Bill of Rights and Responsibilities For Employees and Consumers

Resources for Human Development, Inc.
4700 Wissahickon Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19144-4248
Tel: 215.951.0300

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INTRODUCTION

The values of RHD make us a unique organization. They give us rights as well as responsibilities. In order to really live the values, we need to incorporate them into everything we do. It is not always easy, but the RHD Bill of Rights and Responsibilities for Employees and Consumers is there to help guide us in living these values. The values are ours only if we step up to the challenge and make them work, together.

The RHD Bill of Rights and Responsibilities is actually a collection of writings developed over the past two decades that, together, serve as the framework for the culture we strive to create and maintain within RHD. We strongly encourage each employee to carefully read and think about the articles that comprise the document, and to participate actively in making the RHD environment in which he or she works reflect the Bill’s spirit and intent.

It is of the utmost importance that each employee of this corporation has access to a copy of the full RHD Bill of Rights and Responsibilities document. If you need additional copies for yourself or a co-worker, contact either your Citizen Advocate or the Office Manager in the Central Office (215-951-0300).

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RHD ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES
(Condensed Version)

RHD is a values-driven organization. We no not merely encourage all members of the corporation to support and promote the organizational values; we require that they do so. Although there are a number of values that are important to the organization, certain values serve as its cornerstone:

**Respect for the dignity and worth of each individual** - Employees and consumers have the right to live and/or work in an environment that affirms their fundamental dignity as human beings and does not insult or demean them.

**Multi-level thinking** - RHD promotes a “win-win” thinking process that encourages the expression of many different viewpoints and rejects one-dimensional thinking.

**Empowerment of groups** - At RHD, power resides with the group, not with the individual. Group leaders are empowered to empower others and no person, regardless of position, has permission to treat others in an inappropriate or dictatorial manner.

**Decentralization of authority** - Local decision-making should be maximized and, whenever possible, power and responsibility should not be centralized.

**Safe and open environment** - All RHD settings must be open environments where employees and consumers feel safe to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and concerns.

**Creativity** - All consumers and employees should be actively encouraged and supported to express fresh ideas and approaches, regardless of the degree to which they depart from what is typical or commonplace.

**Honesty and trust** - All RHD environments are expected to be places of honest communication that promote and support the belief that each consumer and employee is worthy of trust and must always be treated with respect.

**Diversity** - Diversity with regards to characteristics such as race, age, gender, ethnicity, culture, levels of education, economic status, religion and sexual orientation are valued and promoted by the organization. The corporation rejects all discriminatory behaviors toward any individual or group.

**Organizational integrity** - RHD embraces the obligation to conduct all of its work with strict adherence to the highest ethical standards, including issues relating to laws and regulations and the proper utilization of funds.
**Ongoing growth and development** - The organization is committed to the constant improvement and utilization of its capacity to respond effectively to new social needs and service challenges.

**Personal and professional enrichment** - RHD is committed to creating environments that promote the maximum enrichment of the personal and professional life of each consumer and employee.

**Quality service** – All programs are required to deliver quality service.
RHD ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES
(Full Version)

RHD is a values-driven organization. It is the commitment to certain values that gives us our particular character, focus and energy. We recognize, however, that these values, no matter how worthy and well intentioned, will not play a meaningful role in organizational life unless all employees strive continually to sustain and foster them. Therefore, we do not merely encourage all members of the organization to support and promote the organizational values; we require that they do so.

Although there are a number of values that are important to the organization, certain values have been particularly relevant to the life of the RHD community and collectively serve as its cornerstone:

- Respect for the dignity and worth of each individual
- Multi-level thinking
- Empowerment of groups
- Decentralization of authority
- Safe and open environment
- Creativity
- Honesty and trust
- Diversity
- Organizational integrity
- Ongoing growth and development
- Personal and professional enrichment
- Quality service

RHD's vitality and strength require that consumers and employees engage in an ongoing dialogue regarding these values at all levels of the organization. The value statement is a living document that is continually open to review and always subject to re-formulation.

Respect for the dignity and worth of each individual consumer and employee - This is RHD's most fundamental value. Each individual has the right to live and/or work in an environment that does not deny or demean his or her fundamental dignity as a human being. Beyond this protection from the negative, destructive behavior of others, each person has the right to expect an active, ongoing affirmation of his or her basic human worth.
Multi-level thinking - RHD promotes an organizational process where the value of creative chaos is openly acknowledged. Such chaos is not seen as formless confusion but as a dynamic tension and ferment that leads to fresh ideas and leaps of creativity. Furthermore, the organization embraces a win/win way of thinking that rejects a narrow "either/or" perspective that divides knowledge into a simplistic calculation of right and wrong or true and false. Instead RHD employs a "both/and" philosophy of knowledge and process that accepts and promotes many different viewpoints. Thus, in instances where two perspectives apparently contradict each other, both can be seen as true depending on the differing experiences and characteristics of the individuals involved. The consequence of this approach is that RHD requires ongoing debate and dialogue and is extremely resistant to one-dimensional thinking.

Empowerment of groups - At RHD, power resides with the group, not with the individual. No individual is empowered alone because all power at RHD, whether it flows from the highest or lowest position in the organization, is shared power. Group leaders are empowered to empower others and no individual, regardless of position, has permission to exercise arbitrary power over another. Furthermore, all consumers, regardless of ability or circumstance, must be empowered by the group or unit to exercise responsible control over their lives to reach their maximum potential. Finally, all employees, regardless of position, must be empowered by the group and its leaders so that they can achieve the maximum development of their capacities.

Decentralization of authority - This value reflects the belief that RHD's work is best accomplished when power and responsibility are dispersed rather than centralized. Consequently, the organizational structure is comprised of many individual units with minimum centralization and bureaucracy. Whenever possible, decisions are made locally including purchasing and the hiring and termination of personnel. This local decision-making facilitates the face-to-face surfacing and resolution of conflict on the part of consumers and employees.

Safe and open environment - Employees and consumers must be able to communicate their thoughts and feelings, their concerns and observations in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. They must feel free responsibly to advocate for change without fear of retaliation. In an atmosphere, which accepts the inevitability of conflict but denies the necessity of hostility, the negating of the value of each person's contribution to the program is resolutely avoided. The criterion for evaluating such contributions is not based on the traditional understanding of success but rather on whether or not conscientious risk-taking, strong commitment, and exceptional effort have been present. Finally, each person's sense of safety is enhanced by the knowledge that all allegations of abuse and demeaning behavior will be immediately investigated and evaluated.
**Creativity** - The philosophy that underpins this value is the belief that the most effective and satisfying environment is one in which all employees and consumers are actively encouraged and supported to express their beliefs and ideas, regardless of the degree to which these suggestions depart from the norm. Creative working environments continually promote new ideas and approaches. The atmosphere encourages the questioning of authority and avoids the imposition of unnecessary and/or stifling internal regulations. Organizational and unit traditions are appropriately valued but always open to question and debate, while the importance of maximizing choice at all levels of program operations is strongly affirmed.

**Honesty and trust** - The key to this value is the recognition of the basic goodness and dignity of every human being. Consequently, each consumer and employee begins with the knowledge that he or she is considered to be honest and worthy of trust, although this initial viewpoint may be sharpened and adjusted as a result of time and experience. Finally, every organizational environment is expected to be a nurturing one where each individual is accorded respect and given the consideration of direct and consistent communication, interaction and supervision.

**Diversity** - RHD recognizes that its consumers and staff represent considerable variety with regard to characteristics such as race, ethnicity, culture, levels of education, economic status, religion and sexual orientation. Such diversity is valued and promoted by the organization while it rejects all discriminatory or negating behaviors towards members of these groups. RHD believes that by celebrating and affirming diversity its organizational life is immeasurably enriched.

**Organizational integrity** - RHD recognizes its responsibility to conduct all of its work with strict adherence to the highest ethical standards. From the standpoint of legal requirements, all staff and consumers are expected to uphold the laws and regulations pertaining to their organizational activities. With regard to regulatory concerns, each program unit must maintain all appropriate licenses and permits. Integrity regarding fiscal matters requires that each program's financial decisions be based on the greater or common good and not on individual self-interest.

Consequently, all programs are expected to avoid budget deficits, maintain proper fiscal documentation, conduct all financial matters in a timely manner, and manage all funds with proper safeguards. Finally, a commitment to non-discriminatory behavior must characterize all management decisions and interactions.

**Ongoing growth and development** - Underpinning this value is the understanding that RHD's health and vitality require economic strength and diversity to respond effectively to new social needs and service challenges. With this philosophy, the organization is continually acquiring new technologies, competencies, and resources, which its employees are then able to share with consumers and communities in need.
**Personal and professional enrichment** - RHD is committed to creating environments that promote the maximum enrichment of the personal and professional life of each consumer and employee. The corporation should be concerned with all areas that impact on life enrichment, including education, health care, housing and leisure time activities. By focusing on these issues, RHD affirms a value that places the growth and development of each member of the RHD community at the heart of its endeavors.

**Quality service** - All programs are required to deliver quality service. The evaluation of quality involves consideration of a given unit's mission and careful assessments of consumer and customer satisfaction. Long-term program quality requires an environment that promotes a sense of ownership on the part of consumers and staff. This quality is the result of an ongoing process of teamwork and group participation that fosters a feeling of pride and a sense of personal accomplishment.
ARTICLE 1
RHD CORPORATE CULTURE: A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

RHD believes that employees and consumers alike deserve to live and work in an atmosphere that respects the dignity and worth of each individual.

In order to make this belief a reality, it is necessary to have a safe work environment that encourages the expression of ideas and viewpoints, accepts conflict and the appropriate expression of anger, rejects hostile behaviors, and strives to operate by consensus rather than through centralized authority.

As we expand and articulate our understanding of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, we continue to improve our work environment and increase the effectiveness of our organization. In the process of thinking, re-thinking, discussing, disagreeing, and eventually reaching consensus, we create our own corporate culture.

Creativity

RHD is committed to providing an emotionally safe environment where employees and consumers can maximize their creativity. New ideas and unconventional ways of thinking require risk-taking. RHD not only accepts but also encourages creative risk-taking in the workplace. Because discussion and implementation of the creativity value may produce disagreement or even conflict between those involved, a conscious effort must be made to create a safe environment for the expression of those ideas.

The expression of diverse views reflects a basic respect for differences. This respect does not necessarily imply agreement but does, however, value the expression of differences.

Everyone has the right to have his/her own viewpoint on any and all topics. When a person's viewpoint is different from or in opposition to ours, it is important that we do not merely discount it. Rejecting another's views by labeling them as "crazy" or "stupid" negates that person's right to think in his/her own way. This behavior is unacceptable in RHD workplaces, and is especially offensive in environments involving children and consumers with mental health issues and/or developmental disabilities.
Conflict

A safe environment is necessary in order to foster healthy professional relationships. RHD supports the "Question Authority" premise and values this expression when it occurs between consumers, staff and those in authority. If consumers or staff feel uncomfortable with the instructions or the behavior of other staff or of those in authority, whether at the unit level or central office, they have the right as well as the responsibility to challenge this behavior without fear of retaliation or loss of job.

All members of the RHD community need to develop the skills necessary to effectively deal with those who disagree with them. Similarly, it is the responsibility of the leader, or person in "authority", to aid others in expressing their opinions while both work toward resolving the situation. When staff and consumers take on authority, they too act as leaders and assume those responsibilities. Because we all may have the opportunity to take on leadership roles, we all need to be aware of the roles and responsibilities that that position requires. Leaders who are not able to tolerate disagreement or the expression of conflicting views are not in alignment with the corporate values.

Expressing Anger

Anger or the surge of emotion that comes with strong differences is a normal part of conflict in the work place. Even though we may be upset as strong feelings are expressed, we must avoid being hostile with one another. Those that fear the expression of anger are likely to suppress their feelings and not share their ideas. This in turn slows and reduces the effectiveness of the overall corporation.

Recognizing and Managing Hostility

While conflict and anger are acceptable at RHD, hostility is not. Hostile behaviors include:

1. Demeaning speech or behavior
2. Negative triangulated messages
3. Threat of abandonment
4. Disconfirming the Other Person’s Reality
5. Intimidation/Explosion

Article 2 of this Bill of Rights and Responsibilities serves to further clarify RHD’s philosophy about and processes for managing conflict and difference within our work community.
Decisions by Consensus

While power is unevenly distributed in RHD and authority relationships do exist throughout the organization, no one is empowered to use his/her authority to insist on personal preferences over those of others. For instance, decisions involving the physical design of the work place, dress codes, staff and client activities, use of discretionary funds and other matters that effect the work environment should include a small or large group process. Although reaching consensus on decisions is time consuming, and the results might be different from the leader's preference, the process itself contributes to an employee's feeling of safety and commitment in the work environment.

RHD places as much importance in the process as in the results. A group commitment to a particular project or idea is of greater significance that the "correctness" of a leader's preference.

Summary

RHD is committed to provide a safe work environment where creativity flourishes conflicts are acceptable, and process is a way of life for all employees and consumers. Our corporate culture is based on each employee accepting responsibility for his/her own behavior, including the responsibility to challenge others when their behavior threatens the safety of the work environment. We all are accountable to each other and our mutual empowerment rests in our ability to maintain a work environment that affirms the individual worth of each employee and consumer.
ARTICLE 2
MANAGING CONFLICT AND DIFFERENCE WITHIN RHD

The RHD Values explicitly recognize the inevitability of conflict in the workplace, while holding to the position that such conflict need not and, in our corporation, must not involve hostility. The purpose of this article is to supplement the Corporate Values Statement, Article 1 of the RHD Bill of Rights and Responsibilities on our Corporate Culture, and the RHD Corporate Policy on Dispute Resolution by describing:

a) Types of hostile behavior which are not acceptable in RHD;
b) Skills that are helpful in constructive, assertive confrontation;
c) Ways to express anger in a non-hostile manner;
d) Mechanisms available to RHD staff members to surface and manage conflict issues; and,
d) Thoughts for "third party" supports engaged to help the parties in conflict situations.

Basic Principles of Conflict Management within RHD

As written in Article 1, our corporate culture is based on each employee accepting responsibility for his/her own behavior, including the responsibility to challenge others when their behavior threatens the quality of the work and/or the safety of the work environment. We are all accountable to each other. It is our shared responsibility to maintain a work environment that affirms the dignity and worth of each consumer and employee.

Staff at all levels in the organization need to develop and utilize the skills necessary to effectively deal with those who disagree with them. Similarly, it is the responsibility of the leader(s), or the persons in “authority,” to assist others in expressing their opinions while all involved work toward resolving a potentially hostile situation. As we all may have the opportunity to take on leadership roles at times, we all need to be aware that leaders within RHD are expected to tolerate disagreement and support the expression of conflicting views in a non-hostile manner.
This corporation has chosen to operate with several basic assumptions. One of those assumptions is that there are multiple "right" ways or paths we can follow in making decisions, thus there is no one "true" or "absolute" reality. Each person in a situation holds his/her own view of reality, and his/her own perspective about the most effective way to do things. This assumption allows us to recognize that conflict is inevitable and that people will disagree in the workplace. While conflict and difference (or disagreement) are to be expected, explosive or otherwise hostile expressions of anger are not acceptable in RHD.

As a member of the RHD community, it is important to be able to do two things:
   a) separate from our own need to be "right" in order to hear and respect others' realities and perspectives; and,
   b) differentiate between thoughts (what's going on inside your head) and behaviors (what you do or say).

In RHD, there are five types of hostile behaviors described and named as unacceptable:

1. **Demeaning Speech or Behavior**
   Demeaning speech and behavior involves any verbal or non-verbal behavior that someone experiences as undermining of that person's self-esteem and implies that he/she is less than worthy as a human being. Such behaviors include, but are not limited to name-calling, ridicule, sarcasm, or other actions which "put down" people. Demeaning a person with such physical behaviors as rolling one's eyes when the person speaks or otherwise negating her importance as a member of the community is also unacceptable. Anyone encountering such hostile behavior has the right and the responsibility to surface it as an issue.

2. **Negative Triangulated Messages**
   Triangulated messages involve repeating comments that were supposedly or actually stated by a third party. Usually, but not necessarily, the message carrier keeps the name of the third party secret. Instead of becoming a part of this pattern, one should encourage the messenger to talk directly with the party who
initiated the conversation. When third party comments are presented in a group, that group should likewise oppose the acceptance of such triangulated messages.

Specific exceptions to this policy occur when the message or accusation refers to (1.) client or staff abuse, (2.) theft from the corporation, or (3.) threatening the corporate relationship with funding authorities. In such situations, immediate administrative investigation and appropriate action will ensue.

3. **Threat of Abandonment**

The threat of abandonment in the work environment takes the form of the employer's implied threat of dismissal or the worker's vague threat to leave. While work settings do include the possibility of termination of employment by either party, it is the use of indirect or vague threats, including being ignored or left out of relevant situations, that is sometimes used as a hostile weapon. Threats of firings or resignations create the desire to withdraw from relationships and to reduce creative risk taking and thus undermine feelings of safety.

If a work relationship is in danger of ending, it is extremely important that communication be clear and open. Supervisors need to be explicit regarding the reasons for possible termination. Employees deserve to know that their jobs are secure unless they are clearly warned to the contrary. Similarly, supervisors need to know if an employee is planning to leave so that strategies can be designed to cause the least amount of disruption to co-workers and consumers.

4. **Disconfirming the Other Person's Reality**

When one person negates another person's perspective with such statements as, "That never happened," or "Are you out of your mind? How could you think that?" we consider the behavior a means of disconfirming the other's reality. Although one may feel very clear about what he/she experienced in a situation, it is not acceptable to deny that the other person may have had a different
experience. It is important to make "room" for the possibility of different realities, at least during the conversation with the other person.

5. Intimidation/Explosion

Hostility is most obvious when it is expressed as yelling, inappropriate language, or physical threats. Such attacks may either stimulate counter attack and possible physical conflict or else withdrawal and submission. Either is clearly destructive to interpersonal safety and is not acceptable at RHD. Even though an employee may have intense personal feelings about a situation, all are expected to control their reactions so as not to endanger the feeling of safety of others. When someone feels and states that s/he is afraid of being attacked, the issue has been raised and both may need assistance to resolve the conflict.

While naming what is unacceptable in this corporate culture is important, giving people tools and options for acceptable behavior is equally important. This document provides some ways to manage conflict and difference which are acceptable in our workplace.

Skills for Constructive, Assertive Confrontation

- Clarify your feelings, thoughts, needs and goals in the specific conflict, as well as your own experience and expectations of conflict generally. In particular, identify the conflict behaviors that feel particularly hostile to you.
- Recognize and respect that the other persons have their own needs and perspectives in the specific conflict, as well as their own experiences and expectations of conflict generally. It is important to remember that different conflict behaviors may feel hostile to others.
- Directly address the other persons with your concerns or different perspectives.
  - Give the other persons a "heads up" that you are going to surface a conflict or difference. This allows them to prepare themselves to respond, not react, to your statements. You might start the conversation with:
    - "I need to express a different view"
"Is now a good time to talk about different view?"
"Could we talk about this later/more privately?"
Use "I" messages to own your feelings and thoughts, allowing the other persons the opportunity to decrease their defensiveness, such as:
  "I feel hurt when…"
  "My perspective is…"
  "I need…"

Practice "active" listening. Active listening can be summed up in the statement, "Seek first to understand, then to be understood." The skills of active listening include:

- **Face the speaker** -- show you are listening through your body language.
- **Maintain eye contact**, to the extent that you both are comfortable.
- **Minimize external and internal distractions**. Turn off the radio, don’t answer the phone, and don’t try to take care of other tasks while listening. If your own thoughts about what you want to say next or anything else keep getting in the way, consciously re-focus your attention on the speaker.
- **Focus solely on what the speaker is saying**.
- **Respond appropriately** to show that you understand, with such behaviors as nodding.
- **Keep an open mind**. Try NOT to make assumptions about what the speaker is thinking or intending.
- **Wait until the speaker is finished to reply**.
- **Engage yourself**. Ask questions for clarification, and paraphrase what you've heard to make sure that you did not misunderstand.
- **Speak only for yourself**, rather than bringing others into the conversation.
- **Stay with a situation** to see it to resolution.
- **Engage a helpful, fair third party to assist you and the other person(s)** if you do not feel able to go through this process without assistance.
Non-Hostile Expression of Anger

Anger can be described as the primary feeling in a family of feelings which includes fury, outrage, resentment, wrath, exasperation, indignation, animosity, annoyance, irritability, and hostility. Anger, then, is a feeling, not a behavior.

When something happens that seems threaten our sense of safety -- whether that threat is to our physical safety or to our self-esteem, such as when we are demeaned -- we may experience a rapid rush of feeling angry. The anger rush happens when our emotion hits us before our head can register what we're thinking; the "fight or flight" response is triggered in a flash of a moment. Anger can also emerge a bit slower, when emotion follows from our thoughts or interpretations of a situation.

People often say that they cannot control their anger, and many believe it is unhealthy to do so, even if they could (the "let it all out" concept.) However, while it is true that we do not choose our emotions, we can control to some degree the duration of the feeling and we can control the behaviors we use to express the feeling.

Anger is a pretty seductive emotion -- unlike sadness, it can feel energizing and powerful (it's supposed to -- it's the mechanism we have developed to survive!). Indeed, we may need to harness the power of the feeling to get past fears in order to protect ourselves from physical, verbal, or emotional violence or abuse. On the other hand, the longer we allow ourselves to feel the anger, and some of the ways we choose to express the anger, can be damaging both to ourselves and to others. When we linger in the feeling of anger -- rolling the thoughts that caused the feeling around in our mind -- we may actually increase the intensity of the feeling. And research has shown that venting the anger in an explosion of rage (such as screaming or physical violence) does not eliminate or reduce the anger; outbursts of rage typically pump up the emotional brain's arousal, leaving people feeling more angry, not less. To reduce the duration and intensity of anger, it is far more effective to first cool down, and then, in a more constructive or assertive manner, confront the person or situation directly.
So, how do you cool down when you find yourself caught in the grip of anger? And then, how do you confront the person or situation in a constructive, assertive way?

**Defusing Anger and Cooling Down**

As stated earlier, the slower form of anger is generated and intensified by the thoughts you have about a situation or interaction. One way of defusing your anger, then, is to seize on and challenge the thoughts that trigger surges of anger. Take a moment or two to figure out what thoughts you are having -- particularly those thoughts that stand out most clearly or keep repeating -- and try to reframe those thoughts. Ask yourself: why do I think this? What information do I have to support this thought? What information do I have to dispute this thought? What might the other person be thinking and feeling? If you find yourself unable to look at your thoughts from another perspective, you may want to talk to a more objective third party, asking that person to help you reframe the thoughts.

There are two important points about defusing anger by challenging the thoughts that cause and escalate it. First, the earlier you do it the better, so that your thoughts don't have a lot of time to fan the flames. And second, this manner of defusing anger works well at moderate levels of anger; at high levels of rage it makes no difference because the intense emotion makes it difficult, if not impossible, for you to think straight.

When you cannot think straight, the best thing to do is to cool off physiologically by waiting out the adrenal surge in a setting where there is not likely to be further triggers of rage. There are many ways of cooling off, yet the starting point is to get yourself out of the space in which the situation or interaction is occurring. Just a few options:

- going for a walk or doing other exercise
- watching TV or listening to music (maybe even singing at the top of your lungs!)
- deep breathing and muscle relaxation
- reading and/or writing
- meditating or praying
- anything that distracts you -- one co-worker does laundry!
Mechanisms for Managing Conflicts within RHD

It is critical for the parties involved in a conflict situation to **consciously and explicitly** determine the nature of the issues involved, as well as to decide the most appropriate and effective strategies for dealing with those issues.

Once the decision is made to surface the conflict, it is important for individuals to consider the most appropriate course of action. Options include (but are not limited to):

- **Direct one-to-one discussion**
- **Supported one-to-one discussion**
  - Individuals who have a conflict or concern to surface directly with a co-worker or higher level of authority, but who may feel unsafe in doing so alone, may request the presence of a third party. In this scenario, the third party’s role is to offer encouragement and support to the person surfacing the conflict, and to ensure that a fair and productive process takes place between the conflicting parties. A third party “support” can be:
    - a Citizen Advocate (either from within the unit or from outside the unit);
    - other colleague/peer;
    - a supervisor or other manager (depending upon the situation);
    - a member of the relevant Hub management team;
    - a member of the corporate HR Department or the RHD Access Team.

- **Mediated one-to-one discussion**
  - Similar to the option above, however, the role of the third party is to actively facilitate the process that occurs between the conflicting parties so that the parties themselves work constructively toward resolution of the conflict. This role of a third party requires a “neutral” person; the parties in conflict need to view the mediator as someone they trust to facilitate a fair process, and need to understand that the mediator is not a decision-maker regarding the outcome of the conflict. The Citizen Advocates, the RHD Access Team and the HR department are all sources of mediation assistance.
• **Formal dispute resolution/grievance procedure (individual)**

  Individuals who are in conflict with supervisors about specific employment-related decisions or actions that affect them should be supported and encouraged to utilize the *grievance or dispute resolution procedure* (as outlined in unit policies and corporate policy). In formal dispute resolution/grievance procedures, the employee raising the grievance is allowed to bring a Citizen Advocate or other peer for support; the employee may choose the Citizen Advocate from his/her own unit or one from the Citizen Advocate group as a whole. As a formal process, the role of the highest level of authority involved in the process is that of a decision-maker or arbitrator; they should facilitate a process for the two parties to communicate with one another, but they retain responsibility for determining the outcome or resolution of the conflict.

• **Facilitated group discussion within work group or unit**

  When multiple members of a particular unit or work group are in conflict with one another or with supervisors/managers, the group may utilize the support of a third party to facilitate the direct and constructive surfacing and resolution of the conflict. Facilitators may be drawn from members of the unit or work group who are not involved in the conflict, including supervisory or other management staff (depending upon the situation), or from the RHD Access Team.

• **Values Stakeholder Challenge**

  At times a situation may arise when individuals or groups find themselves differing about the interpretation or implementation of one or more values, or concerned that the values are being compromised with respect to some aspect of a service system. Such a situation may not involve what the individuals perceive as a personal conflict, but instead, the people involved in the situation may have different understandings of what happened, what the others’ motivations and/or perceptions were, and what the values mean in relation to the situation.

  In such a situation, staff may utilize a mechanism named a “Values Stakeholder Challenge.” This mechanism is a meeting process that a group of individuals may call when they perceive that a value has been violated or misinterpreted. Again, while
interpersonal issues and conflicts are best handled directly and privately, decisions or policies that affect multiple people or groups would be appropriate topics for Values Stakeholder Challenge processes. *(Please note: This mechanism should be considered after the parties involved have attempted more direct ways of surfacing and resolving the conflict, as this mechanism may involve additional levels of authority outside of the unit or work group in which the conflict occurred.)*

*The group calling the meeting identifies as many of the people as feasible who have a “stake” – an interest, concern or responsibility – in the situation and its resolution or outcome, and invites them to join the process. The purpose of a Values Stakeholder Challenge is to surface the issues in the conflict, discuss the issues, and share the different perspectives that the stakeholders have. Each stakeholder’s perspective should be respected and validated. Instead of arguing, the stakeholders agree to mutually explore the observations and assumptions on which their points of view are based. It is not necessary that the process lead to a decision on the matter being discussed; however, a decision or change in policy or procedure may come about as the result of new understandings among stakeholders.*

Values Stakeholder Challenge meetings can include people from a unit or group plus individuals representing different levels of authority in the corporation, up to and including the Executive Director. It is important to remember that when staff members have decided to reach outside of their unit or work group to call a Values Stakeholder Challenge, they are likely to have developed a level of frustration, fear and/or anger that is not always conducive to constructive conflict management. In addition, the involvement of other levels of authority may contribute to fear, frustration and anger on the part of those being “challenged.” Often, the parties involved in the situation have personalized the conflict. In such cases, the emotional levels of the stakeholders need to be recognized and attended to prior to bringing the stakeholders together. For this reason, it is important that all Values Stakeholder Challenge processes be facilitated by experienced group facilitators, available through the RHD Access Team.
• Formal investigation by higher authorities

Certain issues that are raised by an employee or group in the process of surfacing conflict must be reported to and/or investigated by unit and corporate management. These issues include, but are not limited to abuse or neglect of consumers, harassment of staff (sexual or other), theft, abuse of power/authority, violations of laws or corporate policy, or violation of any of the Employee Rules of Conduct.

**Involvement of “Third Party” Mediators & Facilitators in Conflict Situations**

If a “third party” – a Citizen Advocate, mediator, or other facilitator -- is engaged by the individual(s) seeking to surface a conflict, the first step that “third party” should take is to engage in a fact-finding mission, listening to the concerns expressed from multiple perspectives to better understand the nature of the issues and the course of action desired by the individual(s). In determining that course of action, the “third party” should bear in mind the following principles:

• Interpersonal conflicts are best handled directly and privately.

Anyone functioning as a “third party” should focus on helping the people in conflict take responsibility for and ownership of their interpersonal conflict situations, and should emphasize the importance of surfacing and dealing directly and respectfully throughout the conflict management process. Carrying negative triangulated messages should be avoided as much as possible.

• Critical to the decision to engage in problem solving is the extent to which the individual wishes to take his or her opponent’s goals, interests, desires and personal integrity into consideration. When people perceive their goals to be positively linked, “concern for other” is higher and problem solving more likely than when parties perceive their goals to be independent, or contradictory. The “third party” should gauge the extent to which all parties in the conflict perceive their goals to be shared or positively linked, and base recommendations and interventions on that assessment.
In summary, peer support, mediation, formal grievance, and the Values Stakeholder Challenge are some of the mechanisms available to individuals and groups within the corporation to effectively surface and manage differences. Let’s use such mechanisms to sharpen our agreement about how to keep RHD’s values alive and working throughout the corporation.

Final Thoughts
Each of us has the right to have feelings, and each of us, in this work environment, has the responsibility to express those feelings in ways that strengthen our self-esteem while maintaining and/or enhancing the sense of safety of others in our workplace.
ARTICLE 3
IMPLEMENTING THE VALUE OF MULTI-LEVEL THINKING

There once was a group of four blind men who came upon a huge obstacle in the road. The first blind man reached out and felt a large, rough object that was as round and solid as a tree trunk; he told the other men in his party that they had run into a tree. The second man quickly objected; he had reached out and felt a long wrinkled hose waving in the air and so concluded that the object was not a tree, but a hose. The third blind man said, "No, no, no. what we have here is a small, swinging rope with a tassel at the end." And the fourth stated, unequivocally, that the object was none of the things the others had described; instead, he was sure the object was an extremely large boulder. A separate traveler approached the group of blind men and asked, "What are you gentlemen doing with that elephant?"

RHD's Value

"RHD promotes an organizational process where the value of creative chaos us openly acknowledged. Such chaos is not seen as formless confusion but as a dynamic tension and ferment that leads to fresh ideas and leaps of creativity. Furthermore, the organization embraces a win/win way of thinking that rejects a narrow "either/or" perspective that divides knowledge into a simplistic calculation of right and wrong or true and false. Instead RHD employs a "both/and" philosophy of knowledge and process that accepts and promotes many different viewpoints. Thus, in instances where two perspectives apparently contradict each other, both can be seen as true depending on the differing experiences and characteristics of the individuals involved. The consequence of this approach is that RHD requires ongoing debate and dialogue and is extremely resistant to one-dimensional thinking."

"The more perspectives on an issue that a team (group or individual) can consider, the more possibilities exist for effective action. The point is not just to look at one or two extremely different perspectives (i.e.: "either/or," "black/white"), but to capture as many differences of nuance as possible." from The Fifth Discipline Field book (page 273)

Key Concepts

- appreciate the positive side of chaos, which leads to fresh and creative ideas
- accept and promote many different viewpoints
• accept that people have their own perspectives on reality -- one person does not have the whole view
• think "both/and" rather than "either/or"
• increase tolerance for situations that have no clear-cut solutions

Empowering leaders engage staff: they greet new ideas openly and tolerantly; affirm each person's right to have his/her perspective; and, recognize, reward, affirm and incorporate different ideas into their decisions.

**What kinds of behaviors promote multi-level thinking?**

• actively and consistently affirming when people voice their ideas and concerns
• leading and/or participating in team/group decision making processes
• offering and participating in job/role switching opportunities and tours of other sites
• encouraging employees to share training with others in their program and/or the corporation
• asking questions that promote the analysis of issues from as many perspectives as possible
• when there is a disagreement, addressing the other in a respectful, caring way
• encouraging people to try things they've never tried before, or to try things that others say are impossible
• engaging in true dialogue, which does not necessarily result in decisions
• ensuring that groups include people from multiple perspectives
• being aware that silence does not necessarily signify agreement or understanding

**What kinds of behaviors interfere with multi-level thinking?**

• group leaders stating or indicating that they have answers to issues without engaging others in dialogue
• group members rejecting new views by laughing or putting down a newly offered idea
• group leaders avoiding regularly scheduled group meetings
• group leaders setting the agendas for meetings without input from members

• group members complaining privately about authoritarian decision-making but not raising the issue directly with group leaders

• group members not contributing to group discussions although they have important perspectives to share

• group leaders dominating group discussions and allowing very little time for others to speak
ARTICLE 4
QUESTIONING AUTHORITY

As a key aspect of multi-level thinking, RHD embraces the concept of Questioning Authority. Each of us brings her or his own particular background, information, perspective, job experience, and knowledge of consumers to our jobs. In many cases, an employee’s perspective may give him or her access to more or better information or insights than possessed by the person’s immediate supervisor or “higher-ups” in the corporation. Each of us has an obligation to bring our expertise to bear on workplace issues.

The value of “questioning authority” does not lie in the rebellious ideal that these words often invoke, but in the principle, inherent in the process of questioning, that understanding and growth arise from challenging the status quo. Imagine, if you can, the condition of our world if Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela or Thomas Jefferson had not questioned the authority of the systems and thinking of their times. Without inquiry, mistakes, false assumptions, and erroneous ideas remain unchallenged and are perpetuated.

The same is true within the context of the delivery of human services. Because what RHD does is not an exact science, development and improvement of services requires an environment that fosters and supports questions like, “Why are we doing things this way?” or “Isn’t there an easier way to accomplish this task?” These questions signify the kind of ongoing analysis that is the key to the maintenance of quality in the services that RHD delivers.

The power to question authority, therefore, is at the heart of RHD’s values. However, questioning authority within the context of the workplace is a process that must be balanced against the fact that the workplace exists to accomplish specific tasks and activities. The nature of the relationship of employer and employee is that the employer defines the tasks that are to be accomplished and the broad conditions within which the work must take place. The employee agrees to accomplish the assigned tasks within the established conditions. In the workplace, authority exists to assure that work is completed. This authority cannot legitimately be questioned if the organization is to accomplish its mission.

How the work gets done is quite another matter. Here the issue of authority is by no means fixed.

Authority is defined variously as the power to execute dominating control or influence; expertise; and freedom from doubt. At RHD the first definition is rejected. No one, on any level in this organization, has the power to exercise dominating control. Similarly, as implied in the text above, the nature of the services that RHD provides precludes the possibility that anyone working within this organization can be
completely free from doubt. Each person, each situation, has unique characteristics which require continuous adjustment of the parameters of service.

The type of authority that RHD seeks to foster and support is that which arises from expertise. Each aspect of the corporation’s operations is populated with individuals who have developed and demonstrated expertise in the area of their professional endeavors. This expertise, born of education, training and personal experience, lends weight to the counsel and advice which these people bring to the workplace. Does this mean that the counsel and advice is not to be questioned? Absolutely not.

Recent research has identified three types of workplace environments, based on the personal and managerial styles of the people who have authority in those settings: Authoritarian, Permissive and Authoritative.

The “authoritarian” person thinks obedience, without argument, is a virtue. Authoritarian supervisors and managers tend to set absolute standards of behavior that are not to be questioned or negotiated. They favor forceful discipline and demand prompt obedience. Authoritarian people are also less likely than others to use more gentle methods of persuasion, such as affection, praise and rewards. Consequently, authoritarian people are prone to use more aggressive modes of conflict resolution. Conflicts are dealt with using coercion and intimidation. Workers have little freedom or independence. These workplaces are characterized by a lack of teamwork and much strife as workers attempt to jockey for favored status with the “boss.”

“Permissive” people, on the other hand, behave in a kind, gentle way and demand very little. These managers and supervisors place relatively few demands on their workers and are likely to be inconsistent disciplinarians. They are less likely than other people to monitor their workers’ behavior. Although the settings in which this management style is used tend to be friendly, workers in them often lack the capacity to work as a team and take little responsibility for their own behavior. Conflicts in this management style are handled in a manner that is often contradictory. Despite the pleasant atmosphere, workers in these environments are often unhappy, expressing the lack of a sense of direction in the enterprise.

“Authoritative” people, in contrast to both authoritarian and permissive people, are neither lenient nor domineering. The authoritative person has rules and exercises personal authority, but rules are explained and reasons are given for decisions. Workers are encouraged to be independent and to express their opinions. Teamwork is encouraged, as is personal initiative and workers in this environment tend to express greater degrees of satisfaction with their work. It is this combination of management strategies that has been found the most facilitative in the development of competence.

In its operations, RHD seeks to establish authoritative workplaces. Questioning of authority is the norm in
these workplaces. It is a healthy and dynamic process that is characterized by mutual respect, tolerance for divergent opinions, and openness to the expertise and personal experience of every employee, regardless of their role.

RHD depends upon the creative energies and professional competencies of its employees. By encouraging each employee to “question authority,” the corporation maximizes the availability of these vital qualities.
ARTICLE 5
EMPOWERMENT OF GROUPS

At RHD, power resides with the group, not with the individual. Group leaders are empowered to empower others and no person, regardless of position, has permission to treat others in an inappropriate or dictatorial manner.

Key concepts

1. Power is to be shared.
   When power is shared,
   - each person is valued,
   - ideas and concepts are limitless and worthwhile,
   - the expression of thoughts and beliefs of all is encouraged,
   - challenges are problems to solve,
   - there is no fear of recrimination,
   - no one is isolated, and
   - everyone benefits.

2. Decisions are made by the group, not the individual.
   When a decision has been made by a group, members of the group have had the opportunity to:
   - express their ideas and thoughts,
   - present doubts or concerns,
   - argue their positions,
   - listen to and consider the views of other group members,
   - incorporate alterations to the initial plan, and
   - question authority.
3. **Anyone can develop a group or join a group.**

Groups are formed because one or more persons

- feel empowered to do so,
- see a need that should be addressed,
- want to discuss an issue or find a solution,
- believe that "process" is as important as the result, and
- seek a sense of community and camaraderie.

4. **Empowerment of consumers is crucial.**

When consumers are empowered, they

- have a voice and are heard,
- participate in setting their own guidelines and boundaries,
- are given options which allow them to make decisions for and about themselves,
- feel responsible for their actions, and
- as one consumer said, "[feel] more like being normal."

5. **No one person, regardless of position, has permission to exercise arbitrary power over another. All leaders must exercise their power in a manner that respects the dignity and worth of each individual and in a way that is perceived as reasonable by others.**

The use of arbitrary power by any person alone over another

- is disempowering,
- is threatening and demoralizing,
- encourages dependence,
- undermines a sense of purpose and responsibility,
- reduces the likelihood of reaching appropriate and effective resolutions when perceived inequities or injustices arise, and
- encourages hostility and distrust.

*Note:* It is against RHD corporate policy to terminate any employee without the concurrence of at least one other administrative staff member.
Some Behaviors that Foster Empowerment

Empowering Leaders…

- help people believe in themselves;
- are not threatened by the success of others, even of those they supervise;
- encourage others to state their beliefs and respect the principle of questioning authority;
- want to see others receive recognition for their efforts;
- are able understand that each person in the group, including themselves;
- is part of the whole and, in turn, is part of a bigger picture;
- interpret a challenge to their authority as an indication of a safe and open environment; and
- directly ask staff whom they supervise for feedback about their ideas and behavior.

Members of a group express their empowerment when they…

- participate fully in the group by being attentive and offering comments and suggestions;
- discuss a problem situation openly with those involved, instead of gossiping afterwards;
- bring suggestions for solutions to problems and do not expect the leader to provide an answer to every question;
- are respectful when questioning authority; and
- demonstrate willingness to take on related tasks.

Some Behaviors That Interfere With Or Inhibit Empowerment

Inhibiting Leaders...

- ridicule staff or make them feel as less of a person for disagreeing with or challenging their decisions,
- do not acknowledge ideas of others,
• do not share decision making tasks,
• lead through fear and domination,
• confuse empowerment with manipulation,
• may feel threatened by the empowerment of others, and
• may not be able to recall the last time they were challenged about their decisions and decision-making
ARTICLE 6
DECENTRALIZATION OF AUTHORITY

This value reflects the belief that RHD’s work is best accomplished when power and responsibility are dispersed rather than centralized. Consequently, the organizational structure is comprised of many individual units with minimum centralization and bureaucracy. Whenever possible, decisions are made locally, including purchasing and the hiring and termination of personnel. This local decision-making facilitates the face-to-face surfacing and resolution of conflict on the part of consumers and employees.

“Localness (or decentralization) means moving decisions down the organizational hierarchy; designing business units where, to the greatest degree possible, local decision makers confront the full range of issues and dilemmas intrinsic in growing and sustaining any business enterprise. Localness means unleashing people’s commitment by giving them the freedom to act, to try out their own ideas and be responsible for producing results.” —from The Fifth Discipline, pp.287-288

The RHD corporate value of “Decentralization of Authority” is intended to be thoughtfully balanced with the other values, most particularly the values of “Empowerment of Groups,” “Multi-level Thinking,” “Safe and Open Environment,” “Organizational Integrity,” and “On-going Growth and Development.”

Decentralizing authority means moving power and decision-making responsibility from the Corporate Office to those who are closest to the point of service. In order for this principle to work effectively, people at all levels and in all functions within the corporation need to develop and practice the following skills:

- Sharing power, letting go of need to control;
- Being open to new and different perspectives and ideas;
- Considering how a local decision will affect the corporate system as a whole;
- Facilitating and/or participating in group decision-making processes;
- Listening and responding to others with respect; and,
- Taking responsibility for own thoughts, feelings and behaviors.
What are the principles behind decentralization?

Decentralization of authority, or localizing decision-making, is intended to have the following effects:

- Increased quality of service in meeting “customer” needs—consumers, family, staff, community and funders are better served by the greater responsiveness, flexibility, and creativity that can accompany decentralization.

- Increased sense of “ownership”—staff and consumers at the local level are more supportive and feel greater responsibility and accountability for decisions made with their shared input.

- Increased growth and development, sense of fulfillment, and satisfaction on the part of local staff and/or consumers.

What principles are used to determine what is centralized?

The Corporate Office delegates as many day-to-day operations of systems as possible, and centralizes only those functions necessary to maintain financial responsibility and program integrity.

To meet this goal, the Corporate Office centralizes the signing of contracts, the management of funds, and review and approval of budgets, and is involved in major relationships with government and other contract sources.

Decentralization needs to be honored at all levels in the corporation. Decisions should not be made by individual leaders alone, but with the input of all concerned. Sometimes such process is not possible, but a pattern of authoritarian or autocratic decision-making needs to be questioned, discussed and challenged, if necessary.

Under what conditions will we re-centralize an authority (power/responsibility) that has been decentralized?

RHD does not decentralize power and authority to individual leaders in order that they may create tightly controlled autocratic systems or small “fiefdoms.” Power and decision-making are expected to be shared at the local level with the people involved in and affected by that system.
RHD’s Corporate Office will intervene in program and/or fiscal operations when there are indications of:

- Misappropriation or poor decisions regarding program funds;
- Decisions and actions that jeopardize a program’s licensing and/or funding;
- Local decision-making that reduces options or restricts choices; and/or,
- Leaders making decisions that focus on their own needs and best interests rather than those of their consumers and staff.

The type of intervention used in such situations is determined by the scope and severity of the effect of the autocratic behavior on the people in the system. Before the decision to intervene is made, the dynamics of the specific situation are evaluated and appropriate intervention strategies are carefully considered. Types of intervention include, but are not limited to, investigation, consultation and coaching with leader, facilitated group meetings, conflict resolution processes, temporary or permanent withdrawal of specific decision-making powers, and probation or termination of leader.

The Corporate Office prefers that each unit operates with as much autonomy as possible while continuing to use the Corporate Office services and implementing the RHD corporate values. When a unit chooses to function in isolation without regard to the values, the Corporate Office may find it necessary to re-centralize authority.
“RHD recognizes that its consumers and staff represent considerable variety with regard to characteristics such as race, ethnicity, culture, levels of education, economic status, religion, developmental ability and sexual orientation. Such diversity is valued and promoted by the organization while it rejects all discriminatory or negating behaviors towards members of these groups. RHD believes that by celebrating and affirming diversity, its organizational life is immeasurably enriched.”

Diversity is the strength of Resources for Human Development, Inc. The foundation of the corporation is built on the diversity of the people whom it serves and of the staff who provide the services. Diversity of race, religion, culture, educational backgrounds, abilities and outlooks adds a richness and depth to the corporation that needs to be encouraged and embraced. There is no place for prejudice in this corporation. Moving beyond known, or even unknown, prejudices will open a new world and improve one’s quality of life.

The goal of the corporation is not to make everyone alike and conform to one way of thinking and living; it is not to put all of us together to become alike in a melting pot. Instead, we strive to acknowledge and appreciate the uniqueness in each of us and to embrace those differences in all of us. Our goal is to create an environment in which each individual is able to bring his or her “whole person” to work, while not demeaning or negating others. To do so, we need to balance “assimilation” with holding on to the positive, enriching quality of our differences. We differentiate between accepting and respecting our differences and imposing one preference over another.

We acknowledge that leaders (individuals and groups) within our organization often make and implement decisions and that, as human beings, their decisions are based on situational factors and their own perceptions and biases. However, we believe that there are no absolute “right” decisions in any situation, which means that there may be numerous “good” decisions in a given situation. We expect our leaders to draw from multiple and diverse perspectives and to then use their best judgement when making decisions that effect others.
“Hows” -- Accepting, Celebrating and Promoting Our Diversity

**Develop Self-Awareness**

The first step in creating a work environment in which all members are enabled to bring “who they are” is for each of us to become more self-aware. We need to explore how the messages sent to us through our racial, religious, ethnic, socio-economic, and family backgrounds have influenced our current cultural assumptions and biases. We should take time to reflect on the aspects and qualities of ourselves we most value, and why. In this way we are building a greater sense of self-esteem -- finding what we love and value in ourselves -- so that we will be better able to find what we can love and value in others, even those individuals and groups that seem so different from us.

We do not want to act as though we each do not have biases; instead, we want our awareness of those assumptions and biases to serve as “red flags” which will help us to consciously avoid behaving toward others in ways that are based on those biases or that feel negating or demeaning to others. For this reason, it is important to create opportunities and environments in which people in a workplace can surface and talk about biases and assumptions -- to make “undiscussables” more discussable so that we learn together how our differences can enrich the decisions we make and the actions we take.

**Affirm and Celebrate Our Differences**

Programs and groups throughout the corporation must demonstrate their commitment to the affirmation and celebration of diversity. We should also create a variety of mechanisms to address the programmatic impact of having different races, genders, lifestyles, and communication norms in the workplace. This commitment can be promoted through such actions as participating in culturally-sensitive orientation and training, organizing multi-cultural events, involving all members in the process for selecting program holidays, and holding brown bag lunch discussions on issues relating to diversity.

**“Hows” -- Rejecting Discriminatory and/or Negating Behaviors**

**Recruitment, hiring and other employment practices should reflect the corporation’s commitment to having a multicultural workforce.**

Beyond the legal requirements contained in our corporate policies, RHD is committed to creating employment opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds in order to enrich the decisions and work of the organization. We must ensure that no individual is rejected for employment based on the fact or
perception that the individual is a member of any specific group. If an individual has a need that is based on their inclusion in a particular group (religious, sexual orientation, disability, etc.), the individual has both the right and the responsibility to join with others in problem-solving when his/her need conflicts with the needs of the program.

As one way of helping us remain conscious of our diversity goals, all programs and groups throughout the organization are requested to periodically look at the composition of the membership in their group, and to reflect on the reasons for and impacts of that composition. Based on such reflection, the group may want to make decisions about how they will move forward in creating and valuing a diverse membership.

**Systems must be in place throughout the corporation and the programs to vigorously investigate and resolve allegations of discriminatory practices and negating behaviors.**

Any employee who feels that he or she has been unfairly treated or has concerns about discriminatory or negating behavior in the workplace is strongly encouraged to bring the issue(s) to the attention of his/her immediate supervisor, a Citizen Advocate, Unit Director, Hub point person or RHD’s Human Resources Director. Complaints will be investigated, and anyone found to be engaging in discriminatory or negating behaviors will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Often, however, bias and discrimination are demonstrated in very subtle ways, such as excluding a certain person from group activities because he is different from the other members (for example, he may be the only male, the youngest or oldest, more or less educated, of a different race or religion or sexual orientation, etc.). The more subtle the discriminatory or negating behavior, the more difficult it is to challenge. As with other hostile behaviors, it is important to remember that at RHD, hostility is “in the eye of the beholder,” that is, it is defined by the receiver. In the example given here, if the person feels demeaned or negated by being excluded from group activities, he has the right to raise his concerns, regardless of what the others in the group intended by their behavior.

Finally, one of the reasons people do not challenge discriminatory or negating behaviors in the workplace, especially the more subtle behaviors, is the fear of retaliation. As with discrimination, retaliation can be overt or subtle; regardless, retaliation is not acceptable at RHD. Any employee who feels that he or she has been retaliated against for surfacing and challenging discriminatory or negating behaviors is encouraged to bring the issue(s) to the supervisor, Unit Director, Hub point person or RHD’s Human Resources Director.
Summary

Bias, discrimination, negating behaviors, retaliation...none of these actions are acceptable at RHD. Our goal is to recognize and eradicate even the subtlest of discriminating behaviors.

Diversity can be, and in this corporation, is powerful; it demonstrates our strength, freedom, joy, learning and quality. When we create an environment in which each person’s uniqueness is valued, honored and appreciated, we have the opportunity to bring out the best in each of us. And this, in turn, enriches the life of the organization.
ARTICLE 8
IMPLEMENTING THE VALUE OF “QUALITY SERVICE” WITHIN RHD

“Quality Service — All programs are expected to deliver quality service. The evaluation of quality involves consideration of a given unit’s mission and careful assessments of consumer and customer satisfaction. Long-term program quality requires an environment which promotes a sense of ownership on the part of consumers and staff. This quality is the result of an ongoing process of teamwork and group participation which fosters a feeling of pride and a sense of personal accomplishment.”

**What is quality service? Can We Define It?**

In RHD, we see quality in the visible and often measurable development and changes in our consumers and our staff. We also perceive that “quality” means doing our best to achieve the goals of our program/team. It often means providing what is needed, even if what is needed is not being explicitly asked for.

Quality service and creativity go hand in hand. It requires each of us to bring our creativity to the work we do in order to continually discover new ways of helping consumers reach their maximum potential, and of exceeding our customers’ needs and expectations. Quality service is never “completed” or achieved once and for all, nor is it a constant state; the challenge is to acknowledge when we are moving toward what has already been defined as quality service for a consumer or customer, and when we need to stop and redefine quality service based on the current information and situation.

Quality service involves “going the extra mile” because we really care about the people we serve, we care about our own personal satisfaction and the level of pride we feel about the work we do, and, in many cases, we care about the connection between our work and our spirituality -- serving a higher power or a god of one’s own understanding.

“Going the extra mile” may look like being a helper or mentor to new staff, even though that responsibility may not be outlined in your job description, so that everyone on the team is moving in the same, positive direction. It may look like spending a little extra time and energy to read between the lines and find the true meaning behind the words or actions of a consumer or staff member so that the individual
feels heard and responded to. It may look like pausing for a moment to be fully “present” in a relationship with a co-worker or customer, genuinely responding to a greeting rather than simply replying “hello, fine” without thinking about how, in fact, you really are or how that person really is that day.

Quality service occurs when a group works together in a mutually supportive relationship to:

- provide maximum freedom of choice for the consumer or customer
- provide support for minimizing choices that are deemed “harmful” to the individual consumer or others
- demonstrate patience with the development of the consumer
- demonstrate commitment to the consumer
- demonstrate empathy with one another and treat each other with respect

In a sense, “quality service” means that we are continually “raising the bar,” in terms of what we expect and how we respond, for each other. The story below is shared as an example of what we mean by “quality” in everyday work life:

During a team meeting of the staff in a residential unit, one direct care staff person raised the topic of the way the team had been serving the meals of a consumer who, for medical reasons, had to have his food pureed. The staff person voiced her observation that staff was putting all of this gentleman’s food into a blender together and serving it as a “shake” of sorts, and she shared her opinion that the consumer deserved to have his food presented in a way that made it a real “meal” that he could share with his housemates. She talked about how important she thought it was that he feels like an equal member of that household. She asked for concurrence from her team mates that this consumer should be served his meals at the table with his housemates, with his different food items (although pureed) presented attractively in separate sections of his plate. Her point was that, although blending the food together and serving it all at once was easier and more efficient for staff and met the consumer’s nutritional needs, that method did not treat him like a dignified human being for whom eating a meal in his home with his housemates was a right. The staff team responded to her by agreeing that her suggested way of serving meals to this particular gentleman would be implemented.
Where does quality service come from?

The source of quality service needs to be separated from educational degrees or formal authority/power, because at the most fundamental level, the quality of any service is affected by the staff’s relationships with the consumers and with one another. These relationships, when of a high quality, are characterized by a sense of kinship with the consumer, as well as a sense of ownership and empowerment that is shared by both the staff and the consumer. Quality service does not come from the “head” alone; having a degree does not guarantee quality service. The relationship characterized by “joining” and by “kinship” is generated and supported in large part by the “heart.”

A Group Process

The true measure of quality is demonstrated in the process of delivering the service, not solely in quantitative measures and outcomes. Perceptions of the quality of a service need to be elicited from all “stakeholders” -- those people affected by the service, as well as those with relevant information, authority and resources to affect the service. All stakeholders should be encouraged to express their opinions about the service as well as their satisfaction with the service. Indeed, the essence of quality service is a willingness to continually search with other stakeholders for better ways of achieving “satisfaction and quality.”

When delivering quality service by involving multiple “stakeholders” in the process, we can expect at least some conflict or difference of opinion regarding what constitutes “satisfaction.” It is common for us to be committed to providing quality service, yet we often prefer to avoid conflict, especially in groups. RHD appreciates that verbalizing difference is often experienced as painful or frightening. However, we cannot seek quality in an open way if any one of us expects to be attacked. For this reason, the implementation of this value is intricately connected with that of the other values, especially “Safe and Open Environment,” “Respect for the Dignity and Worth of Each Individual,” and “Diversity.”

The level of pride that members of a group feel about their work is a critical facet of the process of creating and delivering “quality service.” Staff satisfaction and pride fosters continual improvements in the quality of services provided by that staff, which in turn bolsters the group’s sense of satisfaction and pride. It is not an “either-or” situation—to genuinely provide quality service, the corporation and each program must be attuned to and supportive of continually increasing staff satisfaction and pride in the work that staff groups do together.
**Summary**

In summary, the creation and delivery of “quality service” in RHD involves finding a healthy combination of two key measures: the degree to which stakeholders are encouraged to have their own voice and choices, and the degree to which differences among stakeholders are managed constructively and respectfully. At the most fundamental level, however, is the concept that true “Quality Service” comes from the heart and spirit of individuals working together in healthy relationships, with a sense of ownership of and pride in both the results and the process of their work.
ARTICLE 9

TRIANGULATED NEGATIVE MESSAGES

Resources for Human Development is consciously working to create a safe and creative environment for all of its employees. Toward that end, we have developed this corporate “Bill of Rights and Responsibilities.” As part of this effort, we formally reject behavior in the workplace that we find to be hostile and threatening to others. The passing on of Triangulated Negative Messages is one of those behaviors that we want to stop wherever possible. Below is a definition of Triangulated Negative Messages, as well as some of the impacts and intervention points related to them. As one way of stopping these behaviors, you will note that we encourage employees to reveal who is carrying negative messages about others; “shining a light” on the negative message carrier will help discourage such behavior at RHD, and we will all benefit in a safer work environment.

Definition of Triangulated Negative Messages (TNM's)

A triangulated negative message is a communication process in which one person (the "carrier") conveys a negative message from another person (the "originator") to a third person (the "receiver"). The content of the message is:

- feelings or thoughts the originator has expressed about the third person,
- often conveyed to the receiver as "a secret", and
- usually unsolicited by the receiver
Results of Triangulated Negative Messages

The results of this type of communication process are numerous, including, but not limited to, the following:

Receiver of the message:

- Increased anxiety and concern.
- Decreased sense of safety and trust.
- Disempowerment by being asked to "keep it a secret" when he/she needs to surface & deal with the conflict.
**Carrier** of the message:

- Inner conflict and anxiety about being responsible for conveying (and the potential results of conveying) the message.
- Increased control over the tone, feeling and content of the original message.

**Originator** of the message:

- Reduced control over the tone, feeling of the message intended.
- *possible* reduced responsibility for the content of the message since it was conveyed by someone else.
- *possible* reduced trust in the individual who acted as a carrier.

**Impact of Triangulated Negative Messages on the Work Environment**

TNM's often result in an atmosphere that feels unsafe for all members of an organization -- those involved in the situation, as well as those observing the process and results of the situation. By allowing conflicts to be managed through the use of Triangulated Negative Messages, conflicts are often forced "underground."

Underground conflict is indicated by high levels of stress, loss of productivity, competition, perceived helplessness, chronic complaining, and/or sabotage. Also, people may "leave by staying;" if quitting isn't a realistic choice, a person with deep-seated, unresolved conflicts may physically remain in the situation but his or her spirit, energy, enthusiasm, etc. will leave and passive-aggressive behavior may result.

**Dealing with Triangulated Negative Messages**

Regardless of the role you are playing in a TNM situation, the first thing to do is to take a good look at your own behavior and motivations.

In an organization, we all have a part in creating the current reality, no matter what our position. In a relationship, we both create the outcome. In a team, what we do or don't do is a part of the process and the results.

Accept your responsibility for creating both the current reality as well as the potential reality, and choose to create a healthier and more productive potential reality.
THEN: If you have a negative emotion/thought about or conflict with someone, consciously choose what you will do with it.

If it is a true conflict, deal directly with the person with whom you have the conflict -- don't give away the power of or responsibility for your feelings to another who is outside of the conflict.

If it is an emotion or thought that you simply need to "vent" to someone, choose your confidante and be clear with her/him that you are "venting" and that you do not want the message carried outside of your conversation.

If you are engaged by someone who has a negative message about a third party, consciously choose what role you will play.

If you perceive that there is a conflict between the originator of the message and the third party, choose to be a "supporter" of direct surfacing and resolution of the conflict. Be clear with the originator that you will not carry the message for him/her, but that you will be there, emotionally and/or physically, for him/her as the conflict is surfaced and managed.

If you perceive (or hear directly) that the originator simply needs to "vent," choose to be a "listener." Do not take it upon yourself to carry the message forward. A word of caution -- take care of yourself by setting limits regarding the amount of "venting" to which you will listen. If a particular originator is using a great deal of your time and energy (whatever you feel is "too much"), be clear with him/her about the point at which you need to stop listening. At that point, suggest that the person either deal directly with the conflict (and you choose to become a "supporter" instead), accept the reality as it is, or find another listener.

If you choose to be a "carrier" of the negative message, understand that you have no right to confidentiality or invisibility. By choosing to convey the message, you are giving up your right to stay out of the conflict situation; in fact, you have chosen to become a player in it.

If you receive a negative message about yourself from a carrier, consciously choose how you will react.

If you feel that the TNM indicates a conflict between yourself and the originator (or you feel hurt or unsafe as a result of the TNM), check out the reality of the message with the originator. Surface the issues and feelings, and problem-solve in order to manage the conflict.
Remember, once a carrier has conveyed a TNM, you should not feel any responsibility to keep quiet about the source of your information about the conflict. Understand that you have both the right and the power to deal with information that impacts you -- your sense of confidence and safety in your workplace.

If you feel anxious or afraid, engage a "supporter" or a "listener" in your organization to help you face the conflict in a healthy way. Do not expect or ask anyone to convey your feelings or reactions for you; otherwise, you are choosing to be a TNM originator yourself, and a very unhealthy cycle will continue.
ARTICLE 10
OPEN COMMUNICATION

Open communication – simply put – means two things in RHD:

- ANYONE (or any group) can speak with ANYONE ELSE within the entire corporation directly about ANYTHING at all at ANYTIME; and,
- NO ONE is permitted to use their “authority” to prohibit the open and free communication of ideas or concerns any employee may wish to express.

In RHD, as in all other work environments, there are defined lines of authority. Each of us has a “boss”. In most companies all communication of ideas and/or issues is required to flow up this “chain of authority” to some higher place at which decisions are or are not made. Such communication frequently gets blocked, lost or changed somewhere along the chain, often by a supervisor who is either indifferent or fearful. Consequently, many workers choose to stifle creative ideas rather than risk the disapproval of their supervisors. They may speak “unofficially” to other co-workers about their concerns, suggestions and ideas, but they may be hesitant to express themselves to their “boss”. In some cases, the employee has spoken directly to a supervisor and their ideas have been rejected or dismissed. They can see no positive results. If they think there is no place else to go – no alternative – then discontent and/or apathy emerge and, too often, great ideas are lost.

We decided long ago that we did not want such a rigid structure regarding human communication to exist officially at RHD. Our written Values Statement speaks about the “open environment” we promote. That means that when the ordinary “chain of authority” avenue is felt to be ineffective by an employee – for whatever reasons – that employee is welcome to choose another avenue of communication. He or she may speak respectfully with anyone at any level within the corporation and expect some response/resolution to the issues presented in a reasonable time frame. We recognize that it is important for the continued health of our organization that the ideas and concerns of all staff are heard and considered.

Obviously, it is recommended that an employee first approach his/her immediate supervisor with concerns or suggestions since that is the place where most issues can and should be rapidly addressed. However, on those occasions when that approach is not sufficient or comfortable, all employees are encouraged to identify another person or persons with whom they can share their insights and who will follow through with appropriate actions.

In summary, NO ONE in RHD is empowered to PROHIBIT open communication between members within our corporate community.
ARTICLE 11
CREATIVITY

“This ‘telephone’ has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication. The device is inherently of no value to us.” – Western Union internal memo, 1876.

Resources for Human Development is committed to supporting and encouraging the formulation and expression of new concepts and is willing to take a nontraditional level of risk in order to implement good ideas. Creativity is one of the core values upon which RHD was built. In 1976 a woman named Portia Sperr approached Bob Fishman with the “out of the box” idea of starting a museum where children could touch and interact with the exhibits. No already established museum was willing to incorporate the idea into their mission. With the help of RHD, this idea became a reality and the Please Touch Museum was born.

This groundbreaking idea has since been copied throughout the country. Almost any museum that you walk into today has at least one interactive exhibit for their visitors. In fact, these are generally the most popular exhibits. What if RHD had taken the same stand as everyone else and squelched an idea that was perceived as a risk?

“So we went to Atari and said, ‘Hey, we’ve got this amazing thing, even built with some of your parts, and what do you think about funding us? Or we’ll give it to you. We just want to do it. Pay our salary, we’ll come work for you.’ And they said, ‘No.’ So then we went to Hewlett-Packard, and they said, ‘Hey, we don’t need you. You haven’t got through college yet.’” - Apple Computer Inc. founder Steve Jobs on attempts to get Atari and Hewlett-Packard interested in his and Steve Wozniak’s personal computer.

How do I know if I am, or could be, creative?

Every living, breathing human being has the potential to be creative. Each of us is a unique individual capable of creating. We are, quite simply, a creative species.

Most of the obstacles to creativity can be found within you:

- Fear of criticism.
- Lack of confidence in oneself.
• A narrow definition of what is creativity, i.e. creativity means much more than just being good at arts and crafts.

**What can I do to increase my creativity?**

Creativity requires patience and a willingness to work for a creative outcome rather than simply waiting for enlightenment. The first step to becoming more creative is giving yourself permission to do things creatively. The second is overcoming your personal blocks to creativity. It really helps to think of creativity as a skill or set of skills. By practicing, one can get better at using them. So whenever you have a chance try to do mundane things in novel ways—it will make them more entertaining and you will get used to expressing your abilities.

**What do I need to do before presenting my idea?**

Before presenting new ideas, whether at a site, unit, or corporate level, ask yourself the following questions:

• Does this idea benefit those around me and/or society in general?

• Do we have the funds or resources to try it, and, if not, can I figure out how to get the funds or resources to try it?

• Do I have the energy and commitment to pursue the idea?

• Am I willing to take a personal risk in implementing this idea?

• Is it legal?

If you can, with good faith, answer “yes” to these questions then no one should tell you that you cannot attempt to implement your idea. EVERYONE has the right to implement her or his ideas.

Implementation, of course, does not guarantee success, but unless you try you will never know if your idea could have succeeded. You must not let others discourage you from your vision.

“The concept is interesting and well-formed, but in order to earn better than a ‘C’, the idea must be feasible.” —A Yale University management professor in response to Fred Smith’s paper proposing reliable overnight delivery service. (Smith later founded Federal Express Corp.)
What are the responsibilities of the person with the idea?

“If I had thought about it, I wouldn’t have done the experiment. The literature was full of examples that said you can’t do this.” --Spencer Silver on the work that led to the unique adhesives for 3-M “Post-It” Notepads.

- You must believe in your own idea and passionately follow through with trying to get it heard.
- Don’t let one “no” stop you. If you feel that your idea meets the above criteria and you do not get a positive response from the first person you approach, find someone who will listen. Places you might try are your HUB team, The Accentuate the Positive Committee, the Citizen Advocates.
- Find a way to attract a network and to build on your idea. When you express your idea you may be surprised to find that others have a similar idea or can connect you with additional resources to support your idea.
- Own your idea and be willing to do the hard work of making your dream become a reality.

What are the responsibilities of the person listening to the idea?

“Drill for oil? You mean drill into the ground to try and find oil? You’re crazy.” –Drillers who Edwin L. Drake tried to enlist in his project to drill for oil in 1859.

- Increase your availability and willingness to listen to new ideas. Commit to being responsive when someone presents an idea to you.
- Empower and encourage the person with the idea by asking questions and giving constructive feedback.
- Assist the individual in carrying out his/her idea, to the best of your ability, without taking ownership away from that individual.
- Look at your own fears or reservations when presented with a new idea. Are your reservations rational? As the listener you are being asked to take a leap of faith.
- Decrease times when you, unwittingly, squelch or discourage someone’s idea.
What are everyone’s responsibilities?

“What can be invented has been invented.” – Charles H. Duell, Commissioner, U.S. Office of Patents, 1899.

- “Stir the waters”. Encourage discussion of new ideas and ways of doing things.
- Find ways to help get new ideas heard.
- Demonstrate respect for individual viewpoints and ideas.
- Be willing to own your idea while opening yourself up to collaborating with others.

Summary

All ideas do not have to be earth shattering, monumental ideas. Small changes can mean huge changes in the lives of others. Examples of ideas that have meant a great deal to RHD and others are:

- the 2nd Floor News (Ridge’s newsletter where staff and residents express their ideas and emotions);
- the mural in the back staircase of RHD’s Central Office;
- Tigerman (a superhero who promotes anti-violence with our youth);
- the Community Gardens of Chester County (a garden for low-income residents that encourages self-reliance, good nutrition, and recreation);
- Endow-A-Home (a program which enables low-income women with children to purchase their own homes);
- Citizen Advocates (a way for “line staff” to have a voice within the corporation); and,
- Capital-To-People (a for-profit program within RHD that supports employee-owned businesses that create wealth in low-income areas).

While most people at RHD have heard of and recognize these initiatives, there are ideas that are being born every single day that change peoples’ lives for the better. Examples of small ideas that make a BIG difference are:

- finding a new recreational activity for an individual who’s become bored with his or her routine;
- buying a microwave oven to increase someone’s independence;
• developing a booklet of information about the services that RHD employees can access for support within the organization; and,

• encouraging a staff member to pursue further education.

As part of the RHD family we are all encouraged to utilize unconventional thinking. Ideas need to come from ALL LEVELS of the corporation in order for RHD to continue to flourish and preserve its diversity. We must not be afraid to express our ideas and to support others in having their ideas be heard. Unless your idea has been heard and tried, nobody has the right to tell you “it can’t be done.”