

SECTION 5: LEARNER ACCESS AND REFERRAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

5.01 CODE OF ETHICS:

The agency believes in the dignity and value of the learners. It is committed to increasing the learner's understanding of him/herself and others. All staff and volunteers are expected to adhere to and model appropriate behaviours in accordance with the guidelines outlined below.

As professionals, the agency's staff and volunteers will promote the full development of each learner's potential and will endeavour to ensure that the learning needs of each learner are met.

Procedures:

1. Staff and volunteers should be aware of and facilitate the delivery of appropriate services considering each learner's educational, vocational, physical, medical, emotional and social needs.
2. Staff and volunteers will maintain professional objectivity and self-discipline so that the learner's needs remain the primary focus.
3. Staff and volunteers should recognize the need to further both their own knowledge and skills as well as assisting others to further themselves.
4. Staff and volunteers are obligated to safeguard information about learners as set forth in 4.01 *PRIVACY PROTECTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY*.
5. Staff will recognize the importance of other related disciplines in the delivery of service to the learners.
6. Staff have the responsibility to add to their professional body of knowledge through involvement in related projects, keeping up to date with publications and attending applicable training opportunities.
7. Staff and volunteers will respect the reputation and philosophy of the agency.

5.02 LEARNER REPRESENTATION ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

The board of directors will have a learner member-at-large at all times.

It is essential to have learner representation on the board of directors in order to ensure that the learners have a voice in the decisions made by the agency.

Procedures:

1. The board will have at least one learner representative at all times.

5.03 LEARNER EQUITY:

The program is committed to applying the principles of equity in its practices for dealing with learners.

Principles of equity must be applied at all times when dealing with learners. This concept is based on the belief that all learners have the right to an effective education in a fair and just way. "All learners cannot be treated the same because their different learning, social, cultural, emotional, psychological and physical needs or characteristics naturally give rise to varying interventions for them to achieve comparability." Bradley Scott, 1995

Procedures:

1. The concept of equity for learners will be a board agenda item to be dealt with at least annually. Policies dealing with equity will be reviewed.
2. The agency will do outreach activities specifically targeted at equity groups.
3. It is the responsibility of the executive director to continually address the issue of equity for learners in the program. Curricula, materials and approaches used will be under constant scrutiny to ensure that they are sensitive to the needs of learners from equity groups.
4. Staff members, volunteers and board members should be aware of equity issues. It is the responsibility of the executive director to ensure that these groups are aware of the issues and to instill the need for sensitivity to learners from equity groups.

5.04 LEARNER ACCESS:

The program sites are accessible to learners with physical disabilities or other barriers.

The agency is committed to creating barrier free program sites and to providing supports and services within the limits of available resources. Sites should be accessible to allow for equal training and education opportunities for learners with disabilities.

Procedures:

1. The program sites are safe and accessible for learners with disabilities.
2. The staff member assessing a learner entering the program will attempt to determine any necessary accommodations for a learner to be able to fully participate in the available programming.
3. Where a learner is unable to access a program due to physical limitations or barriers, the program will endeavour to make every accommodation possible so that the learner can participate. These accommodations may include but are not limited to:
 - Moving the program to a different room
 - Altering the programming or times available
 - Offering various supports such as childcare or transportation
4. Agency staff will foster a supportive environment by working to remove attitudinal barriers and inform and educate other community members.

5.05 REFERRAL OF LEARNERS:

Learners that cannot be accommodated by the agency or would be better served by another program will be referred appropriately.

Learners must be able to acquire the skills that they need in order to achieve their goals. Some programs will better serve learners than others. Agency staff must be aware of the limitations of the programming that is offered internally and also of the availability of other programs in the community.

Procedures:

1. When a learner makes initial contact with the program, staff will make appropriate inquiries to determine if the learner should be assessed for the programming offered.
2. If it is apparent that the learner would be better served by another agency, the learner will be referred to that agency. The learner should be given the following information:
 - Name of agency
 - Contact person
 - Telephone number
3. Staff will record the referral on the appropriate tracking sheet.
4. Upon written consent of the learner, a "Referral" form will be forwarded to the other agency.
5. Staff will follow up by telephone within 14 days of making the referral with the other agency. The results of this follow up call will be recorded on the Referral Tracking Sheet.

5.06 LEARNER INTAKE:

When a learner contacts the program a standardized intake process is completed.

When a learner enters the program certain information must be collected. Formalization of the intake process ensures consistency in the treatment of learners and the information collected.

Procedures:

1. When a learner contacts the program an appointment is set to complete an intake and assessment for program placement.
2. The *Learner Registration Form* is completed at the intake session. Some of the information collected is for statistical and accountability requirements of our funder(s).
3. Staff will attempt to identify any support needs of the learner during the intake. Complete *Childcare Allowance* form as eligible. Where appropriate, the learner may be referred to other known community agencies for support.

5.07 PROGRAMMING OPTIONS:

The agency offers a variety of programming options to meet the needs of the learners that it is serving.

There are a diversity of adult learners and learning styles. For example, some learners are able to acquire the skills they need in a group setting and some require additional attention.

Procedures:

1. When a learner enters the program their learning style and preferences are discussed and they are placed in the program that best suits their needs.
2. The agency offers mainly large group sessions, but also small group instruction, as resources allow.
3. Where the programming offered is not suitable for the learner, where possible, they will be referred appropriately to another program in the community. The process outlined in the policy 5.05 *REFERRAL OF LEARNERS* will be followed.
4. Where there is no other suitable programming available for the learner the agency will put forth its best effort to accommodate the learner's needs internally, provided that the training to be offered fits within the mandate and financial restrictions of the agency.