-day functions as a member.

Member: _____ Date: _____

Staff Unit Leader: _____ Date: _____

MEMBER DISCIPLINARY/GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Developed January 2008

Any staff person who serves as a unit facilitator has full authority to make the final decisions in their respective units as it applies to the work of the unit and the duties therein. Any member who has a disagreement with any decision made as it pertains to his/her immediate work unit and the duties therein can make such thoughts known to the staff person facilitating the unit. If the issue is not resolved after bringing it to the staff facilitator's attention then the member can present the issue to the Program Director. After the PD has had the opportunity to speak to all parties involved regarding the issue a decision regarding the outcome will be made by the PD.

The Gathering Place administers disciplinary actions when/if needed in the following manner:

- A first time "verbal warning" which is written and put in the member's personal file with a copy given to the member.
- A second-time "written warning" which is written and put in the member's personal file with a copy given to the member.
- A third offense can be grounds for an indefinite suspension from TGP. The severity of the offense will determine the length of such suspension.*

The Program Director is responsible for making all of the decisions regarding the above-mentioned warnings and/or suspensions however if a member disagrees with the decision they can appeal to the Executive Director.

If a member decides to appeal to the ED he/she should make the request to the PD and the PD will set up a meeting with the member, the ED and him/herself within five (5) working days. After meeting with the ED a decision will be made regarding the outcome by the ED. If the member feels that the issue has not been adequately resolved by this meeting he/she may inform the ED that he/she wishes to appeal to the Program Committee Chairperson. The ED will then set up a meeting with all involved parties and the PCC within five (5) working days.

If this meeting, in the member's view, still does not resolve the issue the Board President will form a three-person committee consisting of him/herself and two other Board Members to hear the grievance. Such a hearing shall be held within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the grievance, or as soon thereafter as is reasonably practical. All involved parties involved shall be in attendance at the hearing. The decision of this committee will be rendered within a maximum of thirty (30) working days, and shall be final and binding.

* Depending on the severity of the offense there may be occasions when the verbal and written warnings are circumvented for an immediate suspension, i.e. physical assault, sexual harassment, alcohol or drug use or any other type of felonious behavior.

MEMBER POLICY ON VERBAL/PHYSICAL AGGRESSIVENESS

Developed January 2008

The Gathering Place offers a safe and non-threatening atmosphere for all of its members. Understandably there may on occasion be reasons for disagreements between members. If this happens members are expected to resolve these differences in a mature and respectful fashion. However if any type of verbal altercation occurs between members that has no obvious signs of being resolved efforts will immediately be made by staff persons to help in resolving the issue. If the members involved persist in a verbal altercation they will be separated and counseled by staff. After counseling, the members involved will be given the opportunity to be brought back together to verbally resolve their differences. Depending on the severity of the altercation a verbal and/or written warning may be issued to the member(s) involved.

There is however a strict zero tolerance policy regarding any type of physical aggressiveness. If a member initiates a physical altercation in any form or fashion that member will be subject to an indefinite suspension from TGP. If a member refuses to cooperate with staff in ceasing to immediately refrain from such aggressiveness the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) of the Houston Police Department will be called for assistance in resolving the matter. The length of the suspension will be determined by the severity of the infraction. The member will be eligible for re-entry to the program at the end of the suspension providing he/she are willing to meet with the Program Director and an additional staff person to review and discuss the incident as well as to sign an agreement to desist from any such behavior while in attendance at TGP. Any similar behavior after re-entry to the program can result in permanent suspension.

Any member choosing to physically respond to another member's physical aggressiveness, even in self defense, can be subject to suspension as well. The length of such suspension will also be determined by the severity of the infraction.

Any judgment and/or interpretation of verbal and/or physical aggressiveness rests with the staff person(s) involved and ultimately with the Program Director.

The Gathering Place, when/if possible, will look for opportunities to assist members in learning various methods of anger management through its day-to-day program and trainings.

MEMBER POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT/CONDUCT

Developed January 2008

The Gathering Place prohibits the sexual harassment of its members. "Sexual harassment" or "sexually harass" shall mean that term as defined by federal and state law, and, to the extent not inconsistent with federal or state law, shall mean:

- Unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or any conduct of a sexual nature when:
 - A) Submission to or participation in such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of the individual's membership at TGP; or
 - B) Unwelcome sexual advances or request for sexual favors or conduct of a sexual nature has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's participation or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Sexual harassment will not be tolerated by TGP, and the reporting of such conduct will not bring retaliation against the harassed member. If any individual is reported as sexually harassing another member(s) the following shall occur:

- Any male member involved will meet with a male staff person(s) and review the allegations brought forth by the male member and/or against the male member.
- Any female member involved will meet with a female staff person(s) and review the allegations brought forth by the female member and/or against the female member.
- Staff involved will then meet with Program Director, if he/she is not involved already, and the PD will make a decision based on the available information from both meetings on the action to be taken and immediately report such to The Executive Director for counsel and final approval of such action.
- Depending on the severity of reported offense The Houston Police Department may be called and an incident report filed.
- If allegations brought against a member are found to be true, that member can be permanently suspended from TGP.

If a member is uncomfortable with something another member says to them or in a way that another member is acting towards them he/she needs to tell that member to stop. The member making the request for the other to stop should then let a staff person(s) know

about the incident. If the member who is asked to stop persists it can be deemed harassment and the Program Director should be aware of the situation.

As a general rule, and for the protection of all members involved, there is no physical contact allowed on the premises of TGP other than the holding of hands. Outward signs of intense intimacy are not allowed.

Any member seen engaging in the above-mentioned behavior will be issued a verbal/written warning and/or subject to an indefinite suspension from TGP.

MEMBER SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

Developed January 2008

The Gathering Place practices a strict zero tolerance policy regarding the use of and/or being under the influence of any type of illegal drug, alcohol and/or possession of such while on The Gathering Place premises including any type of paraphernalia associated with either. This policy will be carried out in the following manner:

- If a member is found to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol there will be a minimum of 2 months suspension of that member.
- If a member is seen by a staff person using drugs and/or alcohol on The Gathering Place premises there will be a minimum of 6 months suspension of that member and law enforcement officials may be notified.
- Any member seen in the immediate company of the member using drugs and/or alcohol on The Gathering Place premises can be subject to a minimum of 1 month suspension.
- Any person observed selling and/or supplying any type of illegal substance to another member on The Gathering Place premises will be subject to a minimum 1 year suspension and law enforcement officials will be notified in accordance with existing statutes of law.

Any judgment and/or interpretation of being under the influence is to be based entirely upon each staff person and ultimately with the program director.

Consideration will be given to circumventing the length of any of the above-mentioned suspensions if the suspended member can present doctor/psychiatrist/therapist signed documentation of rehabilitation for substance abuse. Mandatory attendance to a P-11 support group may be a stipulation in such consideration.

The Gathering Place offers a weekly P-11 support group. Information shared in this meeting is confidential and offers a support to any member (or outside individuals) who may have dealt with or who are currently dealing with problems associated with substance abuse.

COMPUTER USAGE POLICY

Developed January 2008

The Gathering Place practices a strict **zero tolerance policy** regarding access of any/all pornographic websites and/or inappropriate use of its computers and printers. This policy will be carried out in the following manner:

- Any member found to be or having been accessing any type of pornographic material, including but not limited to pornographic stories, letters and/or pictures will be subject to loss of computer privileges and/or possible suspension. The length of the suspension is to be determined by the severity of the offense.
- Any second offense regarding pornographic material by any member will lead to a second suspension for twice the amount of time as the first offense and can lead to suspension from any future access to TGP's computers upon return.
- If a member is found to have signed in and out of a different computer than what they are working, or does not sign in at all, he/she will lose computer privileges for a length of time to be determined by the computer instructor and/or staff person performing coverage depending on the infraction. (A minimum of 2 weeks)
- Do not print any material without first getting consent from the computer instructor, computer lab monitor, or staff offering coverage.
- Any member computer room monitor has full authority to monitor computer usage and the signing in and out of the computer room.

The following rules will also apply to computer usage:

- No downloading or uploading software of "any kind" on the computers.
- No website that may have any hint of sexual content.
- No sweepstakes or any website that claims you have won a prize. "Do not put any information about yourself on these websites."
- No playing games on the computer unless the game comes on Microsoft and is already loaded on the computer.
- No downloading of any music pictures or files.
- No hacking of websites.
- No deleting of toolbars or changing of icons.
- No websites that speak of or give any hint to gang signs and/or participation.
- No dating services other than nolongerlonely.com

Remember: If you think something may be inappropriate ask a staff person.

Any judgment and/or interpretation of improper usage of the computers is to be based entirely upon each staff person and ultimately with the program director.

Member Policy on Religion

Developed February 2008

The Gathering Place, as a private, non-profit, community service organization, does not adhere to any one religious practice, creed, or belief. While members are, of course, free to exercise their individual rights in regard to the religion of their choosing, they may not in any form or fashion verbally, or in any other manner, impose these beliefs on other members while in attendance at TGP. TGP does not promote religious points of view, opinions, scriptures, etc. in any clubhouse publication including newsletters and in-house work unit activities, contests, etc.

TGP is committed to providing an environment where all persons without regard to religion, race, creed, color or gender are made to feel welcome.

If a member has any concerns with the environment at TGP, as described above, he/she is strongly urged to voice his/her feelings immediately to the Program Director who in turn will to the best of his/her abilities address the issue to all parties involved and make every attempt to resolve the matter. If the concern is not resolved to the member's satisfaction he/she should refer to the grievance procedure as described in the "Member Disciplinary/Grievance Procedure."