

## MEMORANDUM

To: NARR Directors

From: Beth Sanders, Standards Review Board

Date: January 30, 2023

**Re: Request for opinion from Recovery People/TROHN regarding recovery residence rules and potential ethics concerns related to an owner/operator dating a former resident who was also hired as a staff member.**

In the grievance submitted, the former resident left for several months and then was hired as staff and is in a personal relationship with the operator.

Response:

There are several aspects to consider within this scenario:

1. The operator has a personal dating relationship with the former resident.

NARR is in the process of creating a defined guideline for ethical relationships in recovery residences. In most professions the dynamic of a *dual relationship* is an ethical violation. A personal relationship nullifies the caregiving relationship and makes the care recipient (in this case former resident) susceptible to exploitation due to the innate power differential.

NARR Ethics Code # 18 states that providers will '*maintain clear personal and professional boundaries*'. Dating a former resident would comprise an ethics violation.

2. Was the former resident qualified for consideration for the position? If so on what basis? Was preferential treatment given because of her relationship with the operator?

NARR Ethics Code # 7 states that providers will have '*consistent and uniformly applied rules*'.

The dual nature of the relationship may indicate preferential treatment given and an ethics violation in the hiring of the former resident.

3. The operator makes the former resident a staff member.

Hiring former residents for positions of staff leadership is common practice in social model recovery residences. In the forthcoming policy statement regarding relationships, NARR will provide guidance on variables to consider when doing so such as role, issues of vulnerability, and severance from the program before becoming a staff member.

In this scenario the dual relationship is perpetuated in the mix of a personal and professional relationship. The former resident, now staff member is in a position of vulnerability on many levels – emotionally as well as in their livelihood.