

**Living Systems: Family Systems Counselling,  
Education, Training & Research Society**

**Dispute Resolution Policy for Student Complaints**

**1.1 Guideline Purpose and Principles**

The purpose of this guideline is to ensure students who are in the Clinical Internship Program or other training program are supported with a complaint, as defined below, and defines how Living Systems will address student complaints. Anyone involved in the Clinical Internship Program or other Living Systems training programs, has the right to be treated fairly and respectfully and to work in a professional environment where their knowledge, skills, and abilities are the critical factors in their success. Living Systems expects all students, Clinical Practitioners, Faculty, Supervisors, volunteers and others who participate in Counselling or Coaching services or programs to maintain standards of propriety, promote equal opportunity, treat everyone professionally, and act without bias. A student who makes or is otherwise involved in a complaint will not be subject to any form of retaliation by the institution at any time.

**1.2 Policy and/or Procedure**

The following are the policies and procedures for managing student complaints brought to the attention of Living Systems. This policy governs complaints from students respecting Living Systems and any aspect of its operations.

- a) All written complaints received by Living Systems regarding student complaints will be directed to the First Assessor. The First Assessor is the Executive Director of Living Systems, Katherine White (katie.white@livingsystems.ca). In the event that the First Assessor is absent or named in the complaint, the President of the Board will be the First Assessor, Mark Smith (board@livingsystems.ca). If neither of these are available nor named in the complaint the next person in line is the Clinical Manager, Leila Howard (leila.howard@livingsystems.ca).
- b) A student has representation rights in the dispute procedure which authorize a student who makes a complaint to be represented by an agent or a lawyer.
- c) The originator of a complaint will be contacted within 24 hours from initial contact. The First Assessor will discuss with the originator whether they feel comfortable discussing their concerns with the person(s) involved. Depending on the nature and severity of the complaint or if the originator is uncomfortable speaking to the person one to one, the originator will decide if they want the First Assessor to proceed with the complaint ~~issue~~ resolution procedure. The First Assessor may request the originator to provide a more detailed written description of the complaint.
- d) When making first contact, the First Assessor will listen gather information. The First Assessor will assure the originator the matter will be investigated and give a timeline to follow up with them. Until resolution or final finding is achieved, the First Assessor, may take interim remedial measures, including without limitation, separating the originator and the other party or parties involved.
- e) The First Assessor will contact any other party directly involved in the complaint to set up a time to discuss the matter.

- f) The First Assessor will follow up with the originator and discuss resolution. If contact with the originator is not possible, the First Assessor will follow up with written notification of any initial finding within 15 days.
- g) If the parties to the complaint do not agree on a resolution, the First Assessor may make an initial finding, notify the parties in writing of the initial finding and the reasons for it and implement remedial measures, including without limitation, remedial steps to address, including a verbal reprimand, the possible suspension, with or without pay, removal of a party from activities and physical premises used for the Clinical Internship Programs and business of Living Systems, periodic review and implementation of any follow-up plans, and termination;
- h) If the parties do not agree on a resolution or accept the initial finding, the First Assessor will provide the documentation to the second Assessor, the President of the Board of Directors for their consideration.
- i) The Second Assessor will review current documentation and if necessary, contact the originator, and any other party directly involved in the complaint to the matter. The Second Assessor will follow up with written notification of any final finding. This will occur within the timeframe of 30 days from the original written complaint.

The written reasons will advise a student, that if the student is dissatisfied with the determination, and has been misled by the institution regarding any significant aspect of that program, the student may file a complaint with the Private Training Institutions Regulatory Unit (PTIRU) ([www.privatetraininginstitutions.gov.bc.ca](http://www.privatetraininginstitutions.gov.bc.ca)) within one year of the date a student completes, is dismissed from, or withdraws from the program.

- j) The Second Assessor will document the complaint ~~issue~~, and the Executive Director will place a copy of the documentation in the Dispute Resolution file and other relevant files.

### 1.3 Defined Terms

- a) **“First Assessor”** means the person responsible for the initial assessment and resolution of a complaint. The Executive Director will be responsible for initially addressing all student complaints.
- b) **“complaint”** means an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, action, or lack of action, or treatment provided by the institution which has been brought to the attention of Living Systems or directed to Living Systems’ Business Office by a student. This includes complaints relating to the Clinical Internship Program or other training program.
- c) **“Second Assessor”** means the person(s) responsible for a second assessment and resolution in the event the complaint is not resolved by the First Assessor. This is the president of the board.