



Living Our Values

Feminism

Respect

Empowerment

Equity



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“For years I have fought daily with what at the time was undiagnosed complex PTSD and what CARA has given to me is a priceless treasure of acceptance. An ability to understand myself and how what has happened has affected me at a core level. I stand taller, I think deeper and I breathe easier. I feel safer inside myself and found a peace that I have never had. I still battle and I know I always will but all of you at CARA have given me a sword and shield to use in that battle”

— CARA Service User

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Introduction

The way we behave – both as an organisation, and as individuals working within CARA – creates **our organisational culture**. This includes the way we provide our services, the way we support and appraise our workers, the way we interact with other agencies and the wider community, and the way we, as individuals within CARA, treat our clients and our colleagues.

CARA's core values are **Feminism, Respect, Empowerment, and Equity** and we try to ensure that these values underpin everything we do at CARA.

This document seeks to name the organisational and individual behaviours that truly reflect CARA's core values. By identifying these behaviours, we aim to:

- **Capture and instil a strong, positive and authentic culture that is rooted in CARA's values.**
- **Remind us that our values should influence everything we do at CARA.**
- **Support accountability, reflection and learning and create an environment where we own any mistakes and work together to move forwards from them.**
- **Provide a practical framework we can use to help us identify the right way to do the right thing - for our leadership, and for us as individuals within CARA.**



Feminism

- Promoting gender equity and recognising and championing women's value in society.
- Using power positively, responsibly, and transparently, sharing power wherever possible.
- Being accountable for our actions.
- Working collaboratively.
- Promoting compassion, and self and collective care.

As an organisation, CARA will:

1. Advocate tirelessly for victims and survivors, recognising the injustice of their experience and the societal response.
2. Instigate positive change through increasing awareness and understanding of sexual violence.
3. Name gender inequality as a cause of sexual violence.
4. Support and amplify women's voices and experiences.
5. Be courageous - taking initiative, owning and learning from our mistakes and not fearing failure.
6. Be clear, transparent and timely in making decisions.
7. Create opportunities for our service-users and our workers [1] to lead, contribute to decision-making and work collaboratively with others.
8. Promote work-life balance for our workers, maintaining manageable workloads and clear boundaries, and ensuring our leaders role-model keeping their own working hours balanced.
9. Create space for our workers to talk about the impact of vicarious trauma, self-care and wellbeing.

As individuals within CARA, we will:

1. Take initiative, own and learn from our mistakes and not fear failure.
2. Be honest, clear and timely in our communications with service-users and colleagues.
3. Remain open to insights, feedback and suggestions from colleagues and service-users, even those we disagree with.
4. Work collaboratively with service-users and colleagues.
5. Treat service-users and colleagues with compassion and care.
6. Take steps to maintain our own wellbeing and support the wellbeing of those around us.

[1] CARA workers are referred to throughout this document and includes all staff, trustees, volunteers and sessional counsellors.



Respect

- Treating our service-users, colleagues, and everyone we come into contact with through CARA with integrity, dignity, and compassion.
- Fulfilling our responsibilities.
- Listening to others and valuing their feedback, insights, and contribution.
- Encouraging reflective practice and self-awareness.

As an organisation, CARA will:

1. Ensure that our leaders' model courteous, compassionate, unbiased, and respectful behaviour.
2. Address language, speech or behaviour that is not respectful to our service-users or our workers.
3. Provide flexible services that are responsive to individual needs.
4. Support the needs of our workers wherever possible, recognising their competing commitments.
5. Provide structured, safe spaces for workers to receive feedback on their performance.
6. Encourage feedback from service-users, workers, and other stakeholders, and act to make improvements where possible.
7. Create space to reflect on the way we work.

As individuals within CARA, we will:

1. Speak to and about our service-users and colleagues using courteous, empathetic, unbiased, and respectful language.
2. Recognise the importance of confidentiality and treating personal information with sensitivity.
3. Use our working time conscientiously, adhering to agreed workloads, working hours and working practices.
4. Respect our colleagues' workspaces and working hours.
5. Seek, give and value feedback as an opportunity for two-way learning.
6. Use appropriate channels to raise concerns about colleagues, service-users or external agencies.
7. Listen to others and value their contribution.
8. Reflect on our own contribution, working towards recognising our own strengths and accepting our vulnerabilities, as well as the strengths and vulnerabilities of others.



Empowerment

- Respecting and supporting individual choice and control, wherever possible.
- Supporting professional and personal development.
- Recognising and celebrating abilities and achievements.
- Enabling survivors' voices to be heard.

As an organisation, CARA will:

1. Foster psychological safety by establishing an environment of trust and transparency.
2. Maintain an open-door management culture.
3. Provide clear, accessible information about the services we provide.
4. Provide clear, accessible information about our workers' rights and responsibilities and create an environment in which workers feel psychologically safe to exercise them.
5. Invest in our workers; supporting their induction, training, development and wellbeing and providing structured support and appraisal.
6. Promote a culture of celebration, regularly acknowledging the collective and individual achievements of our workers and our service-users.
7. Create opportunities for service-users voices to be heard, both within and beyond CARA.

As individuals within CARA, we will:

1. Respect the choices of others, even if they are not the choices we would make ourselves.
2. Support each other in taking initiative, leading on activities, and pushing forward CARA's work.
3. Share what we have learnt from training, personal development, and wellbeing activities.
4. Recognise and celebrate the achievements of our colleagues and our service-users.
5. Listen to our clients and support them in being heard.



Equity

- Welcoming and including all who engage with CARA.
- Supporting, valuing, and celebrating diversity.
- Fostering and promoting intersectionality, feminism, and anti-racism.
- Addressing discrimination against those with protected and non-protected characteristics.

As an organisation, CARA will:

1. Ensure our leaders model welcoming and inclusive behaviour towards all who engage with CARA.
2. Ensure all workers receive a full induction to CARA and ongoing support.
3. Actively encourage and value diversity in our workforce and our service-users.
4. Take action to improve equity, diversity, and inclusion for our service-users and our workers.
5. Take an intersectional approach, recognising that everyone has their unique experience of discrimination and that we must consider everything and anything that can marginalise people.
6. Create space for reflection, discussion and learning about intersectional feminism and cognitive bias, ableism, ageism, classism, homophobia, transphobia, and racism, including racial trauma, white privilege, white fragility, anti-racism, and allyship.
7. Address language, speech or behaviour that is discriminatory or abusive.

As individuals within CARA, we will:

1. Welcome all those who engage with CARA.
2. Respect and respond to the individual needs and preferences of our service-users and our colleagues.
3. Celebrate difference and value diversity amongst our service-users and colleagues.
4. Support and adhere to CARA's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion policy and Anti-racism policy.
5. Recognise discriminatory or abusive language, speech or behaviour, and take action to ensure it is addressed using the appropriate channels.

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said,
people will forget what you did, but people will
never forget how you made them feel”
— Maya Angelou



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