

TEXAS CIVIL COMMITMENT OFFICE



POLICY AND PROCEDURE

NUMBER: 3.29
EFFECTIVE DATE: 06/20/2017
SUPERCEDES: 03/27/2017

SUBJECT: ESTABLISHING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

POLICY: The Texas Civil Commitment Office (TCCO) supports and encourages clients to develop healthy relationships, which may include romantic relationships, to support and help the client successfully integrate into society. A romantic relationship, like all other contacts, requires prior approval in accordance with TCCO Policy 3.4, Approval of Contacts and Chaperones.

PURPOSE: To establish procedures for TCCO clients to have proper and TCCO-approved healthy and/or romantic relationships.

DEFINITIONS:

“Romantic Relationship” is a consensual relationship between a client and another responsible adult person that may involve intimate emotional or physical contact, upon TCCO approval.

“Healthy Partner” is a TCCO-approved person who may enter into a healthy or romantic relationship with a client, referred to as partner for purposes of this policy.

PROCEDURE:

I. Requests to Enter into a Healthy Relationship

- A.** Clients who request approval of a possible healthy relationship shall be truthful and open at all times with the client’s Case Manager and Treatment Provider concerning all details of the potential relationship.
- B.** The Case Manager shall ensure the client has signed the Notice Regarding Release of Information (TCCO-62-16). Additionally, the client shall complete the Client Request for a Partner form (TCCO-07-17) and submit the form to the Case Manager. The client shall also include the reasons why the client seeks this relationship and how the client believes it will further his treatment.

- C. The Case Manager shall staff the client's request with the Treatment Provider to determine if the relationship will be healthy, appropriate and supportive.
- D. If the Case Manager and the Treatment Provider are in agreement to move forward with the client's request, both entities shall sign the Client Request for a Partner Form (TCCO-07-07). The Case Manager and Treatment Provider shall submit a written recommendation, to TCCO management, that the client be allowed to begin the process of establishing a relationship with a potential partner. The written recommendation shall contain sufficient details and information to support the recommendation.
- E. The potential partner shall agree to obtain a criminal history background check, via fingerprint analysis, if one has not been conducted within the last six (6) months. Criminal background checks are required before the authorization to move forward with the process begins. The criminal background check shall be sent to the Civil Commitment Manager (CCM) upon receipt. Payment for the criminal background check is the responsibility of the client or potential partner.
- F. After the potential partner's criminal history background check is completed and submitted to the CCM, the CCM shall staff the client's request with TCCO management, disclosing the results of the criminal history background check and the recommendation.
- G. The TCCO management shall staff the client's request and decide if the client is authorized to move forward in the process. This authorization is not an approval for a potential partner; it is only authorization to start the approval process. TCCO management will advise the CCM if the client's request for a potential partner is authorized to be processed or denied.

II. Disclosure Letter for a Potential Partner

- A. Once the potential partner is approved by TCCO management, the Case Manager shall prepare a disclosure letter for the potential partner. The letter shall contain, at a minimum:
 - 1. The client's offenses and dates of offenses;
 - 2. The age and sex of the victims;
 - 3. A description of the sex offenses;
 - 4. The length of each offense sentence; and
 - 5. The basic rules for civil commitment: treatment and supervision (GPS).
- B. The Case Manager shall schedule a meeting with the potential partner to review the disclosure letter.

III. Potential Partner Responsibilities if Authorized to Establish a Relationship

- A.** The potential partner shall provide a copy of his or her driver's license and any other documents requested by the Case Manager.
- B.** The potential partner shall demonstrate the ability to hold the client accountable for the client's actions and not be intimidated or controlled by the client.
- C.** The potential partner shall demonstrate the ability to maintain open communications with the client's Case Manager, Treatment Provider, and other TCCO staff. This includes an ability to report any inappropriate or high-risk behavior or situations, or violations committed by the client.
- D.** The potential partner shall agree to attend treatment sessions with the client and the Treatment Provider. The client or the potential partner shall pay for the sessions.
- E.** The potential partner shall not deny or minimize the client's behavior.
- F.** The potential partner shall meet with the client and the client's Treatment Provider. The client shall give details of his offenses and behaviors associated with them to the potential partner. Both the client and the potential partner shall discuss their past relationships and any issues.
- G.** The potential partner shall undergo Chaperone training in accordance with TCCO Policy 3.4 (Approval of Contacts and Chaperones), if not already completed.

IV. Approval of a Potential Partner

- A.** If the Case Manager and the Treatment Provider agree that the potential partner should be approved, the Case Manager shall prepare a decision memorandum to TCCO management and the Treatment Provider shall prepare a report for submission to TCCO management outlining the reasons the client's request for a potential partner should be approved.
- B.** Once TCCO management has provided written authorization, via a Decision Memorandum, for approval of the partner, the client's Case Manager and Treatment Provider shall give the partner and the client detailed written guidelines regarding the parameters of the relationship.

V. Persons Who are Not Allowed to be Partners

A potential partner shall not be approved to have a relationship with a client if the person:

- A.** Is an inmate, or on community, parole, or federal supervision, on civil commitment, or has pending criminal charges;

- B.** Is on deferred adjudication or has a prior conviction for a sex offense or an offense against a person, including Burglary with Intent to Commit an Offense Against a Person;
- C.** Exhibits traits, attitudes, or a personal history that would harm the client's success in completing civil commitment;
- D.** Is a victim of abuse, neglect, or sexual exploitation by the client; or
- E.** Is incapable of making informed decisions due to cognitive or intellectual impairments, mental health problems, or substance abuse problems.

VI. Intimate Contact with a Potential Partner

- A.** For a client living in an independent home plan, intimate/sexual contact with a potential partner requires the Treatment Provider and TCCO management approval.
- B.** Intimate/sexual contact with a potential partner is not allowed at a confined treatment facility or at a facility under contract with TCCO.

VII. Rescinding Approval

TCCO management reserves the right to rescind the approval of any relationship if TCCO believes the relationship is no longer healthy or no longer supports the client's reintegration into society.

SIGNATURE ON FILE

Marsha McLane
Executive Director

Attachments

- Notice Regarding Release of Information (TCCO-62-16)
- Client Request for a Partner (TCCO-07-17)