BOARD POLICY	
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Policy Name: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	**Date Approved:** June 13, 2023
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Board Governance Policy – Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

As stewards for the organization, the Board works to advance equity, value diversity, and create inclusion as fundamental actions underlying the work we do to support the Mission and Values, and the Strategic Plan.

As such the Board is committed to,

- ✓ Building Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) into the organization's work and modelling this commitment as we advance our Mission.
- ✓ Creating an organization culture in which all people are safe, respected, included, and equal.
- ✓ Valuing and celebrating human diversity and uniqueness.
- ✓ Upholding the Human Rights Code as we actively welcome, appreciate and protect the dignity and worth of all people.
- ✓ Respecting how individuals define their identity and how they express their differences.
- ✓ Eliminating racism, oppression and injustice within our governance, operations, systems of service and individual actions.
- ✓ Working for EDI because it is good for our organization, it is the right thing to do and most importantly it is centred on and supports our collective liberation.

To support the above commitments, the following principles will act as guideposts for both governance and operations:

- Social identity and oppression are complex concepts that have many intersecting relationships.
- Power and privilege are relative to one's social location or place in society.
- People experience unjust barriers, disparity and disproportionality because of historical legacies including but not limited to colonialism, patriarchy, racism, and capitalism.

- Anti-oppression and anti-racism (AO-AR) work demands that we disrupt power and oppression.
- Ongoing dialogue and courageous conversations are necessary to advance AO-AR work.
- Systemic racism and oppression are embedded in our social structures and systems and hidden in our policies, procedures, and practices, privileging some groups and disadvantaging others. This is the result of unexamined ideas and historical legacies that support and often promote white supremacy, westernized practices, colonial beliefs as well as racist and oppressive behaviours.
- Identifying and removing barriers rooted in oppression and racism is key to creating safe, respectful, and inclusive spaces. Often this requires fundamental changes in policies and practices.
- This work is ongoing, and each individual and organization are at different places on this journey. It requires unlearning and re-learning, humility and advocacy, reflection and action.
- Measures of success must be guided and determined by the people we are working with to achieve equity and inclusion.

PROCEDURE

With respect to Governance, the Board of Directors will be intentional in its efforts to:

1. Openly support and prioritize equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in our governance work.

2. Examine Board practices in order to create more inclusive opportunities and spaces. This should include but is not limited to nominating, recruitment, leadership development and education.

3. Create opportunities for dialogue and reflection on one's own power and privilege and how this manifests itself at the Board table.

4. Recognizes the Board's role and responsibility in addressing and eliminating systemic racism within our organization and the community at large.

5. Ensure that oppressive language and images are not used in Board communications, policies, procedures, and practices through the application of an equity lens.

6. Connect and where appropriate and collaborate with other Board's governing organizations in support of equity and inclusion.

7. Participate in education and training to develop our Board's cultural competency and anti-racist and anti-oppression practice.

8. Regularly review, monitor and uphold all formal Equity and Inclusion commitments made by the Board, which include but is not limited to,
    a. Our Mission and Values
    b. Our Strategic Plan
    c. The Declaration of Commitment to Indigenous People
    d. French Language Services.

9. Hold ourselves and each other accountable to the guidelines and procedures in this policy by moving beyond intellectualizing this work to doing this work.

10. Monitor operations according to policy to ensure EDI is integrated into the Centre's operations, its services, human resources, and continuous quality improvement program.

DEFINITIONS:

Human Rights Code prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, gender expression, disability, colour, creed, age, marital status, family status, reprisal, receipt of public assistance, record of offences and discrimination because of association.

Advocacy refers to ensuring that, both internally and externally, policies and services seek to eradicate systemic barriers that support racism and oppression.

An Ally is someone from a privileged group who is aware of how oppression works and struggles alongside members of an oppressed group to take action to end oppression. An ally does not put their own needs, interests, and goals ahead of the people they are working with; has self-awareness of their own identity, privilege, and role in challenging oppression; and is engaged in continual learning and reflection about various cultures and their history.

Allyship is "an active and consistent practice of using power and privilege to achieve equity, inclusion, and justice while holding ourselves accountable to marginalized people's needs" (Michelle Mijung Kim, CEO Awaken).

Anti-oppressive practice promotes equality and power sharing for all people. It challenges existing social relationships in which powerful groups maintain power and influence over less powerful groups. It includes specific practice behaviours and relationships that minimize power imbalances and promotes equity and empowerment for users of service. *(Corneau & Stergiopoulos, 2012).*

Anti-Black Racism is prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping and discrimination that is directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement. Anti-Black racism is deeply entrenched in Canadian institutions, policies, and practices, such that anti-Black racism is either functionally normalized or rendered invisible to the larger white society. Anti-Black racism is manifested in the legacy of the current social, economic, and political marginalization of

African Canadians in society such as the lack of opportunities, lower socio-economic status, higher unemployment, significant poverty rates and overrepresentation in the criminal justice system. *(African Canadian Legal Clinic).*

Anti-Indigenous Racism: The unique nature of stereotyping, bias and prejudice about Indigenous peoples in Canada that is rooted in the history of settler colonialism. It is the ongoing race-based discrimination, negative stereotyping, and injustice experienced by Indigenous peoples in Canada that perpetuates power imbalances, systemic discrimination and inequitable outcomes stemming from the colonial policies and practices. *(In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care, November 2020)*

Anti-racism is a process of actively identifying and opposing racism. The goal of anti-racism is to challenge racism and actively change the policies, behaviours, and beliefs that perpetuate racist ideas and actions. Anti-racism is rooted in action. It is about taking steps to eliminate racism at the individual, institutional, and structural levels. *(Cherry, K., 2020 from https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-anti-racism-5071426)*

Collective Liberation means recognizing that all of our struggles are intimately connected, and that we each play a critical role in upholding and dismantling systemic oppressions that ultimately impact us all. *(Michelle Mijung Kim, Awaken CEO)*

Cultural Competency is defined as a set of values, behaviours, attitudes, and practices within a system, organization, and program or among individuals, which enables them to work effectively, cross culturally. Further, it refers to the ability to honor and respect the beliefs, language, interpersonal styles and behaviours of individuals and families receiving services, as well as staff who are providing such services. Striving to achieve cultural competence is a dynamic, ongoing, developmental process that requires a long-term commitment. Our focus on cultural competency includes but is not limited to race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, ability, religion, and language.

Cultural Safety is an outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in the service system. It results in an environment that is free of racism, discrimination, and oppression, where people feel safe receiving services *(adopted from First nations Health Authority – Creating a Climate of Change)*

Equity is the fair and respectful treatment of all people and involves the creation of opportunities and reduction of disparities in opportunities and outcomes for diverse communities. It also acknowledges that these disparities are rooted in historical and contemporary injustices and disadvantages.

Diversity includes a wide range of expressions and experiences, including gender identities, ethno-racial identities, sexual orientations, abilities, and other identity factors. It is about understanding and valuing each other and moving beyond simple tolerance.

Employment Equity supports the selection, hiring, training, promotion, and retention of qualified and/or potentially qualified individuals. It ensures that barriers against persons in designated groups resulting from the organizational systems, policies and practices are identified and eliminated.

Inclusion is an outcome to ensure those that are diverse actually feel and/or are welcomed. It is the degree to which diverse individuals can participate fully in the processes and opportunities within an organization, group, or community. The process of inclusion engages people by helping them feel valued and essential to the success of the organization.

Respect is the act of recognizing and valuing different views, values, orientations, histories, and cultures of diverse groups, while aligning with Human Rights legislation, the Centre's mission statement, Code of Conduct, and any other relevant agency policies.