

Shelter Pulse

Policy Example

Policy Number: 001

Policy Name: Program Guiding Principles and Values

Applies To: *Employees, Students, Volunteers*

Philosophy:

Agency X is committed to providing services to shelter seekers with a variety of physical, mental and social needs. Agency X operates with the intent to reduce barriers that may impact shelter seekers and their dependent children accessing shelter services. Assisting these individuals requires a shared set of values and principles which set the foundation for empowering individuals escaping violence to regain control over their lives. It is a basic human right for all people, regardless of class, age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic background and/or religious beliefs to live without fear of abuse of any kind. Guiding principles aid in daily operations and the decision-making processes essential to operating under a variety of circumstances. Furthermore, guiding principles prioritize the important values Agency X is dedicated to embodying through its day-to-day activities. The following foundational principles and values allow for Agency X to live out its vision and mission to provide the resources necessary for shelter seekers to reach their full potential as human beings.

This project has been funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

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des genres Canada

Canada

Rationale/Purpose:

This policy describes the guiding principles which inform and provide direction to everything Agency X does in order to provide inclusive, trauma-informed care to shelter seekers. The policy addresses the shared values that employees, students and volunteers representing Agency X operate under on a daily basis. The goal of this policy is to establish principles which promote and guide the development of consistent, high quality shelter program standards.

Policy Statement:

All individuals or partners representing Agency X and/or in a formal relationship with Agency X are guided by the guiding principles and values of Agency X in their professional roles in the delivery of services and programs.

Definitions:

- Access to services:* Any shelter seeker or their dependents who receive services in the shelter, referrals to services in the community, or information and safety planning support over the phone.
- At Risk of Violence:* Refers to situations where a shelter seeker indicates that they and/or their children are at risk of experiencing violence.
- Cisgender:* A person whose self-identity conforms with the gender that corresponds to their biological sex.

<i>Discrimination:</i>	An act or decision that treats a person or group negatively or unfairly on the basis of characteristics or life circumstances which are 'protected grounds' under the Canadian Human Rights Act such as a person's age, race, gender, national, or ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability or impairment, sources of income, membership or participation in a trade union, or family status.
<i>Dependents:</i>	Children and/or family members affected by violence and/or abuse, who are currently residing in the home of a shelter seeker.
<i>Shelter Seeker:</i>	A person pursuing and/or receiving services from a shelter agency.
<i>Transgender:</i>	An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. Individuals under the transgender umbrella may describe themselves using different terms

Procedures:

All programs and their related partners are guided by the following principles:

An approach to service delivery centered on the shelter seeker:

- All shelter seekers, with or without dependents, who experience violence and/or abuse will be provided access to shelter services, regardless of their ability, race, sexual orientation, political or religious beliefs, ethno-cultural background, Indigenous identity, or whether they identify as two-spirited, cisgender or transgender.
 - This includes but is not limited to individuals with mental health needs or those who use substances
 - Shelter services are respectful to the diversity of shelter seekers and dependents free of discrimination
- Services are provided according to each shelter seeker's expressed needs, within the context of service provider and community resources.
- Services for children are provided in collaboration and consultation with their parent/guardian and according to each child's needs within the context of service provider and community resources.
- Services are provided in ways which recognize shelter seekers as experts of their own lives and that they have the right to autonomy based on an informed understanding of their options. Service providers are respectful of those choices, and will not restrict services based on the decisions of shelter seekers.
- A shelter seeker's lived experiences are valued and taken into consideration in the delivery of shelter services. Shelter services are responsive to the cultural, spiritual, and religious needs of shelter seekers.

The safety and security of individuals at risk of violence is a priority. The needs of any individual must be balanced against the safety and well-being of others:

- Training and shelter policies and procedures encourage, improve, and maintain the well-being and safety of all individuals residing, contributing, and working in the shelter.*
- Intake policies and procedures must provide all people with equal opportunity to access services. Agency X will refer eligible shelter seekers to a more appropriate resource when they are considered likely to cause severe disruption to effective service delivery, or where they represent a danger to themselves, other residents, staff or visitors.*
- It is understood that service providers may need to adjust service delivery from time to time, based on available resources and client needs.*

Power disparities among gender identities are acknowledged and responded to:

- During the service delivery process, service providers are informed by and responsive to gender and other power imbalances that cause individuals to be At Risk of Violence, and recognize that perpetrators are responsible for their own actions.*

A transparent and collaborative shelter sector:

- Agency X and its partners seek to enhance service delivery through an open and collaborative working relationship.*
- Service providers and partner organizations communicate with each other and work collaboratively to strengthen and extend the network of services available to individuals At Risk of Violence.*

Reliable and accountable program/service delivery:

- Agency X is accountable to the individuals we serve and to the broader public.
- Agency X will develop a consistent and transparent process for negotiating Agreements with external partners where applicable.
- Agency X will maintain secure, accurate and consistent records.
- Agency X will adopt written policies and procedures regarding service delivery in accordance with their Agreements and will communicate these policies to shelter seekers.
- Agency X will conduct internal reviews and assessments to confirm services delivered are effective at meeting the program's objectives.
- Agency X will work to meet the highest standards of governance and will maintain shelter seeker confidentiality.

Approvals:

Policy Created Date:

Policy Approved By: Agency X Board of Directors

Policy Approval Date:

Policy Revisions:

Policy Revised Date:

Policy

Designate/overseen by: Agency X Administration or Management/
Board of Directors