



An Integrated Anti-Oppression Framework for Reviewing and Developing Policy

A Toolkit for Community Service Organizations



ending violence against women



United Way
Greater Toronto

Springtide Resources Inc.
2008

Acknowledgements

This toolkit was developed as part of Phase II of the Integrating Anti-Oppression project funded by the United Way of Toronto. Phase I of the project was funded by the City of Toronto.

The Integrating Anti-Oppress project was initiated by Springtide Resources with the goal of creating a tool that would support community service organizations to consistently integrate their anti-oppression learning into practice.

Special Thanks to:

The workers and organizations who participated in the focus group and evaluation process for their valuable insight.

Tannis Atkinson – plain language edit
Yoon Hee Park – format and design

My colleagues: Fran, Sarah, Angie and Marsha who supported the work with their comments and feedback.

Guide Developed by:
Margaret Alexander, Program Manager
Springtide Resources, 2008



Funded by:



Table of Contents

Part 1. Introduction	1
Why do we need to look at policies?	1
Aim of this toolkit	1
What community organizations can do to challenge social inequality	2
Who should take the lead?	2
The goal of this toolkit	3
History of this project	3
What is integrated anti-oppression?	4
Principles of integrated anti-oppression	4
How is it different from other approaches to equity?	5
Barriers and challenges to integrated anti-oppression	6
Part 2. Applying integrated anti-oppression to policies	9
The five steps in integrated anti-oppression policy review	9
Step 1: Set a schedule for reviewing policies	10
Step 2: Create a work plan	11
Step 3: Set up a Policy Review Committee	12
Step 4: Review the organization’s policies	14
How accessible are your policies?	15
How do our policies affect different people?	17
What are the gaps in policy, and what can we do to make changes?	19
Step 5: Make recommendations	21
Part 3. Appendices	24
Appendix A: Forms	25
Plan for policy review	26
Work plan	27
How accessible is this policy?	28
How does this policy affect different people?	29
Policy gaps and what we can do	30
Report of recommendations	31
Appendix B: Sample Terms of Reference – Policy Review Committee	32
Appendix C: Sample Conflict Resolution Guidelines – Policy Review Committee	33
Appendix D: Sampel Decision Making Chart	35
Appendix E: Framework for policy review and development	36
Appendix F: Glossary of Anti-Oppression Terms	41
Appendix G: Focus Group Findings	46
Focus group participants	47
Appendix H: References	48

Part 1. Introduction

Why do we need to look at policies?

Consider the following situation:

Three statutory holidays occur in a one-week period: Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. Thinking that the office is quiet and staff would probably like the time off, the Board and Executive Director decide to create a policy that closes the office for the week between Christmas and New Year. They are pleased to think that this gives employees a few extra days of paid time off.

At first glance this arrangement seems to benefit the staff of this organization. After all, who wouldn't like extra paid time off in the year? The answer is that we would all like extra days off with pay. However, there are several equity issues raised in this scenario.

Aim of this toolkit

The aim of this tool kit is to help organizations review and consider changes to policies such as these to make sure that they are equitable for all employees and members, and for their community.

The suggestions and checklists in this guide are designed to help foster discussions that will allow us to apply an anti-oppression analysis to our current policies and to the policies that we create in the future. The questions in the checklists are offered as a place to start, but please note that many other questions should arise throughout the discussion.

Back to the scenario. What are the equity issues it raises? To apply an anti-oppression analysis, begin the discussion by asking two questions:

- Who benefits from this policy?
- Who does not benefit from this policy? Or benefits differently?

The answers will identify what parts of the policy are not equitable. The next stage of the work is discussion that focuses on ideas for change, looks at the possibilities for change and makes some recommendations about what the organization could do. In effect, these are the main steps in the work of applying integrated anti-oppression to an organization's policies.

This toolkit provides a practical tool that allows organizations to apply integrated anti-oppression practice to their policies. It is for Executive Directors, Program Managers, Boards of Directors and others who are responsible for reviewing and updating policies in community service organizations. We hope it will support individuals who have completed general anti-oppression training and who want to put their learning into practice.

What community organizations can do to challenge social inequality

Social inequality is embedded in our individual values and beliefs, and the systems and institutions we create reflect these inequalities. Therefore, change must begin with individuals transforming ourselves. We can do this by challenging our perceptions and assumptions, critically analyzing what we “know” and recognizing power in interpersonal relationships. However, anti-oppression work cannot end there. For any real change to happen, we must also work to restructure systems and institutions.

Community service organizations can be at the forefront of anti-oppression work. They mostly work with people who are disenfranchised, diminished and marginalized, and often the workers come from the community they serve. The workers’ strength and knowledge come from their lived experience of being marginalized.

Community service organizations can challenge social inequality in vital ways. Their guidelines and principles of engagement are innovative and radical because they believe in what they are doing. They try to provide services in ways that promote dignity, respect and empowerment.

Every organization’s mission statement or mandate states the agency’s vision. These statements are lofty goals. Their purpose is to keep the organization grounded in a common purpose and reason for being. Policies exist to tell people how to enact the mission and mandate. They provide guidelines for action. From policies come the procedures which give people instructions about what to do. Developing and reviewing policies is a vital process that can help community service organizations consistently apply their anti-oppression practice.

No matter what approach we take to challenging social inequality, change takes time. There is no quick and easy way to do this work.

Who should take the lead?

To do integrated anti-oppression work, organizations should first understand all the ways in which individuals hold power and how they use their power. Begin by asking yourself, **“In our organization, which people make the decisions that affect other people’s access to resources?”** Most often the answer is, “Those who hold interpersonal and systemic positions of power in the organization.” The lived experiences of those individuals are most often reflected in the policies and practices of the organization. Policies, whether societal or institutional, are created from social norms; they can reinforce hierarchies and can keep people from being involved. Policies that have integrated anti-oppression practices **can** create inclusion, connection and shared vision.

It is important to acknowledge that there are contradictions inherent in attempting to apply an integrated anti-oppression framework to policies in a hierarchical structure. A hierarchical organization cannot function within an anti-oppression framework unless its leaders show that they are committed to this approach.

Executive Directors and Boards of Directors are in positions of power. They set the agency's direction. They have the authority to create an inclusive environment and to make sure that anti-oppression practice is the norm. For example, Executive Directors need to examine how power is held and actualized both personally and structurally. They also need to identify how classism, racism, sexism, ableism and other forms of oppression may be manifesting through their position and other positions of power in the organization.

To support integrated anti-oppression work, board members and Executive Directors must allocate funds and staff time to develop programs and practices that will make sure that knowledge about difference, diversity and oppression are directing the work. They need to make policy review a priority for the organization and allocate funds and staff time for this work.

The goal of this toolkit

We hope that this toolkit will help community service organizations become better able to reflect the values, beliefs and life experiences of everyone in their community. In this way, they will become places rich with diversity and difference where everyone works to challenge and dismantle all forms of oppression.

History of this project

In 2005 Springtide Resources (formerly known as Education Wife Assault), started a project to create tools that would help us continue to integrate anti-oppression work in our agency. Integrated anti-oppression is not a new concept. However, many of us felt it was challenging to pull together what we had learned over the years, to apply it in our organization and to make sure that we applied anti-oppression practice in all our work.

The project, funded by the City of Toronto, involved a series of focus groups. Participants included various members of Springtide Resources and other agencies in our social change network. The people who participated identified the issues that both individuals and organizations face when trying to apply anti-oppression in their day-to-day work.

As we reviewed the focus group discussions and policies from various organizations, it became clear that organizations have developed some great policies and practices over the years that help create inclusive spaces. At the same time, we are still challenged by how to consistently integrate anti-oppression practice in all aspects of our work. To address this concern, we created a framework that organizations can use to develop policies with an integrated anti-oppression analysis. This framework is included as Appendix E.

Another thing we learned was that organizations needed a practical tool that would allow them to apply anti-oppression practice to their policies. This was especially important to community service

organizations since they are extremely busy doing the work and do not have time to develop their own materials. Hoping to assist these organizations, Springtide Resources applied for funding to do this work. The United Way of Toronto granted funding for Phase II of the project in 2007. This toolkit is the result of that project.

What is integrated anti-oppression?

The term 'anti-oppression' reflects a number of different approaches to the work of addressing the social and institutional inequalities that are constructed in our society. In North America, the theories and concepts of anti-oppression grew out of the social justice movements of the 1960's. Disenfranchised groups who were opposing the status quo also began to challenge each other to recognize that different people within these groups experience different levels of oppression.

Anti-oppression approaches to inequality include feminism, anti-racism as well as structural, and critical approaches. Often, anti-oppression work can focus on a single issue, perspective or way of being marginalized. For example a group may want to address gay/lesbian/bisexual/transsexual/queer (GLBTQ) rights or women's rights.

Using an **integrated** anti-oppression model, people work together to rebuild existing systems so that everyone shares the benefits and opportunities of the system. Integrated anti-oppression looks at all the ways people can experience oppression and marginalization, and how those social locations intersect. This approach recognizes that individual contexts are different, and that people's lived realities are complex. It is integrated because it asks us to combine information and values from a range of people and sources in order to get a fuller, more inclusive result.

Integrated anti-oppression requires that people examine their own experiences and actions, and critically analyze social structures of power and privilege. It insists that the dominant group recognize the power of its own social location(s) and how that power results in societal privilege and benefit to the exclusion of marginalized people.

This approach encourages us not to make assumptions about group identity. It emphasizes that people who share a group identity may or may not have similar characteristics and lived experiences. Integrated anti-oppression reminds us to unlearn what we thought we knew and to think of and work with people as individuals.

Principles of integrated anti-oppression

The following are principles that guide the integrated anti-oppression model:

- Society operates within a socially constructed hierarchy of difference where some people are valued and privileged and others are marginalized and exploited. For example people living with a disability are devalued by society and their contribution to society is not recognized, solely because of their disability.
- People do not belong to just one category or social location. Our identities are complex and multiple; fluid rather than fixed. As a result we can be both victims

and perpetrators of oppression. We often re-create the relations of social power and control that also oppress us. For example, one may experience oppression because of female gender but at the same time experience white skin privilege.

- The ideas, thoughts and beliefs of people who “belong” to groups that are highest on the social hierarchy create “dominant culture”. Dominant culture becomes the standard or norm by which everyone is compared. For example in Canada the dominant culture norm of women’s clothing does not include wearing the hijab, as a result wearing the hijab is considered unusual and abnormal.
- People who are members of privileged groups have the power to control access to resources and information. This perpetuates the cycle of power and oppression for people who are not members of these groups. People who are marginalized and exploited experience limited access to the power to shape their own past, present and future. For example, Canadian history has been written from the perspective of white skinned, European descent colonialists. This historical perspective is perpetuated through dominant education institutions as the only true view of history.
- Not everyone from the same social group has the same experiences because people have many different lived experiences. When people have multiply marginalized identities, they do not merely face extra barriers; their lived experience is entirely different.
- Integrated anti-oppression work requires that individuals accept responsibility for their role in perpetrating oppression both interpersonally and systemically. To bring about change, individuals and systems must be changed.

How is it different from other approaches to equity?

A **formal equality** approach generally means that the rules are the same for everyone, and nobody gets special considerations or favors. A formal equality approach assumes that if the same rule is applied to everyone, it will produce equal results. This approach is flawed because it does not recognize differential impacts and circumstances. It renders social discrimination and oppression invisible by insisting it either does not exist or does not matter.

Cultural competence is an anti-oppression practice that encourages people to work across cultural variations. It asks individuals and organizations to focus on understanding the characteristics and needs of “diverse groups”. Cultural competence encourages people to include diverse groups in existing frameworks.

This approach is limited because the dominant group’s culture is accepted as the norm and diversity is identified as anything outside of those norms. Often, with cultural competence, the dominant group does not critically examine its power and privilege. This approach also reinforces identity politics and divisions between groups that are based on superficial characteristics and social markers.

Another approach is **substantive equality** or **equity**, which recognizes that the same rules applied to everyone will not produce equal results because of different circumstances and social discriminations, at present and in the past. Sometimes, substantive equality tries to remedy the effects of past discrimination by providing additional supports to those who have historically been marginalized. Integrated anti-oppression is comparable to the substantive equality approach.

Barriers and challenges to integrated anti-oppression

Working from an integrated anti-oppression framework is not easy for a variety of reasons. It is important to acknowledge this and find ways to continue the work. Here are some of the most common barriers and challenges, and how you can address each one.

Not enough time

In social service agencies there is always more work and limited funding. In some cases organizations have had to reduce their number of staff or number of programs. Community service organizations have been seeing higher demands for services from people who seem to have greater and greater needs.

Anti-oppression work is often thought of as work that can wait, as an administrative function rather than work that requires our full and urgent attention. But policies that do not reflect integrated anti-oppression analysis are not effective for many people. This can lead to confusion and make it hard for organizations to proactively respond to the needs of clients, volunteers, staff and communities.

When we create policies using an integrated anti-oppression analysis, programming will become more meaningful and thereby more effective. This approach also helps us learn new ways of doing things. When the work is shared and delegated differently, we can discover new efficiencies.

Not enough money to implement policy changes

Implementing real change will cost money and agency budgets are already stretched thin. Remember that **not** making changes will affect everyone in the organization. The people who will feel the pinch the least are those who have the power to make decisions about the budget!

Most organizations cannot afford to make radical changes all at once to their frameworks and programs. As with any structural change, organizations need to create a plan to phase in change. The plan should include clear timelines, name who is accountable and allocate funds from the budget. The plan should also include priorities, a risk and benefit analysis of what you hope to achieve and steps to meet your goals.

Not understanding what ‘integrated anti-oppression’ means and how to put it into practice

There is little information and few resources about applying an integrated anti-oppression framework. Much that has been written has focused on theory more than on how to use the

framework. This is challenging for organizations that are inundated with direct service demands and have no time to develop their own materials. As this work becomes more widespread, it is certain to generate more practical tools for busy agencies.

Feeling overwhelmed by how broad the work is

Many people doing this kind of policy work for the first time say that not having an integrated analysis of oppression makes it hard to change policies. Organizations struggle with compartmentalizing issues of oppression and marginalization; for example, we may address racism but we don't connect it to disability issues and recognize how racism impacts racialized people living with a disability. Changing policies can quickly become overwhelming if an organization is trying to have a different policy for each marginalized group.

Integrated anti-oppression looks at how we can experience systemic oppression and perpetuate oppression at the same time; in the same moment. This is why the work is ongoing – no one is an expert! Being forgiving of one another can help foster an environment of change and learning. You can do this by being open to other people's mistakes and oversights, and by noticing your own. Remember that mistakes are opportunities to learn and develop.

Being afraid of change or of losing position, status, privilege

We can all expect to feel uncomfortable with change and to be afraid of losing what we have. Our society fosters feelings of instability and insecurity, and encourages people to be afraid of losing what they have gained. Historically, marginalized groups have not had access to positions of power, to the ability to make decisions or even to stable, permanent, full-time positions.

Systems of oppression allow some people to have success and achievement at the expense of other people. It does not have to be that way. An integrated anti-oppression framework allows us to find ways to share access and power equally.

Being afraid of not being able to accommodate everyone, or of making a mistake

When people are afraid, they can freeze and not take any action. Of course, everyone will make mistakes! No organization's policies are perfect examples of integrated anti-oppression. Nobody even knows what fully integrated anti-oppression looks like!

Approach this work with honesty and integrity. Build a system that allows people to acknowledge their limitations, errors and shortcomings. This will allow real change to happen. Confidence will grow as knowledge and insight grow. Stay committed to the work.

Not having the will

Working with an integrated anti-oppression framework requires time, effort, commitment, and funds. It asks us to be vulnerable enough to hear how we, as individuals and organizations, oppress others in spite of our intentions. Integrated anti-oppression involves working through conflict and struggle. This is a lot to ask. But it is possible.

If we procrastinate, make excuses and constantly avoid the work, others may come to believe that we are not committed to the work. If you believe that this work is important, take risks and begin.

Not having the formal power to make changes

If you do not have much formal power in the organization, it will be difficult for you to be an agent of change. However, you can still do important work! Social justice work is best done in groups. Find allies and build a support network. Together, apply pressure to people who have the power to change things. They will find it hard to ignore a growing group of people. It is easier for them to disregard a single voice.

Not being supported by others, or doing the work alone

It is very difficult to be the agent of change when you have little or no support from peers and colleagues. If you are in this situation, try to find ways for others to join the struggle. Everyone will experience oppression at some point in their lives. By helping them to see that this may make it possible for them to discover why equity is important. Finding common ground is a good place to start.

Everyone involved is at a different level of understanding

Everyone is always at a different place in their learning. People who have been anti-oppression activists for years can share insights, resources and information with others who are just beginning to think about these issues. Be compassionate. Gently challenge yourself to keep deepening your understanding and to help others do the same. Approach everyone as a potential ally!

Part 2. Applying integrated anti-oppression to policies

The five steps in integrated anti-oppression policy review

Developing and revising policies can be a huge administrative task that costs a lot of money. As a result, policies in community service organizations tend to stay the same for years. This is a problem. Policies set out how the organization works, and must be revised regularly as information changes and our knowledge grows. We hope that our five-step process will make it easier to plan for, and include, integrated anti-oppression in your policy review process. The five steps are:

1. Set a schedule for reviewing policies
2. Create a work plan
3. Set up a Policy Review Committee
4. Review the organization's policies
5. Make recommendations

The sections below explain more about each step. Appendix A includes blank copies of the forms you can use at each step in the process.

Step 1: Set a schedule for reviewing policies

Every organization should regularly include policy review in its work plan. A policy review schedule can make sure that all of the organization’s policies are examined every two or three years.

The schedule should include all of your policies, and say which policies will be reviewed each year. By rotating which policies are reviewed, the organization’s policies will become living documents that change and grow as knowledge increases.

Consider how many policies a committee can review in a six to eight week period. Build your schedule to reflect the size of your organization and the number of policies you need to review.

Here is a sample schedule for a small organization:

Date	Area	List of policies to review
Year 1	Personnel	Hiring Firing Employee Benefits Other personnel policies
Year 2	Operational	Programming Conflict of Interest Confidentiality/Non-disclosure Other operational policies
Year 3	Board of Directors	Board Recruitment Committees Financial Other Board policies

Use the chart on page 26 (Appendix A) to create your policy review plan.

Step 2: Create a work plan

Once you have a policy review schedule, create a work-plan for the policy review process. Make sure to allow enough time for a successful and meaningful review.

To help create this work plan, we suggest using the Framework for Policy Review and Development, included as Appendix E. Here is a sample of a basic work plan.

What needs to happen	Who is responsible	Tasks	Time Line
Develop a budget	<i>Executive Director</i>	<i>Forecast expenses, etc.</i>	<i>February 1</i>
Recruit Committee Members	<i>Board of Directors - Personnel Committee</i>	<i>Write a letter to invite community members, recruit service users and staff</i>	Letter - Feb. 1 Post - 2 weeks Interviews - 2weeks
Committee Logistics	Staff liaison, committee members	<i>Set location of meetings and schedules Choose a chair for the committee Ensure committee has the resources to begin</i>	First meeting - March 14
Recommendations Report	Chair of the committee and staff liaison	<i>Write report and submit to the Executive Director</i>	May 14
Follow up on Recommendations	<i>Executive Director, Managers, Board</i>	<i>Provide a report back to committee members and stakeholders that outlines the timelines for changes, etc.</i>	June 25

Use the chart on page 27 (Appendix A) to create your workplan. Use the Framework on pages 36 to 40 (Appendix E) to help you develop the work plan.

Step 3: Set up a Policy Review Committee

Often people think that committees are a cumbersome and time-consuming way to work. However, working with a diverse group is the best way to build integrated anti-oppression into the organization's policies.

You will need to decide the size of your policy review committee. It should be large enough to include a variety of perspectives, but not so large that it will be difficult to complete its work in the time set for the process. Remember to think about how many people the budget can accommodate and who should be represented.

Committee members will have access to sensitive and confidential material. For this reason, they must agree to **confidentiality** and sign a letter that outlines this agreement.

Inviting members to join

Invite or recruit members from the community and from within the organization. You should:

- use accessible language and formats in your invitation,
- invite people to join well before the committee starts its work, and
- give people clear information about what you expect from the committee, what their responsibilities will be, and how much time the committees work will take.

Who should be on the committee?

Make sure that the committee reflects **diverse identities and has representation from people who do not traditionally have decision making power.**

- the majority of the committee should identify as racialized or aboriginal;
- the majority of the committee should be people who have no or little decision-making power in the organization;
- all committee members should identify part of their social location as a member of a marginalized group; and
- as a whole, the committee should represent the demographic of people who use the organization's service.

Make sure that your committee includes **representation** from people who will be impacted by the policy, such as:

- community members including service users
- Volunteers
- Frontline staff
- Management
- Board

People who sit on behalf of the Board of Directors and management must be able to make decisions and speak on behalf of the decision-makers they represent. Make sure they are clear about what process they should use to check in and communicate with the board or management.

Supporting the committee

The organization must **fully fund** the participation of all committee members. This includes money for transportation, child care, interpretation, accessible space and attendant care. An honorarium should be given to committee members who are community members.

Ideally the organization should:

- Provide financial support to everyone without stigmatizing those members who are poor or who identify as marginalized socio-economically. In addition, the organization must work with members who receive social assistance to make sure that they are not penalized for any financial support they get for doing this work. Perhaps one of the first policies the committee could review is the Honorarium policy or the policies about Committee Membership.
- Supply a **resource person** to the committee. Their role is to:
 - i. keep notes of the meetings;
 - ii. make notes about recommendations for how policies should be revised;
 - iii. research legislative benchmarks, human rights provisions, employment standards and any other matters, as needed;
 - iv. create information packages for committee members that include relevant internal documents such as complaints, salary and benefit grids and collective agreements;
 - v. report back to the organization on the committee's progress or on issues that need broader discussion

If this person is a staff person with other responsibilities, they should be given time to work on this process. Committee work should **not** be added on to their other duties and squeezed in when possible. Allocating staff time for this work is one way to make sure it has priority within the organization.

- Develop **terms of reference** for the committee. It should include a statement of the committee's mandate. The terms of reference should include details of the scope and boundaries of the work, the timelines, and the responsibilities of the committee as a whole and of the facilitators. (See Appendix B for sample terms of reference).
- Ensure all committee members have a copy of the organization's anti-discrimination and/or anti-harassment policy. In addition consider developing some guidelines for conflict resolution. (see Appendix C for a sample of conflict resolution guidelines).
- Develop an **agenda** for the meetings. For the first meeting the agenda should include:
 - i. choosing a facilitator and co-facilitator;
 - ii. reviewing the terms of reference;
 - iii. introduction to the process and each other;
 - iv. schedule of meetings;
 - v. introduction to the package of materials;
 - vi. expectations and role of the committee;
 - vii. discussion about the power differences between committee members and how the committee should be mindful of this while making decisions
 - viii. guidelines for decision making (see Appendix D for a sample of a decision making chart)

Ask the committee members to provide feedback on their experiences working on this project after they go through the whole policy review process. This will support the organization to identify and alleviate barriers and improve the process for the next round.

Step 4: Review the organization's policies

Once the committee is ready to begin work, it should review each policy. We have developed questionnaires to help facilitate discussion of the three vital questions at this stage of the process, namely:

- how accessible is the policy?
- how are different people affected by the policy?
- how can the policies be changed to truly include everyone?

Blank copies of these questionnaires are included in Appendix A.

To help you understand how to use these tools, we have included questionnaires that have been completed in response to the following policy provided by Springtide Resources. Please note that this is an old version of one of our policies. Springtide Resources has recently used the integrated anti-oppression framework to update all of its policies.

Sample policy – PAID HOLIDAYS

(from Education Wife Assault (EWA)

– the name for Springtide Resources before 2006)

EWA staff will be paid for ten statutory holidays:

New Year's Day; Canada day; Thanksgiving Day; Boxing Day; Good Friday; Christmas Day; Labor Day; Victoria Day; Easter Monday; Civic Holiday.

A religious holiday of the employee's choice may be substituted for Easter Monday.

Permanent part-time staff who work 21 hours a week are entitled to all statutory holidays.

Building Closure:

When the EWA offices are closed between Christmas and New Year's employees will be paid for these days.

How accessible are your policies?

The questions in this section are designed to help you think about whether the policy documents are accessible. “Accessible” includes where the policy is physically located, its format and how meaningful the policy is. The best policies will be representative and make sense to a variety of users.

To make policies accessible, you should aim to:

- Keep the policies in a place where anyone who wants to read them can access them without barriers.
- Make sure that the policies can be, and are, translated into different and appropriate language and cultural interpretations as well as physical formats.
- Use language that is clear and direct, rather than full of jargon.
- Use wording that makes the policy intentions easy to understand.
- Have a clear statement about who the policy applies to and who is responsible for putting it into practice.
- Being flexible in the policy to allow for different cultural beliefs and values, unless there are legal reasons to limit your flexibility.

Questions for discussion

To check your policies for accessibility, use these questions in your discussion.

1. Is the policy in a barrier-free location?
2. Is the policy available in different formats?
Do we invite comment about the format?
3. Is the policy written in language that is easy for most clients and all staff to understand? Look for jargon that only makes sense to workers in your organization but is not recognized by others.
4. Can the policy be easily translated to other languages?
5. Does the policy say who it affects?
Does it say who is responsible for implementing it?
6. Does the policy reflect various cultural beliefs and values? This question can lead to a tough discussion about cultural beliefs and values that may undermine social equity. There are no fast and easy answers but again the policies should be living documents that change and adapt to our new information and knowledge about difference.
7. If there is a process in the policy, are the steps flexible and adaptable to accommodate differences?
8. Does the policy invite people to give feedback and comments about what it says?

Record your decisions on the form “How accessible is this policy”. This form is on page 28 (Appendix A).

Here is how we used our questionnaire to assess our policy about Paid Holidays.

How accessible is this policy?

	Yes	Needs work	Areas of Attention
Is the policy in a barrier-free location?		X	Only available electronically on the server. Only staff can access the policies.
Is the policy available in different formats?		X	Only available in print - when printed off the server.
Do we invite comment about the format?		X	Haven't solicited feedback from anyone.
Is the policy written in language that is easy to understand?		X	Uses some jargon: ie. Statutory. Language is stilted. Some language leaves the meaning open to interpretation.
Can the policy be easily translated to other languages?	X		
Does the policy say who it affects? Does it say who is responsible for implementing it?		X	Identifies part-time staff and employees. Does not identify who is responsible for implementation. Does not identify how other staff are affected.
Does the policy reflect various cultural beliefs and values?		X	Office is closed and people get paid time off for Christian holidays. Other holidays, cultural celebrations or rituals are not mentioned.
If there is a process in the policy, are the steps flexible and adaptable to accommodate differences?		X	One substitution is allowed.
Does the policy invite people to give feedback and comments about what it says?		X	The policy does not identify remedying steps. Does not solicit feedback or identify how to address the problems.

How do our policies affect different people?

The questions in this section are designed to facilitate discussion about the impacts of policies on diverse lived experiences. Some questions can be answered with yes or no responses and others require more information. The term “impact” in this context is used in a broad sense to refer to both benefits and restrictions.

To consider how people are affected, you should aim for a policy that:

- affects people equitably;
- incorporates values that are of similar importance for people with different lived experiences;
- says what it does not do and outlines steps to change;
- was created with input from the range of people who are affected by it.

Questions for discussion

To check how your policies affect different people, use these questions in your discussion.

1. How has the policy been implemented? What procedures and practices have resulted?
2. Who benefits from this policy? How?
3. Who does not benefit? How?
4. What are the barriers to equitable impacts? What are the kinds of barriers (legislated, financial, etc.)?

Record your decisions on the form “How does this policy affect different people”. This form is on page 29 (Appendix A).

Here is how we used this questionnaire to assess our policy about Paid Holidays.

How does this policy affect different people?

Question	Areas of Attention
<p>How has the policy been implemented? What procedures and practices have resulted?</p>	<p>Practice: Staff verbally let their supervisor know they are switching holidays and makes a note on her timesheet.</p> <p>Practice: staff who are not eligible for paid time or who choose to work on stat days must work from home.</p> <p>No procedures for consistency or to ensure everyone knows how to follow the policy.</p>
<p>Who benefits from this policy? How?</p>	<p>Staff who celebrate Christian holidays</p> <p>They get</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - paid time off to enjoy with others who celebrate similar religious or cultural holidays - no lost income
<p>Who does not benefit? How?</p>	<p>Staff who do not celebrate because they</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - try to do work when many others are closed - must take time off when many other offices are open - must struggle to get time off <p>Staff who are not eligible because they</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - must choose between losing income and having to work on holiday (if they celebrate)
<p>Can you identify the barriers to equitable impacts? What type are they (legislated, financial, etc.)?</p>	<p>Legislated paid time off</p> <p>Financial restraints - cannot afford to give all staff paid time off</p> <p>Have to have procedures in place to document alternative arrangements for liability purposes</p>
<p>What comments, questions and complaints do people have about this policy or the practices and procedures that this policy has created? What do the staff, service users/community members or volunteers say about this policy?</p>	<p><i>The organization should provide any information they have about formal and informal complaints about this policy to the Policy Committee for review.</i></p>

What are the gaps in policy, and what can we do to make changes?

The questions in this section are exploratory, to help begin discussions to identify gaps and generate ideas for change. Use a flipchart with the questions as headers. This will allow everyone to contribute and build on the information and ideas.

Questions for discussion

1. Does the policy recognize and identify how different people will be affected?
2. Is the policy flexible enough to respond to the different lived experience that people have?
3. If the policy is not flexible, does it say what the organization will do to change this? Does the plan for change include timelines?
4. Does the policy say how people can give input or feedback about how the policy affects them? What comments, questions and complaints do people have about this policy or the practices and procedures that this policy has created?
5. Does the policy include diverse cultural norms and values? What are they?

Record your decisions on the form “Policy gaps and what we can do”. This form is on page 30 (Appendix A).

Here is how we used this questionnaire to assess our policy about Paid Holidays.

Policy gaps and what we can do

	Yes	Needs work	Area of Attention
Does the policy say how different people will be affected?		X	It identifies differential impacts by acknowledging part time staff and those who do not celebrate Easter - no others.
Is the policy flexible enough to respond to the different lived experiences that people have?		X	Offers part time staff access to the paid Christian holiday time off - only certain part time staff (over 21 hours) - no others identified
If the policy is not flexible, does it say what the organization will do to change this?		X	No
Does the plan for change include timelines?		X	No
Does the policy say how people can give input or feedback about how the policy affects them?		X	No, information is not solicited
Does the policy include diverse cultural norms and values? What are they?		X	There is some recognition of class issues - for part time workers to benefit some. There is one religious holiday substitution allowed - some recognition of difference.

Step 5: Make recommendations

Once the committee has assessed the policies, it must create a report that outlines its recommendations. The report should summarize how each policy could be improved. To come up with recommendations for improving each policy, the committee can review comments from the questionnaires.

The main question in this step of the process is: **What would improve this policy so that it integrates anti-oppressive practice?** Use flipchart paper to record ideas. This allows committee members to share information and build upon each other's ideas.

Facilitate the discussion

There will be different perspectives and ideas about what changes will benefit people and how to accomplish these changes. Because of this, there is potential for conflict. Here are some hints to help make sure that this discussion will lead to recommendations that can help your organization.

Ask the committee to **choose a facilitator** for the discussion. Their role is:

- to support everyone in being heard,
- to solicit all ideas and perspectives,
- to make sure that opposing viewpoints or challenges are given and received in a friendly and open manner,
- to help the committee build consensus and
- to finalize recommendations.

The facilitator should not offer ideas to the discussion. Their role is to help make sure all of the committee's ideas are recorded. The organization may choose to hire an outside facilitator for this part of the discussion.

Have the facilitator review the committee's Terms of Reference and Conflict Guidelines. Remind everyone that this is ongoing work.

Write a report

For each policy, the committee should write a recommendations report.

This report has three columns:

Recommendation	Who is responsible?	Timeline
----------------	---------------------	----------

Write the committee's recommendations in the left-hand column. The recommendations may range from fairly simple to quite complex. They can be one-time actions or multi-staged changes.

The committee should leave the two columns on the right empty – these will be filled out by decision-makers in the organization. They will review the recommendations and decide what to do with them.

Assessing the recommendations

As soon as possible, the decision-makers in the organization should review the recommendations and fill out the right-hand columns of the recommendations report. The management or Board of Directors must decide **Who is responsible**. They must also set a **Timeline**.

The organization is not required to act immediately on all of the committee's recommendations. Some recommendations may not be possible or viable in the immediate future and may need longer term planning.

To decide how to implement the recommendations, the decision-makers should consider:

- how urgent the issue is,
- the workloads of the staff involved in changing the policy,
- the fiscal timing,
- what research the organizations needs, and
- how much time the organization needs to prepare.

For example: a policy change that does not involve employment standards or financial supports could be implemented fairly quickly. A policy change that involves rewriting, translating and adapting policies will takes time so it may not be implemented until well after the organization has finished taking care of its year-end reporting responsibilities.

Once the Board or management has done this work, they should give copies of their completed report to every member of the committee and to all staff, volunteers and community members who are affected by the policy. This helps keep the policy process open and helps people feel that the policy process is collaborative among everyone in the organization.

Use the "Report of recommendations" chart on page 31 (Appendix A) to record your decisions.

Here is a sample report of recommendations.

Report of recommendations

Recommendation	Who is responsible?	Timeline
<p>Change policy statement to allow paid statutory holidays that have a religious or cultural connection, specifically: Christmas Day, Boxing Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday and New Year's Day to be exchanged with religious or culturally important dates that are not identified in the employment standards act.</p>	<p>Policy Committee of the Board of Directors Executive Director</p>	<p>Within 6 months</p>
<p>Do not close the office between Christmas and New Year's. Instead, offer those as floater days that employees can take whenever they choose.</p>	<p>Policy Committee of the Board of Directors Executive Director</p>	<p>Within 6 months (before the next closure)</p>
<p>Identify all the levels of employment in the organization, such as contract workers, part-time less than 21 hours, etc. Identify whether each qualifies for paid time off.</p>	<p>Policy Committee of the Board of Directors</p>	<p>Within 3 months</p>
<p>Add definitions of certain terms, such as "statutory holidays" to the policy. Make reference to the Ontario Employment Standards Regulation that affects this policy.</p>	<p>Policy Committee of the Board of Directors</p>	<p>Within 3 months</p>
<p>Print out a hard copy of the policy. Put it in a binder with other policies. Place the binder where everyone who is affected by the policy can access it and read it.</p>	<p>Executive Director Program Managers</p>	<p>Within 3 months</p>
<p>Include exchange of days in any "time off" procedure so that everyone knows what to do.</p>	<p>Executive Director Program Managers</p>	<p>Within 6 months</p>

Part 3. Appendices

Appendix A: Forms

Appendix B: Sample Terms of Reference

Appendix C: Sample Conflict Resolution Guidelines

Appendix D: Sample Decision Making Chart

Appendix E: Framework for policy development and review

Appendix F: Glossary of Anti-Oppression Terms

Appendix G: Focus Group Findings

Appendix H: References

Appendix A: Forms

- Plan for policy review
- Work plan
- How accessible is this policy?
- How does this policy affect different people?
- Policy gaps and what we can do
- Report of recommendations

Plan for policy review

Date	Area	List of policies to review
Year 1		
Year 2		
Year 3		

Work plan

What needs to happen	Who is responsible	Tasks	Time Line

How accessible is this policy?

	Yes	Needs work	Areas of Attention
Is the policy in a barrier-free location?			
Is the policy available in different formats? Do we invite comment about the format?			
Is the policy written in language that is easy for most clients to understand?			
Can the policy be easily translated to other languages?			
Does the policy say who it affects? Does it say who is responsible for implementing it?			
Does the policy reflect various cultural beliefs and values?			
If there is a process in the policy, are the steps flexible and adaptable to accommodate differences?			
Does the policy invite people to give feedback and comments about what it says?			

How does this policy affect different people?

Questions	Areas of Attention
<p>How has the policy been implemented?</p> <p>What procedures and practices have resulted?</p>	
<p>Who benefits from this policy?</p> <p>How?</p>	
<p>Who does not benefit?</p> <p>How?</p>	
<p>Can you identify the barriers to equitable impacts? What type are they (legislated, financial, etc.)?</p>	
<p>What comments, questions and complaints do people have about this policy or the practices and procedures that this policy has created?</p> <p>What do the staff, service users/community members or volunteers say about this policy?</p>	

Policy gaps and what we can do

	Yes	Needs work	Areas of Attention
<p>Does the policy say how different people will be affected?</p> <p>Does it admit that people will be affected in different ways?</p>			
<p>Is the policy flexible enough to respond to the different lived experiences that people have?</p>			
<p>If the policy is not flexible, does it say what the organization will do to change this?</p> <p>Does the plan for change include timelines?</p>			
<p>Does the policy say how people can give input or feedback about how the policy affects them?</p>			
<p>Does the policy include diverse cultural norms and values?</p> <p>What are they?</p>			

Report of recommendations

Recommendation	Who is responsible	Timeline

Appendix B: Sample Terms of Reference – Policy Review Committee

Preamble:

INSERT YOUR ORGANIZATION NAME is committed to applying an integrated anti-oppression framework to all undertakings of the organization. To that end, the organization will ensure that all policies will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect an integrated anti-oppression perspective.

Mandate:

The mandate of the Policy Review Committee is to review the policies listed below with the objective of providing the organization with feedback and recommendations as to how the policies can better reflect an integrated anti-oppression analysis. The committee may also recommend the deletion or addition of policies in this process.

Type of Committee:

The Policy Review Committee is a short term, project based committee composed of community members from the service area of YOUR ORGANIZATION NAME and frontline staff, management, volunteers, Board and people who have accessed our service.

Composition:

Members should self-identify in one or more of the following ways:

- racialized or aboriginal;
- people who have little or no decision making power in the organization, including service users;
- members of a marginalized group;
- representative of the demographic of organization’s community.

Timeline:

The committee will complete the said work in a period of not longer than INSERT DATE HERE (3 months from the start date of the review.)

Deliverables: Recommendations Report

Scope:

Committee members shall have access to the policies of the organization, mission statement, by-laws, salary grids, collective agreements, board meeting minutes, complaints received, strategic plan, and all other relevant documents with the exception of the following:

- personnel files
- in-camera Board meeting minutes
- client files
- private legal material

The organization will endeavor to assemble the relevant material that will be useful in meeting the objectives of the committee, prior to the beginning of the project and will ensure that any relevant materials will be delivered to the committee as quickly as possible.

The decisions and recommendations of the committee do not bind the organization into action. The Board of Directors and/or Executive Director of the organization will review the recommendations of the committee and ultimately decide what can be instituted.

Budget and Additional Resources:

The Policy Review Committee has a budget of \$\$\$\$\$. The budget will cover the committee costs:

- member expenses: childcare, travel, long distance calls, honorarium,
- meeting expenses: accessible meeting room, refreshments, conference calls
- accessibility expenses: ASL interpretation, note taking, attendant care
- supplies: photocopying, office supplies

Staff resource:

- maintain minutes and discussion notes for the committee
- retrieve documents that the committee requires
- assist in organizing meetings and refreshments for meetings

Meetings:

Meetings will be held at an accessible meeting space – onsite at the organization if possible.

The committee is responsible to elect co-chairpersons during the first committee meeting.

The responsibilities of the co-chairs in consultation with the whole committee are to:

- organize meetings
- develop the agenda
- organize committee communication
- keep committee members on task
- organize the completion of the final report
- maintain communication with the organization; including updates, requests, concerns, etc.

Appendix C: Sample Conflict Resolution Guidelines – Policy Review Committee

Principles

It is in places of conflict that the potential for change exists. Conflicting ideas, beliefs and values will ensure a rich dialogue and essential learning opportunities for everyone. Committee members are charged with reminding themselves that the committee exists in the service of the organization with the ultimate goal of better serving the community. Each person on the committee has the responsibility to deal directly with each other and commit to engaging with each other as allies in this work.

Remember that resolving conflict does not necessarily mean that a person will change their view-point or opinion. A resolution of conflict implies that each party has had the opportunity to share their perspective, be heard, have opportunity for discussion and then have closure.

How we deal with our colleagues when we have a different opinion or viewpoint can either open us up to new learning or shut us down. The following are some key points to keep in mind.

- i. Recognize that conflict is a healthy part of communication if all parties understand their responsibilities in the process.
- ii. Parties should approach the process with the idea of creating a learning environment.
- iii. Parties should be prepared to listen to each other – that is really listen without interrupting or preparing your argument in your head.
- iv. If you are challenging a statement made by another person – it is important to state concisely where you believe the problem lies and if it furthers the learning moment, to state the impact on yourself.
- v. Do not belabor the point or make comments about the other’s motivation for the statement (i.e. They are ignorant, bigoted, etc.).
- vi. The person who has been challenged should take away the information to think about where their learning lies – the statement back to the challenger should include how you will approach the information that was shared with you from the other person.
- vii. If you do not agree with the challenger’s view – further dialogue may be necessary.
- viii. State your own view and where you believe the problem lies.
- ix. Each person is responsible to think critically about the other’s view with a goal of finding common ground and/or compromise and/or the decision to agree to disagree – which is allowing space for differing points of view.
- x. It is important that both parties do not disengage from the process by complaining or expressing dissatisfaction about the other person to other people – that kind of behavior lowers the integrity of the process and the party who engages in it.
- xi. Try to understand each other’s perspective without judging the person or making assumptions about each other

Co-chairs responsibilities:

- reminding members of the guidelines of conflict resolution
- arranging time in the agenda to address conflict in the group
- mediating conversations between the parties in conflict
- negotiating resolution
- If the conflict is in regards to making a decision. The co-chairs should refer to the decision making guidelines.

***The guidelines presented above should not be used in situation of discrimination and abuse. In those situations the committee should follow the procedures in the organizations anti-discrimination or anti-harassment policies.

Appendix D: Sample Decision Making Chart – Policy Review Committee

Options	Reasons for/Benefits	Reasons Against/Problems	Group Decision	Reasons for Decision

Appendix E: Framework for policy review and development

We developed this framework during the first phase of this project. Its purpose is to help organizations use an integrated anti-oppression framework approach when reviewing and developing policies.

QUESTION	CHALLENGE	RESPONSE
<p>What is the purpose of this policy and/or procedure?</p>	<p>It can be difficult to know when a policy is necessary, to ensure you are not creating too many policies and to ensure that your policies are not making conflicting statements. Identifying the purpose can help avoid these pitfalls as well as provide direction as to how and what procedures will be necessary to meet the purpose.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the rationale for the policy • Clearly identify the equity intent • Identify legislative responsibilities • Link procedures to the appropriate policy(s).
<p>Does the policy fit within the agency mandate, mission statement and/or statement of values and beliefs? How?</p>	<p>Many agencies have statements that outline their mandate and their beliefs about how they will meet the mandate. For example: "to end all violence against all women" is an example of a mission statement. Policies that follow must then ensure that the organization is not perpetuating violence against women in the form of exclusion or oppression.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all relevant documents: statement of beliefs, mandate, mission statement, etc. • Determine if the policy supports the mission/mandate. • Identify the ambiguities. • Determine if the policy contrasts with the values of the organization. • Identify the changes you can make to the policy to improve it.
<p>Does the policy fit with the organization's political position? How?</p>	<p>A political position does not mean a partisan position that supports a particular political party. Rather, many organizations have developed 'positions' on particular issues. For example your organization may be a feminist organization. As a feminist organization your policies and procedures would follow a woman's equality framework. i.e. pay equity, expanded family/caregiver benefits, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and discuss the organizational 'positions' regarding social issues that are unwritten but exist within your organization. Some of those may include: paid labor vs. volunteerism, pay equity, mental health issues, etc. • Add appropriate positions to a belief statement - or create one if one does not exist.

QUESTION	CHALLENGE	RESPONSE
<p>Does the policy meet minimum standards of labor legislation, human rights legislation, privacy legislation, funder agreements and other contractual agreements? Does it exceed them?</p>	<p>Policies should clearly meet legislative and contractual responsibilities. Legislation (even equity legislation) is written from a dominant culture framework that is based on the assumption of homogenous groups. They seek to protect the rights of marginalized people, not advance the rights of people. To apply an intersectional framework, policies should go beyond minimal standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and understand the organization's responsibilities under the law. Review contracts and understand responsibilities under the terms of contracts. Identify where the minimum expectations fall short of advancement and improvement to access and equity. Identify ways your organization can support equal opportunity.
<p>How does this policy/procedure impact the organization's budget?</p>	<p>Many policies do have budgetary impact to implement them. If this is not recognized the policy will become impossible to follow and be discarded - not because it is a bad policy but because the costs of implementation were not accounted for.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify all the costs associated with implementation of the policy. Identify where the costs are part of regular business - i.e. Salary of manager would include staff supervision. Identify additional costs. Budget accordingly.
<p>Who is responsible to ensure this policy is understood and enforced?</p>	<p>Policies and procedures must clearly state who is responsible for carrying out, monitoring and evaluating effectiveness. Each person's role should be clearly stated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the various roles of paid and unpaid members of the organization. Identify the members who will carry out the procedures, supervise and evaluate the members, create, review and evaluate the policy.

QUESTION	CHALLENGE	RESPONSE
<p>What is the mechanism for complaint/critical feedback?</p>	<p>Policies and procedures should be living documents that get better as our learning improves. Therefore it is important to clearly state how those affected can provide feedback or complain if/when they prove ineffective, unmanageable or oppressive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a complaints policy that clearly identifies the process for paid and unpaid members, service users/clients, and community members. • Ensure the complaints process is accessible. It should be placed where folks can physically access it and offered in different accessible formats. It should also be written in clear, plain language so that it can be accessed by people with various literacy levels. • Identify the process for feedback for the policy review.
<p>How will the policy be communicated to those who will be affected by it?</p>	<p>Policies/proc. should be evident to all those effected by the outcomes. Creating a plan of communication is important.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify all of the people who will be responsible for implementation and those who will be impacted by the implementation. • Identify the points of access, the different kinds and types of access necessary. • Ensure all those responsible for implementation are clear about their responsibilities. • Identify the plan to communicate policy to service users/clients and community members. • Address literacy, language and other accessibility issues. • Create a plan to address these issues.

QUESTION	CHALLENGE	RESPONSE
<p>What is the review schedule? Who will do the review?</p>	<p>Policies and procedures as living documents should be reviewed regularly and consistently for improvement. The process should include a schedule so as to provide opportunity for feedback. In order to get input from all those affected by the policies and procedures a team of reviewers should be voted or chosen, that represent a broad base of perspectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a time line for review of policies - yearly, or bi-yearly. • Identify the stakeholder groups that should be involved in the review with attention to diversity. • Provide tools to assess the effectiveness and equity of each policy.
<p>Does this policy challenge patriarchal, oppressive social norms? How?</p>	<p>Applying an integrated framework is in itself challenging dominant culture norms. However as many of us have been conditioned by North American standards we should start from the premise that our policies and procedures will be framed in dominant culture values and beliefs. Therefore we have to ask ourselves a series of questions that ensure we are not upholding entrenched systems of oppression.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the issues of patriarchy and oppression inherent in each policy. • Strategize how to challenge these issues within your organization. • Review the transparency in the decision making processes. • Create questions for yourselves: i.e. What does power look like in our organization? • Identify who benefits from the policy? • Determine which policies uphold a power over framework. • Ask questions - i.e. Who gets hired full-time, part-time? How is this determined? Where is money spent in the budget? Who determines priorities?

QUESTION	CHALLENGE	RESPONSE
<p>What will be the differential impact on marginalized groups?</p>	<p>Equal does not mean the same. It is important to understand the various impacts of policies on different groups to identify where the barriers lie and how to support accessibility of employment and services for various groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify groups of people who are victims of systemic oppression. ● Identify the impacts on various groups. ● Distinguish impacts that advance equity and those that do not. ● Strategize ways to change barriers to access.
<p>How will the policy challenge oppression?</p>	<p>Review policies for systemic oppression.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● racism ● heterosexism/homophobia ● ableism ● ageism ● sexism ● ethnocentrism ● classism ● anti-semitism ● anti-Arabism ● religious discrimination ● colonialism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Determine if the policy has a western "first world" view. ● Assess the policy for an assumption about ability, language, and socio-economic situation. ● Review the language for references of colonization, religious assumptions.

Appendix F: Glossary of Anti-Oppression Terms

Ableism: Prejudice and discrimination against people living with mental, emotional and physical disabilities *or differences*. People living with disabilities experience this discrimination, segregation and isolation because of people’s prejudices and institutional barriers, not because of the disability or difference itself. Deaf, Deafened and Hard of hearing people historically have experienced systemic ableist oppression as well.

Anti-Semitism: Discrimination or violence against Jews, Judaism and the cultural, intellectual and religious heritage of Jewish people. The word Semite literally refers to “any of the peoples supposed to be descended from Shem, son of Noah, especially the Jews, Arabs, Assyrians and Phoenicians”. However, Anti-Semitism is mostly used to refer to prejudice, discrimination and violence directed at Jews.

Class: Economic and social groups. People in the higher classes make decisions about the economy while other people work for wages, or are kept out of the economy. The things that mark differences between classes include people’s ability to meet their basic needs, their level of income, wealth and formal education, and their connections with people and institutions that have influence and power. In the current economic structure, rich people got their wealth by taking advantage of people at the bottom and middle of the class structure.

Classism: Any practices and beliefs that judge and value people according to their social class, or the social class that other people assume they belong to. Most workplaces use classist language that reflects and reinforces the social hierarchy. For example they undervalue the work of support staff, and decisions do not include the knowledge and opinions of these workers.

Colonialism: When a foreign power dominates and exploits an indigenous group by taking their land and resources and using them as cheap labor in order to make money. It also means specific era, between the 1700s and 1900s, when European countries expanded into the Americas and countries of the global South. In Europe, people justified these practices using racial doctrines. These ideas about hierarchies of race are still widespread. Uncovering and challenging the ideas and ongoing practices of colonialism are important parts of racial equity work.

Culture: The collective experience, beliefs, values, knowledge, economy, and ways of life of a group of people who share past or current experiences. Culture changes constantly; it is not static. Every culture is shaped by the land and spaces people inhabit together. Individual and group culture can also be shaped by language, religion, racialization, gender, experiences of migration and immigration, social class, political affiliation, family influences, age, sexual orientation, geographic origin, ethnicity, experiences of discrimination or lack of discrimination, and experiences fighting oppression.

Disenfranchised: Not having full rights as a citizen, or not being able to fully participate as a member of the community.

Dominant Culture: The beliefs, values and judgments of groups with social power. The dominant culture is created and maintained by people in the dominant social group. People who do not belong to the dominant group often believe that these values, beliefs and judgments are true, instead of seeing how they reflect the interests of people in power.

Dominant group: People whose social identity gives them power and privilege. In most parts of Canada dominant identities are White, male, English-speaking, heterosexual, able-bodied, Christian, affluent and middle class, thirty to sixty-five years of age, university educated, from central Canada. Many people have one or more dominant identities.

Equity: People’s rights, as individuals or members of a group, to an equitable share of the resources and influence in society. Equity work analyses and challenges unfair systems and practices and works towards creating outcomes and access that benefit people equally.

Exploitation: Taking unfair advantage of a person or a group for one’s own gain or advantage. Exploitation can be systematic or individual.

First Nations: A term that reflects the process some Aboriginal peoples in Canada have used to name themselves. The word “first” recognizes the fact that Aboriginal peoples are the original inhabitants of what is now called Canada. The word “nation” stresses the fact that Aboriginal peoples are political collectives who had their own forms of government before Europeans began to settle here. Many First Nations peoples are fighting to re-establish that sovereignty.

- The term also refers to a group of Aboriginal people who were previously called a “Band” by the Department of Indian Affairs.
- “First Nation” can also mean a group or several groups of Aboriginal people who have the same ethno-cultural background.

Gender identity: Features that are tied to how an individual thinks of themselves as a man or a woman. A person’s gender identity may not be the same as their biological sex.

Gender roles: The culturally specific behaviors and appearances constructed by a culture to define what is expected of women and men. The expectations of femininity and masculinity are imposed on individuals according to their biological sex.

Harassment: Persistent, ongoing behavior conveying negative attitudes towards an individual or group to make them feel intimidated and humiliated. Harassment is an exercise of power. It includes any action that a person knows, or should know, is not welcome. Harassment includes name-calling, jokes, slurs, graffiti, insults, threats, rudeness and crude gestures, verbal or physical abuse. Human Rights Codes in most provinces prohibit harassment based on race, religion, sex, ethnicity and the other prohibited grounds for discrimination.

Heterosexism: All practices that convey the message that heterosexuals are better than other people, including the assumption that everyone is or must be heterosexual. It operates like other forms of prejudice and discrimination, giving privilege and rights to members of the dominant group—heterosexuals—and not to gay or lesbian people.

Hierarchy: A system that gives individuals or groups different positions and power. People, and groups, with a higher rank have more power, resources and value than individuals or groups with a lower rank. For example, in a patriarchy men are given more value than women.

Immigrants: People who have arrived and settled in Canada in their lifetime. Sometimes, people use the word incorrectly to refer to Canadian-born racialized people, because they assume that all racialized people were born elsewhere.

Inclusive: Making sure that all members of the community are represented or involved in all aspects of the community.

Integrated: Combining information and values from a variety of people and sources in order to get a fuller result that is more inclusive.

Islamophobia: The systemic ways and individual practices of racism that target Arab people and have particular impact on them. Some examples include: negative stereotyping of Muslim people, depicting Islam as essentially violent and fundamentalist, assuming that all Arabs are Muslim and all Muslims are Arabs.

Landed immigrant: Persons with legal status who are permanent residents of Canada, rather than visitors, refugee claimants, temporary workers or citizens.

Marginalization: A process that keeps groups or individual from having access to all or part of the resources and activities of the community.

Oppression: When one social group takes advantage of another social group, either knowingly or unconsciously. Oppression gives the dominant group privilege and marginalizes and disenfranchises the subordinated group. The dominant social group can use force or social institutions and resources to achieve oppression. After a time, individual members of the dominant group do not need to do anything and unequal treatment becomes so much a part of the social institutions and structures that it seems normal.

People of colour: Any person who is not White or Aboriginal. This term was first adopted in the United States by racialized people who were trying to name themselves with a positive identity, rather than as “non-whites”, “coloured”, “ethnics”, or “visible minorities”.

Privilege: Unearned power that gives members of the dominant group economic, social and political advantages. Privilege also means rights that everyone should have but that are denied to some people.

Racism: Any aspect of Canadian society that openly or subtly makes White people and Whiteness normal and valuable while making racialized communities invisible or devaluing, stereotyping and labeling people of colour as “others” who are different or inferior.

Individual racism: The beliefs, attitudes and actions of individuals that support or maintain racism. Individual racism can be conscious or unconscious. It can be active or passive.

Institutional racism: The network of structures, policies and practices in systems and institutions that give White people advantages and that discriminate, oppress and disadvantage racialized people.

Racialization/Racialized: Racial identities are not fixed categories. They are shaped by history, nationality, gender, class and identity politics. Racial designations often differ from country to country. The term racialization or racialized makes explicit the ways in which we are socialized to differentiate groups of people on the basis of superficial physical characteristics where White is the norm. It emphasizes the active process of categorizing people while at the same time rejecting “race” as a scientific category.

Refugee: Persons who have to flee their country because they have a “well-founded” fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.

Religious discrimination: Any institutional or individual practices that exclude and discriminate against a person because of their religion. In Canada, many workplaces do not provide equitably for all religions. Recently, the Supreme Court has ruled that employers must accommodate employees whose religious observances are not recognized in the Christian-based statutory holidays such as Easter and Christmas. Religious discrimination is often linked to other forms of discrimination. For example, Irish Catholics were often marked by their class, ethnic origins and language as well as their Catholicism. Racialized Muslims often experience racism mixed with religious discrimination.

Sexism: Systemic and individual practices that give men privilege, make women subordinate and that shame values identified with women.

Social Location or Social Identity: A person’s membership in a socially constructed group. These groups are often identified according to superficial characteristics such as skin colour, country of origin, religious beliefs, body form, etc.

Structural: This approach to equity work believes that the thoughts and behaviors of the individual are created and guided by various social structures such as capitalism and/or neo-liberalism, and are therefore limited. The focus for change is raising awareness of the limits and challenging the structures.

Systemic racism: The conscious or unconscious policies, procedures and practices that exclude, marginalize and exploit racialized people. Systemic racism is supported by institutional power and by powerful ideas, often unexamined ones, which make racism look normal and justified. For example, institutions that do not have effective complaints procedures, or performance appraisal and promotion processes that use equity competencies, make it possible for individuals to be racist.

Transgender person: A person who is not comfortable with, or who rejects some or all of the gender identity given to their biological sex. This is an umbrella terms used to describe transsexuals, transvestites or cross-dressers, and intersex people.

Transsexual: Someone who has a very strong feeling that they are living in the wrong sex. A male transsexual needs to live as a woman and a female transsexual needs to live as a man. Some, but not all, transsexuals have surgery to reassign their sex. Some have procedures to partially reassign their sex and some use hormone therapy. A transsexual can be heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual.

White: Refers to people belonging to the dominant racial group enjoy skin privilege in North America, Australia, New Zealand and anywhere European colonialism has created racial inequity. The term “White” is capitalized for different reasons than other racial designations – Aboriginal and Black. The latter identities are claimed with pride in opposition to the names imposed by dominant White society. One of the ways that racism operates is to leave the racial identity of White people unidentified. “White” is capitalized to interrupt the privilege of having Whiteness go unnamed.

White Supremacy: A system based on assumption of the “rightness of Whiteness” in which political, economic and social systems result in White people having more privilege and power than racialized people.

** many of the terms in the glossary were adapted with permission from: *Dancing on Live Embers, Challenging Racism in Organization* by Tina Lopes and Barb Thomas. Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006.

Appendix G: Focus Group Findings

The following points are the relevant themes that emerged from the focus groups. The groups were asked to answer the following questions.

1. How well has your organization and the various sectors practiced an integrated approach to anti-oppression?
 - overall feeling that most are doing pretty good work
 - some feel frustrated that the policies etc are not fully put into practice by all staff at an agency
 - feeling that the work is silo'd and separated – working on one oppression at a time
 - that the work is framed from a white middle class perspective
 - the work is not happening fast or often enough – i.e. deaf woman services gaps and barriers

2. What are the effective practices in the various areas? i.e. policies, programming, outreach, training, org. development.
 - be committed, inventive, constantly evolve, vigilant
 - open to change, pushing for change
 - inclusion at all levels of an organization, working together on committees and groups
 - engage diversity, responsive to different needs

3. Where are the challenges?
 - funding shortages, piecemeal and targeted on specific groups only
 - lack of accountability, lack of clear policies and procedures
 - lack of inclusivity and diversity
 - lack of time to be together, communicate, etc./workloads of service providers
 - silo'd work
 - systemic exclusion internal and societal institutions

4. Visions and suggestions for change?
 - core guidelines with key values – written down and put into practice
 - accountability in staff and management
 - commitment from all levels
 - everyone open to challenge
 - look at themes not populations
 - community driven
 - training and tools
 - fully funded and supported by structures

5. Who would take up the facilitation of change?
 - not one person
 - coalitions
 - community groups
 - all levels of organization including service users

Recommendation(s):

- a. Conduct a review of existing policies, procedures and practices that organizations feel represent their best efforts of an integrative anti-oppressive framework.
- b. Working groups should be created to develop the most effective integrative policies and programs. The groups should include diverse members from different social locations, communities and be representative of all levels of the organization including service users.
- c. Organizations must support this work by: allocating time, personnel and resources.
- d. Organizations must demonstrate commitment to the work by reviewing all policies, procedures and programs through the lens of an integrative anti-oppressive framework.
- e. A tool kit should include templates of policies and procedures to simplify the writing of work done by the committees/working group.
- f. This work is not static and must be revisited regularly in order to incorporate new information.
- g. Organizations should offer regular training and workshops on how to put an integrative anti-oppression framework into practice.
- h. Organizations must hold staff and volunteers accountable to adhering to agency practice by offering training and supervision, including key values in mandate and mission statements and integrative anti-oppressive practices in personnel and volunteer policies.

Focus group participants

The following organizations participated in focus groups in 2005-06 for the Integrative Anti-Oppression Project:

Woman Abuse Council
FCJ Refugee Centre
519 Community Centre
Nellie's
Springtide's Women with Disabilities Program
Toronto Rape Crisis Centre/Multicultural Women Against Rape
Central Neighbourhood House
Access Alliance Multicultural Community Health Centre
A Commitment to Training and Employment for Women (ACTEW)
Arab Community Centre of Toronto
Assaulted Women's Helpline
Barbara Schlifer Counselling Clinic
Black Creek Community Health Centre
Central Family Intake
Ernestine Women's Shelter
Family Services Association
Flemingdon Neighborhood Services
Korean Canadian Women's Association

Macaulay Child Development Centre
St. Christopher's House
St. Joseph Women's Health Centre
St. Michael Hospital
Stonegate Community Health Centre
Urban Alliance on Race Relations
Women's Counselling, Referral and Education Centre
Yorktown Shelter
YWCA

Appendix H: References

Dancing on Live Embers, Challenging Racism in Organizations. Tina Lopes and Barb Thomas. Between the Lines, Toronto 2006

Campbell, C. (2003). *Anti-oppressive social work. Promoting equity and Social Justice.* Editor: Dr. Carolyn Campbell. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Dalhousie University.

Retrieved Jan. 22, 2008

<http://aosw.socialwork.dal.ca/whatisaosw.html>

Roundtable on Anti-Oppression Politics in Anti-Capitalist Movements. Edited by Sharmeen Khan – participants in the roundtable: Kirat Kaur, Junie Désil, Gary Kinsman.

Retrieved Jan. 22, 2008

<http://uppingtheanti.org/node/1380>

Williams, C., (2003). "Seeking Cultural Competence. What Is It, How Do You Develop It, and How Do You Know When You've Got It?" In W.Shera (Ed.), *Emerging Perspectives on Anti-Oppressive Practice* (pp. 265 - 278). Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc.