

Société Alzheimer Society

Organization and Culture Policy

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

The Alzheimer Society (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. 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:

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.

The Society and its staff, students, volunteers, and Board formally acknowledge that we work and live on traditional Indigenous territories across the province. We acknowledge that there are 46 treaties and other agreements that cover the territory now called Ontario. We are thankful to be able to work and live in these territories. We are thankful to the First Nations, Metis and Inuit people who have cared for these territories since time immemorial and who continue to contribute to the strength of Ontario and to all communities across the province. The Society is honoured to collaborate with Indigenous clients, stakeholders, and communities throughout the various territories.

The following Land Acknowledgement will be read in public gatherings and meetings, and elsewhere as deemed appropriate:

The Alzheimer Society of Sarnia-Lambton acknowledges our obligation to truth and reconciliation and acknowledges that this land on which we are gathered today is part of the ancestral land of the Chippewa, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples, referred to collectively as the Anishinaabeg. It is through the connection of the Anishinaabeg with the spirit of the land, water and air that we recognize their unique cultures, traditions, and values. Together as treaty people, we have a shared responsibility to act with respect for the environment that sustains all life, protecting the future for those generations to come. Please take a moment to reflect on your own commitment to demonstrate change through your words and actions that honour the Calls to Action.

As part of our role in Truth and Reconciliation, we are committed to equality, equity, and inclusion; to providing accurate education on Indigenous history and rights; and to supporting intercultural competency and anti-racism.

The Society provides clients, employees, students, volunteers, and the community an opportunity to be together in a way that identifies the cultural needs that are relevant in our work. To this end, we

Société Alzheimer Society

Organization and Culture Policy

understand and acknowledge how the following anti-oppressive practice principles impact our work together:

- Social identity and oppression are complex, take many forms and have many intersecting relationships.
- Power and privilege are relative to one's location or position in society.
- People experience unjust barriers to service, employment, education and compensation because of who they are or where they live rather than being determined by what they need or what skills and abilities they have.
- Anti-oppression means allying with the marginalized individual or equity seeking group. It requires that we acknowledge the power and privilege that comes with our social location (race, class, gender, abilities etc.).
- Strategies for change require that we take affirmative action and share responsibility to address racist and oppressive behaviors and systems.
- There is a need for ongoing dialogue to learn from each other and the clients we serve to make positive change happen at the individual, family, community, and systems levels.
- Our work includes ongoing learning, advocacy and making affirmative change to promote diversity, guarantee inclusion and ensure equity.
- Removing barriers rooted in oppression and racism is key to creating physically safe environment and promotes healthy, respectful and inclusive spaces.
- Systemic racism and oppression are not about individuals directly but are the unconscious ways of thinking and being that are embedded in our social structures and systems which in turn support and often promote racist and oppressive behaviors.

All Society personnel shall:

1. Openly support equity, diversity and inclusion across services, operations, and employment practices.
2. Formally recognize their role and responsibility in addressing and eliminating systemic racism within our organization and the systems we operate within.
3. Have access to and have 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, 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.

Société Alzheimer Society

Organization and Culture Policy

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, and volunteers.

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, LGBTQ2S 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,

Société Alzheimer Society

Organization and Culture Policy

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 CEO 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.