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|  | **Executive Office of Health and Human Services** **Department of Developmental Services** |
| **DOCUMENT:** | **Human Rights Statement of Purpose.**  |
| **FROM:** | **Office of Human Rights** |
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| ***Commonwealth of Massachusetts*** |

1. **DDS Overarching Governing Principles**

The mission of the Department of Developmental Services (“DDS” or the “Department”) is to create, in partnership with others, innovative and genuine opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to participate fully in their communities and meaningfully engage as valued members. Promoting human dignity and self-determination are fundamental to the mission of DDS and are responsibilities that the Department takes very seriously. With that in mind, the Department aims to support the people served to experience the same rich and fulfilling lives as anyone else.

1. **DDS Office of Human Rights Underpinning Principles**

Building on the overarching principles above, the following principles guide DDS Office of Human.

1. People supported, just like everyone else in the society, have a right to inherent dignity and individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices.
2. People supported have a right to due process, including full, effective participation in services provided and in the society with the least restrictive/intrusive supports.
3. People supported have a right to supports and accommodations in order to fully participate in their lives.
4. People supported have the right to be free from abuse and discrimination.
5. People supported have a right to access justice and to be recognized as a person before the law.
6. People’s behavior is a communication of the person’s need to be loved, respected, and valued.

**III.** **ROLE of DDS Office of Human Rights**

In alignment with and supportive of DDS Overarching Governing Principles and its Mission to create opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to participate fully in their communities and meaningfully engage as valued members, the DDS Office of Human Rights (OHR) exists to:

1. Support the people served, DDS, and Service Provider Community to ensure the following in provision of services:
2. Human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms are fully respected.
3. People have a right to ‘dignity of risk’ – that is, to undergo typical life developmental experiences, that may entail reasonable level of risk- in order to promote personal choice and self-determination.
4. The autonomy of persons to make decisions, while taking responsibility for those decisions and respecting the autonomy of others, is prioritized. For persons who are not capable of exercising autonomy, special measures are to be taken to protect and uphold their rights and interests.
5. Services and supports are provided in keeping with the human rights framework which includes:

- individualized manner

- least restrictive

- incorporating teaching and skill building

- following due process

1. Freedom from abuse, discrimination, stigmatization, and unreasonable risk is ensured.
2. Behavior is recognized as communication and a means of expression.
3. Support DDS and Providers to:
4. Integrate human rights principles throughout their organization, business processes, training, risk management, communication, and management.
5. Identify policy and practice gaps in the areas of human rights and work with service providers to develop solutions.
6. Respond to relevant stakeholder questions, concerns, and expectations.
7. Provide DDS regulations, interpretations, and guidelines in collaboration with other DDS offices including DDS Legal.
8. Provide trainings related to human rights principles; including required regulatory trainings and other trainings when necessary or as requested.