

Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions
Welcoming & Inclusive Spaces Committee

Terms of Reference

PURPOSE STATEMENT

Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions (SMFC) strives to be an equitable, diverse and inclusive organization through the use of an anti-racist, anti-oppressive, intersectional approach that is trauma-informed, healing-centred, safe, responsive and affirming of all identities to ensure excellence in service delivery, fruitful partnerships, strong accountability, and an enhanced reputation locally and provincially.

The Welcoming & Inclusive Spaces Committee is tasked with supporting the agency's efforts to be a safe, responsive and affirming environment for staff to work in, for service recipients to be in and for the community to visit and be a part of.

DESIRED OUTCOMES INCLUDE

All agency locations and their spaces are equitable and inclusive in a manner that is trauma-informed, wellbeing-centred, safe, responsive and affirming of all service recipients, staff and visitors.

Desired outcomes includes:

- Colours, sounds and decorum that are trauma-informed, safe, affirming and accessible
- Affirming wall hangings, displays and appointments
- Safe, affirming and accessible spaces
- Dedicated spaces for identity-based practices and observances (e.g. areas for smudging, serenity rooms/observances rooms)
- A feedback mechanism for staff and the public

COMPOSITION

- Membership representation from each office location and identified functions/areas in the agency (e.g. union representative, direct service staff, leadership team, foster parents, etc.)
- A designated Chair
- The committee's membership will be reviewed annually or as needed

MEMBER-CONDUCT/GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION

- Each member is required to make a minimum of a two (2) year commitment
- All members are expected to actively participate in the committee and, if unable to attend a meeting, must notify the Chair
- Members are expected to contribute, work collaboratively, respect confidentiality and respectfully discuss sensitive topics and issues
- Members are expected to review any necessary literature prior to the meeting and model anti-racist, anti-oppressive values and practices

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIRS

- Request agenda items from the membership
- Prepare and distribute agendas, identifying items requiring a decision
- Ensure that meetings adhere to the principles of equity and inclusion and the terms of reference

- Ensure a “power with” approach is employed at all times whereby power is used in a manner that is non-hierarchical, collaborative and relational regardless of a member’s identity-based and/or positional power
- Establish priorities for discussion at each meeting
- Move the group through the agenda
- Act as the standing contact person to represent the group and to be a contact for questions
- Formalize the work plan
- Ensure the timely distribution of minutes/notes following meetings
- Work collaborative with all other agency-based committees (e.g. AR/AO Committee, 2SLGBTQ+ Committee, etc.) as well as departments and staffing levels towards shared goals and outcomes
- The Chair will liaise with the Executive Director and Senior Leadership as required.
- The Chair will represent the committee on the SMFC Leadership Council for Equitable Outcomes.

DECISION MAKING PROCESS:

In order to reflect the principle of inclusiveness as well as to recognize the importance of the work to be addressed, it is recommended that all decisions be made through a process of reaching consensus of the members. Consensus does not require full agreement by all members to all aspects of the decision made, but rather involves the ability of all members to abide by and work with the decision and dissenting opinions will be noted in the minutes if desired.

If consensus cannot be reached a vote will be taken. When quorum is not met then the item up for decision will be emailed to all committee members with a deadline asking for assenting and dissenting votes with rationales. If there is no pending deadline the decision will be brought forward again at the next meeting. If there are deadlines attached to the decision the majority vote will prevail.

In the selection of a new co-chair, a survey will be circulated to all members with the names of nominees. Each member will have one vote in the selection of a new co-chair.

QUORUM:

There must be 50% plus one of members on the committee in attendance at the meeting to reach quorum for decision making purposes.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

All members will treat information declared to be confidential appropriately.

MEETING SCHEDULE AND TIME FRAME:

- Meetings will be 1.5 hours in length unless additional time is required
- Meetings will be held every 4-6 weeks or as required

MINUTES/AGENDA:

- Notes will be taken at each meeting by a designated notetaker
- Notes will be sent via email to Chair for approval prior to the next committee meeting
- Minutes and the meeting agenda will be distributed via email for review prior to the meeting

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Members of the Committee are accountable to the Chair who are in turn accountable to the Executive Director
- Members of the Committee are also accountable to each other.

REVIEW OF TERMS:

Terms of Reference will be reviewed every two years or when required.

Created February/ 2024
