

Policy Critique Paper: Decision-Making Plan

NaRayel Daniels

Longwood University

SOWK 392: Social Work Junior Internship

Professor Reynolds

June 25, 2021

Policy Critique Paper: Decision-Making Plan

The Elk Hill Farm agency works to “enable children and families to transform overwhelming challenges into successful futures by offering behavioral health and education services,” (Elk Hill, n.d.). Elk Hill Farm has put into place a wide range of policies and procedures to provide a guide for day-to-day operations. For this assignment, the paper will focus on the Decision-making plan. This policy was first in effect in 2015 and was last reviewed in early 2020. This policy is structured to be in alignment with the facility’s organizational flow chart. For instance, it includes decision-making authority for residential counselors and/or childcare workers, residential house managers and/or lead counselors, case managers, program director, residential therapist, residential coordinator, chief operation officer, chief executive officer, and lastly staff input. In all, the purpose of this paper is to explore and discuss the elements of the Decision-making plan within the Elk Hill agency as it relates to the advantages and disadvantages, the impact on clients, staff, and faculty, and how beneficial the policy may be.

Pros and Cons

This policy has the authority structured based on the organizational chart, so the level of authority is different for each job title. One advantage of this policy would allow for there to be no miscommunication of the decision-making process based on the job title. It has enough information in the procedure of the job title to explain and describe all elements of the job to staff and faculty. Another advantage would be that this policy allows for there to be an effective structure for the employees to work within a system if they put in the work to do so. One disadvantage of this policy would include the levels of responsibility or lack of authority based

on the level of the job they have. Another disadvantage could be a lack of collaboration on the team's part, which can result in an ineffective team. In all, there seems to be an equal amount of both advantages and disadvantages of this policy for the staff.

Impact on Clients

The impact this policy has on the clients and or their family can be positive. It allows the clients to clearly communicate with the correct staff and faculty to get the care and resources they need and are available to them. For instance, this policy puts residential house managers and/or lead counselors in charge of the decision-making authority that involves the health and safety of the individual client. Another good thing about this policy is that it includes backup plans for the lead employees in case of emergency so their duties never falter, and neither will the responsibilities to their clients. Another example includes the residential coordinator who is responsible for creating and maintaining the residential facilities. This is beneficial for the clients living in residential facilities because the residential coordinator is the main person really in charge and sustains positive attitudes, values, and behaviors within the residents.

Impact on Faculty and Staff

The impact this has on the faculty and staff is also generally positive and negative in some respects. For instance, the input, feedback, and concerns will typically follow the chain-of-command. This can negatively impact the staff by their feedback and concerns getting lost or not resolved at all. Nonetheless, the positive outlook on this decision-making policy is that it gives no misconception of the role that needs to be done as well as including the dynamic of the position's responsibilities. From this policy it is clear the expectations that are encompassed within the job title. It would be essential to acquaint oneself to this part of policy.

In addition, when discussing the staff having input on decision-making processes within their agency, Elk Hill's decision making is based on organizational management; however, faculty and staff are hired in respective teams that have supervisors. Their supervisors are supposed to be available and responsible for listening to the input of the employees while deciding the validity and reasonableness of the feedback.

Discussion

In conclusion, this decision-making policy decides the authority based on the facilities organizational flow chart. This structure allows for the agency to base responsibilities and authority on the higher up their job title is on the organizational chart. In this policy, there is a procedure that lists the roles and responsibilities specifically for residential counselors and/or childcare workers, residential house managers and/or lead counselors, case managers, program directors, residential therapists, residential coordinators, chief operating officers, chief executive officers, and other staff. For this policy, there seemed to be a few pros and cons. It mostly aligned with clients more than staff in some respects. For example, there will always be someone there for the clients/residents in any case of any concerns but with staff it must go up a chain-of-command which is not always the easiest process. Overall, the policy was last reviewed last year, 2020, so there is always something to improve upon. In all, the Elk Hill Farm agency works very hard to ensure that their policies and procedures are best suited for both staff, faculty, and the clients, but they could always benefit from others' input to help modify it in any way. In addition, the Elk Hill agency staff should take time to familiarize themselves with the organizational flow chart to better comprehend the process and possibly offer feedback.

References

Elk Hill. (n.d.). *Children and families*. Elk Hill. <https://www.elkhill.org/>.