

 <b>STANISLAUS COUNTY</b> <b>BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES</b>	<b>Developed by/Date:</b> E. Inacio 8/27/18	<b>Page:</b> 1 of 2	<b>Number:</b> 90.1.127
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	<b>Title:</b> <b>WELCOMING FRAMEWORK PRACTICES FOR SERVICES</b>		
			<b>Approved:</b>

## POLICY

Stanislaus County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS), including management, staff, and providers, is committed to creating and sustaining a welcoming environment designed to support recovery and resiliency for individuals seeking services, and their families. We are committed to building the capacity and competencies necessary to meet the challenges of creating and sustaining a welcoming environment. Our intent is to let individuals seeking services and family members know that they are “in the right place” regardless of when and where they arrive for support services.

## PURPOSE

This policy is to establish a framework that results in policy guidelines and welcoming practices in all BHRS contracted and direct services.

## PRINCIPLES

**Welcoming service providers** engage with all individuals and families in empathic, hopeful relationships that facilitate appropriate identification of needs, access to appropriate assessment and properly matched services. Welcoming behavior includes open, attentive, verbal and non-verbal communication with the individual seeking services that allows for him/her to feel heard and safe. It is particularly important to welcome and engage those individuals who might ordinarily have difficulty gaining access to services, such as those who have co-occurring mental health and addictive disorders, those who are from diverse cultural and/or linguistic groups, and those who have associated medical disabilities, all of whom are particularly at high risk for poorer outcomes if not successfully welcomed into care.

**Welcoming is a relational process among all participants in our system of care**, including people seeking services, their traditional and non-traditional families, staff, and management and communities. It is fundamentally the attitude, values, and ways of interacting. Therefore, we must be aware of how people seeking services are encouraged and supported or discouraged from engaging in care by the way we think and behave. Our commitment is to implement policies, practices, and procedures supportive of each person’s recovery as well as their personal responsibility for pursuing their own wellness.

**As service partnerships are fostered**, it is essential for staff to recognize how they welcome, encourage and support each other as well as people seeking services and families – often cross program and agency boundaries. Partners in a welcoming framework recognize that attitudes are communicated in many ways and that how we welcome and support each other will ultimately impact the engagement and recovery of those seeking services and families.

## Recovery-Oriented Engagement

The cornerstone of recovery is hope and the belief that the person receiving services can improve their health and well-being. We must understand and support clients to exercise a primary and active role in planning for their expressed needs and recovery including identification and coordination of services. Persons receiving services and family members may also engage and welcome each other by respecting the rights of others to receive services in a supportive and safe environment.

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### **Culturally Fluent Engagement**

All persons will be welcomed with respect for their ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity, sexual orientation and gender identity, religious and spiritual background, age and socioeconomic issues. It is our responsibility to be aware of and open to each individual's circumstances and cultural needs. Our goal is to continue to develop our capacity to best serve each person.

As part of the Mental Health Services Act, the Stanislaus County Behavioral Health & Recovery Services Department has a State approved Workforce Education and Training Plan (WE&T Plan). This WE&T Plan also references the Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5820 - 5822 and provides that administrative structures are in place to support long-term workforce development that actively outreaches to support career pathways and ensure barriers are reduced or eliminated for consumers, and family members who wish to enter the publicly funded behavioral health workforce. Candidates with lived experience as a consumer or a family member of a consumer of behavioral health services are highly encouraged to apply.

### **All Access Points to Services Will Be Responsive**

In order to remove any barriers to receiving proper, respectful services and regardless of where a person seeking services enters the BHRS system, qualifying questions will be asked to determine the service need(s) and the individual will be supported in accessing the services whether at the site and/or with other service provider(s).

Respectful engagement requires openness to understanding the perspective of the person receiving services. Service providers must suspend quick judgments and willingly join with the individual in finding effective solutions within the resources that can be leveraged. Supervisors and direct services providers will work with people seeking services and their families / significant others to address immediate barriers to care.

A welcoming environment maintains safety for people seeking and receiving services and staff regardless of the circumstances. Staff, providers, and programs may have limits on the type of service they can adequately provide (including client behavioral issues), based on licensing requirements, funding and scope of practice.