

# **LUDLOW HOUSING AUTHORITY**

## **SOCIAL AGGRESSION POLICY**

**Adopted by the Board of Commissioners**

**DATE: July 16, 2024**

This Social Aggression Policy is being adopted by the Ludlow Housing Authority (LHA) in an effort to curb various methods of social aggression which include but are not limited to: bullying, harassment, physical violence, gossip. It is our hope that this policy will help to promote civility and tolerance as well as to foster a sense of pride in our communities. We also hope that we can promote an atmosphere of care and concern in our housing sites where all community members look out for each other and work to keep the peace.

There are three main types of social aggression:

- Verbal - includes but not limited to inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, threatening harm, pointed jokes meant to cause harm
- Relational - involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships and includes but is not limited to shunning or exclusion, spreading gossip and rumors about someone, playing tricks or pranks on someone repeatedly, and embarrassing someone in public
- Physical - involves hurting a person's body or possessions and includes but is not limited to name-calling or racial slurs, pushing and shoving, blocking someone's path, hitting/kicking/pinching, spitting, destroying someone's personal property and offensive hand gestures.

Social aggression is considered to be a form of violence by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention which defines it or "bullying" as "any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another person or group of people that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly to be repeated." It can inflict severe distress on those involved, including physical, psychological, and/or social harm.

Harassment is unlawful discrimination based on protected status and only has to happen once to be considered harassment and may result in a hostile environment which is a lease violation. Social aggression becomes harassment when it is based on protected status i.e., race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, familial status, children, marital status, veteran status or membership in the armed services, the receiving of public assistance, or physical or mental disability, etc. It can cause a hostile environment for the target.

The LHA believes in a zero-tolerance policy with regard to harassment, discrimination and all social aggression. This zero-tolerance policy is geared toward tenants, guests and LHA personnel

whether they are the target of it or the offender. As a housing issue it can create a hostile environment and cause a resident or employee to file a complaint against the housing management. It can also have a negative impact on the LHA because:

- It can be a behavioral health issue resulting in social isolation and physical or emotional harm.
- It can be a community issue as it is typical for it to happen in front of a group as a quest for status. If the group does not condone the behavior, then the aggressor striving for dominance has less motivation for this behavior and the cycle will end.
- It can be a social justice issue as it may focus on those who are perceived to be vulnerable due to a disability or difference in ethnicity, race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.
- It can be a legal, civil rights or human rights issue as it is a lease violation which denies a resident the right to peaceful enjoyment of his/her environment.
- It can be an organizational issue as the need for the training of both residents and staff may be required.

The LHA is observant of social aggression because it has been noted that some of the highest suicide rates are among older adults. The risk factors for death by suicide among older adults include not only physical and mental illness, but also social exclusion, loss, and psychological pain.

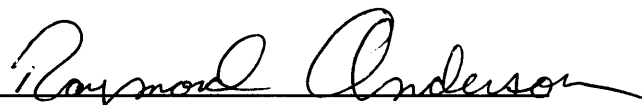
If anyone feels that they are the target of social aggression the LHA requires that the target should immediately report it to the current Resident Service Coordinator (RSC), by calling the LHA office number at 413-589-7272 and leaving a message asking for RSC to return the call. If the target still feels that the issue is unresolved, then ask the Executive Director (ED) to intervene. Executive Director will return the call to the target and will work towards a resolution. Following that procedure, should the issue remain unresolved, a Grievance Hearing may be requested or a meeting with the Board as needed.

Should someone witness an act of social aggression, he/she should notify the personnel listed in the prior paragraph in that order and report the act. The witness should also be ready to report it in writing and prepared to testify to what was seen and/or heard. This is a very important part of the process if a witness is called. The name of the witness will not be disclosed to any of the parties involved without the express written permission of the witness. Confidentiality is most important.

Included with this policy is a Pledge that is to be signed by all tenants and guests of tenants who wish to participate in various activities sponsored by the LHA.

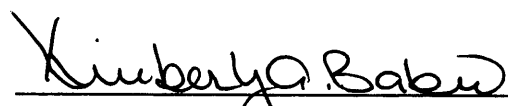
Social Aggression Policy signed and executed on this 16th day of July, 2024 by the Ludlow Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners:

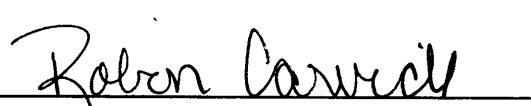
  
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