

THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF HAMILTON
HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

SUBJECT: Diversity and Inclusion Policy

EFFECTIVE: November 2011

SUPERSEDES: New

APPROVED BY: Senior Management
& Board of Directors

POLICY

The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton is committed to ensuring that children and families of all diverse groups can access our services and that service is responsive to their unique needs. We are also committed to creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive environment for staff, volunteers, foster and adoptive parents, students and board members.

Diversity encompasses both our differences and our similarities. Reflecting on these, we can learn about each other, enhance our sense of connection and build acceptance.

For the purpose of this policy, the word 'diversity' suggests the range of human characteristics found in any workplace or community. The diversity of identifying characteristics includes race, culture, language, faith & religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, income, family status, literacy level, educational background, housing, immigration status, health status, and mental health status, among many others. Groups and individuals are both visibly and invisibly different from each other. These differences can be influenced by the dynamics of power and privilege, which shape and have a significant impact on our experiences and expectations in any given situation.

The Society respects and values the diversity and similarities within its community and endeavours to be inclusive through its various activities and functions, as appropriate. The Society is dedicated to collaborating with community service agencies, which are representative of Hamilton's diversity, in support of and in order to promote, the Society's vision, mission and values.

The Society makes a determined effort to enhance services to meet the ever-changing needs of our community's diverse population and works to ensure that staff members remain involved in critical dialogue to affect our practices, policies and processes, and to support service users' needs and/or emerging community concerns and interests related to the welfare of children and their families. We believe these efforts will lead to better outcomes for the families and children we serve.

PURPOSE

The main objectives of this policy are:

- to eliminate systemic discrimination and promote diversity and inclusion through positive relations and attitudinal change, including access to employment opportunities and services;
- to foster understanding and mutual acceptance of diversity among the Agency's board, staff, volunteers, placement students, fostering and adoptive parents and service users;
- to ensure the needs of all service users are addressed in a manner that respects individual dignity and unique differences;
- to strengthen working connections with diverse organizations in Hamilton whose service users experience inequity and oppression;
- to ensure discriminatory and/or harassing incidents or behaviours from board members, staff, students, volunteers, fostering and adoptive parents, as well as service users are not tolerated; reinforcing a zero tolerance of discrimination, racism and harassment;
- to establish effective ways to address issues and concerns relating to workplace diversity

- and inclusion, discrimination and/or harassment under the Workplace Violence Policy;
- whenever possible, to establish that staff, board members, foster parents, volunteers, students and adoptive parents reflect the diversity of the Hamilton community;
- to establish a framework that requires all departments within the Agency to embrace fairness and equity in all operations, including access to employment opportunities and service delivery; and
- to monitor progress, evaluate progress, and adapt strategies to ensure that the Agency becomes a diverse and inclusive organization.

In keeping with the organization's mission, we are committed to providing an environment that is free from racism, prejudice, discrimination and harassment. The organization will ensure that staff, board members, volunteers, students, fostering and adoptive parents adhere to the Diversity Policy.

This policy recognizes that a diverse and inclusive workplace is essential for effective and relevant service delivery. It seeks to challenge systemic and individual forms of discrimination in the organization so that the Agency fully benefits from the skills, knowledge, and experience of all of our stakeholders.

This policy applies to all agency personnel, including full-time, part-time, and temporary employees, students, and any person acting on behalf of the Agency.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all agency personnel. However, board members and management have an increased responsibility as employers under the Ontario Human Rights Code to provide a working environment that is free from harassment and discrimination, and to deal effectively, quickly and fairly with any situations involving claims of harassment or discrimination that come to their attention.

Members of the Board of Directors are responsible for:

- ensuring that people of diverse race, ability, gender, religion, sexual orientation and age are welcomed and included in the organization;
- demonstrating its commitment to the above by obeying legislation (e.g. employment equity, human rights) and by encouraging and developing organizational openness and inclusion;
- ensuring staff, volunteers, students, foster parents and adoptive parents represent and reflect the diversity of the community served by the organization;
- ensuring that board members and staff, foster parents and other resource personnel receive training and development in the area of diversity and inclusion and learn the facts about diversity in their community;
- setting policy and direction that furthers the implementation of this policy;
- working with the Executive Director and Anti-Racism Organizational Change Lead to establish concrete measures for increased diversity and inclusion;
- reviewing the allocation of resources to ensure identified measures are attainable;
- assessing and evaluating the performance of the organization based on these measures;
- recruiting and retaining diverse board members with a commitment to diversity and inclusion;
- being accountable to the larger community for the organization's diversity and inclusion work;
- advocating for diversity with funders and the broader community; and
- ensuring that services are provided in accordance with Section (2) of the *Child and Family Services Act*, R.S.O. 1990 c. C-11.

The Senior Management Team is responsible for:

- ensuring that people of diverse race, ability, gender, religion, sexual orientation and age are welcomed and included in the organization;
- demonstrating its commitment to the above by obeying legislation (e.g. employment equity, human rights) and by encouraging and developing organizational openness and inclusion;
- creating and maintaining a workplace free from discrimination and harassment, ensuring equitable employment systems and daily practices;
- working with the Board to establish concrete measures of increased organizational equity;
- allocating adequate resources for diversity and inclusion work in the organization;
- working with managers to review employment, program, and service delivery policies to integrate diversity and inclusion as prescribed in this policy;
- working with all employees to ensure effective discrimination and harassment complaints policy and procedures, and to ensure all complaints are resolved as quickly as possible;
- where applicable, to ensure that all complaints are fully investigated as outlined in the Workplace Violence and Workplace Harassment Policies; and
- implementing diversity initiatives within their departments.

Managers and Supervisors are responsible for:

- ensuring that people of diverse race, ability, gender, religion, sexual orientation and age are welcomed and included in the organization;
- demonstrating its commitment to the above by obeying legislation (e.g. employment equity, human rights) and by encouraging and developing organizational openness and inclusion;
- creating and maintaining a workplace free from discrimination and harassment;
- ensuring that the diversity policy and procedures are available to all staff, accessible and supported;
- working with their teams to ensure equitable program and service delivery practices;
- acknowledging and addressing any tensions that might arise from the anti-racism organizational change process;
- not ignoring or condoning behaviour that is contrary to the policy;
- working with staff within the organization and partner organizations to ensure equitable relations with communities that experience discrimination and/or marginalization;
- taking all complaints seriously, discussing the situation with the respondent, and seeking advice from senior management and human resources while working in accordance with the procedures set out in the Workplace Violence and Workplace Harassment Policies; and
- creating conditions for building community within the organization.

All Agency staff are responsible for:

- ensuring that people of diverse race, ability, gender, religion, sexual orientation and age are welcomed and included in the organization;
- learning and acting together in equity;
- refraining from discrimination and harassment of co-workers, services users, volunteers, foster parents, adoptive parents, board members, students and any and all other individuals working for or on behalf of the organization;
- reporting instances where they believe there has been, or there is the potential for discrimination against and/or harassment, to one of the following individuals: their immediate supervisor, manager, director, or the Director of Human Resources, and as outlined in the Workplace Violence and Workplace Harassment Policies procedures;
- cooperate with any investigation of harassment or discrimination as required;
- following all established policies and procedures;
- completing the Diversity Management self-identification form;
- notifying their supervisor/manager of their need for employment-related accommodations, and consulting with the Human Resources Department on the most appropriate accommodation;
- reporting areas where they feel there may be barriers to equal opportunities;
- attending training provided when requested; and
- being aware of available support services through the Employee Assistance Program and the Peer Support Team.

MONITORING ACHIEVEMENTS/TRACKING & MEASURING

For the Board of Directors:

- evaluate progress with regard to meeting Agency objectives for diversity & inclusion once a year; and
- report on progress at the Annual General Meeting.

For the Senior Management Team:

- use budget and work planning processes to ensure appropriate allocation of resources for diversity policy implementation;
- Anti-Racism Organizational Change Initiative Lead to provide a written report on progress of identified measures and goals in working toward becoming a diverse and inclusive organization to Board of Directors yearly;
- make diversity policy implementation a standing agenda item at senior staff meetings; and
- ensure prompt and effective application of Workplace Violence and Workplace Harassment Policies and Procedures when a complaint is filed.

For Supervisors and Managers:

- make diversity policy implementation a standing agenda item for all team meetings;
- use supervision and performance appraisal processes to support staff implementation of policy;
- use program planning and development processes to ensure equitable and diverse service delivery;
- ensure prompt and effective application of Workplace Violence and Workplace Harassment Policies and Procedures when a complaint is filed; and
- complete and submit the semi-annual Report Card on Diversity & Inclusion to Senior Manager in charge of Anti-Racism Organizational Change Initiative.

For Agency Staff:

- raise issues related to diversity and inclusion in team meetings and supervision;
- maintain a safe work environment;
- not ignore violent, threatening, intimidating, or other disruptive behaviours;
- report immediately to their supervisor, manager, director or the Director of Human Resources any incident where Agency personnel is subject to, witness, or has knowledge of workplace violence or has reason to believe that workplace violence may occur.

DEFINITIONS

Aboriginal Peoples: The descendants of the original peoples who inhabited the North American continent prior to the arrival of Europeans. Other terms used to refer to these groups of people are First Nations peoples, Natives or Native people. Least often preferred, and considered offensive by some, is the term “Indian”. Aboriginal People include persons who describe themselves as “Status” or “Registered” or “Non-Status” Indians. (Source: Arnold Minors, A.B.C. D. Equity Glossary, 2010)

Anti-Oppression Practice: Anti-oppressive practice is concerned with eradicating social injustice perpetuated by societal structural inequalities, particularly along the lines of race, gender, sexual orientation and identity, ability, age, class, occupation and social service usage. (Source: Dumbrill, 2003. Emerging Perspectives on Anti-Oppressive Practice)

Culture: Patterns of beliefs, symbols and values that develop over time among groups of people. It is the symbolic order through which people communicate and organize their social life. Culture helps people adapt to their environment and it usually facilitates group survival. Culture is much broader than ethnicity, and it revolves around the fact that groups differ in their worldview, their perspectives on patterns of life, their concept of the essential nature of the human condition, and

the way they structure behaviour. Culture often runs so deep that one may be be unconscious of its influence, and hence misinterpret it as an objective reality. (Source: Wong, 2002, Lee, 1999)

Disability: Disability covers a broad range and degree of conditions, some visible and others not. Disability means any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device, (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability, (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language, (d) a mental disorder, or (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997. (Source: Ontario Human Rights Code)

Discrimination: Is a showing of partiality or prejudice in treatment, specific action or policies directed against the welfare of minority groups. Every person has a right to full and equal recognition and exercise of their human rights and freedoms without distinction, exclusion or preference, based on race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, civil status, religion, political convictions, language, ethnic or national origin, social condition, or the fact that he/she is a disabled person, or that he/she uses any means of palliate his/her disability. Discrimination exists where such distinction, exclusion, or preference has the effect of nullifying or impairing such a right.

Diversity: The word 'diversity' suggests the range of human characteristics found in any workplace or community. The diversity of identifying characteristics includes race, culture, language, faith & religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, income, family status, literacy level, educational background, housing, immigration status, HIV status, and mental health status, among many others. Groups and individuals are both visibly and invisibly different from each other. These differences shape and have a significant impact on our experiences and expectations in any given situation.

(Source: adapted from Lopes and Thomas, 2006. Dancing on Live Embers; and Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition, 2004. Inclusive Community Organizations; A Tool Kit)

Dominant/Majority Group: Refers to groups of individuals who share certain characteristics that as a result, are afforded specific forms privileges, at the expense of the oppression of the other groups who are usually shaped and controlled through social, economic, cultural, political or religious power of the dominant/majority group. Characteristics of the dominant group include being White, male, middle to upper class, heterosexual, able-bodied, 18 to 65 years of age, Christian, English-speaking, university educated, and living within an urban community.

Equity: The rights of groups or individuals to an equitable share of the goods, services, resources as well as, input into the practices which shape the social structures and institutions in society.

Harassment: Is any behaviour verbally, physically, deliberate, unsolicited or unwelcome invitations, that demean, embarrass, humiliate, annoy, alarm or verbally abuse a person and that is know, or would be expected to be know, as unwelcome. Harassment includes words, gestures, jokes, remarks, innuendo, taunting about a person's body, attire, age, marital status, ethnic or national origin, religion and so on. Harassment extends to incidents occurring at or away from the workplace, during or outside normal working hours provided such incidents are employment related.

Inclusivity: Refers to an organizational system where decision-making includes perspectives from diverse points of view. It includes the rights of individuals and groups for equal opportunity and participation. It also speaks to the degree to which an organization actively seeks, welcomes and collaborates with diverse community partners and service users.

Marginalization: To relegate or confine to a lower or outer limit or edge, as in social standing. The social process of marginalization refers to the lack of equitable access to social, political and economic benefits, including health on the basis of one's membership in an identifiable group.

Oppression: Oppression exists when one social group exploits (knowingly or unconsciously) another social group for its own benefit. It results in privilege for the dominant group and disenfranchisement for the subordinated group. Overtime, oppression does not require the conscious thought or effort of individual members of the dominant group, and unequal treatment becomes institutionalized, systemic and looks "normal". (Source: adapted from Lopes and Thomas, 2006. Dancing on Live Embers)

Power: The unearned and often hidden ability of individuals from the dominant/majority group to exert their influence over other individuals as a result of their social position. Power can also be the ability to control resources, information or make decisions and act on them to benefit one's own interest.

Privilege: The unearned advantages afforded to members of the dominant/majority group as a direct result of the oppression and marginalization of those who are not members of the dominant group. Privilege gives inequitable access to resources, information and power based on skin colour and social location.

Racialized Groups/Community: A group of people with a diverse background of culture, heritage and religions, which is characterized by race as being a people of colour and are socially located as the subordinate group, and has little or no access to social, political or economic power. This term is used in Ontario by the Human Rights Commission to describe people collectively; it is preferred over "visible minorities", "person of colour" or "non-white" as it expresses race as a social construct rather than a description of biological traits.

Racism: A set of practices and attitudes that discriminate against or seek to subordinate people because of their colour, race, racial heritage and/or ethnic background. Racist behaviour may include name calling, abusive language, or violent or threatening behaviours. It is also reflected in deliberate acts of exclusion such as denying or restricting access to services, promoting negative racial stereotypes, job and housing discrimination, and preferential treatment to individuals and groups of European descent.

Systemic Discrimination: Systemic discrimination occurs when social and organizational structures, including policies, procedures and practices exclude, limit or restrict, whether intentionally or unintentionally, members of diverse groups, from employment or opportunities within employment.

References:

1. Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H-19;
2. Workplace Violence Policy;
3. Workplace Harassment Policy;
4. Discipline Policy;
5. Collective Agreements, C.U.P.E. Local 3042, Full-time, Part-time, Local 3899;
6. Child & Family Services Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. C 11;
7. Employee Assistance Program;
8. Staff Safety Manual;
9. Complaints Procedures Policy;
10. Code of Ethics.