

Policy Example

Policy Number: 003

Policy Name: Personnel- Staff training and orientation

Applies To: *Employees, Students, Volunteers*

Philosophy:

Agency X assists shelter seekers and their dependent children in gaining access to shelter services, supporting them to escape violence they are experiencing. To do this effectively, a safe and therapeutic atmosphere must be maintained. Training and orientation of agency staff is essential and mandatory for all staff, and includes the provision of orientation materials and training which promote Agency X values, emphasizing trust, safety, and collaboration.

Agency X is dedicated to delivering trauma-informed care, harm-reduction services, as well as gender inclusive workplace policies and shelter services.

Every aspect of Agency X's employment process, from hiring new personnel to ongoing employee retention and engagement is carried out using a trauma-informed approach guided by diversity and inclusion principles.

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Given the nature of Agency X's work supporting people through incredibly challenging experiences, professional boundaries in client interactions are important. Employees, students, and volunteers at Agency X must actively and deliberately model appropriate professional and personal boundaries in order to create a healthy environment for both shelter seekers and shelter staff.

Rationale/Purpose:

Agency X expects all employees to be trained and competent and provides adequate staff training and onboarding. This policy exists to provide new staff with access to information and resources, to ensure that new employees are made aware of Agency X safety and security measures as soon as possible, and to successfully help new employees in understanding their roles and responsibilities within the organization. This policy also defines the initial and continuous training requirements in place to assist employees in retaining the fundamental knowledge and skills needed to be effective in their roles. This policy seeks to promote and safeguard workers' dignity and equality, as well as to define how the organization meets its duties under Alberta Human Rights Act to accommodate personal requirements in areas protected by law, and addresses Agency X's efforts to protect workers and volunteers from vicarious trauma and/or burnout.

Policy Statement:

All new employees are given a thorough orientation to information and resources so that they may succeed in their positions and duties. Employees, both new and current, are expected to attend specialised training and, in certain situations, to refresh this training at predetermined periods. Agency X will take reasonable efforts to accommodate workers' requirements that preclude them from performing their duties within the organisation. Such accommodation will be limited to protected grounds and will only be made if it does not cause undue hardship to the organisation.

The nature of Agency X's job and residential work environment can be stressful, contributing to burnout and vicarious trauma among employees and volunteers. As a result, the organization's preventive measures include regular employee and volunteer support, training, and self-care opportunities.

Agency X provides appropriate First Aid & CPR training to the following identified staff who must have current and valid Certifications: Residential Support Worker, Child & Youth Worker, Transitional Support Worker, Domestic Abuse Worker, Residential Service Manager, and any other Staff who have direct Service User contact. Other staff may be trained as required.

First Aid and CPR procedures – to be performed on either Service Users or Staff – are entirely voluntary. The organisation hopes that personnel would use their knowledge and good judgement in an emergency needing First Aid and/or CPR, but it is not a necessity. In such cases, employees must dial 911 (if necessary) or arrange for transfer to a facility such as a hospital or medical centre.

Agency X is dedicated to ensuring that all self-identified women have access to its shelter services and works to eliminate barriers that prevent trans-women from actively participating in programmes. The organisation strives to promote a safe and welcoming atmosphere for transgender women.

Definitions:

Trauma-Informed Care: A program, organization, or system that is trauma informed realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for healing; recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in staff, clients, and others involved in the system, and responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, practices, and settings (SAMHSA, 2014).

Trauma Specific Services: A treatment service intended to reduce trauma symptoms experienced by survivors. Trauma services should be individualized, evidence-based, and promising best practices. The services should be provided in a collaborative, person-centered process.

Duty to Accommodate: The legal obligation of an employer to take steps to eliminate the disadvantage to employees or prospective employees resulting from a rule, practice, or physical barrier that has or may harm individuals or groups.

Undue Hardship: The legal duty to accommodate does not apply if the only way to resolve the problem will cause the employer undue hardship. The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that the employer's hardship must be "substantial in nature" and assessed on a case-by-case basis.

First Aid: Includes, but is not limited to, giving direction to Service Users or Staff concerning:

- Cleaning minor cuts, scrapes, or scratches
- Applying or changing bandages
- Treating a minor burn
- Applying a cold compress or splint
- Providing follow-up observation

Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR): An emergency procedure performed to manually preserve intact brain function until Emergency Professionals can undertake further measures.

Injury: Refers to any harm or damage that will require immediate medical attention.

Trans-women: People living and identifying as women. This definition does not include cross-dressers or female-to-male transgendered people who identify as male.

Procedures:

Regarding staff orientation:

New Staff Orientation:

The immediate supervisor shall provide new employees with a formal orientation, as follows:

Within the first day:

- A review of the employee's position description and service model;
- A tour of the facility
- Introduction to staff and management
- A review of the facility security system and client safety procedures
- The location of fire extinguishers, emergency evacuation routes, and information about any occupational hazards;
- A review of emergency evacuation, lockdown and sheltering in place procedures;
- Working alone procedures;
- Resources needed to access areas of the building relevant to their position (i.e. keys, security codes, passwords, washrooms, parking, office supplies, desk, computer).

Within the first week:

- Introduction to the programs and services of Agency X;
- A list of short-term performance objectives for the employee;
- Setup of telephones and email
- A description of the culture, values, mission and vision of the organization
- Review of the organizational chart
- An overview of the policy and procedures manual (or Employee Handbook)
- Completion of all necessary orientation forms and paperwork
- A copy of the Employee Benefits Handbook

Clarification of:

- .Hours of work and breaks
- Pay days
- Entitlement to benefits (including sick days)
- Vacation
- Dress code
- Performance evaluation process
- Training procedures and expectations

New and Existing Staff Training Procedures:

- All frontline employees are required to have training in Standard First Aid and ASSIST prior to working alone in the Shelter.
- Agency X staff and volunteers receive training in trauma-informed care, domestic violence, cultural diversity, Indigenous awareness and any trauma-specific services they are required to provide as part of their role with the organization.
- Where ongoing mandatory training is required by the organization, the cost of the training will be incurred by the organization. Where possible, mandatory training will be made available during regular work hours.

Regarding Duty to Accommodate:

- Employees' reasonable requirements shall be accommodated on protected grounds. Policies, working conditions, and/or physical settings may be modified to ensure that an individual is not negatively impacted by disability, religious practise, gender, or other protected grounds. Modifications to job tasks or changes to work schedules to facilitate religious observance are examples of accommodation.

- Individual requirements will not be accommodated if the necessary modifications will cause the organisation undue difficulty. Excessive financial cost to the organisation or programme resources, interruption to operations, restricting the organization's capacity to achieve operational or safety requirements, morale issues, and interference with the rights of others are examples of instances where undue hardship may apply. Before declining to accommodate, the organisation will verify that all feasible accommodation options have been investigated.

Requests for Accommodation Related to Disability:

- Requests for disability accommodations should be sent to the Executive Director. A full description of the accommodation sought to satisfy the requirement must be included in the written request.
- Additional information, such as pertinent medical information and/or examinations, may be necessary. Where a functional impairment is not immediately evident, the organisation may demand a needs assessment undertaken by a trained practitioner to establish the reasonableness of the request, the requirement for accommodation, and/or recommendations and possibilities for accommodation. Personal information includes medical information. When medical information is requested, the individual's personal information shall be safeguarded in accordance with the Agency X Personnel Records Policy.
- The request for accommodation will be decided by the Executive Director. After completing the relevant information, the decision will be written to the employee.
- If the individual is dissatisfied with the written judgement about their accommodation request, they may appeal to the Board of Directors. This appeal must be filed in writing and must contain any medical information sought and supplied as part of the process thus far. The Board of Directors' decision is final.

Regarding Self-Care:

- Agency X will provide trauma informed supervision, education, and training for employees to assist in preventing burnout and/or vicarious Traumatization.
- Agency X will provide education and training to all staff members on:
 - The potential effects and impact of trauma on individuals, families, groups,
 - Organizations, therapeutic relationships, and employee well-being;
 - Personal and professional boundaries and on understanding the signs of trauma and behaviors of individuals with a history of trauma;
 - The promotion of a work environment that is both trauma-informed and trauma sensitive.
- Agency X will support staff with ongoing training, performance evaluations, and supervisory assistance with integrating trauma-informed practice in their work.
- Agency X will strive to maintain an environment that is safe and comfortable for staff to share personal and work-related stressors. Staff may receive support through supervision, an extended health program, or other professional services, or education to increase awareness about the impact of stress on work performance and develop personally meaningful and useful stress management strategies.
- Agency X offers vacation leave, extended health benefits and self-care days to support self-care within the work environment.

Regarding CPR:

- There are two First Aid Stations: one in the shelter kitchen and one in the staff lunch room. Every First Aid Station has a fully filled First Aid Box. The Health and Safety Committee will check these Boxes on a regular basis to guarantee their completion. The Employer is responsible for purchasing and maintaining these products at all times. The First Aid Boxes will NOT contain any equipment that is outside the training/scope of First Aiders.
- CPR equipment is stored in the cabinet in the Staff washroom located directly across from the Residential Support Office.
- Staff should familiarize themselves with the locations and content of the First Aid and CPR equipment.
- The responsibilities and obligations of both employer and worker when an accident happens on the job are outlined and in a consistent location.
- A copy of the valid First Aid and CPR Certificates for every certified staff will be kept in their Personnel File. A second copy will be kept in a binder in the photocopy room.
- At the time of hiring to an identified position requiring First Aid and CPR Certification, employees must provide a copy of their current certificates. In some cases, Management may approve a time extension to allow new hires to obtain this training within a reasonable time.

- In all cases of injury, Staff must:
 - Administer First Aid or call Emergency Medical Services
 - Advise Management
 - If Staff is injured, they must seek appropriate health care which could include doctor, hospital care, nurse, physiotherapist, prescription drugs, and chiropractor.
 - If the injury to staff aligns with the posted information regarding workplace injuries and/or incident, staff must fill-out the proper paperwork and provide a copy to management. Staff are also expected to cooperate with health care treatment, disclose functional abilities information, cooperate throughout the work reintegration process and ensure all related paperwork is complete within the required timeframe(s).
- In all cases of Staff injury, the Employer must:
 - Ensure First Aid is given ASAP and give the Staff a record of the First Aid treatment/advice given
 - Provide immediate transportation to hospital, doctor's office, health centre or Staff's home
 - If the injury to staff aligns with the posted information regarding workplace injuries and/or incident, employers must complete the appropriate framework within a timely manner as well as provide the injured staff member with a copy of the paperwork and related attachments.
 - Pay full wages/benefits for the day or shift on which the injury occurred

Regarding Transwomen:

The agency will not make conclusions about a person's eligibility for assistance based on their look, voice, legal name, or other frequently-gendered features. Access to services is totally dependent on a woman's self-identification as a female.

Transwomen seeking services from the organisation will be asked the same medical questions as any other woman seeking services.

Trans-women will be addressed by the name with which they self-identify regardless of the name that may appear on their legal identification. Staff shall use whatever pronoun the trans-woman prefers. Where this is not known, staff shall use the pronouns "they" or "them" until they can respectfully ask the trans-woman how they wish to be addressed.

Staff who answer the phone or door shall also use the pronouns "they" and "them" until the gender identity of the individual being addressed and their preferred pronoun are known.

Any employee who discloses such confidential information will face disciplinary proceedings. Any woman using services who discloses such confidential information may have her access to services terminated at the discretion of the Executive Director or her designate.

No employee shall refuse to provide services to a woman based on her trans status. Any such refusal shall result in disciplinary action.

As the agency's resources allow, all personnel shall receive continuous professional development on the needs, concerns, and realities of trans-women. Individual and group awareness education will be offered to shelter seekers who use the agency's services.

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