



Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Process

(OP 01)

Version: 3

(Note: New process replaces Complaint Resolution Strategy – CRS – Procedure (OP 1) Version: 2, last review October 2019)

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A. PURPOSE

The following information describes the intent of the strategy designed to receive feedback from consumers, their family members and friends or other professional and members of the community to help guide the agency to reflect upon what is going well as well as to explore areas for quality improvement. Feedback can include complements, concerns or complaints regarding YSSN services, policies or other procedures.

B. SCOPE

This process is for all YSSN employees, students and volunteers.

This process provides the agency an opportunity to evaluate procedures and implement productive change. Continuous improvement and development of our service delivery is supported through an effective feedback process.

Information is gathered regarding compliments as well as concerns or complaints. In the event of receiving a concern or complaint, the following procedure provides guidance for staff to support consumers, family members or other members of the community through the process.

Definition of a Concern or a Complaint

A concern or a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with the agency's policies, procedures, employees or quality of services.

Many concerns stem from a lack of information and confusion about what can be expected from the agency and can be easily resolved. Some concerns cannot be resolved in a simple manner and require the agency to consider policy and/or procedural revisions or exceptions to typical procedures in order to resolve the matter. Concerns may also stem from systemic issues that YSSN may or may not be able to resolve such as lack of funding, wait lists, lack of community supports and resources or complaints about other services.

C. STANDARDS

- Agency communication material (brochure, website) will provide contact information to assist individuals in submitting a compliment, concern or complaint as well as a brief statement about the process and the agency's commitment to continuous quality improvement.
- Outcomes may require amendments to agency policies and/or procedures and will be given priority at the appropriate management tables
- The employee is not authorized to negotiate exceptions to procedure or policy in an attempt to resolve the situation.
- Systemic concerns or complaints provide data and information for potential advocacy strategies at a systems level.

D. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

i. For the person providing feedback

- To have feedback procedures available when involved in a feedback process
- To have established timelines for responses
- To privacy of information for all parties involved
- To know that actions will not result in retaliation or barriers to services
- To have written notification regarding actions to be taken to address a concern or complaint if requested or as required
- To use an advocate

ii. For YSSN

- To ensure communication throughout the process with all parties involved as required and appropriate
- To set timelines with the person providing feedback regarding responses for each step of the process as required or requested
- To access legal counsel as required
- To identify conflict of interest and take actions to eliminate conflict of interest
- To provide privacy of information for parties involved as needed
- To provide written notification regarding actions the agency will be taking to address the concern or complaint as requested or required
- To document, review and attempt to resolve the concern or complaint as appropriate

E. TWO LEVELS OF CONCERNS

1. Simple Concern or Complaint:

The individual's concern can be resolved in a straightforward manner by providing routine services, information, or an explanation provided through a conversation, a face to face meeting or other communication method of their choosing such as email.

2. Formal Concern or Complaint:

If the concern or complaint could not be resolved through an informal/simple process it becomes a formal complaint and follows the process for informing appropriate management teams (see section F 2 below)

F. PROCEDURE(s)

1. Process for receiving compliments, concerns or complaints:

- Compliments, concerns or complaints may be forwarded in writing, in-person, over the phone, via an employee, email, website or other methods such as through use of visual aids.
- A compliment, concern or complaint may be received by any employee of the agency
- Whenever possible, the person will be re-directed to the worker involved or their supervisor to resolve concerns informally.

2. Response times for Concerns or Complaints:

- Supervisors or staff respond to concern/complaints within 3 business days.
- In extenuating circumstances, response time may be sooner and the next level supervisor/manager is notified as follows:
 - i. A response is required **within the same business day** of receiving the information and Senior management staff are notified when:
 - There are safety concerns or risk of personal harm or harm to others
 - There is indication of possible corrupt conduct or criminal activity
 - The media may be involved
 - The concern or complaint is related to matters legislated by the Personal Health Information Privacy Act (PHIPA). The Privacy Office is also notified in this situation.
 - ii. A response is required within **1 business day** of receiving the information and the next level supervisor/director/finance manager must be notified due to:
 - Clear intention to involve funding Ministries
 - Indication that legal action will be taken
 - iii. The next level supervisor/director/Finance Director are informed **within 3 business days** of receiving the concern or complaint in situations where:
 - Agency resources or finances are required to seek a resolution
 - Agency follow up with staff and/or review of policies and procedures may be required
 - The dispute involves a formal financial agreement (ie ISA)
 - Formal action may need to be taken (legal, disciplinary, etc)
 - A comprehensive investigation or an exceptional remedy is required
 - The concern or complaint involves accessibility to French language services
 - The issue involves accessibility concerns related to the Access for Ontarians Accessibility Act

3. Most concerns are considered to be simple when first received

- a) The employee/supervisor will attempt to remedy the situation by providing clarifying information, an explanation or sympathetic understanding.
- b) The concern/complaint is documented in the complaint tracking form with the resolution indicated
- c) The employee/supervisor provides written communication regarding next steps should the person feel they need to re-engage regarding their concern. – [Guidelines - Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Process \(April 2024\)](#)
- d) A case note is entered when a client contacts YSSN to discuss a concern or complaint – [Guidelines - Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Process \(April 2024\)](#)
- e) When concerns or complaints are specific to workers/staff, names are omitted from the case note
- f) If the matter cannot be resolved, it becomes a formal complaint. The employee or supervisor will continue to document the situation and inform the next level management.

4. For a concern or complaint being reviewed by next level management:

- a) Documentation is required on the tracking form by the supervisor, manager or director
- b) The concern or complaint will be further assessed by the next level Supervisor and an appropriate strategy will be determined.
- c) The Director will be informed of the situation.
- d) In situations where the complaint involves a dispute that is financial in nature, the Finance Director is informed.
- e) The employee or supervisor who is involved may continue to seek resolution, or resolution may become the responsibility of the next level Supervisor based on the needs of the specific situation and as decided by the management team.
- f) Communication with the person who expressed their concern is maintained through the process as determined with the person (frequency, method of communication)
- g) If the matter is resolved, documentation is finalized and forwarded to the office of the Executive Director
- h) Written notification is provided to the complainant regarding actions to be taken to address the concern or complaint as requested or required along with next steps should they continue to express concerns.
- i) Case notes are entered when there is communication with the client following the suggested scripting (see guidelines)
- j) As an appeal, or if the matter cannot be resolved, the next level Supervisor will involve the Director/Manager or the Executive Director.
- k) The resolution strategy may be developed at an appropriate management table and may involve an external individual(s) with specific expertise.
- l) If the concern or complaint cannot be remedied by senior level staff and the Executive Director, external consultants may be needed to help formulate a response.
- m) When the matter is resolved, documentation is finalized and forwarded to the office of the Executive Director
- n) Written notification is provided to the complainant regarding actions to be taken to address the concern as requested
- o) Correspondence is maintained in the client record either electronically or paper as applicable. A note indicating resolution is entered into the client record (see guidelines).

5. RESOLUTION OUTCOMES AND REPORTING:

An annual written analysis of all concerns and outcomes will be completed for review by Senior Management Team and the board on an annual basis or more frequently, if needed that includes:

- a) trends,
- b) areas for performance improvement,
- c) actions to be taken for service improvements
- d) possible advocacy strategies at a systems level

G. RESOURCE DOCUMENTS

Please click on the following to access referenced documents:

- [Abuse Policy - Service Delivery \(Feb 2024\)](#)
- [Managing High Risk Situations - Risk Management Related to Service Delivery - Safety Practices \(SD 7.i\) \[orientation\]](#)
- [Managing High Risk Situations - Risk Management Related to Service Delivery - Responding to Aggressive Behaviour \(SD 7.ii\) \[orientation\]](#)
- [DS - Serious Occurrence Report \(SOR\) - Policy and Process](#)
- [Guidelines - Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Process \(April 2024\)](#)
- [Concerns and Complaints Flow Chart \(April 2024\)](#)
- [CRS Individual Complaint Summary Form](#)
- [CRS - Practical Tips for Managing a Complaint May 2016 \(3\)](#)