

Policy: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy	Number: ORG-CUL-03
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POLICY:

The Alzheimer Society of Durham Region (the “Society”) is committed to creating an environment and culture in which all people are safe, respected, included and equal. Equity, diversity, and inclusion are key elements of our service philosophy, strategic plan, and organizational culture. The Society upholds the Human Rights Code and actively welcomes, appreciates, and protects dignity and worth for all people. We respect how individuals define their identity and how they view differences. Using an anti-oppressive practice framework, we strive to address injustice and oppression, both within the Society and community.

- **Land Acknowledgement**

The Alzheimer Society of Durham Region is located on the traditional homelands of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation who are the stewards of this land *(if virtual delivery, enter location where you are speaking from and ask participants to quietly reflect on the land they are on)*. The Mississaugas belong to the branch of the greater Anishnaabeg Nation that includes: Ojibway, Odawa, and Pottawatomi. The Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation are part of the eighteen treaties first signed between 1781 and 1923 that were collectively known as Williams Treaties and were intended as a framework for sharing and partnership. However, this led to the loss of land and harvesting rights of the Indigenous Peoples and allowed for growing numbers of Europeans to settle in Ontario. As settlers, old and new, of this Treaty land we recognize the ways in which we are benefitting from the destruction of their relationship to land, family and community and traditional practices and ways of life. *(You may also share why this is important to you)*.

Acknowledging territory shows recognition of and respect for Indigenous peoples. It is recognition of their presence both in the past and the present. Recognition and respect are essential elements of establishing healthy, reciprocal relations. These relationships are the key to reconciliation, a process to which the Society is committed.

ASDR recognizes the profound need for informed relationships with the Indigenous community. We acknowledge the injustices of the past and the continued legacy and impact of colonialism on the Indigenous community today. We are committed to building awareness of and addressing existing challenges facing Indigenous Peoples’ access to care and support through staff education and consultation with the Indigenous community and are working towards a better future for every Durham resident living with dementia and their care partners. *(You may also share personal commitments to reconciliation)*.

All Society personnel shall:

1. Openly support equity, diversity and inclusion across its services, operations, and employment practices.
2. Formally recognize our role and responsibility in addressing and eliminating systemic racism within our organization and the systems we operate within.
3. Have the opportunity to join and contribute to the Society's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee and review the Terms of Reference of the committee
3. Have access to and have a fluid membership with the Alzheimer Society in Ontario Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee, which is responsible to both ASiO Leadership Teams and individual Societies. The ASiO EDI committee will provide leadership, recommend appropriate trainings, and support the Society's involvement in actively creating positive change within across the organization and community.
4. Ensure that the person-centered approach considers the client's diversity in every phase of service delivery from intake, assessment, treatment through discharge planning.
5. Advocate, with and for clients, in order to address systemic barriers to justice, equality, equity, inclusiveness and access.
6. Address injustice and oppression that may be present in the workplace, bringing forward concerns to appropriate designates.
7. Society personnel will be given an opportunity to voice comments, concerns, and opportunities of improvement about diversity and inclusivity through a variety of processes including but not limited to complaints processes, meetings, engagement efforts, quality assurance, program evaluation and experience surveys.
8. Society personnel shall ensure that oppressive language and images are not used in agency communications, policies, procedures, and practices.

The Society shall:

1. Take an affirmative employment equity approach in the selection and hiring of people from equity seeking groups in employment practices, which may include but is not limited to recruitment of staff, students, volunteers, and board members.
2. EDI work will include organizational governance, services, training, advocacy. We will strive to partner with equity seeking groups to co-create the material and present the programs. Examples might include involving care partners and people living with dementia who are Indigenous and Francophone people in the development of population specific services.
3. Be committed to Truth and Reconciliation and will:

a. Provide education and training to develop our staff and organization's Indigenous cultural competency.

b. Create space for Indigenous history, rights, practices, and knowledge.

c. Ally with Indigenous people and partners while concurrently respecting their rights to choose who they work with.

4. Ensure Board members practice EDI during organizational oversight in key areas: strategy, governance, talent, integrity, and performance.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to board members, staff members, students, volunteers, donors, and clients.

DEFINITION(S):

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

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

Diversity: Diversity encompasses acceptance, respect, and the understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizes individual differences. It is about understanding and valuing each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual. Individual differences may be characterized as their gender identity, race or ethnicity, military, or veteran status, 2SLGBTQI+ status, disability status, and more.

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

Equity: People are treated fairly and appropriately regardless of who they are, what they have, and where they live.

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

Inclusion: Inclusion is a sense of belonging, feeling respected and valued for individuality. The process of inclusion engages people by helping them feel valued and essential to the success of the organization. To contribute to the organization, advance their skill sets and careers, and feel comfortable and confident being their authentic selves. Inclusion is the degree to which an agency actively seeks, welcomes, and collaborates with its diverse community.

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

Society Personnel: All staff, board members, students, and volunteers.

POLICY REVIEW:

The Executives will review this Policy every 2 years and will present recommended and required revisions to staff Society. If there are legislated changes required, these changes will be made as close as possible to the effective date of the legislative change.