CREATING INCLUSIVE SPACES FOR WOMEN

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

FOR IMPLEMENTING AN INTEGRATED, ANTI-RACIST, FEMINIST SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM

Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION TO THIS MANUAL

<u>**Welcome**</u>

The Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH) has written this manual to help its member agencies create and maintain welcoming, respectful, and inclusive spaces for women and their children.

This is a **practical guide** for implementing an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system. We hope the ideas, suggestions, and specific strategies included in this manual will help you:

- ► acknowledge and celebrate the successes you have already experienced in creating inclusive spaces for women and their children

- ► determine how your organizational structure, employment practices, and programs and services either support <u>or</u> don't support your efforts to create inclusive spaces for women

- ► identify specific problem areas or things you would like to improve

- ► develop a step-by-step <u>realistic</u> work plan to make the changes needed to maintain an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system in your agency

This manual will help your organization get started if the idea of creating inclusive spaces for women within an anti-racist, feminist service delivery system is a relatively new one for you. For those organizations that have been working to create inclusive spaces for some time now, this manual will help you evaluate the changes you have made and focus on areas that require improvement.

> **This manual is a tool. Use it, discuss it,**
> **add to it, adapt it to fit your organization.**

What You'll Find in This Manual

In chapter two, you'll find some general suggestions and reminders about using this manual and about engaging in anti-racist work. In chapters three to six, you'll find information and suggestions regarding specific aspects of your agency, such as your governance structure, foundation documents (i.e., Mission Statement), employment practices, or programs and services. In addition to generating discussion, we hope that you'll find these strategies helpful as you develop your own step-by-step action plan for change. A summary of all strategies presented in this manual can be found in appendix one.

Creating meaningful change depends on thinking <u>and</u> doing, learning <u>and</u> acting. This manual focuses on the "doing" and "acting" parts of change; however, we have also included some definitions of words frequently used when discussing anti-oppression work in appendix two as a contribution to the "thinking" and "learning" prerequisites for change.

For more information about the evolution of anti-racist practice in the feminist and anti-violence movement, we suggest you read: 1) "Chapter 1: Ain't I A Woman", <u>Creating Inclusive Spaces for Women: Implementing an Integrated, Anti-Racist, Feminist Service Delivery System</u> (Version 1: 1999), written by Shara Stone and Esther Enyolu; and 2) Rita Kohli's keynote address, *Provincial strategy for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children*, presented at our strategy session in May 1998.

A Few Words of Thanks

We would like to offer a heartfelt thanks to the four marginalized women who agreed to serve as a panel of experts at our AGM in 1998. These women spoke as first Nations women, women of colour, women with disabilities, lesbians, and poor women; they talked to us about what it was like for them to use the services we provide. Member agencies and individual frontline workers continue to tell us what a powerful and meaningful experience this was for them. The comments and challenges presented by these of women represented a turning point or call to action for many of us in OAITH.

<div align="center">This manual is a result of that call to action.</div>

CHAPTER TWO
GETTING STARTED

Making a Commitment to Anti-Racist Work

Anti-racist work is hard. There are lots of different reasons for this.

It demands a willingness and ability to:

- ► embrace personal, interpersonal, organizational, and social change;

- ► re-examine our values, perceptions and attitudes;

- ► open ourselves to new experiences, different ideas, and different ways of doing things;

- ► explore our relationship to and use of power (which often brings us face to face with parts of ourselves that make us uncomfortable);

- ► change our language and our behaviour;

- ► accept challenge and criticism;

- ► and deal with a wide range of uncomfortable and distressing feelings that may arise as we do this work, including anger, betrayal, guilt, fear, embarrassment, shame and confusion.

Anti-racist work is hard. We've been working at it for the last 15 to 20 years and we're still asking ourselves, "why are marginalized women still telling us that their needs are not being met at our shelters?", "what do we need to change?", "why has anti-racism work failed?".

Women in the feminist anti-violence movement have been struggling with issues relating to racism and other forms of oppression for many years. It is hard to stay interested, motivated, and hopeful when change is slow, success is limited, and serious tensions and conflicts continue to divide co-workers and agencies.

Anti-racist work is hard. It requires a commitment from both individuals and organizations. One or two women working to address their own relationship to power and privilege and to promote an integrated, anti-racist feminist service delivery system will find it difficult to implement and maintain meaningful organizational or programme changes. Similarly, an organization that develops well worded policies and procedures designed to create inclusive, respectful services fro women and their children will find it difficult to develop these services if staff members and volunteers do not understand or are not committed to anti-racist and anti-oppression work.

This work requires a commitment from your organization as a whole, from the management personnel and frontline staff or from the staff collective group depending on your organizational structure. The success of each agency's effort to implement an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system depends on:

- ► support for this goal from the board of directors as a group;

- ► commitment from individual board members to engage in their own learning process and change their behaviour as necessary to comply with agency expectations and requirements;

- ► support for this goal from other employees as a staff group;

- ► support, encouragement, and challenge shared respectfully between individual co-workers and colleagues;

- ► commitment from individual employees to engage in their own learning process and change their behaviour as necessary to comply with agency expectations and requirements.

Our ability to meet the diverse needs of the women who use our services and to work effectively with all women committed to ending violence against women depends on our willingness, as individuals and agencies, to perceive and acknowledge our racism and change our behaviour.

We know this work is hard. Members of the OAITH Board of Directors and members of the Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Committee are all doing this work in their own lives and organizations.
We want to acknowledge the difficulties you might be facing in your agency if you are already trying to create respectful services for all women. And we want to offer you encouragement, support, and a gentle reminder to spend some time identifying and celebrating the successes you have experienced in implementing an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system to date.

A few Cautions

1.   Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Committees

Many organizations set up anti-racism/anti-oppression committees (AR/AO committees) when they begin their anti-racist and anti-oppression work. This can be a very effective way to focus energies, concentrated expertise, and ensure that these issues receive the time, attention, and resources they require.

It is important to evaluate the effectiveness and role of the committee from time to time for several reasons. Our goal is to establish an integrated anti-racist, feminist service delivery system. Our commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression should be evident throughout all aspects of our agency and each person, committee, or group should act in accordance with that commitment. For example, when child care staff are purchasing books for the shelter "library", they should make sure that the resources include references to children of various ages, racialized group/races, ethnocultural groups, religions, family compositions, and abilities. It should not be the responsibility of an AR/AO committee to review the selections of the child care staff.

An AR/AO committee may inadvertently be set up as the "anti-racism/anti-oppression police" in your agency if they are assigned responsibility for all tasks relating to anti-racism and anti-oppression work. This "excuses" non-committee members from making any concrete commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression work and may contribute to serious tension and conflict between committee members and other people in the agency.

2. Budgeting for Change

We are aware that many of the strategies in this manual have financial implications for agencies. There are direct costs associated with some of the suggestions, such as providing additional training to board and staff members. There are indirect cost associated with others, such as allocating time at staff meetings to review house rules with attention to inclusivity and fairness. We recognize that this is a legitimate concern for our member agencies.

However, we also know that this work is hard and challenging and painful. For this reason, we caution you against immediately giving up when money isn't readily available within your current budget for this work. It may be necessary and appropriate to rearrange budget priorities, change the way you currently use monies available (such as the example given above: child care staff buying inclusive materials that reflect diversity with monies already allocated for resources), or make an effort to secure additional grant monies for specific projects or initiatives.

Lack of funding may be a legitimate and valid reason for not making some changes in your agency. It should never be an excuse.

<u>Think About Your Own Organization</u>

Everything in this manual must be applied in a realistic and meaningful way in your organization. Some suggestions may need to be adapted or modified to better fit your organizational structure or your decision-making process. Other suggestions may not be appropriate for your agency for some legitimate reason relating to your mandate, the programmes and services you provide, or your client population.

Before trying to implement the strategies in this manual, you need to know who is responsible for what in your agency. For example:

> ► who is responsible for developing and approving policies in your agency?

► who has input into the content of specific policies?

► who is responsible for developing procedures in your agency, including board procedures, personnel procedures, and service delivery procedures?

► how are policies and procedures revised in your organization?

► who is responsible for establishing budget priorities and how are priorities established?

You also need to know **how all the various groups or parts of your agency "fit together"** or work together. For example;

► what are the lines of communication in your organization?

► how do individuals and groups communicate with one another – i.e., does your agency use internal newsletters or written memos?

► do board and staff members ever work together on projects or committees?

A basic understanding of **how things are currently done** in your agency will allow you to effectively adapt and implement the strategies in this manual. For example, it is of little use to suggest that the board orientations process be modified to include information on anti-racism and anti-oppression work if there is currently no orientation process for new board members. In this example, it would be best to suggest that 1) a board orientation process, including a package of written materials, be developed, and 2) that this process and package include information on anti-racism and anti-oppression work.

Lastly, an assessment of your agency's **capacity to manage change** will help you develop a realistic action plan for this work. This work demands personal and organizational change. Systems must be thoroughly reviewed, programme priorities re-evaluated, and funding allocations revisited. A simple statement confirming the agency's commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression work may be a start but it is not sufficient. This work demands change.

Change can be very stressful, regardless of whether it is perceived as desirable or not, whether it is externally imposed or internally driven, or whether it effects one programme area or the entire agency.

Understanding how your agency, your board of directors, and your staff group generally react to and manage change is essential. Who and what are the best resources available to you to support the desired changes? How much change has your organization been through in the past 12 to 18 months? What would be an appropriate time frame for the introduction of these additional change? What kind of resistance can you expect based on people's past reactions to change? How will you deal with individual and organizational resistance?

How to Use This Manual

This manual has been written as a practical guide. You may find it helpful to work through the entire manual on a chapter by chapter basis. Any section or chapter of the manual may also be used on its own to help you address a specific problem or component of your agency.

On-site training sessions based on this manual and its root document will also be offered to regional shelters by OAITH.

We suggest you talk with other anti-violence organizations who are also using this manual. They may have ideas, suggestions, and resources that you'll find helpful as you work through the manual and develop you own action plan.

Consultation with other group and agencies in your region may also be helpful when addressing some components of this work, such as establishing service priorities and developing opportunities for staff members to learn more about various ethnocultural groups.

Working with external consultants skilled at anti-racism and anti-oppression education, organizational development, and change management may also be useful from time to time during the development and implementation of your action plan.

CHAPTER THREE
GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES AND
FOUNDATION DOCUMENTS

<u>Introduction</u>

Governance structure refers to the group or body in your organization that is charged with the legal responsibility for overseeing the management and functioning of your agency. In most organization, this group is the board of directors. Board of directors are not generally involved in the day to day management of an organization or in the development or implementation of specific services.

In most organizations, the board of directors is responsible for:

- ► confirming long term strategic direction and strategic priorities

- ► policy development

- ► financial accountability

- ► and board management

Boards of directors may fulfill their responsibilities in these areas in different ways. Some complete these tasks on their own, others work cooperatively with staff, while still others may delegate some or all of these responsibilities to various committees or management personnel. Regardless of how the board of directors gets these things done, they remain responsible for ensuring these tasks are completed. Making a commitment to becoming an anti-racist and anti-discriminatory agency demands attention in each of these areas.

If your organization is going to make a sincere commitment to becoming an anti-racist and anti-discriminatory agency, the board of directors must fully support this goal.

Foundation documents are the most important or fundamental pieces of papers required to incorporate and define your organization. They confirm the purpose, mandate, beliefs and aims, and guiding principles of the organization.
Foundation documents include the Letters Patent, by-laws, mandate/mission statement, and statement of beliefs and aims or statement of principles for your agency. Foundation documents are supported by the policies of the organization.

> **The board of directors is responsible for ensuring that the foundation documents and the policies of the organization accurately reflect the purpose, priorities, and principles of the corporation.**
> **Your agency's commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression should be reflected in all these documents**.

Confirming Your Commitment to Anti-Racist and Anti-Oppression Work at a Structural Level

Task #1: By-Laws

The by-laws of a corporation confirm the overall purpose of the organization, outline how the organization will be governed, and establish the basic rules and regulations for the governing body and the agency. By-laws are legally binding. General members of the corporation must approve any changes to the by-laws.

Strategy

1. Include a clear and simple statement in the by-laws of the corporation that confirms your agency's commitment to the implementation and maintenance of an integrated, anti-racist service delivery system.

Once this is done, the board of directors has a legal obligation to ensure that an integrated, anti-racist service delivery system exists.

Task #2:   Mandate/Mission Statement

The written Mandate or Mission Statement confirms the purpose of the
organization, outlines its "reason to be" (i.e., why is this organization needed?),
and provides a brief introduction to its philosophy.

Strategies

2. Include a clear and simple statement in the <u>purpose</u> section of your
    Mandate/Mission Statement that confirms your agency's commitment to
    the implementation and maintenance of an integrated, anti-racist service
    delivery system. (<u>What</u> you will do)

3. Include a brief explanation of why a commitment to an integrated, anti-
    racist service delivery system is necessary in the <u>"reason to be"</u> section of
    your Mandate/Mission Statement. (<u>Why</u> you do this)

4. Include a brief overview of the most fundamental components of your anti-
    racist/anti-oppression philosophy in the <u>philosophy</u> section of your
    Mandate/Mission Statement.

Task #3:   Statement of Beliefs and Aims/Principles/Goals and Objectives

A statement of Beliefs and Aims outlines the principles that guide and inform all
aspects of the agency's structure and functioning (i.e., "We believe…") and
confirms the specific objectives or goals of the organization (i.e., "We aim to…").

Some organizations summarize their beliefs or values in a Statement of Principles
and use a list of Goals and Objectives to outline their aims.

Strategies

5. Include clear statements which reflect the anti-racist/anti-oppression
    beliefs, values, or principles in your Statement of Beliefs and Aims (or
    equivalent).

6. Include specific aims, goals, or objectives that confirm and demonstrate how the agency will actualize its anti-racist/anti-oppression beliefs and values within the parameters of its overall mandate to provide services to abused women and their children.

The documents discussed above serve as a foundation for your organization. All other documents and papers, such as policies and procedures, must reflect and reinforce the basic structure, philosophy, principles, and goals outlined in these foundation documents.

Failure to include a clear commitment to an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system in the foundation documents of your agency suggests that the organization and its governing body do not support this goal.

Task #4: Policy Development

The board of directors is responsible for the development and approval of policies. Policies serve as a collection of directives from the board and address all aspects of the organization's structure and function, including the board of directors, employees, and service delivery systems. In most feminist anti-violence organizations, this task is completed with input from or in cooperation with staff.

Your commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression work should be evident throughout the agency's policy manual. This is in keeping with our interest in developing an integrated anti-racist, feminist service delivery system.
For example, language should be inclusive rather than exclusive and specific references to anti-racist principles should be included when appropriate.

Some agencies have also found it helpful to **develop a specific policy which confirms their commitment to and involvement with anti-racist activism and anti-oppression work.** This kind of policy serves to confirm the agency's commitment to and support for a political agenda.

In addition to reflecting your commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression work throughout your policy manual, we suggest you also **develop a detailed anti-racism/anti-oppression policy which:**

► acknowledges the existence of racism and other forms of oppression in our society and within your own organization;

► Reconfirms your commitment to address and eliminate individual and systemic or organizational racism and oppression in your agency;

► briefly restates the specific parts of your Mission Statement and Statement of Beliefs and Aims that refer to your commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression work;

► confirms your agency's commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression education and training for board, staff, and service volunteers in accordance with their specific roles and responsibilities;

► confirms expectations for board members, employees, and volunteers with respect to their individual commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression work;

► outlines accountability systems throughout the agency-i.e., who should you talk to if you have concerns about something a volunteer said?;

► provides a step-by-step complaint process for board members, employees, service volunteers, and service users specific to concerns relating to racist or oppressive comments or behaviour (some agencies develop one process for all people associated with their agency while others prefer to develop slightly different processes for different groups- i.e., link process for staff to agency's existing supervisory and disciplinary procedures);

► directs reader to most recent action plan regarding implementing an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system which should include specific goals, strategies, and timelines for completion and evaluation.

<u>Strategies</u>

7. Review your existing policy manual and identify changes required <u>throughout the entire manual</u> to reflect your commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression work.

8. Develop a comprehensive anti-racism/anti-oppression policy as outlined in this manual.

You may find it particularly helpful to review several different anti-racism/anti-oppression policies from other anti-violence and social service organizations before finalizing your policy.

9. Ensure that all revised or new policies are reviewed by all board members, employees, and service volunteers.

You may want to circulate the policy and have individuals sign to confirm that they have read the document or you may chose to post the policy for review. Whichever method you chose, it is important to ensure that everyone involved with the organization confirms that they have read and understand the new policy/policies. This helps to eliminate any confusion or misunderstandings in the future when specific parts of the policy are implemented, such as a specific accountability mechanism.

10. Ensure that individuals and bodies responsible for monitoring compliance with the policy are aware of their specific responsibilities.

11. Ensure that consequences for non-compliance with the policy expectations are applied consistently throughout the organization (easier said then done, we know, but a policy without consequences is simply a piece of paper!)

12. Review and revise the anti-racism/anti-oppression policy on a regular basis in accordance with your standard procedures for policy review.

Board Recruitment, Selection, and Orientation

Task # 1:   Board Composition

Board members are voted into their positions for a specific term of office by the general members of the corporations. Some organizations have comprehensive recruitment and selection processes for prospective board members while others rely on "word of mouth" recruitment.

Board members should be recruited in consideration of the skills required to fulfill the significant responsibilities assigned to the board of directors <u>and</u> in consideration of the composition of your region. Inclusivity begins with the board of directors. The composition, structure, and functioning of the board of directors should model the best practice standards for the entire agency.

<u>Strategies</u>

13. Confirm the composition of the community/communities in your region with attention to various social identities such as racialized groups/race, ethnocultural groups, first language/mother tongue, income levels, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation/preference, and disability.

There are many different ways you can pull together this information for your region.

► Statistics Canada gathers this type of information when it completes national censuses;

► in some regions, District Health Councils, social planning councils, hospital, and/or long term/palliative care facilities have compiled information about community population in an effort to anticipate the changing service needs in their area;

► some police services compiled detailed community analyses in response to employment equity requirements

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> ► your local MP's or MPP's office may have access to some of this information or they may be able to help you get the information you need
>
> ► self-governing bodies, community organizations, cultural groups, and religion organizations often gather information about population breakdowns with respect to their target population;

For example, Band Councils and Native Friendship Centres may be willing to share information about the First Nations/Aboriginal people living on and off reserve in your area, respectively. Mosques, Sikh temples, and synagogues may have information about the numbers in their congregations. Independent Living Resources Centres and provincial associations working with people with disabilities may have information about numbers and income levels of persons with disabilities living in your area…etc., etc., etc.

Despite how well you may think you know your own community, do <u>not</u> rely on personal or anecdotal information when completing your community composition analysis.

14. Include a clear statement in the by-laws or policies of your agency confirming your commitment to maintain board diversity in accordance with the composition of your community.

Revising your by-laws to include such a statement is the "strongest" of these options. Once something in written into your by-laws, the board of directors has a legal obligation to ensure that it happens.

15. Develop a step-by-step plan to increase the diversity of your board in accordance with your community composition analysis.

The terms of office and rate of turn-over on your board may influence the time lines in this action plan to some degree.

This plan should include outreach to various groups and organization with connections to the populations you wish to reach, advertising in a wide variety of newsletters and community bulletins, advertising on radio programmes offered

in languages other than English, and other similar strategies designed to ensure that your call for new board members is seen or heard by a wide variety of people of your region.

Task #2:   Recruitment and Screening

Your initial outreach to prospective board members demonstrates and reflects what is important to your organization, whether you are consciously aware of this or not. For example, if you make no reference whatsoever to anti-racism and anti-oppression work during your initial conversations with individuals interested in serving on the board of directors, you have missed an important opportunity to demonstrate the importance of this issue in your organization.

This principle should guide and inform your screening process for board members as well. For example, if you use an interview process to select prospective board members for presentation to the general membership, be sure to include questions and discussion about anti-racist and anti-oppression philosophy and practise in a feminist anti-violence organization.

It is also your responsibility to clearly identify the requirements for board membership, in policy format and/or as part of the recruitment, screening and orientation materials used by your agency. This provides a framework for your screening process and ensures that all prospective and new board members are aware of exactly what is expected of them.

Strategies

16. Review and revise the information you share with prospective board members at all stages of your recruitment and screening process to include adequate and appropriate references to your anti-racist and anti-oppression principles and practices.

Consider both what you say to interested community members who contact your agency for information about serving on the board and what kinds of handouts or written information you give them.

17. Review and revise the topics for discussion and questions asked during screening interviews with prospective board members to include adequate and appropriate references to your anti-racist and anti-oppression principles and practices.

18. Request that all prospective board members briefly address their understanding of and commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression work in any statements made by prospective board members prior to voting at your AGM.

19. Include a clear statement confirming the agency's expectations regarding board members' understanding of and compliance with the anti-racist and anti-oppression policy/policies of the organization in your "Requirements for Board Membership Policy" and/or recruitment, screening, and orientation materials.

Task # 3:   Orientation

The orientation process for board members should also include information about the anti-racist/anti-oppression philosophy and activities of the organization. The orientation package for new board members should include copies of relevant policies, the agency's most recent anti-racism/anti-oppression action plan, and other materials relating to the issue.

Strategies

20. Review and discuss the agency's commitment to an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system during the orientation process.

21. Review and confirm the agency's expectation that all board members understand, support, and comply with the agency's anti-racism and anti-oppression policy/policies during the orientation process.

22. Include copies of relevant policies, the agency's most recent anti-racism/anti-oppression action plan, and other materials relating to this issue, such as definitions of terms and a reading list.

Task # 4:   Retention

Recruiting, screening, and orienting board members in a way that reflects and reinforces your commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression work is an excellent start. Ensuring that your board and your agency remain a welcoming and respectful environment for <u>all</u> board members is also important. It is not enough to simply ensure that marginalized women (and men for those of you who have male board members) have a legitimate place at your board tables; you must also consider how you might need to modify your board processes to ensure that all board members' contributions are valued.

<u>Strategies</u>

23. Conduct board evaluations on an annual basis to gather feedback from current board members regarding their experience of serving on the board of directors and solicit suggestions for improvement and change.

24. Conduct exit interviews with board members at the end of their term of office or when they resign to gather feedback and solicit suggestions for improvement.

Board Management

Board management includes all the administrative system and processes used by the board to ensure that they:

► comply with the requirements articulated in the by-laws and policies of the corporation;

► fulfill their responsibilities in accordance with the needs of the organization;

► function in an efficient and effective manner.

It is the board of directors responsibility to develop and use board procedures designed to ensure that they work together in a respectful, effective manner.

Task #1:   Noncompliance with Policies

The board is responsible for monitoring their compliance with agency policies as individuals and as a group. It is the board of directors' responsibility to deal with any non-compliance with the anti-racism/anti-oppression policy within the board. For example, if an individual board member makes an anti-Semitic comment during a board meeting, the board chair (and possibly other board members depending on the wording of your policy) should be aware of her responsibilities to deal with this situation.

<u>Strategy</u>

25. Ensure that noncompliance with anti-racism/anti-oppression policy within the board of directors is dealt with in a prompt and consistent manner and in accordance with the policy requirements.

CHAPTER FOUR
EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Introduction

Implementing an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system requires a commitment to building an anti-racist, anti-discriminatory agency as discussed in Chapter Two <u>and</u> to developing and using anti-racist and anti-oppression employment practices.

Discrimination and harassment in the workplace are illegal in Canada. The *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Federal Human Rights Code*, the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, and employment equity legislation confirm and protect an individual's right to work in an environment that is free of all forms of discrimination and harassment. These various pieces of legislation all override the *Employment Standards Act*, the *Labour Relations Act*, Letters Patent and agency by-laws, policies and procedures developed by agencies, and collective agreements.

Complying with law is obviously in the best interest of any organization. Ensuring that your employment practices reflect your commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression work is important for other reasons as well. It promotes positive staff morale, cooperative and respectful relationships between coworkers, and quality service delivery.

Recruitment, Screening, and Selection

Task #1: Workforce Composition

Determining the composition of your community/communities will help you develop a realistic and meaningful plan to increase the diversity of your staff group in consideration of the needs of women and children in your region. As we discussed in relation to your board of directors in Chapter Two, you should gather information relating to racialized groups/race, ethnocultural groups, first languages/mother tongues, income levels, religions, ages, disabilities, and sexual orientations/preferences represented throughout your catchment area.

Refer back to pages 15 and 16 in this manual for suggestions on completing a community composition analysis.

Before you can implement a realistic plan to increase the diversity of your staff group, you need to develop an accurate picture of the composition of your current workforce. This is best done using an anonymous, self-identification survey. Employees are asked to indicate their employment status (i.e. permanent vs casual), social identities, and language fluencies (it's not a good idea to ask for "language spoken" as some languages, such as ASL and Bliss, are not actually "spoken").

Some agencies ask staff to complete these surveys on an annual basis as a way to track or evaluate the progress they have made in increasing the diversity of the staff group in relation to the community composition analysis.

Strategies

26. Develop and distribute a simple anonymous survey designed to gather information about the composition of your current workforce with attention to employment status, social identities, and language fluencies.

27. Compile the information gathered using the self-identification surveys and compare this information with your community composition analysis.

28. Develop a realistic step-by- step plan to increase the diversity of your staff group in accordance with your community composition analysis.

Posting, advertising, and hiring procedures may need to be reviewed prior to the implementation of this plan. Careful attention to these issues during collective agreement negotiations may be necessary within unionized work environments. While the rights of current workers must be protected, management and union representatives must find a way to work cooperatively and effectively together to implement the agency's commitment to anti-racist employment practices, including maintaining an appropriately diverse workforce.

29. Maximize diversity within the pool of relief, casual, and contract employees and service volunteers in your agency.

Most anti-violence organizations post vacant positions internally before advertising externally. Past experiences in the organization, either paid or unpaid, is recognized as a valuable asset. In some agencies, women with the most seniority are given the position, assuming they have the skill set required to do the job. For this reason, it is especially important to maximize the diversity within your pool of relief, casual, and contract staff and service volunteers as one part of your overall strategy to increase the diversity within the permanent staff group.

Task # 2: Recruiting to Meet Identified Service Needs

Evaluating the composition of your client group will help you make informed decisions about any specific or changing skill set(s) required by frontline staff. For example, recent changes in government policies and decreased funding for some types of psychiatric services has resulted in a noticeable increase in the numbers of women with significant mental health problems seeking service at shelters. If this pattern continues over time, it may appropriate to include previous experiences working with women with psychiatric disabilities or mental health problems in the qualifications required for the next available frontline position. Similarly, fluency in languages other than English may be identified as a requirement or asset for specific hirings if your agency determines that a significant percentage of your client population speaks language(s) other than English. For example, fluency in various Aboriginal languages may be an asset in shelters located in communities with a high proportion of First Nations/Aboriginal women living both on and off reserve within their catchment area.

Strategies

30. Modify client records or agency evaluation forms as necessary to track changing client needs, use of translators and cultural interpreters, and first languages/mother tongues of clients. Compile this information on an annual basis.

31. Review the most recent information regarding client composition and changing client needs prior to each frontline hiring and modify postings and advertisements as necessary to include specific skill set(s) required to meet identified need(s).

Task #3: Postings/Advertisements

The wording of your job posting and advertisement should reflect your commitment to developing a diverse workforce. Specific wording is more helpful than a general statement confirming your commitment to diversity.   For example, "We are especially interested in receiving applications from First Nations/Aboriginal women and women with disabilities." is more likely to attract applicants from these populations than a general statement, such as "Women from diverse communities are encouraged to apply".

It is also important to think about where you post or advertise the positions available in your agency.   Advertising in mainstream English newspapers and faxing job postings to other anti-violence organizations limits your pool of applicants to women who read these papers and who are currently employed in these organizations.   The majority of women working in anti-violence organizations in Ontario today are white, middle class, heterosexual, non-disabled women with a Christian, English-speaking heritage.

Sending job postings to groups and organizations with connections to the populations you wish to reach and advertising in alternative newsletters and community bulletins is more likely to result in a diverse pool of applicants.

Strategies

32. Change the wording of your job postings and advertisements to include an invitation to apply directed at specific target populations. Target populations should be selected in consideration of your community composition analysis, workforce analysis, and identified service needs.

33. Distribute job postings to cultural and religion groups, community organizations, and other agencies with connections to the target populations identified in the advertisement.

34. Ask applicants where they heard/read about the position during their interview. This will provide you with useful information regarding the success of your outreach efforts.

Task # 4:   Selection and Hiring Practices

The **information that you give applicants prior to their interview** is one of the first opportunities you have to:

► demonstrate your agency's commitment to an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system;

► and outline the requirements for employment with the agency.

For example, if you offer applicants a copy of the job description for the position available and it does not include any references to working with diverse populations or challenging racist and oppressive comments or behaviour within the organization, you have missed an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the importance of these issues to your agency.

Failure to include this kind of information in the job descriptions for your employees also has serious implications for performance appraisals/evaluations and disciplinary procedures as discussed later in this chapter.

The **composition of your hiring committee and the space used to conduct interviews** should also reflect your commitment to diversity, anti-racism, and anti-oppression work.   The composition of the hiring committee should realistically reflect the current diversity within your organization and the interview space should be welcoming to all women.   For example, your stated commitment to anti-oppression work may appear somewhat suspect to a large woman if she walks into a small, crowed interview room set up with a collection of "office" chairs, all of which have arms.

After you have thought about what you want to tell applicants about your agency and the position available prior to the interview, the composition of your hiring committee, and space you will be using for the interview, you should give

careful thought to the interview process itself, including the questions you will ask and the way you will rate or rank applicants. All candidates should be asked the same questions and their responses should be ranked in accordance with a pre-determined point or grading system to ensure consistency and fairness.

The interview offers you another opportunity to demonstrate what is important to your agency and to collect the information you need to determine which candidate best meets the agency's needs. Your interview should include specific questions about each candidate's:

► experience working with diverse populations;

► understanding of and involvement with anti-racism and anti-oppression work;

► and their awareness of how their own experiences with privilege and oppression might influence their job performance and their participation on the staff team.

Strategies

35. Include information about the agency's commitment to an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system, such as the agency's anti-racism/anti-oppression policy, in the information package distributed to job applicants.

36. Clearly state the agency's expectations for employees in relation to anti-racist and anti-oppression work in the job descriptions for all positions in your agency. For example, confirm the agency's expectation that staff challenges and address racist and other oppressive comments and behaviours in the workplace in accordance with relevant policies.

37. Clearly outline the specific skills set(s) required to work with a diverse population within an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system in the qualifications section of the job descriptions for all positions in your agency.

38. Ensure that the composition of your hiring committees accurately reflects the diversity within your organization.

39. Ensure that the space used to conduct job interviews is welcoming to all applicants.

40. Develop standardized interview questions.   Ask all candidates the same questions in the same order.

41. Include questions that explore each candidate's experience working with diverse populations. Use scenarios and behavioural questions to solicit specific information.   For example, ask candidates to outline some of the issues that should be explored when completing an intake interview with a woman who is a wheelchair user.

42. Include questions that explore each candidate's understanding of and involvement with anti-racist and anti-oppression work.

43. Develop and use a pre-determined point system to rank all candidates.

Orientation and Probation

The orientation process for new employees should include information about the anti-racist/anti-oppression philosophy and activities of the organization.   All new employees should be required to confirm that they have read and understand the Mission Statement, Statement of Beliefs and Aims, and policies of the organization prior to the completion of their probationary period. Many organizations find it useful to ask new employees to sign a letter confirming that they have completed this task.

Identifying specific learning commitments for the employee's first three to six months with the organization is an excellent way to demonstrate the agency's commitment to concrete performance indicators and accountability. Learning commitments should relate directly to the employee's job responsibilities and should reflect the agency's commitment to an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system.

For example, it may be appropriate to include a requirement that the employee visit the area's multi-cultural centre and practice/role play at least one intake interview with the assistance of an interpreter.

Strategies

44. Review and discuss the agency's commitment to an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system during the orientation process for new employees.

45. Ask all new employees to sign a letter at the end of their probationary period confirming that they have read, understand, and agree to comply with the Mission Statement/Mandate, Statement of Beliefs and Aims, and policies of the organization.

46. Identify specific learning commitments for each new employee which reflect the employee's specific job responsibilities within the integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system used by the agency.

Retention

Retention refers to your agency's ability to keep the staff it hires employed at the agency. Lots of research and work has been done in the area of retention of female employees in male dominated work fields. If this is a new issue for you, you may find it helpful to review some of this information and consider how it might be adapted and applied in relation to marginalized women within your own work environment.

It is most likely that marginalized women will remain at an agency when they feel welcomed, respected, and included. More specifically, consistency between an agency's stated commitment to an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system and the words, behaviour, and performance of board members and employees increases the likelihood that women with various social identities will stay at a particular agency.

47. Gather information from employees on a regular basis regarding each employee's experience of inclusion. Solicit specific suggestions for improvement.

48. Conduct exit interviews with employees when they resign from the organization to gather feedback and solicit specific suggestions for improving the agency's efforts to create a welcoming, respectful, inclusive environment for all employees and to recruit and retain employees with diverse social identities.

49. Consider scheduling, location, and food supplied at staff meetings, gathering and training sessions in consideration of the diversity represented with the staff group.

Compensation

Compensation refers to the salary and benefits given to an employee in exchange for their labour, their commitment to the organization, and their compliance with the organization's requirements for employment. The compensation given to employees affects their morale, productivity, sense of job satisfaction, and willingness to remain in a particular position or retention.

Many factors influence the compensation package given to employees, including the agency's annual budget, personnel policies, and collective agreements in unionized work environments. Within these constraints, each agency should review its current and projected compensation packages with attention to equity and fairness. Special attention should be directed toward the flexibility allowed within the benefit package to accommodate the needs of lesbians, women with disabilities, and women who celebrate cultural and religious holidays that do not fall on established Canadian or Ontario holidays.

Strategy

50. Secure benefit coverage from a supplier who recognizes and provides same-sex benefits.

51. Review and adjust personnel policies relating to statutory holiday to allow flexible use of paid day in consideration of cultural and religious holidays celebrated by employees.

52. Review and adjust personnel policies relating to sick time credits to allow flexible use of paid days to provide care to young children and/or aging parents and in consideration of any needs identified by women with disabilities on staff.

Performance Management: Supervision and Evaluation

Performance management is an ongoing process. It includes the formal and informal supervision provided to employees as well as regular performance appraisals or evaluations. Most organizations complete evaluations on an annual basis. However, employees have the right to receive regular feedback regarding their performance, including both successes and areas requiring improvement. Annual evaluations provide an opportunity to summarize and review feedback shared with the employee during the year in a more focused manner; nothing shared with the employee during their annual evaluation should come as a "big surprise".

An employer is entitled to assign tasks and evaluate an employee's job performance in accordance with the general and specific responsibilities outlined in the employee's job description. If a performance indicator is <u>not</u> mentioned or addressed in some way in the employee's job description then it <u>cannot</u> be included in their annual evaluation. For this reason, job descriptions for employees working in an anti-racist/anti-discriminatory agency must include clear references to the agency's requirements or expectations in this area.

Job description should include a clear statement confirming an employee's responsibility to provide respectful, equitable, and accessible services to all women in accordance with the agency's integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system. This ensures that the agency has a right to deal with employees who do not meet this expectation.

For example, employees who:

► do not provide interpretation services for women who do not speak English or who are more comfortable talking about difficult or complex issues in their first language/mother tongue;

► offer the best quality donations to white clients

► refuse to assist a woman with mobility impairments when she is using the toilet

► avoid contact with lesbian clients

► instruct a Muslim woman to eat the ham and pineapple dinner that has been prepared for that day

► insist that a Jewish woman must complete her assigned chores on Saturday "just like all the rest of the residents".

Strategies

53. Ensure that specific job requirements and agency expectations relating to working within an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system are clearly stated in agency job descriptions.

54. Ensure that employees receive regular feedback throughout the year regarding their job performance.

55. Ensure that all staff receive regular performance appraisals which include specific learning commitments for the next year.

56. Ensure that management personnel are adequately and appropriately trained to provide regular supervision and performance appraisals for employees working in a diverse work environment.

Disciplinary Processes

Agencies should have clearly written disciplinary policies which outline grounds for disciplinary action and the progressive steps that may be taken against an employee. If an agency has developed a separate anti-racist/anti-oppression policy, the relationship between this policy and the disciplinary action policy should be clearly stated to avoid confusion or misunderstandings.

Strategies

57. Develop a disciplinary action policy which clearly outlines grounds for discipline and the progressive disciplinary process.

58. Cross reference the disciplinary action and anti-racist/anti-oppression policies.

59. Apply disciplinary action in a fair, equitable, and consistent manner.

60. Monitor applications and use of the disciplinary action policy to ensure that differential treatment is not occurring.

Personnel Policy and Procedure Review

All components of an agency's functioning should be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis, including personnel policies, procedures, and practices.

Strategies

61. Develop an efficient and effective process to monitor the application of personnel policies and the employment practices of the agency.

62. Ensure that the agency has access to the services of a lawyer with training and expertise in the area of personnel management, labour relations, human rights, and anti-racism/anti-oppression practices.

CHAPTER FIVE
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Introduction

Implementing an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system demands that we acknowledge that:

♀ women of colour and other marginalized women face racism and other forms of oppression <u>every day of their lives;</u>

♀ <u>racism, other forms of oppression, and sexism overlap or work together</u> in the lives of women of colour and other marginalized women affecting their day-to-day experiences, their personal reactions to woman abuse and other forms of violence, their community/communities reaction to violence, their willingness to reach out for services, and their ability to access meaningful and appropriate services;

♀ women of colour and other marginalized women <u>bring all their experiences of racism and/or other forms of oppression with them</u> when they reach out to our organization for service, including any negative or discriminatory experience they may have had at our agency or another shelter;

♀ women react to crisis, conflict, and violence in <u>different ways;</u>

♀ regardless of the apparent similarities between women using our services and the counsellors working at our agencies, <u>all communication is intercultural</u> (between or across different cultural standards and norms) and all communication is affected by culture and various social identities;

♀ **<u>racism and other forms of oppression exist in our organizations;</u>**

♀ we must recognize, work to understand and appreciate, honour, and celebrate the <u>complex and multiple identities of the women</u> who use our services.

We must work to uncover and eliminate all the subtle and not-so subtle ways we minimize, deny, or avoid dealing with the racism and other forms of oppression present in our own organizations.

Do you ever find yourself;

❑ denying that racism, anti-Semitism, heterosexism or other forms of oppression "really" exist anywhere in Canada today?;

❑ acknowledging that various forms of oppression may exist in some parts of Canada but that racism or other forms of oppression aren't really relevant to the issue of woman abuse?;

❑ or that various forms of oppression may exist in some institutions and laws but aren't really part of day-to-day life in your community?;

❑ or that others may be racist, able-ist, or age-ist, but you're not?;

❑ saying that you'd be more than willing to change if women of colour and other marginalized women would just tell you exactly what it is they want you to do?;

❑ claiming that you just "treat everyone the same" without thinking about how this denies the different realities and experiences women bring to the shelter?;

❑ saying you just can't stand conflict so you'll stay clear of all this "mess" and let everyone else work it out?

These are just some of the many different ways we deny, minimize, or avoid facing the existence of racism and other forms of oppression in our own organizations and in our day-to-day work. These are some of the ways we avoid taking responsibility for our own oppressive attitudes, comments, and behaviour.

These are some of the protections women of/with privilege must be willing to give up to build an anti-racist, anti-discrimination agency.

It is these kinds of attitudes and ideas that result in the needs of women of colour and other marginalized women being ignored or not heard when they reach out to our agencies for service. Making a commitment to implement an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system means making a commitment to hear, perceive, understand, and respond to the needs of marginalized women in accordance with the mandate of your organization.

Implementing an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system demands attention to all aspects of our programs and services, from planning to evaluation.

Community Involvement and Liaison

Task # 1:   Community Consultation

We know a lot about violence against women. We don't know a lot about working effectively with diverse populations of women. There are organizations and community groups throughout the province that can help us learn what we need to know about working with specific groups of women, such as women with disabilities or immigrant and refugee women. These groups may not always have the same awareness or understanding of violence against women as some of us but they have much to teach us about anti-racist and anti-oppression work and working effectively and respectfully with women across social identities.

We must be willing to work cooperatively with various groups and organizations In our region and to seek consultation as necessary when we are developing and implementing an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system.

Strategies

63. Develop a list of community groups and organizations in your region that may be able to provide you with information, resources, and specific suggestions about working with women across social identities.

64. Establish concrete, two-way communication and networking strategies that allow you to exchange information and consult on specific issue with representatives from these community groups and organizations.

Individual outreach to a specific contact person within the group may be appropriate for informal, ongoing consultations.   Requesting to be on the mailing list for those groups with community newsletters may provide you with useful updates and resources materials.   More formal arrangements may be most helpful when you are developing or evaluating specific services or programs.   For example, establishing a **program advisory committee** with representation from groups and organizations that have connections to women of colour and other marginalized women is an excellent way to gather input, solicit feedback, and demonstrate accountability to your regional community/communities.

65. Solicit feedback from community group, organizations, and agencies regarding your programs and services on a regular basis using a simple written or telephone survey. Incorporate this information into your annual program evaluation and strategic planning processes.

Task #2:   Outreach

Gathering information and input from community groups and organizations with connections to marginalized women is an essential prerequisite for program planning, development, and evaluation. Sharing information about your mandate, programs, and services with these same groups is also important. It is one way to ensure that women with various social identities learn about your services.

Distribute information about your agency as widely as possible throughout your region. Consider what kind of wording, pictures, and graphics are most likely to reach your target audience and to convey the message that all women are welcome at your shelter. It may be appropriate to develop different brochures or flyers for different audiences or venues.

<u>Strategies</u>

66. Leave information about your agency at shopping malls, hair salons, doctors' offices, dentist' office, hospitals, community health centres, churches, mosques, temples, synagogues, Native Friendship Centres, drop in centres, housing projects, and cultural food shops.

67. Share information about your agency and specific events in community and alternatives newspapers and newsletters (and in the language used by the newspapers/newsletter).

68. Advertise your services on English and non-English radio programs.

Program Planning and Evaluation

Task #1:   Gathering Input and Soliciting Feedback

Program planning and program evaluation are two closely related processes that help to ensure that your services are meeting the needs of abused women and their children in a meaningful and effective manner.

☆ Gathering input and information from various sources before you plan and implement a new program is an important part of program planning.

☆ Gathering feedback from various sources during or following the delivery of specific services is an important part of program evaluation.

Whenever you are planning and developing new programs or evaluating and revamping existing programs, you should gather and review information from a variety of sources, including input and feedback from:

  ✍ your own staff
  ✍ various community groups, organizations, and agencies in your region as discussed above;
  ✍ past current service users –i.e., review summaries of departure questionnaires; develop a brief survey to explore the need for a specific service; complete exit evaluations during final group sessions; etc.

Questionnaires and surveys distributed to past and current service users should include questions which explore the women's needs and experience across their social identities.

Strategies

69. Gather and review information from various sources, including past and current service users, when planning a new program or revising an existing service.

70. Include specific questions that explore the needs and experiences of women across various social identities when gathering information during a program planning or evaluation process.

71. Compile information gathered from residents in an anonymous manner and ensure that this information is reviewed during strategic planning and program planning processes.

For example, you may want to compile feedback from departure questionnaires on a quarterly basis and include quarterly summaries in packages of information distributed to all board and staff members prior to strategic planning process.

72. Gather and review program evaluation data on a regular basis to ensure that your programs continue to meet the changing needs of women and children using your services.

Program Policies and Procedures

Task # 1:   Ensuring Consistency

Program policies establish the broad parameters and framework of your service delivery system. For example, the criteria for intake and the criteria for termination of service are usually outlined in the service delivery policies of an organization.   The board of directors is responsible for the development of program policies.

Program procedures outline the specific guidelines and processes used during the delivery of service on a day to day basis. For example, the step-by-step process for completing an intake interview and welcoming a woman and her children into your shelter is usually outlined in the service delivery procedures of an organization. Management personnel and frontline staff are responsible for the development of programs procedures in most agencies.

Developing clear and meaningful programs policies and procedures:

    ✍ ensures that staff are aware of the agency's expectations and requirements regarding delivery of services;

    ✍ promotes consistent and equitable service delivery;

    ✍ ensures that service users receive clear information regarding the services available to them and the roles and responsibilities of staff.

The unpredictable nature of shelter work often demands a flexible approach to service delivery, one that allows sole-shifted staff considerable discretion in their day-to-day management of shelter activities and services. However, too much flexibility can lead to inconsistent and inequitable service delivery.

Program procedures should be written that all women and children receive quality services in accordance with the standards and expectations established by the agency, <u>not </u>in accordance with personal preferences and standards of whoever happens to be on shift at any given time. We all need help to "un-learn" the negative and prejudicial attitudes we have absorbed. Program procedures should offer staff support and guidance while protecting and promoting the agency's commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression.

This kind of consistency is especially important when we are talking about expectations placed on residents and consequences for non-compliance with these expectations. For example, house rules should be explained, monitored, and enforced in a consistent manner in order to minimize discretion based on favouritism, bias, or prejudice.

Strategies

73. Develop meaningful and clear service delivery procedures which outline and confirm the way services will be provided to all residents, any expectations the agency has of service users, and consequences for residents should they fail to comply with agency expectations.

74. Review and revise existing procedures as necessary to ensure that they promote consistent, equitable, and respectful service delivery.

75. Develop a standardized package of information to be reviewed with and given to all residents upon intake. Ensure that important procedures, such as house rules, are clearly outlined and reviewed with all residents in a consistent manner. Ensure that all residents receive the same information regarding the service and support available to them – i.e. donations, food requests, etc.

76. Consider developing a large print and audio version of the information given to residents upon intake for women who have limited eye sight or who are unable to read English. Consider having some of the most essential information about your services and expectations for residents written in languages other than English in accordance with information gathered in your community composition analysis.

77. Develop and implement monitoring and supervisory processes which ensure that program procedures are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner.

78. Review and revise program procedures on a regular basis and in accordance with feedback from current and past service users.

Cultural Interpretation and Translation

Task # 1:   Procedures and Guidelines

Clear guidelines and procedures regarding the use of cultural interpreters and translators are an important component of an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system.

Cultural interpretation services may or may not include language translation. The primary role of a cultural interpreter is to ensure that:

▸ a woman's needs, experiences, and comments are considered within the context of her own culture;

▸ the relevance, usefulness, and meaning of any suggestions, strategies, and services offered to the woman by a service provider are considered and evaluated in consideration of her culture.

For example, when meeting a First Nations/Aboriginal woman to discuss her plans for herself and her children it may appropriate to arrange for an elder of the woman's choice to participate in the meeting.

Translation services are language-focused though they often include cultural interpretation as well.

As mentioned above, agencies should have clear written procedures regarding the use of these services. This helps to ensure that these services are made available to women in a consistent and equitable manner and in accordance with the standards and guidelines established by the agency.

Strategy

79. Develop written procedures which clearly outline the agency's expectations regarding the provision of cultural interpretation and translation services.

These procedures should:

? confirm the agency's understanding that interpretation and translation services are an essential component of effective counselling when working with women from diverse populations;

? outline when these service should be provided – i.e., during intake, during counselling meetings, during house meeting, etc.;

? confirm fees and/or other financial supports available for translators and interpreters, such as payment of transportation costs;

? outline how the use of these services is to be monitored and evaluated.

Task #2:   Securing Interpretation and Translation Services

It may be difficult for some agencies to locate and secure these services. Their availability may be limited in your area. Budgetary restrictions may limit how often and under what circumstances you can use these services. Issues of confidentiality may also affect a woman's willingness to access these services and/or influence the agency's willingness to include interpreters in group counselling session or house meetings.

You may have to be particularly resourceful and creative when developing your agency's procedures for securing and arranging interpretation and translation services. For example, developing relationships and partnerships with agencies that have staff who speak languages other than English may increase your ability to access some translation services. If you are unable to pay a fee for translation services, perhaps you could offer to pay transportation costs or provide childcare at your shelter for the interpreter's children during any interviews or meetings.

Strategies

80. Establish a budget for translation and interpretation services.

81. Establish relationships and partnerships with cultural groups, religions associations, and other agencies in your area that have staff who speak languages other than English.

82. Establish criteria and requirements for interpreters and translators with attention to: gender of interpreter; knowledge and understanding of woman abuse; ability to maintain confidentiality; fluency in English and other languages; availability; and ability to translate accurately without negatively impacting on the relationship between the woman/resident and the shelter worker.

Task #3:   Monitoring and Ensuring Quality of Services

Offering interpreters and translators the opportunity to participate in your volunteer training program may help to increase their understanding of issues relating to violence against women and reinforce the importance of confidentiality. Obviously, all interpreters and translators should be required to sign a commitment to confidentiality prior to working at the shelter in any capacity and systems must be established to monitor and address any issues relating to confidentiality as they arise.

It may also be helpful to arrange one or more training sessions for your staff to better prepare them to work effectively with interpreters and translators, especially if this is a new component of your service delivery system. Issues such as the importance of speaking directly to the woman seeking service not the translator and the need to change the rhythm and pace of a house meeting to accommodate translation services should be addressed during the training.

Strategies

83. Provide training to interpreters and translators regarding your agency's mandate, philosophy, beliefs, aims, and service delivery systems.

84. Provide training to staff to ensure that they are able to work effectively and respectfully with interpreters and translators in accordance with the standards and procedures established by the agency.

85. Review residential and counselling procedures to ensure that language and cultural interpretation needs are identified and addressed appropriately.

For example, does your intake process include a standardized opportunity to explore any language or interpretation needs? Is your house meeting structure flexible enough to accommodate translation and/or interpretation services?

86. Monitor and evaluate use of translation and interpretation services on an ongoing and regular basis with attention to patterns of usage and changing needs.   Incorporate this information into your annual budget planning and strategic planning processes.

Intake Processes

Intake and welcoming processes at most shelters are formally or informally divided into several stages. Critical and urgent needs are usually addressed as soon as possible after the woman (and her children) arrive at the shelter. This initial intake generally addresses issue relating to injury/the need for medical care, the need for food and/or sleep, confidentiality, fire safety, and house rules. Other information about the woman's life situation, her needs, shelter routines, and service available is gathered and shared over the next several days.

Task #1:   Creating a Welcoming Atmosphere During Intake

What a woman sees or perceives when she first enters you shelter says a lot about who is welcome here and who works here. Careful attention should be directed toward the décor and set up of the intake/counselling/welcoming room.
What kind of posters and pictures are on the wall? What kinds of chairs and furniture are in the room? Could a wheelchair user or a woman with mobility limitations navigate the room? What kinds of reading material are available?
What kinds of toys are available in the room? Does everything in your intake room reflect a white, heterosexual, middle-class, Christian, non-disabled norm?

Strategy

87. Ensure that the décor, artwork, written materials, and toys available in the intake/counselling/welcoming room (and throughout the shelter) reflect the diversity of women's identities, experiences, and languages.

Task #2: Standardized Intake Process

In addition to what women perceive when they first enter your shelter, you should give careful attention to what kinds of questions workers ask during intake interviews. Individual workers should <u>not</u> be allowed to use their personal discretion regarding issues relating to diversity and client needs.

Shelters should develop and use a standardized intake process in order to ensure that all women receive consistent service and are given an opportunity to identify any specific language, cultural, religious, or health needs <u>regardless of appearance</u>.

For example, the intake process should include questions about a woman's and her children's:

- ► cultural and racialized/racial background;
- ► immigration or refugee status; First Nations/Aboriginal status
- ► first language/mother tongue and other languages spoken
- ► literacy level
- ► need for private space for prayer
- ► health or personal care needs

Strategy

88. Develop a standardized intake process that includes questions which explore all women's/children's language, cultural, religious, dietary, and health needs.

89. Ensure that this information is shared with all staff in an efficient manner.

Residential and Counselling Services

It is beyond the scope of this practical guide to address every aspect of service delivery within an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system. However, we hope that the following guidelines get you started and generate the kind of ongoing discussion needed to support the creation of inclusive spaces for women.

Task #1: Creating Inclusive Spaces

First, you must determine exactly **how many specific programs and services you provide** at your organization and develop a plan to re-examine each of them in consideration of your commitment to implement an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system. Your programs may include telephone crisis intervention and counselling services, face-to-face individual and group counselling, residential services for adults, residential services for children, advocacy and accompaniment services, outreach services, and second stage housing. Each of these programs or services must be revisited and revised as necessary to reflect your commitment to anti-racisms and anti-oppression work.

Second, you must ensure that you understand and acknowledge **the relationship between racism, other forms of oppression, and sexism**. This will enable you to develop a counselling framework and approach that recognizes and works with women and children within the context of their social identities. Your efforts to support and advocate on behalf of a woman will be successful if you do not have an accurate and thorough understanding of how her social identities may influence her ability to access services.

For example, suggesting that a woman with a partner of colour report her most recent assault to the police without considering the fear she might carry about her partner being brutalized by the police or victimized by the justice system represents a failure to consider the interplay between racism and sexism in you society.

Areas where marginalized women typically experience discrimination or harassment include housing, social assistance, education, health care, parenting, immigration, and legal issues such as custody, access to restraining orders, and criminal charges against their partners.

Third, you must have a clear understanding of **your role and responsibility when it comes to advocating on behalf or marginalized women.** Advocacy work has been central to the anti-violence movement since its earliest years; however, we have limited experiences advocating on behalf of marginalized women who are experiencing discrimination or harassment in relation to their social identities. We must not only encourage and support women in their efforts to deal directly with their experiences of discrimination; we must also develop the skills necessary to help women identify acts of discrimination and to advocate on their behalf when invited/asked to do so.

Fourth, you should evaluate specific components of your programs and services to **ensure that women are being treated fairly and consistently** and that appropriate consideration is being given to specific needs relating to their social identities. We discussed this in relation to intake procedures earlier.

Other areas that require this same kind of careful attention include;

- ► shelter routines including staple foods maintained on-site, meal preparation, and bedtime routines;

- ► house rules - are they implemented fairly and consistently regardless of who is on staff?;

- ► resource materials maintained on-site and distributed to women should reflect diverse social populations;

- ► entertainment materials, including videos and music, and casual reading materials, including newspapers, newsletters, and magazines, should also reflect diverse social populations.

- ► books, games, and toys available to children should reflect diverse identities, family compositions, experiences, and languages

- ► shelter furniture and floor plans – does your furniture comfortably accommodate women of various sizes?; are doorways and light switches clearly marked?; do you have scatter rugs and mats throughout the house that might be a hazard for women with mobility impairments?; do you have an audio and visual fire alarm system?

Fifth, you must give careful attention to the **verbal and written language** you use. This words we use reflect and reinforce a particular world view. Creating inclusive spaces for women demands the use of inclusive and respectful languages. Various groups and organizations have developed lists of words that are best used when speaking about or to individuals with various social identities. These can be helpful tools; however, this is an ongoing process and as our understanding of racism and other forms of oppression develop, our choice of words change.

In addition to making a commitment to use inclusive and respectful language, we also need to give consideration to which of our words reflect a predominantly white, middle class experience, such as "counselling", "group session", and "therapy". And we need to think about how different words may mean different things to women with various social identities, such as "family", "violence" and "settling" (as opposed to "bedtime").

Finally, we must be ever vigilant in our efforts to **monitor and address our own racist and discriminatory attitudes and behaviour.** For example, we recognize and celebrate women's anger when it is directed at perpetrators of woman abuse and/or institutions and systems which discriminate against women. However, we tend to assume a more hostile and judgemental attitude towards the anger women may feel and express when they experience racism or anti-Semitism or age-ism in our own agency. Whenever we hear ourselves or our co-workers label a resident as "hard to work with", "too hostile", "so angry", "never satisfied", or "inappropriate to our mandate", we need to check ourselves and each other for racist and discriminatory attitudes which might be affecting our assessment of this woman.

Strategies

90. Identify all the specific programs and services provided by your agency, Confirm goals and objectives of each of these programs.

91. Develop a realistic, step-by-step plan to review each program and service in consideration of your agency's commitment to implement an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system.

92. Promote an understanding of the overlap between racism, sexism and other forms of oppression in the lives of marginalized women amongst staff. Ensure that all aspects of your counselling and advocacy services reflect this understanding.

93. Clarify staff responsibilities with respect to advocating on behalf of a woman who experiences discrimination on the basis of her social identity/identities during her time at the shelter.

94. Ensure that food staples maintained onsite reflect staple requirements of various cultures. Priorities should be developed in consideration of your community composition analysis.

95. Ensure that kitchen supplies available on site allow for various cooking styles. For example, some pots, pans and dishes should be set aside as "non-meat" dishes to accommodate women who maintain a kosher kitchen.

96. Review and monitor application of house rules to ensure that they promote equal access to service and are used in a consistent and fair manner.

97. Ensure that the resources materials, entertainment materials, and toys at the shelter reflect the diversity of women and children's identities, experience, and languages.

98. Review written language used in agency brochures and resources materials in order to ensure that it reflects your commitment to inclusivity and respect.

99. Monitor verbal language used in the shelter by residents, staff, and service volunteers. Develop respectful guidelines for offering alternatives words and challenging racist and oppressive language.

100. Monitor and challenge judgements that may surface about women during their stay with special attention to judgements regarding women's anger and "social skills".

Dealing with Conflict

Task #1:   Understanding Your Role

Women and children who have experienced and witnessed violence may have a limited ability to deal with conflict in a constructive and respectful manner. Some degree of conflict and tension is inevitable in cooperative living situations involving hurt, stressed, and victimized women and children. Women and children staying at shelters often look to staff and service volunteers to see how they interact, how they treat one another, what kind of language they use when they communicate, and how they deal with conflict. Staff members must understand and fulfil their responsibilities as positive role models for respectful intercultural communication and effective conflict resolution.

Staff must also develop and demonstrate the ability to distinguish between conflicts arising out cooperative living situations and conflicts resulting from racist or oppressive comments and actions. Agencies should have different strategies to deal with each of these situations.

Agencies should have clear guidelines for dealing with conflict and allegations of racism or other forms of oppression in resident/resident and staff/resident situations.

Strategies

101. Confirm agency expectation that staff demonstrate a commitment to respectful intercultural communication during all conversations with other staff, service volunteers, community representatives, and residents.

102. Develop clear guidelines for responding to conflict between residents and between staff and residents. Cross reference this procedure to the agency's anti-racism/anti-oppression policy.

103. Provide staff with training in conflict resolution and management and in responding to allegations of racism and other forms of oppression.

CHAPTER SIX
TRAINING

Introduction

We have made several references to training at various points throughout this manual. As mentioned in Chapter One, creating meaningful change depends on thinking <u>and</u> doing, learning <u>and</u> acting. This manual focuses on practical suggestions for change. Training generally focuses on the learning prerequisites for change.

Determining Training Needs

Training may be provided to everyone associated with your agency in an effort to promote a common understanding of an issue or improve the level of skill throughout the agency. Training may also be provided to specific groups in your agency, such as the board of directors, to better prepare the group to fulfill their specific responsibilities. Individual board members or employees may also participate in training sessions or programs designed to target a particular training need.

Given the limited funds available for training in most anti-violence organizations today, it is important that training be scheduled in consideration of the strategic priorities of the agency, identified training needs, and potential benefits to the agency and its clients.

Strategies

104. Develop an efficient method for determining the training priorities for the entire agency, the board of directors, the staff group, service volunteers, and individual employees on an annual basis.

Agency training needs may be best identified during your strategic planning process. Board training needs might be evaluated each year following the Annual General Meeting and orientation of new board members. The staff group should be encouraged to identify group training priorities during their annual evaluations

and program planning processes. The training needs of individual employees are best identified during supervision or as part of the annual performance appraisal process for staff.

>   105. Clearly identify when agency–wide, group training, or individual training is mandatory and when participation is optional.

Resources

Finding the resources necessary to organize and provide training for board members, employees, and service volunteers has become an increasingly difficult and challenging undertaking for shelters. Once again, it is essential that we apply our creative and resourceful energies to this task.

Strategies

>   106. Include discussion of funding allocations for training during budget planning and strategic planning processes.
>
>   107. Explore the feasibility of sharing training cost with several other shelters interested in similar training issues.
>
>   108. Establish formal strategies for individuals to share training materials and lessons learned during off-site training with their colleagues and co-workers.

Some agencies schedule time for "training updates and presentations" during staff meetings. Others include an overview of training sessions attended in their agency newsletter. Still others maintain an annual training binder used to summarize and share all information gathered during training sessions attended by board members, staff, and volunteers during any given year.

Eligibility for Training

Whenever possible, an agency should ensure that all members of a particular group within the organization have access to group training sessions organized by the agency.

For example, when providing training to employees, every effort should be made to include relief staff in some way. Sending a rotating representative of the relief pool to specific training, organizing internal training sessions for relief staff put on by permanent staff who attended the external training, and "borrowing" staff from a sister organization to provide coverage at your shelter while all staff attend an agency wide training event are just some of the different ways you might increase relief staffs' access to training opportunities.

Strategies

109. Explore options for including relief staff in mandatory and optional training sessions organized by the agency.

110. When relief staff are not able to attend agency training for financial reasons, use less expensive ways to share training information with them, such as distributing training materials or arranging an "in house" training session facilitated by a permanent staff member who attended the original training session.

Demonstrating a Continuing Commitment to Anti-Racist and Anti-Oppression Training

As mentioned earlier in this manual, the mandatory orientation process and orientation packages for new board members and new employees should include appropriate and adequate information about the anti-racist and anti-oppression philosophy and practices at your agency in accordance with the roles and responsibilities.

An introduction to this material should also be included in the regular training programs for service volunteers in accordance with their roles and responsibilities in the agency. More specifically, it would be appropriate to introduce service volunteers to:

► the mandate, philosophy, beliefs, and aims of the organization;

► the integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system used by the agency;

▶ the connections and overlap between racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression

▶ basic guidelines for intercultural communications.

The annual training plan for your agency, as discussed above, should include ongoing anti-racism, anti-oppression, and intercultural communications training.

Strategies

111. Include information about the agency's commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression and the integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system implemented by the agency in the training program for service volunteers.

112. Include specific anti-racism, anti-oppression, and intercultural communication training commitments in the annual training plan for the agency.

Choosing a Trainer

Lastly, your agency should establish clear criteria for the selection of facilitators and trainers that reflect the agency's commitment to inclusivity, anti-racism and anti-oppression work, regardless of the topic of training.

CHAPTER SEVEN
CONCLUDING REMARKS

This manual was written by OAITH to serve as a practical guide to help its member agencies create and maintain welcoming, respectful, and inclusive spaces for women and their children. Implementing an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system demands attention to all aspects of your agency's structure and functioning, including its governance structure, foundation documents, policies and procedures, employment practices, and programs and services.

We hope the strategies and suggestions in this manual will help you build an anti-racist, anti-discriminatory agency. You may find the **summary of** strategies in appendix one especially helpful when you are developing a specific anti-racism/anti-oppression work plan for your agency.

> **This manual is a tool. Use it, discuss it, add to it,
> adapt it to fit your organization.**

APPENDIX ONE
SUMMARY OF STRATEGIES

Governance and Foundation Documents

1. Include a clear and simple statement in the by-laws of the corporation that confirms your agency's commitment to the implementation and maintenance of an integrated, anti-racist service delivery system.

2. Include a clear and simple statement in the <u>purpose</u> section of your Mandate/Mission Statement that confirms your agency's commitment to the implementation and maintenance of an integrated, anti-racist service delivery system. (<u>What </u>you will do)

3. Include a brief explanation of why a commitment to an integrated, anti-racist service delivery system is necessary in the "<u>reason to be</u>" section of your Mandate/Mission Statement. (<u>Why</u> you do this)

4. Include a brief overview of the most fundamental components of your anti-racist/anti-oppression philosophy in the <u>philosophy</u> section of your Mandate/Mission Statement.

5. Include clear statements which reflect the anti-racism/anti-oppression beliefs, values, or principles in your Statement of Beliefs and Aims (or equivalent).

6. Include specific aims, goals, or objectives that confirm and demonstrate how the agency will actualize its anti-racist/anti-oppression beliefs and values within the parameters of its overall mandate to provide services to abuse women and their children.

7. Review your existing policy manual and identify changes required <u>throughout the entire manual </u>to reflect your commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression work.

8. Develop a comprehensive anti-racism/anti-oppression policy as outlined in this manual.

9.   Ensure that all revised or new policies are reviewed by all board members, employees, and service volunteers.

10. Ensure that individuals and bodies responsible for monitoring compliance with the policy are aware of their specific responsibilities.

11. Ensure that consequences for non-compliance with the policy expectations are applied consistently throughout the organization (easier said then done, we know, but a policy without consequences for non-compliance is simply a piece of paper!).

12. Review and revise the anti-racism/anti-oppression policy on a regular basis in accordance with your standard procedures for policy review.

13. Confirm the composition of the community/communities in your region with attention to various social identities such as racialized groups/race, ethnocultural groups, first language/mother tongue, income levels, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation/preference, and dis/ability.

14. Include a clear statement in the by–laws or policies of your agency confirming your commitment to maintain board diversity in accordance with the composition of your community.

15. Develop a step-by–step plan to increase the diversity of your board in accordance with your community composition analysis.

16. Review and revise the information you share with prospective board members at all stages of your recruitment and screening process to include adequate and appropriate references to your anti-racist and anti-oppression principles and practices.

17. Review and revise the topics for discussion and questions asked during screening interviews with prospective board members to include adequate and appropriate references to your anti-racist and anti-oppression principles and practices.

18. Request that all prospective board members briefly address their understanding of and commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression work in any statement made by prospective board members prior to voting at your AGM.

19. Include a clear statement confirming the agency's expectations regarding board members' understanding of and compliance with the anti-racist and anti-oppression policy/policies of the organization in your "Requirements for Board Membership Policy" and/or recruitment, screening and orientation materials.

20. Review and discuss the agency's commitment to an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system during the orientation process.

21. Review and confirm the agency's expectation that all board members understand, support, and comply with the agency's anti-racism and anti-oppression policy/policies during the orientation process.

22. Include copies of relevant policies, the agency's most recent anti-racism/anti-oppression action plan, and other materials relating to the issue, such as definitions of terms and a reading list.

23. Conduct board evaluations on an annual basis to gather feedback from current board members regarding their experience of serving on the board of directors and soliciting suggestions for improvement and change.

24. Conduct exit interviews with board members at the end of their term of office or when they resign to gather feedback and solicit suggestions for improvement.

25. Ensure that non-compliance with the anti-racism/anti-oppression policy within the board of directors is dealt with in a prompt and consistent manner and in accordance with the policy requirements.

Employment Practice

26. Develop and distribute a simple anonymous survey designed to gather information about the composition of your current workforce with attention to employment status, social identities, and language fluencies.

27. Compile information gathered using the self-identification surveys and compare this information with your community composition analysis.

28. Develop a realistic step-by-step plan to increase the diversity of your staff group in accordance with your community composition analysis.

29. Maximize diversity within the pool of relief, casual and contract employees and service volunteers in your agency.

30. Modify client records or agency evaluation forms as necessary to track changing client needs, use of translators/cultural interpreters, and first language/mother tongues of clients. Compile this information on an annual basis.

31. Review the most recent information regarding client composition and changing clients needs prior to each frontline hiring and modify postings and advertisements as necessary to include specific skill set(s) required to meet identified need(s).

32. Change the wording of your job posting and advertisements to include an invitation to apply directed at specific target populations. Target populations should be selected in consideration of your community composition analysis, workforce analysis, and identified service needs.

33. Distribute job posting to cultural and religious groups, community organizations, and other agencies with connections to the target population identified in the advertisement.

34. Ask applicants where they heard/read about the position during their interview. This will provide you with useful information regarding the success of your outreach efforts.

35. Include information about the agency's commitment to an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system, such as the agency's anti-racism/anti-oppression policy, in the information package distributed to job applicants.

36. Clearly stated the agency's expectations for employees in relation anti-racist and anti-oppression work in the job descriptions for all positions in your agency. For example, confirm the agency's expectation that staff challenge and address racist and other oppressive comments and behaviours in the workplace in accordance with relevant policies.

37. Clearly outline the specific skill set(s) required to work with a diverse population within an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system in the qualifications section of the job descriptions for all positions in your agency.

38. Ensure that the composition of your hiring committees accurately reflects the diversity within your organization.

39. Ensure that the space used to conduct job interviews is welcoming to all applicants.

40. Develop standardized interview questions. Ask all candidates the same questions in the same order.

41. Include questions that explore each candidate's experience working with diverse populations. Use scenarios and behavioural questions to solicit specific information. For example, ask candidates to outline some of the issues that should be explored when completing an intake interview with a woman who is a wheelchair user.

42. Include questions that explore each candidate's understanding of and involvement with anti-racist and anti-oppression work.

43. Develop and use a pre-determined point system to rank all candidates.

44. Review and discuss the agency's commitment to an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system during the orientation process for new employees.

45. Ask all new employees to sign a letter at the end of their probationary period confirming that they have read, understand, and agree to comply with the Mission Statement/Mandate, Statement of Beliefs and Aims, and policies of the organization.

46. Identify specific learning commitments for each new employee which reflect the employee's specific job responsibilities within the integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system used by the agency.

47. Gather information from employees on a regular basis regarding each employee's experience of inclusion. Solicit specific suggestions for improvement.

48. Conduct exit interview with employees when they resign from the organization to gather feedback and solicit suggestions for improving the agency's effort to create a welcoming, respectful, inclusive environment for all employees.

49. Consider scheduling, location, and food supplied at staff meetings, gatherings, and training sessions in consideration of the diversity represented with the staff group.

50. Secure benefit coverage from a supplier who recognizes and provides same-sex benefits.

51. Review and adjust personnel policies relating to statutory holidays to allow flexible use of paid days in consideration of cultural and religious holiday celebrated by employees.

52. Review and adjust personnel policies relating to sick time credits to allow flexible use of paid days to provide care to young children and/or aging parents and in consideration of any needs identified by women with disabilities on staff.

53. Ensure that specific job requirements and agency expectations relating to working within an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system are clearly stated in agency job descriptions.

54. Ensure the employees receive regular feedback throughout the year regarding their job performance.

55. Ensure that all staff receive regular performance appraisals which include specific learning commitment for the next year.

56. Ensure that management personnel are adequately an appropriately trained to provide regular supervision and performance appraisals for employees working in a diverse work environment.

57. Develop a disciplinary action policy which clearly outlines grounds for discipline and the progressive disciplinary process,

58. Cross reference the disciplinary action and anti-racist/anti-oppression policies.

59. Apply disciplinary action in a fair, equitable, and consistent manner.

60. Monitor application and use of the disciplinary action policy to ensure that differential treatment is not occurring.

61. Develop and efficient and effective process to monitor the application of personnel policies and the employment practices of the agency.

62. Ensure that the agency has access to the services of a lawyer with training and expertise in the area of personnel management, labour relations, human rights, and anti-racist/anti-oppression practices.

Programs and Services

63. Develop a list of community groups and organizations in your region that may be able to provide you with information, resources, and specific suggestions about working with women across social identities.

64. Establish concrete, two-way communication and networking strategies that allow you to exchange information and consult on specific issues with representatives from these community groups and organizations.

65. Solicit feedback from community groups, organizations, and agencies regarding your programs and services on a regular basis using a simple written or telephone survey.   Incorporate this information into your annual program evaluation and strategic planning processes.

66. Leave information about your agency at shopping malls, hair salons, doctors' offices, dentist' offices, hospitals, community health centres, churches, mosques, temples, synagogues, Native Friendship Centres, drop in centres, housing projects, and cultural food shops.

67. Share information about your agency and specific events in community and alternative newspapers and newsletters (and in the language used by the newspaper/newsletter).

68. Advertise your service on English and non-English radio programs.

69. Gather and review information from various sources, including past and current service users, when planning a new program or revising an existing service.

70. Include specific questions that explore the needs and experiences of women across various social identities when gathering information during a program planning or evaluation process.

71. Compile information gathered from residents in an anonymous manner and ensure that this information is reviewed during strategic planning and program planning processes.

72. Gather and review program evaluation data on a regular basis to ensure that your programs continue to meet the changing needs of women and children using your services.

73. Develop meaningful and clear service delivery procedures which outline and confirm the way services will be provided to all residents, any expectations the agency has of service users, and consequences for residents should they fail to comply with agency expectations.

74. Review and revise existing procedures as necessary to ensure that they promote consistent, equitable, and respectful service delivery.

75. Develop a standardized package of information to be reviewed with and given to all residents upon intake. Ensure that important procedures, such as house rules, are clearly outlined and reviewed with all residents in a consistent manner. Ensure that all residents receive the same information regarding the services and supports available to them - i.e. donations, food requests, etc.

76. Consider developing a large print and audio version of the information given to residents upon intake for women who have limited eye sight or who are unable to read English. Consider having some of the most essential information about your services and expectations for residents written in languages other than English in accordance with information gathered in your community composition analysis.

77. Develop and implement monitoring and supervisory processes which ensure that program procedures are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner.

78. Review and revise programs procedures on a regular basis and in accordance with feedback received from current and past service users.

79. Develop written procedures which clearly outline the agency's expectations regarding the provision of cultural interpretation and translation services.

80. Establish a budget for translation and interpretation services.

81. Establish relationships and partnerships with cultural groups, religion associations, and other agencies in your area that have staff who speak languages other than English.

82. Establish criteria and requirements for interpreters and translators with attention to: gender of interpreter; knowledge and understanding of woman abuse; ability to maintain confidentiality; fluency in English and other languages; availability; and ability to translate accurately without negatively impacting on the relationship between the woman/resident and the shelter worker.

83. Provide training to interpreters and translators regarding your agency's mandate, philosophy, beliefs, aims, and service delivery systems.

84. Provide training to staff to ensure that they are able to work effectively and respectfully with interpreters and translators in accordance with the standards and procedures established by the agency.

85. Review residential and counselling procedures to ensure that language and cultural interpretation needs are identified and addressed appropriately.

86. Monitor and evaluate use of translation and interpretation services on an ongoing and regular basis with attention to patterns of usage and changing needs. Incorporate this information into your annual budget planning and strategic planning processes.

87. Ensure that the decor, artwork, written materials, and toys available in the intake/counselling/welcoming room (and throughout the shelter) reflect the diversity of women's identities, experiences, and languages.

88. Develop a standardized intake process that includes questions which explore all women's/children's language, cultural, religious, dietary, and health needs.

89. Ensure that this information is shared with all staff in an efficient manner.

90. Identify all the specific programs and services provided by your agency. Confirm goals and objectives of each of these programs.

91. Develop a realistic, step–by–step plan to review each program and service in consideration of your agency's commitment to implement an integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system.

92. Promote an understanding of the overlap between racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression in the lives of marginalized women amongst staff. Ensure that all aspects of your counselling and advocacy services reflect this understanding.

93. Clarify staff responsibilities with respect to advocating on behalf of a woman who experiences discrimination on the basis of her social identity/identities during her time at the shelter.

94. Ensure that food staples maintained onsite reflect staple requirements of various cultures. Priorities should be developed in consideration of your community composition analysis.

95. Ensure that kitchen supplies available on site allow for various cooking styles. For example, some pots, pans, and dishes should be set aside as "non-meat" dishes to accommodate women who maintain a kosher kitchen.

96. Review and monitor applications of house rules to ensure that they promote equal access to service and are used in a consistent and fair manner.

97. Ensure that the resource materials, entertainment materials, and toys at the shelter reflect the diversity of women and children's identities, experiences, and languages.

98. Review written language used in agency brochures and resources materials in order to ensure that it reflects your commitment to inclusivity and respect.

99. Monitor verbal language used in the shelter by residents, staff, and service volunteers. Develop respectful guidelines for offering alternatives words, and challenging racist and oppressive language.

100. Monitor and challenge judgements that may surface about women during their stay with special attention to judgements regarding women's anger and "social skills".

101. Confirm agency expectations that staff demonstrate a commitment to respectful intercultural communication during all conversations with other staff, service volunteers, community representatives, and residents.

102. Develop clear guidelines for responding to conflict between residents and between staff and residents. Cross reference this procedure to the agency's anti-racism/anti-oppression policy.

103. Provide staff with training in conflict resolution and management and in responding to allegations of racism and other forms of oppression.

Training

104. Develop an efficient method for determining the training priorities for the entire agency, the board of directors, the staff group, service volunteers, and individual employees on an annual basis.

105. Clearly identify when agency –wide, group training, or individual training is mandatory and when participation is optional.

106. Include discussion of funding allocations for training during budget planning and strategic planning processes.

107. Explore the feasibility of sharing training cost with several other shelters interested in similar training issues.

108. Establish formal strategies for individuals to share training materials and lessons learned during off–site training with their colleagues and co-workers.

109. Explore options for including relief staff in mandatory and optional training sessions organized by the agency.

110. When relief staff are not able to attend agency training for financial reasons, use less expensive ways to share training information with them, such as distributing training materials or arranging an "in house" training sessions facilitated by a permanent staff member who attend the original training session.

111. Include information about the agency's commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression and the integrated, anti-racist, feminist service delivery system implemented by the agency in the training program for service volunteers.

112. Include specific anti-racism, anti-oppression, and intercultural communication training commitments in the annual training plan for the agency.

APPENDIX TWO
DEFINITIONS RELATING TO ANTI-OPPRESSION WORK

Introduction

Historically, the anti-violence and feminist movements have focussed on the common bond between all women. The perceived "common bond" between all women as real or potential victims of sexism and male violence has served as a unifying principle in the anti-violence and feminist movements for the past two decades. The many differences between and amongst women, as individuals and groups, have often been ignored or denied. Over the past decade, the feminist and anti-violence movements have begun to acknowledge the importance of recognizing and honouring these differences. This had been and continues to be a difficult and painful process as marginalized individuals and privileged individuals struggle to identify, address and resolve the power imbalances, discrimination and exclusionary practices that exist in our various cultures.

A common understanding of frequently used words and phrases is an important prerequisite for and component of successful communication and exchange between the many different women committed to social change. The following basic definitions are provided in an effort to promote such understanding; however, our understanding of these terms continues to evolve all the time and consequently, it should not be assumed that these are the "best", "most correct" or only suitable or acceptable definitions for these words.

BIAS

An attitude or frame of mind that causes us to prejudge individuals and groups in a positive light. This positive judgement, usually based upon myths, assumptions, and historic patterns or trends, often develops into a collection of "common sense notions" which become widely accepted and are used to justify acts which favour these individuals or groups. Generally considered to be the opposite of prejudice as defined below.

DISCRIMINATION

The granting and/or denying of certain rights, such as housing, education, or employment, to specific groups. Discriminatory attitudes and behaviour result in both personalized and systemic mistreatment, disempowerment, exclusion, and marginalization of individuals and groups.

The federal and provincial *Human Rights Code* state that every person has the right to equal treatment in employment and the delivery and use of services without discrimination based on race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, record of offenses or "handicap" (disability). These are referred to as "prohibited grounds" in the legislation.

The *Ontario Human Rights Code* identifies and prohibits three types of discrimination;

> ► overt or ill intent discrimination – refers to overt or admitted act, practice, or policy that results in equal, unfair, or unfavourable treatment of a person or group because of prohibited grounds;

> ► unequal or differential treatment discrimination – refers to a covert or concealed act, practice, or policy that results in unequal, unfair, or unfavourable treatment of a person or group because of prohibited grounds;

> ► systemic or constructive discrimination – refers to an act, practice, or policy that is applied consistently to all people in an organization but which results in unequal, unfair, or unfavourable treatment of a person or group such as exclusion from promotion, because of prohibited grounds.

Including this final type of discrimination in the Code, systemic or constructive discrimination, makes discrimination illegal even if it was unintentional.

The term "reverse discrimination" has recently gained acceptance in many circles. Individuals committed to anti-oppression work should make an effort to challenges the use of this term whenever possible.

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While anyone can treat another person in a disrespectful or cruel manner, individuals and group who do not have access to and control over systems of personal, legal, economic, and political power and authority can not deny, restrict, or limit the choices or options available to someone who does have access to such power and therefore, there is no such thing as "reverse discrimination".

DIVERSITY

Diversity implies a recognition and inclusion of the many different groups within our local, regional, continental, and global communities, including but not necessarily limited to racialized minorities/persons of colour, Aboriginal, Indigenous, and First Nations peoples, immigrants and refugees, ethno-cultural populations, religions, persons with disabilities, lesbians, and transgendered, bisexual, and gay women and men.

An appreciation for and respectful recognition of diversity goes far beyond accepting or tolerating difference. A sincere commitment to promoting and respecting diversity within an organization is a transformative process which demands a re-examination of:

- virtually all values, opinions, assumption, and beliefs;
- music, food, clothing and art preferences;
- attitudes towards relationships, family, and raising children;
- and language and modes of communication.

A commitment to diversity amongst the employees and volunteers at a social service organization:

✓ improves accessibility and quality of service to all persons;

✓ is compatible with a commitment to anti-oppression work;

✓ demonstrates an understanding and respect of the right of marginalized peoples to be included and recognized as valuable contributors within work environments, our community and social justice movements.

HARASSMENT

The *Ontario Human Rights Code* defines harassment as a vexatious ("hard to cope with", "troubling to the nerves or peace of mind") comment or behaviour that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. Harassment include words, actions and/or gestures which are offensive to an individual and which insult, humiliate, demean, and/or undermine a person's worth and dignity.

Sexual harassment is defined as vexatious comments or behaviour of a sexual nature that is known or ought reasonable to be known to be unwelcome. It is also used to describe situations where an employee's right to employment, compensation, benefits, and/or promotion is compromised as a result of sexual pressures or demands.

MARGINALIZATION

Behaviours, actions, policies, and social institutions that serve to keep various forms of power and privilege away from specific individual and groups. Denying individuals and group access to educational, social, legal, and economic resources ensure that they remain "on the margin" or disadvantaged.

OPPRESSION

Oppression is generally used to described a system of historic and systemic discrimination which is actively and consciously maintained through the use of a wide variety of tools and strategies including misinformation, fear, institutional and individual violence, and economic control.

A system of oppression, such as sexism, racism, classism, and heterosexism, is built upon and reinforces myths, negative assumptions, and stereotypes. It ensures that access to and use of various forms of power, control, and authority remains in the hands of the privileged group, in the examples listed above, men, white people, wealthy people, and heterosexual people.

Anti-oppression work requires an active commitment and use of energy and resources to examine, unpack, and challenge historic, unspoken, and often unexamined attitudes and behaviours.

Our understanding of various systems of oppression is constantly evolving and for this reason, any list of oppressions should never be consider complete or final:

Able – ism – the belief in the superiority and dominance of nondisabled, "emotionally stable" as defined by the medical profession, smart people over persons with physical, psychological/emotional/psychiatric, or developmental/intellectual disabilities.

Age – ism – the belief in the superiority of one age group over another. The dominant culture in North America today (i.e. white, Anglo-Saxon) is youth- supremist.

Anti – Semitism – hostility towards and discrimination against Jews as individuals and as a group.

Classism – to order or rank people according to their economic status, Access to economic and/or education resources, and/or ancestral Heritage; and to assign superiority to those with access to more economic and educational resources and/or "proper" (i.e., white, British, wealthy) heritage.

Heterosexism – the belief in the superiority and dominance of heterosexual over bisexual, transgendered, gay and lesbian women and men.

Homophobia – the irrational fear and dislike of bisexual, transgendered, gay and lesbian women and men.

Misogyny – the hatred of women.

Racism – the belief in the superiority and dominance of one race over another. The world today is white supremist.

Sexism – the belief in the superiority and dominance of one sex over another. The world today is male supremist.

Size-ism – the belief in the superiority and dominance of one body shape and size over another. The dominant culture in North America today (i.e. white, Anglo-Saxon) is slim-supremist.

Some individuals may be doubly, triply, or multiply marginalized and oppressed. For example, a working class, black lesbian with a disability. While it is important that we recognize and strive to understand the different oppressions any one person may experience, it is equally important that we resist the temptation to "hierarchize" or rank these oppressions.

> **As with other forms of violence, it is the experience of the marginalized individual or group, not the intent or motivation of the oppressor which must be given priority attention during any exploration of these issues.**

PREJUDICE

An attitude or frame of mind that causes us to prejudge individuals and groups in a negative light. This negative judgement, usually based upon myths, assumptions, and historic patterns or trends, often develops into a collection of "common sense notions" that become widely accepted and are used to justify acts of discrimination which disadvantage individuals or groups.

Generally considered to be the opposite of bias as defined above.

PRIVELEGE

The collection of advantages, rights, and various forms of power assigned to and protected by majority and/or dominant groups.

STEREOTYPE

An exaggerated belief of collection of beliefs and or an oversimplified and generalized belief or collection of beliefs about a group or category of people. For example, "all this type of people are like that...".

NOTES