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**Equal Opportunities Policy**

**Policy statement**

The Braveheart Association aims to ensure that no individual engaged in the pursuit of its practices is subjected to discrimination on grounds of gender, marital status, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, language, background, religious belief, political opinion or, any other form of discrimination.

The Association is opposed to all forms of discrimination and will ensure that, wherever practicable, individuals and groups are treated, both equally and fairly, within the spirit and the framework of the current Equal Opportunities legislation. We will aim towards full use, as well as the recognition, of the talents, skills and experiences of everyone engaged in our activities including:

* Members of the Board
* Staff members
* Volunteers
* Participants
* Health Professionals
* Members of the Association

The Association is fully committed to serving a diverse society and believes that everyone has fundamental human rights that must be protected.

**Objectives of the Procedure: -**

* To create and maintain an equal opportunities ethos within the organisation.
* To ensure that all Trustees of the Board, staff, volunteers and professional advisors engaged in the work of the Association are fully aware of, and involved in the implementation of this policy.
* To ensure that no member or potential member of staff, Board member, volunteer or service user experiences unfair or unlawful discrimination.
* To develop, and encourage, a sense of personal responsibility for ensuring that equality is achieved.
* To ensure that all legislation relating to equal opportunities is observed within the organisation.
* To recognise diversity as a positive attribute.

**Responsibility for implementation:-**

The Board has the overall responsibility for implementing the procedure.

This includes:-

* Monitoring the application of the policy continually, reviewing the procedure and any need for amendment at least every two years.
* Identifying staff, board members and other volunteers’ equal opportunities and/ or diversity training needs.
* One member of the Board having the lead responsibility for equal opportunity issues.

**The Braveheart Manager** has the responsibility for ensuring that:-

* The recruitment of staff, volunteers and the selection of participants is conducted in such a manner as to ensure that all applicants are treated equally and fairly within the legislation.
* Applications or referrals from within ethnic or other minority groups are positively encouraged and welcomed.
* The Braveheart training programmes provide guidance which enables trainees to recognise discrimination and makes them fully aware of the principles and application of equal opportunities legislation.
* Ongoing volunteer training includes refresher sessions, as and when necessary, whereby volunteers and staff are enabled to discuss the application of the procedure as well as being updated on any developments affecting its implementation.

**Braveheart Staff** have the responsibility for:-

* Ensuring that all volunteers and service users are aware of Bravehearts Equal Opportunities Procedure and adhere to it while they are involved with, or volunteering with Braveheart.
* Monitoring and evaluating their specific projects and feeding back to the Braveheart Manager any suggestions or concerns for action.

**Braveheart Volunteers** have the responsibility for:-

* Accepting that in mentoring groups, walking groups and fundraising events or any other volunteering activity where they are not subject to direct supervision, they have a particular responsibility for ensuring that no discrimination of any kind is practised.

Equal opportunities are the responsibility of everyone involved in the Braveheart Association. The principles of this policy should be followed by staff, Board members, volunteers, and service users alike.

**Monitoring & Review:-**

Monitoring the origins and disabilities of all individuals involved in the Association will be maintained and used specifically for reviewing the application of this procedure and where appropriate, to inform funding applications and reports.

This procedure has been developed in partnership with volunteers, staff members and the Braveheart Board.

Braveheart will endeavour to anonymise all statistics.

The lead named Trustee and the Manager will produce an action plan to review current practice, identify gaps and agree future objectives and tasks; this will be carried out annually.

**Complaints:-**

Any individual who has a complaint regarding the application of this procedure should, in the first instance notify the Braveheart Manager. The Manager will investigate the complaint and will take whatever action is necessary. The Manager will seek professional advice if required. If your complaint involves the manager then you should raise your complaint with the appointed member of the board with responsibilities for implementation of this policy.

All instances or complaints of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously and in a timely manner.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome then the complaint can be referred directly to the Board for further investigation.

All complaints will be reported to the Board by the Manager and records of any complaints will be respected as confidential.

**Date agreed by the Braveheart Association**

Signed: ................................................................. Date:

Position:

Signed:................................................................... Date:

Position: