

Anti-discrimination / Anti-Harassment Policy and Client Complaint Procedure

It is the policy of Caring Unlimited to prohibit all forms of harassment and discrimination of or by staff, volunteers, clients and residents — including harassment and discrimination based on race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex or gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, marital status, age, mental or physical disability, military or veteran status, genetic information, or on any basis protected by federal, state or local law.

Caring Unlimited is committed to providing an environment where staff, volunteers, clients and residents are treated with dignity and respect. Discriminatory or harassing language or actions are not acceptable. All clients and residents can expect to be treated with dignity and respect by Caring Unlimited staff and volunteers. All clients and residents are expected to be respectful of one another and with staff and volunteers.

Caring Unlimited will not tolerate retaliation for speaking out against discrimination or harassment, for assisting or cooperating in the complaint investigation process, or for good faith reporting to Caring Unlimited or to a public body a violation of law, rule, condition or practice that would put at risk the health or safety of any employee or other individual.

This policy has been established to ensure there is a process to address misconduct constituting harassment, discrimination or retaliation and to bring about a satisfactory resolution in a fair and prompt manner. This policy applies to clients and residents.

Complaint Procedure

If you believe you have been subjected to conduct in violation of this policy or believe you have witnessed such conduct, the incident should be reported immediately to program staff, to a member of the leadership team or to the Executive Director. (See their contact information below.)

Bonnie Gagnon, Director of Residential Services 207-490-3227, Ext. 106
bonnieg@caring-unlimited.org

Julia Davidson, Advocacy Director 207-490-3227, Ext. 105
julia@caring-unlimited.org

Susan Giambalvo, LCSW, Executive Director 207-490-3227, Ext. 101
susan@caring-unlimited.org

Any reported allegations of harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be investigated promptly. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and, where necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have other relevant knowledge. Caring Unlimited will maintain confidentiality throughout the investigatory process to the extent consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action.

Caring Unlimited will take immediate action to resolve inappropriate behavior, harassment, or equal access issues by any person and will seek to mediate conflicts in a way that is fair, equitable, and respectful. If a client needs to be moved for harassment and safety concerns, the Agency will have a preference to move the client with the bias. Engaging in harassing or abusive behavior may impact your access to services.

Clients and residents may file a discrimination complaint with the Maine Human Rights Commission and the Office of Violence Against Women whether they choose to make a report to Caring Unlimited or not—or if they are not satisfied with Caring Unlimited’s response. Anyone who seeks resolution of situations by using established procedures will not be subjected to discrimination or retaliation, or be penalized in any way.

Below is the contact information for the **Maine Human Rights Commission**.

Maine Human Rights Commission, 51 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04330
Phone: 207.624.6290
Email: info@mhrc.maine.gov

Any person who believes they have been subjected to unlawful discrimination covered under the Maine Human Rights Act may file a complaint with the Commission. A complaint should be filed as soon as possible after the act of discrimination occurs. The process can be started by filling out an intake form online, or calling to request a form. The online form can be found here:

<https://mainehumanrightscommission.formstack.com/forms/intake>

If you choose to call, you should ask to speak with an intake worker, who will screen the information you provide, and if it meets the minimum requirements to state a claim, they will draft a formal complaint. The complaint will then be sent to you, the complainant, by mail. You will need to make sure it is accurate, sign it in front of a notary public, and return it to the MHRA. Complainants can also skip the intake process and file a signed and notarized complaint themselves. Please note that the MHRA requires all complaints to be filed within 300 days of the date of discrimination.

You may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice **Office of Violence Against Women (OVW)**. Information on how to file a civil rights complaint is available on their website: <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/filing-civil-rights-complaint>