TORONTO DROP-IN NETWORK

GOOD PRACTICES TOOLKIT

Produced by: Paul Dowling Consulting, Good Practices Workgroup, and Agora Foundation

2007

INTRODUCTION AND USER'S GUIDE

Welcome to the Toronto Drop-In Network's Good Practices Toolkit!

This Toolkit was developed through a process of intensive discussions with drop-in staff and participants, and it contains the collective wisdom of the Toronto Drop-In Network (TDIN). It is full of practical strategies, helpful tips, and rich discussions that are designed to help drop-in workers develop new policies or improve their existing practices.

The Good Practices Toolkit was written with the diversity of the TDIN in mind – each drop-in differs from others in terms of types of resources, staffing capacity, amount of available space, number of participants, ability to function autonomously, philosophy, mandate, and so forth. Many drop-ins face the same problems and have the same concerns, but few solutions are "one-size-fits-all." The Toolkit covers a range of strategies that correspond to the different resources and constraints of each drop-in. Some of the guidelines apply to everyone – for example, food preparation safety standards – while others need to be adapted to meet the needs of different drop-ins.

Every drop-in is dedicated to continually improving their service, and this document is intended to give the TDIN the tools to help all drop-ins work together – as individuals and as part of the Network – to become the best that they can be. This Toolkit is intended to be a "living document" that grows and changes with the Network, benefiting from the discussion that it invokes. This process should be facilitated by material organization of the Toolkit – it is contained in a binder so policies or notes can be easily inserted in the appropriate place, and the pagination restarts with each subsection so that any new insertions can be easily incorporated into the numbering.

"Good Practices" Versus "Best Practices" or "Minimum Standards"

The Toronto Drop-In Network is remarkable in its diversity. Each drop-in exists within a particular environment, works within a particular set of constraints, and responds to a particular group of people. For these reasons, this Toolkit presents "good practices" rather than "best practices" or "minimum standards;" it does not try to prescribe one way to do something, but rather gives a range of suggestions for each topic that are responsive to the needs of different drop-ins.

Yet while practices may vary according to resources and populations, there is often an underlying "good approach" that provides a common foundation. For example, Section 3 says that drop-in participants should have input into the programs and services provided, and should be involved in decision-making processes at the drop-in. From this one premise, the section goes on to describe a variety of strategies – from surveys to town hall meetings to Board membership – that can be adopted, depending on the drop-in's particular resources and constraints.

For drop-in staff, this Toolkit does not provide you with a set of rules or minimum standards, but instead offers you a way to orient yourself toward your work. As you already know, working in a drop-in requires a tremendous amount of flexibility and creativity. Good practices are about thinking things through, acting with intentionality and care, being responsive to criticism, provoking discussion, and continuing to challenge yourself and others to find ways to improve the quality of your drop-in's service. It is helpful to think of all policies as drafts – never fully finalized, and always open for improvement based on new suggestions, local needs, and changing circumstances.

How to Use the Toolkit

Reproduction and adaptation of portions of this Toolkit by not-for-profit organizations is encouraged, providing that the Toronto Drop-In Network Good Practices Toolkit is acknowledged as the source. No part of the Toolkit may be used for commercial or consulting purposes without prior written consent from the Toronto Drop-In Network.

This Toolkit – like any box of tools – can be used in many different ways. If you want to build a shelf, you need a hammer and nails. If a pipe springs a leak, you need a wrench. Below are some suggestions on how to access and use the tools contained here.

Getting practical advice and material resources. You may be selective as you use this Toolkit, and pick it up only in specific situations where you need practical advice – for example, when you are revising a particular policy on barring practices, or revamping your hiring process, or deciding whether you should institute a loan-granting system, or wondering how to make your TTC token distribution more equitable, or looking for advice on how to improve your relationships with your neighbours.

Each section highlights effective strategies and discusses the advantages and drawbacks to each one, while the appendices provide material resources that you can print out and use. For example, there are participant code-of-conduct posters that you can put up in your drop-in; or volunteer application forms; or a confidentiality policy; or an emergency search and evacuation procedure, or a mail call form; or a barring contract between staff and participants; or a sample participant file closure form; and so forth. These offer a good template to build on, but may need to be adapted to reflect your drop-in's particular management structure, circumstances, and mandate.

Developing your own manual. Because the TDIN is so diverse, and factors like funding levels and spatial capacity significantly affect what types of programming and administration each drop-in has, this Toolkit is not a rule book providing simple, straightforward instructions that everyone will follow. The Toolkit can, however, be a valuable resource for managers to use as they develop their own manual for staff and volunteers in their particular drop-in.

Many drop-ins are under-resourced or understaffed and have little time to develop their own policies and procedures manuals; this Toolkit is intended to facilitate this process. In

addition to the practical strategies offered in each section, there are sample policies and sample protocols attached as appendices. These samples may be easily adapted to fit your drop-in (in some cases, the adaptation may be as simple as adding your drop-in's name at the top of the page; in other cases, you may need to alter the wording to better suit your particular context).
Further, the Toolkit has been printed in a binder to facilitate the addition and organization of your drop-in's own policies, procedures, and guides.

Explaining or justifying to others what you do. In addition to basic nuts and bolts of practical suggestions, this Toolkit also offers conceptual tools – "tools to think with." It is important, not just to use a good practice, but to be able to give a rationale for *why* it is a good practice.

For example, if a participant challenges a particular rule – for example, why they are not permitted to take leftovers home with them – it is far better to give legitimate health and food safety reasons than to say "because it is a good practice." This is a fairly simple example; more problematic ones require more detailed rationales. For example, explaining why a violent participant was only barred from entering the drop-in for a few days; or why it is any of the staff's business what a participant does down the street from the drop-in.

This Toolkit's philosophies and rationales for particular practices can be put to use in a variety of other situations – for example:

- When you are developing an orientation or training session;
- When you are advocating on behalf of participants or drop-ins in the political sphere; or
- When you are trying to justify or explain a particular practice to funders, or managers, or Board members, who do not understand what makes it effective.

Training staff or volunteers. This Toolkit may be used during training or orientation sessions for new staff, volunteers, Board members, or participants joining the staff or volunteer team at the drop-in. Each subheading in each section – for example, "TTC Tokens" or "Showers and Laundry" in 2B: Services and Supply Distribution – starts on a separate page. All relevant additional materials, like appendices, are located directly after that piece. The Toolkit has been organized in this way so that these may be easily removed as teaching aids or photocopied as hand-outs for training and orientation sessions.

Broadening and deepening your understanding. You may also read this Toolkit straight through, from start to finish, if you are interested to discover the kinds of things the Drop-In Network is talking about, and the sorts of practices being used across the GTA to work with socially marginalized folks. Reading the Toolkit from cover to cover may also be a good approach if you are planning to start a drop-in.

If you are interested in doing further research on any of the topics discussed in this Toolkit, there is also a List of Resources at the end that provides all the references used in each section as well as some additional sources that you might find helpful.

Networking. As well as being a useful resource for individual drop-ins, this book is also intended to serve as a common reference point for all the drop-ins in the TDIN and to be used to facilitate networking and dialogue. Building a safe community and a strong coalition relies on clear communication pathways and established guidelines that the community is aware of and can refer to. It should be emphasized, however, that this Toolkit is not intended to be the "last word" – it is intended to become a living document that grows and changes with the TDIN.

Methods

Site visits. This Toolkit was developed through an intensive consultative process. The manager of the TDIN chose a representative sample of eight drop-ins for the consultants to visit and interview their staff. The drop-ins were selected to express the range of the TDIN: one served youth, one served seniors; one served men exclusively, one served women exclusively; some were faith-based, some were secular; one focused on mental health consumer survivors; one focused on trans-gendered people; some were part of a larger organization, some operated on their own; some were based in the downtown core, some were suburban; and so forth.

Focus groups. In addition to the site visit consultations, focus groups were held to open up the discussion and to solicit as wide as possible a range of opinions on good practices within the TDIN. Three focus groups were held with open invitations to any interested drop-in staff, and one was held with interested participants from five drop-ins.

Workgroup. A Workgroup composed primarily of TDIN drop-in staff convened regularly to shape the direction and revise the content of the Toolkit. The Workgroup provided detailed feedback on each of the sections of the Toolkit as they were written.

TDIN. When the Toolkit was complete, a message was sent out to all members of the TDIN to let them know it was available and to give them a chance to request a copy and review the draft.

Sample Policies. The consultants collected policies and procedures during their site visits, and other drop-ins also sent in these types of documents. These documents have been adapted and reproduced throughout this Toolkit as generic samples in the appendices at the end of each section.

The names of the drop-ins that the sample policies were originally from are not included here. While the sample may have originated with one drop-in, the policies have been adapted based on feedback received during focus groups and site visits; they are no longer the policy of that one organization, but rather represent a good practice as defined by a number of voices within the TDIN.

References. The information in this Toolkit is drawn from the site visits, focus groups, and Workgroup consultations carried out between May and October 2006. These are not cited within the text; only external and published resources are referenced. External sources are indicated in footnotes within each section, and are also given in a List of Resources at the end of the Toolkit. The specific individuals, drop-ins, and organizations who contributed to this Toolkit are credited in the Acknowledgements.

Conclusion

Drop-ins provide a safe and welcoming refuge for some of the most vulnerable members of our society. This Toolkit is designed to help the people who operate drop-ins be the best that they can and provide the most effective service to the community. We sincerely hope that you will find it useful.

We would also very much appreciate your feedback on this toolkit. Could you take a moment to send an email to tdin@ststephenshouse.com to answer the following questions?

1. Will this Toolkit be useful to you and/or your agency?
2. Which section will be most useful, and why?
3. Which section will be least useful, and why?
4. Are there other policies and procedures you wished were in the Toolkit?
5. Your name and agency

Thank you!

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- Mustard Seed,
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- The Fred Victor Centre,
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 3
Participant Engagement and Governance

SECTION 4
Volunteer and Staffing Practices

SECTION 5
Health and Safety

SECTION 6
Community Relations

SECTION 7
Organizational Linkages and Partnerships

SECTION 8
Funding

SECTION 9
References and Resources

SECTION 1
Philosophy and Approach

This Section outlines the conceptual frameworks and philosophical premises that structure the work that drop-ins do. This Section can be useful as an educational aid; as a resource when applying for grants; as a way to broaden your understanding of the diversity of the Toronto Drop-In Network (and what unifies it); or as an advocacy tool (whether for use in participant action groups, in challenging a proposed law, or when fighting community attempts to close your drop-in).

This Section is divided into two main areas:

- **1A DEFINING OUR WORK**
  - Who We Are
  - What We Do
  - Who We Serve
  - Attachment
    - Appendix 1A.1: Sample Mission Statements

- **1B CONCEPTUAL TOOLS**
  - Social Inclusion and Social Justice
  - Health Promotion and the Determinants of Health
  - Harm Reduction
  - Community Development

SUBSECTION 1A
Defining Our Work

Who We Are

There has been substantial debate about the precise definition of a "drop-in." Drop-ins vary in their mandates, the services they offer, the environments they cultivate, their governance structures, the populations they serve, and the types of staff or volunteers they recruit. Each drop-in has its own philosophical approach, mission statement, and mandate that guide it in its daily operations and its development of policies (see **Appendix 1A.1**).

Models and terminology. Drop-ins operate according to a variety of models – and there are probably as many models as there are drop-ins.[1] The models discussed below exist only in theory – in practice, most drop-ins combine elements from various sources:

- **Faith-based model:** Drop-ins are an extension of a particular church, ministry, or spiritual community, and drop-in users are often referred to as "guests." The focus is on providing meals and other basic needs, and providing a space for socially marginalized people to build community and be respected. Anyone may be a guest – all are welcomed and accepted.

- **Clubhouse model:** Drop-in users are "members" and join the club to access the drop-in. Membership is usually restricted by age, gender, or some other characteristic of identity or life experience. The clubhouse model is intended to foster a sense of belonging to, and ownership of, the drop-in. Programming focuses on basic needs (showers, laundry, meals) and on recreational activities (card games, movies, sports, social events).

- **Health-focused model:** This model sees the accepting, communal space as the entry point for people to receive health services that they otherwise have difficulty accessing. Many, though not necessarily all, staff have medical training and work intensively with "clients" or "service users" to treat their illnesses, help them overcome addictions, and assist them in accomplishing their goals for positive change. What makes it a "drop-in" rather than a "walk-in" clinic is its focus on the socially marginalized population as its clientele and its efforts to meet needs that go beyond a purely medical or physical health model. For example, the building may have shower and laundry facilities, or open its doors during extreme weather alerts, or organize advocacy groups.

[1] This Toolkit tries to avoid focusing its discussions on any one particular model described above. Instead, it takes good practices from each of these models to recommend to drop-ins. The term used throughout this manual for drop-in users is "participants." This term was chosen to be the most neutral, as it does not belong to any one particular model. It also suggests autonomous and active drop-in users who elect to participate in the life of the drop-in, whether they choose to access the space, meals, services, activities, or any other aspect of the drop-in.

- **Community development model:** The focus in this model is less on professional intervention and more on peer support and capacity building. Here the welcoming, informal space of the drop-in is intended to foster the development of supportive relationships. Staff work to empower drop-in users to become advocates on their own behalf (e.g. with landlords) and on behalf of their community (e.g. with local politicians).

Common characteristics. Since drop-ins have such different organizational cultures – and even different language is used to discuss the people they serve – it is no easy task to settle on one definition that includes them all. Some have tried to define drop-ins as providers of basic needs; this accurately describes one aspect of the service that all drop-ins provide. However, defining what constitutes a basic need, or which basic needs must be met in a drop-in, becomes problematic. Different drop-ins focus on different basic needs – some offer showers, while others don't have the space or facilities for that; some have day beds, while others don't permit sleeping in the drop-in space; some operate food banks, while others focus on providing hot meals.

There are some common characteristics, however, that describe this diverse group of services:

- **Responsiveness and flexibility.** Drop-ins start in response to a need in a particular community, and they change their services and practices as the needs of the population change. What makes the drop-in model so unique and so valuable is its flexibility. It exists as an open-ended operation where, rather than establishing one practice and continuing it, drop-in staff are continually adjusting and improving their services, programs, and policies.

- **Respect for autonomy.** Different drop-ins may focus on different basic needs, but they all emphasize the fundamental importance of treating socially marginalized people with the same respect granted to everyone else. This approach involves respecting an individual's personal autonomy – their ability to make their own decisions about how they want to live their life, the services they want to access, the changes they want to make, and the rate at which they want to make those changes. This does not mean drop-in workers refrain from discussing potential interventions (e.g. detox) with a participant, but it means they do not impose those interventions, or make them a requirement of accessing the drop-in.

- **Holistic approach.** Drop-ins take a holistic approach to working with people, recognizing that any one particular need – e.g. for housing – is always bound up with many other needs – e.g. the need of formerly homeless people to feel safe and "at home" in a new apartment; the need

for interventions into hoarding behaviours, so that people's possessions do not end up crowding them out of their homes; the need for community, so that a person now living alone can balance their familiar life and friends on the street with their new living situation; the need for food and nutritious meals; the need for meaningful activities over the course of a day; the need for an advocate who can intervene on a person's behalf with a landlord; and so forth.

These three attributes – f**lexible responsiveness, respect for autonomy, and holism** – locate drop-ins within the landscape of social services. Drop-ins are generalists in a landscape of ever more specialized institutions. Their approach involves a certain amount of **"intentional informality"** that is simply not possible for many other types of organizations. But this informality should not be mistaken for a laissez-faire attitude; it is "intentional" in that it seeks to create a particular kind of environment where participants can establish a level of comfort and trust before sharing sensitive information, access services in their own time, and develop supportive relationships with their peers.

It is this relaxed environment and respect for autonomy that participants emphasize when they define what a drop-in is. A drop-in is "a place where you can sleep or have a coffee and interact with other people, and where nobody lectures you or belittles you". It is also "a place to get information, self-help, a shower, housing, legal aid, and employment skills" and "deal with self esteem and address health issues." A drop-in is "a calm area," "a safe house," "a refuge," and "a port in the storm."

Most other institutions, by the specialized nature of their work, take a more clinical approach to working with participants. They are guided by institutional or government mandates that define the goals for participants, the steps that must be taken to meet those goals, and the conditions of life required to remain eligible for the services and resources provided. This organizational structure is designed to efficiently handle large numbers of people, and can be very effective. These two approaches to service provision are not exclusive, but complementary: the drop-in approach is not "better," but it does respond to needs that cannot be met by the other approach; it is not "worse," but it should not be replaced by a more formalized model.

What We Do

All drop-ins provide an informal social setting, respond to some basic needs, and offer some sort of programming. The roles of drop-in programs can generally be organized into four clusters, described in the following way by researchers at the University of Sheffield:[2]

1. **Providing for basic needs:** Basic needs can include food, clothing, showers, laundry, and a safe place that is warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Some

[2] This section has been adapted from Maureen Crane, Ruby Fu, Phil Foley, and Anthony M. Warnes, *The Role of Homeless Sector Day Centres in Supporting Housed Vulnerable People*, Sheffield (UK): University of Sheffield, 2005, pages 33-36.

provide meals because participants may lack the money, facilities, or skills to prepare food, or they live alone and are not motivated to cook. Drop-ins provide an environment that is safe, with staff that are responsive to personal health and well-being.

2. **Providing opportunities for social contact:** All drop-ins have some kind of common room where meals or snacks can be eaten and participants can socialize. Many participants may not feel welcome or comfortable in "traditional" community centres and find drop-ins more accessible. Many participants have weak informal social networks and little or no contact with relatives, and drop-ins can provide a relaxed social setting in which people can make new friends. Many housed participants are formerly homeless and are currently only precariously housed. For them, having access to a supportive community may help them stabilize and stay housed.

3. **Providing support for well-being:** In providing support for participants' well-being, drop-ins fill a gap in the provision of community support services for vulnerable people, though this role is not adequately recognized and is often constrained by insufficient resources and staff.

   Drop-ins provide support for participants' well-being in different ways, corresponding to their organizational mandate, staffing capacity, and financial resources. Some drop-ins provide help with housing, debt problems, rent arrears, physical and mental health concerns, social assistance issues, and substance use problems. Some offer individualized case work and some offer more informal emotional support to people who find it hard to cope with everyday stresses and adverse events.

4. **Providing the opportunity for change:** Many drop-in programs help people build skills, motivation, confidence and self-esteem so that they can rebuild their lives and sustain housing (if they have it). Life skills training, meaningful activities, education, and work training programs are offered. For those who are homeless, it is difficult to remain employed. They become trapped in a cycle of "no home, therefore no job, therefore no home." When eventually they are housed, they have often been unemployed for several years.

   The work projects developed by some drop-in programs are beneficial for people who are not ready to return to conventional employment. Many drop-ins offer life skills training classes and community kitchen programs. Some people have always lived with others until they became homeless and have never been responsible for daily living tasks such as cooking and budgeting. While in hostels or on the streets many people do not have the opportunity to practice these skills, so difficulties may only become apparent when a person is housed and has to manage alone.

It is important to recognize that the roles on this list are not exclusive and the lines are often blurred. For example, providing a meal is both a response to basic needs and an opportunity for social contact and community-building. Running a recreational activity like arranging flowers is an opportunity for socializing that can also be an intervention for positive change, helping newly (and precariously) housed people connect with their new home. Responding to people's health problems (whether mental or physical) can be categorized as providing for basic needs, providing support for well-being, and providing an opportunity for change.

Who We Serve

Just as it is difficult to identify the limits and boundaries of what defines a drop-in, it is difficult to pin down a definition of drop-in participants. Drop-ins do not work with only one sector of the population, or with a group of people that is easily categorized. For example, drop-ins are often thought of as serving the "homeless" population, but this is problematic for three reasons:

1. **Population.** Drop-ins serve socially marginalized people who are housed as well as those who are living on the streets.

2. **Definition.** The term "homeless" itself is often misunderstood as referring exclusively to people who are living on the streets or in squats, ravines, or parks. The 2001 *Toronto Report Card on Homelessness* defined the term as a condition of people who
    - Live outside,
    - Stay in emergency shelters,
    - Spend most of their income on rent, or
    - Live in overcrowded, substandard conditions.[3]

    Research has also been done on "hidden homelessness," where people have no home of their own, but sleep at a friend's or relative's place.

3. **Cycles.** Many people go through cycles of homelessness. A drop-in participant who is currently staying in a hostel may get a space in a subsidized apartment tomorrow. A participant who is living in a rooming house today may be out on the street tomorrow. Sometimes the difference between homeless and housed, or between precariously housed and stably housed, can depend on the intervention of the drop-in.

The term "homeless" is also misleading as a description of drop-ins' populations, because it implies that there is only one problem – the lack of housing – and thus only one solution – housing. Of course, helping people find homes is something that many drop-ins do, or invite external housing workers in to do, but since lack of housing is not the only concern participants have, it is not the exclusive focus of drop-ins' services.

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[3] City of Toronto, *The Toronto Report Card on Homelessness*, 2001, page 2. Available at: www.toronto.ca/homelessness/homelessnessreport2001.pdf.

Multiple needs. Drop-ins work with people with "multiple needs;" this is defined by Homeless Link as people who are experiencing challenges in a number of areas of their lives, such that if they were to overcome one of these issues, the others would still inhibit their acceptance by the wider social world, their ability to remain stably housed, or their ability to hold down a job. These individuals may be homeless or housed, and they typically are not in contact or not communicating well with the social service agencies that could help them. Someone with multiple needs is grappling with two or more of the following issues:

- Mental health problems
- Physical health problems
- Misuse of alcohol, drugs, or other substances
- Learning difficulties
- Behaviour control difficulties
- Vulnerabilities because of their age.[4]

Social and geographical communities. Drop-ins also tend to come into being in response to the needs of a particular community. Communities may be geographical or social, and these two often partially overlap. For example, one community centre with several drop-in programs operates in the heart of Toronto's queer community. This organization serves both a local neighbourhood that includes both LGBTQ[5] and non-LGBTQ people, and the LGBTQ community that stretches beyond its catchment area. Most drop-ins report a core of participants who come from within their geographical community, and a number of other participants who travel there for the social community of a specific population (e.g. First Nations, seniors, youth, women, men, etc.), environment (e.g. quiet, spiritual, etc.), or needs (e.g. mental health, addictions, etc.) that the drop-in focuses on.

All of this means that it is hard to pin down which population it is, exactly, that drop-ins serve. Drop-ins are diverse and serve a variety of populations. But this diversity is in part due to one practice that all drop-ins have in common: drop-ins are open and welcoming places to all those who need their services, whoever those people may be or wherever they may come from.

ATTACHMENT:

- **Appendix 1A.1 – Sample Mission Statements**

[4] Homeless Link, "7: Working with people with multiple needs," *Day centres handbook: A good practice guide*, London (UK), 2004, pages 7.4-7.5.
[5] "LGBTQ" stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered/Transsexual, and Queer.

Appendix 1A.1 Sample Mission Statements

Source: Reproduced from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-September 2006.

MISSION STATEMENTS

#1: Faith-Based Model

We seek to nurture community with the neighbour, especially the homeless, alienated, economically poor and women at risk. We welcome everyone without distinction and offer opportunities for participants, volunteers, and staff to be nourished in body, mind and spirit.

#2: Clubhouse Model

To supply and render services of a charitable nature to poor and needy persons and, for such purposes, to provide, maintain, operate, and conduct a centre for social activities, recreation, and other privileges for elderly, homeless, unemployed men.

To endeavour to interest the public in the social problem presented by elderly, homeless, unemployed men, and to further the alleviation of this problem.

To establish training and education centres and to train poor and needy persons in gainful trades, professions and occupations, with a view of enabling such persons to become self-supporting.

To cooperate with other organizations, whether incorporated or not, which have objectives similar in whole or in part to the objectives of the Corporation.

#3: Health-Focused Model

We believe that the most effective way to improve health is to have programs designed and run by the community affected; therefore, we are working towards community participation and decision making in all aspects of the centre's activities.

We believe that health care services should be accessible to all members of our community. We are committed to providing, and ensuring access to, responsive, culturally sensitive services to meet the needs of our diverse community. We recognize that the community and its needs are constantly changing and we are committed to regular evaluation of all programs.

We recognize that social, economic and political issues, such as poverty, inadequate housing, unequal access to services, etc. affect health. We are committed to working with community residents and agencies to advocate for better policies and service delivery on related issues.

We believe that comprehensive health care should include maintaining good health as well as treating illness; therefore, our services will include treatment, support, prevention, education and advocacy on physical and mental health issues.

#4: Community Development Model

[Drop-In Name] is a women's organization that offers practical and emotional support to women through programs, which enable them to take greater control over their lives. [Drop-In Name] works to change social conditions, which endanger women's lives. The following are [Drop-In Name]'s overarching goals:

- **Program:** To offer socially isolated, low income and homeless women assistance, support and encouragement through social and recreational programs.
- **Advocacy:** To support or promote, in collaboration with other organizations, the health, education and social welfare of any woman or group of women and to encourage the development of services or programs that foster self-reliance
- **Administration:** To manage programs, services, and advocacy efforts; to ensure the use of human resources reflects [Drop-In Name]'s overall commitment to the value of women's roles as human service providers and volunteers; to ensure the agency's financial autonomy is maintained by utilizing diverse private and public funding sources.

SUBSECTION 1B
Conceptual Tools

In addition to the policies and practical advice offered throughout this Toolkit, theoretical frameworks and concepts are also important tools that help drop-ins build the foundation for their work and articulate the rationale behind their approach to funders and other outside bodies that may want to understand their work.

The following terms and conceptual frameworks provide a basis for understanding and reflecting on and developing good practices:

- **Social Inclusion and Social Justice**
- **Health Promotion and the Determinants of Health**
- **Harm Reduction**
- **Community Development**

Social Inclusion and Social Justice

"Social inclusion" is the approach taken by drop-in workers to help people become full participants in their community in economic, social, psychological, and political terms. The concept encourages reflection on the multiple barriers to social equality and generates expectations for change at various levels of society – from widespread attitudes to governmental policies to service delivery practices.

"Social exclusion" is a concept that was developed as an alternative term for "poverty." "Poverty" focuses too exclusively on finances and ignores the social marginalization experienced by people with minimal resources. Also, as a personal descriptor, "poor" can obscure systemic and structural oppression and can place the emphasis instead on individual abilities.[6]

"Social justice" is a term linked to social inclusion; its goal is also "the full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs."[7] It envisions a world in which the current unequal divisions of labour, responsibility, and privilege are reorganized more equitably and the principles of fairness are applied in even measure to all individuals, regardless of class, status, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, or any other discriminatory factor.

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[6] Toronto Enterprise Fund, "Section 1: Background," *The Business of Inclusion: Building Livelihoods for Homeless and Low-Income People*, prepared by Eko Nomos Program Development Consultants, October 2003. Available at: http://action.web.ca/home/uwgt/attach/TEF%20-%20section%201%20final1.pdf.
[7] Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook*, New York: Routledge, 1997.

Drop-ins often see their primary task as creating an environment where relationships between people are organized according to the principles of fairness, rationality, consideration, and kindness. They work to foster an environment of social justice within the drop-in, and to work with participants to advocate for a more socially just community outside of the drop-in.

Health Promotion and the Determinants of Health

Drop-ins conceive of health, like poverty, in broader terms than a simple attribute of a person. The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion states that "to reach a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, an individual or group must be able to identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment. Health is, therefore, seen as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities. Therefore, health promotion is not just the responsibility of the health sector, but goes beyond healthy life-styles to well-being."[8]

Determinants of health. A number of factors work together to affect people's health, including:

- **The social and economic environment** – for example, income, education, social status, access to health care, support networks, employment and working conditions, etc;

- **The physical environment** – for example, rural, urban, industrial, tropical, etc.; or in a place with water filtration systems, in a war zone, in overcrowded housing, etc.; and

- **A person's individual characteristics and behaviours** – for example, genetics, gender, culture, age, hygiene practices, smoking habits, exercise, nutritional intake, etc.[9]

Health promotion. The determinants of health described above do not exist in isolation from one another, but rather work together in a complex system. Health promotion takes this system into account as it enables people to increase control over and to improve their health through:[10]

- **Building healthy public policy**, through legislation, fiscal measures, taxation, and organizational change that will foster greater equity and cleaner, safer environments;

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[8] Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, adopted at the First International Conference on Health Promotion, Ottawa, November 21, 1986. Available at: www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/ottawa_charter_hp.pdf.
[9] Canadian Health Network, "What Makes People Healthy?" n.d. Available at: www.canadian-health-network.ca. Last modified February 2005.
[10] Ottawa Charter, 1986.

- **Creating supportive environments**, where people take care of each other, our communities, and our natural environment;

- **Strengthening community actions**, through facilitating full and continuous access to information, learning opportunities, and funding support for public participation in and direction of health matters;

- **Developing personal skills**, through health and life skills education; and

- **Reorienting health services**, beyond clinical and curative services to a mandate that includes broader social, cultural, political, economic and physical environmental components.

The health promotion approach focuses on strengthening the skills and capabilities of individuals, groups, and communities to enable them to take action and gain some measure of control over the determinants of health. As the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland notes, "health promotion is not something that is done on or to people; it is done by, with and for people."[11]

Harm Reduction

Harm reduction is a broad-based approach that takes into account the effects of potentially harmful behaviour on all aspects of a person's life as well as the impact on the wider community. For example, laws that prohibit smoking in enclosed spaces or near public buildings were instituted both to discourage individuals from smoking (or decrease the number of cigarettes they consume in a day) and to protect the community as a whole from the damaging effects of second-hand smoke.[12] Other measures taken in response to unhealthy or unsafe behaviours include graduated licencing programs for young drivers; distribution of free condoms at health clinics to reduce the spread of sexually-transmitted infections; physicians prescribing methadone to help heroin addicts overcome their dependency; homeless shelters dispensing controlled quantities of alcohol to people who are addicted to alcohol and would otherwise be on the street creating a disturbance or freezing to death in the winter; and so forth.[13]

Acknowledging that not all people who engage in unhealthy or unsafe activities are at a point where they will accept interventions aimed at stopping their behaviour, the harm reduction approach works to minimize the damaging effects that these behaviours can have.

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[11] Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland, "What Is Health Promotion?" n.d. Available at: www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk/Healthpromotion/Health/section2.htm.

[12] Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion, "Frequently Asked Questions about Ontario's Smoke-Free Strategy," n.d. Available at: www.mhp.gov.on.ca/english/health/smoke_free/default.asp. Last updated September 15, 2006.

[13] Adapted from Paul Garfinkel, "Reducing harm in our society," *Toronto Star*, Thursday, September 7, 2006, page A22.

At many TDIN drop-ins, **harm reduction strategies** include putting out baskets of condoms (and distributing them specifically to sex trade workers), handing out crack kits (to reduce the use and sharing of unsanitary equipment), installing safe needle disposal containers, making sure water and food are always available, and providing people who are under the influence with a safe space where others cannot take advantage of them (especially when they are incapacitated by drugs or alcohol). These strategies are accompanied by education regarding available alternatives, treatment options, and social service agencies, which participants may choose to access in their own time.

The harm reduction approach taken at many drop-ins recognizes that people have many needs related to their personal health and safety that may not get addressed if being sober is a condition of service. These drop-ins welcome drug and alcohol users the way they would any other person, and begin a **non-judgmental dialogue** with them around their use. Talking openly about the issue allows them to make participants aware of the dangers of substance use and how they can be prevented. Workers can ask participants how they are doing and discuss strategies for safe use. This approach allows staff to meet participants "where they are at" in terms of their substance use, and to let them know that they can access the help they need if they choose to quit, without imposing this as a requirement for accessing the drop-in.

Community Development

Community development works through concrete and effective community action that builds the community's strength, sustainability and capacity to set priorities and make decisions on issues that affect its health and well-being. Participants need to be involved in program design, planning and implementation if the activities and solutions the drop-in is developing are to be rooted in an understanding of the community's perception and experiences of its needs and issues.

Taking a community development approach to service planning encourages service providers and participants to take responsibility for strengthening the fabric of their own community, by asking themselves what kind of place their community is and how services may be used to positively influence the quality of life there.

The community development approach builds on the following principles and beliefs:[14]

- Social exclusion occurs when people lack access to education, employment, decent housing, health care, and other conditions necessary for full participation in society.
- We need to build coalitions and partnerships with others whose work deals with the factors that contribute to social exclusion. The health of

[14] This list has been adapted from the Association of Ontario Health Centres (AOHC), "Principles and Beliefs," *Building Healthy Organizations*, August 2002.

our community develops through such partnerships.

- Programs need to operate on community development principles, such as collective decision-making and action, leadership development and peer support techniques where people learn and teach from their own experiences.

- Management and staff must share information and knowledge with the community to help them make informed decisions.

- Our organization has a responsibility for providing resources and information to our community, and helping it to meet its health goals.

- We need to be aware of the issues that affect our communities. We need to join with others and speak out on these issues in an effective way.

It is a good practice to develop a statement of beliefs and principles, and involve participants in its development.

SECTION 2
Day-to-Day Work and Practice

This Section on daily practice involves many different types of activities and services. The twenty-one Subsections have been organized into four themes for ease of access:

- **ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMMING**
  - 2A Hours of Operation, Scheduling, and Signing In
  - 2B Program Planning and Evaluation
  - 2C Meals
  - 2D Creative and Therapeutic Activities
  - 2E Educational and Vocational Activities
  - 2F Other Activities

- **DISTRIBUTION OF GOODS AND SERVICES**
  - 2G Clothing
  - 2H Showers and Laundry
  - 2I Mail and Messages
  - 2J Computers
  - 2K TTC Tokens
  - 2L Loans and Grants

- **INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT TO PARTICIPANTS**
  - 2M Reception and Intake
  - 2N Assessment and Care-Planning
  - 2O Confidentiality
  - 2P Supportive Conversations and Counseling
  - 2Q Resources and Referrals
  - 2R Advocacy

- **PARTICIPANT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**
  - 2S Rights and Responsibilities
  - 2T Complaint Process
  - 2U Service Restrictions, Barring Policies, and Appeals

ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMMING

Each drop-in develops a unique set of programs and services based on the needs of the populations that they work with and on the types of funding that are available to them. Because of this flexibility and diversity, the specific activities discussed in this Section of the Good Practices Toolkit will not be part of every drop-in. This Section does not present "good programs," or a set of services that all "good drop-ins" should have, but rather discusses good practices for developing, running, evaluating, and improving the programs that your drop-in is able to offer.

The first two Subsections (2A and 2B) address general good practices that all drop-ins should consider as they run programs, while the final four Subsections (2C, 2D, 2E, and 2F) discuss the additional considerations involved with specific types of activities:

- **2A HOURS OF OPERATION, SCHEDULING, AND SIGNING IN**

- **2B PROGRAM PLANNING AND EVALUATION**
  - Developing New Programs
  - Evaluating Programs
  - Attachment
    - Appendix 2B.1 – Sample Program Committee Terms of Reference

- **2C MEALS**

- **2D CREATIVE AND THERAPEUTIC ACTIVITIES**
  - Links between Creative Activities and Therapy
  - Specialized Training
  - Ground Rules

- **2E EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**
  - Education and Training
  - Life Skills Programming
  - Volunteer and Work Activities

- **2F OTHER ACTIVITIES**[1]
  - Social Activities
  - Advocacy Activities
  - Attachment
    - Appendix 2F.1 – Sample Social and Advocacy Committees' Terms of Reference

[1] *Note:* Subsection 2F is titled "Other Activities" to facilitate the easy addition of notes on other activities offered by your drop-in that are not covered under the specific subheadings above.

SUBSECTION 2A
Hours of Operation, Scheduling, and Signing In

Hours of Operation and Scheduling

The days and times when your drop-in is open to participants will vary according to a number of factors, including financial and staffing resources.

For example: limited resources may mean that your drop-in can open only two days a week, four hours each day. When deciding which two days and which four hours to open your doors, **keep in mind the following considerations and good practices**:

- **Population.** Conduct a survey of participants to find out which hours they would prefer. (See Section 3 for sample survey questions and a discussion of good practices when engaging participants.) If you are opening a new drop-in, and you don't have a pre-existing group of participants to survey, it is a good practice to connect with hostels in the area and hold a focus group to ask what people need from drop-in services. If there is no hostel nearby, you can connect with any other agencies in the neighbourhood who work with marginalized persons. If a focus group with potential users is not possible, front line agency staff will often have good feedback about what gaps in service exist in the area and what they see as needed in a new drop in.

- **Other social service organizations.** Coordinate your schedule with other drop-ins, hostels, community centres, churches, and other organizations in your area, to maximize the options participants have for accessing services. For example, one weekly drop-in runs on Sundays, in part because for many years there were no other drop-ins open that day. Many drop-ins coordinate their schedules with nearby hostels. One opens at 7:00 when individuals are starting to leave the hostel, and provides access to shower and laundry facilities. Another drop-in closes at 3:00 to give participants time to head back for a 4:00 evening meal at a local hostel. It is a good practice, not only to coordinate your schedule with other social service organizations, but also to keep a binder of this information as a resource and reference available to participants.

- **Weather.** It is a good idea to be open during the hottest part of the afternoon in summer, so that participants have somewhere to get out of the sun or out of a stuffy apartment. If possible, it is a good practice to open your drop-in outside of its regular hours during extreme weather alerts, or to extend your drop-in's hours during the coldest months of the year and the hottest months of the year. If this is not feasible due to a lack of resources, it is a good practice to inform participants of any other drop-ins, hostels, community centres, churches, or other organizations in your area that are open during these times.

Other factors to take into consideration when developing or changing schedules are:

- **Administration.** Build in the time needed to do administrative duties. Drop-ins' work does not consist exclusively of interacting with participants and providing programming; it is also very important to have time to reflect on the day's activities through writing entries into daily logs and debriefing other staff members. Time is also needed to place follow-up telephone calls; plan new activities; recruit, hire, train, and supervise staff members or volunteers; develop and review policies; coordinate food deliveries or donations; network with other agencies; address neighbours' requests or complaints; organize fundraisers; apply for grants; and so forth.

- **Transparency.** Participants often shape their day based on program schedules, and some people may in fact be participating in more than one drop-in program on any given day. It is, therefore, important to inform participants and other drop-ins or local social service agencies of any changes or closures with plenty of advance notice. Post schedules in visible locations and, where resources permit, make copies so that participants can take one with them.

Signing In

The tension that many drop-ins experience between creating a pressure-free, welcoming environment and maintaining an efficient operation is exemplified by the question of signing in. Some drop-ins view signing-in as an intrusive and unnecessary measure that may become a barrier to people accessing service. Many participants who are socially marginalized may feel that signing their name makes them vulnerable.

However, many funders require statistics on the number of people who access the drop-in on any given day, and requiring participants to sign in is an effective way of tracking and preserving that information. Knowing the number of participants can also help staff plan meals and activities to meet the need, and determine whether demand is increasing or decreasing. Sign-up sheets can also be used as a way of managing the space, preventing the numbers of participants from exceeding the room capacity, and ensuring that people understand the expectations and rules for their participation in the program. A sign-in list can also help staff gauge approximately how many people there are in the building if a fire or some other emergency occurs (although this will never yield exact numbers).

Different drop-ins have come up with different ways of resolving these tensions:

- **Providing rationales.** To allay participants' fears and concerns about the signing-in process, many drop-ins will let participants know why they are asking them to sign in and permit them as much privacy as they need to feel comfortable. For example, the rationale for requesting signatures may be written at the top of the form or indicated in informal conversations with participants.

- **Anonymous sign-in.** The participant may give any name they choose, and no identification is asked for. The participant may also sign in with only their first name and first initial of their last name to reassure them of confidentiality.

- **Specific purpose sign-ins.** The drop-in space is open to all who come in, but participants are required to sign in if they want to access a particular service (such as TTC token distribution), or they want to join a club or activity that has limited space (for example, a cooking class). For high-demand supplies like TTC tokens, the list tends to be a fairly accurate representation of the number of participants on a given day, since most people will sign up for them. Please note, however, that asking participants to sign up for tokens is only a good practice if you have enough to distribute to everyone on the list. (For further discussion of TTC token distribution strategies, see Subsection 2K.)

- **Head counts.** If the drop-in has a staff member or volunteer who works the door or a front desk, part of that person's job description may be to keep track of how many people come in.

- **Large groups.** The above strategies work for smaller groups of, for example, up to 100 participants, the majority of whom are regulars. For drop-ins that run large meal programs for hundreds of participants, sign-up sheets and head counts may not be feasible or efficient ways of determining how many people are in attendance. One way to do this is to count the number of plates served. Another response, adopted by drop-ins who have limited resources and high demand, is to distribute a set number of meal tickets (for example, 250), and when those are gone, no more participants can enter the building.

SUBSECTION 2B
Program Planning and Evaluation

Programming at drop-ins involves both **unstructured activities** and **structured activities**. Unstructured activities are available to participants throughout drop-in hours with no staff involvement required. For example, there may be books, magazines, or pamphlets on shelves that participants can pick up and read as they please. There may be snacks on a sideboard that do not require serving. There may be board games, decks of cards, or a television. There may be a closet of clothes available for anyone to rummage through and take items home. It is a good practice to have these types of informal activities available in the drop-in to foster a friendly and engaging environment, to encourage participants to take ownership of the space, and to provide newcomers with ways of breaking the ice and getting to know other participants.

This Subsection focuses predominantly on structured activities, which have a clear beginning and end, involve formal staff supervision or instruction, and have identified goals and outcomes. For further discussion of unstructured activities, please see Distribution of Goods and Services (Subsections 2G to 2L) below.

Developing New Programs

When developing a program, the Toronto Drop-In Network's training program recommends that you consider the following:[2]

- What would be the benefits of this activity for participants?
- What is the goal or purpose of the activity you would like to offer? How will this activity help participants to reach this goal?
- How does this activity fit in with your drop-in's mandate or mission statement?
- Have participants been given the opportunity to provide input on this activity? Is there a demand or a need for it?
- What dates and times will this activity be offered and do they fit or conflict with participants' schedules?
- How many people are expected to participate in the activity? Is there limited space? How will you ensure that all participants have a fair chance to sign up?
- How frequently will this group meet? Will this be a one-time activity, weekly, or other? How long will it run?
- Where will the activity take place?
- Who will lead the activity?
- What kind of group participation will be required? Will this be a group that people must sign up for ahead of time? Is participation in the group flexible? For an ongoing group, will people who miss one session be able to participate in the next?

[2] This list has been adapted from Evelyn Mitchell, "Handout 4A: Group Project Proposal," *Building and Maintaining Successful Groups: Workshop Facilitator's Manual*, Toronto (ON): TDIN and THTC, 2005.

Further, as Homeless Link notes, it is important to identify "routes of progression" from drop-in activities to community-based activities (sports, sewing circles, art classes, support groups, health clinics, social clubs, general equivalency courses, post-secondary schools, internships, etc.). "For many service users the idea of using community-based activities, not specifically for homeless people, will be a long way off," Homeless Link notes, but "it should at least be considered as an eventual goal for many service users."[3]

Partnerships. Something else to consider when developing a new program is whether or not a partnership with another organization is a possibility. It may be helpful to partner with another agency to apply for funding for a particular project, or to pool resources in order to get an idea off the ground. (See Section 7: Organizational Linkages and Partnerships for further discussion.)

Consultations. It is a good practice to consult with participants when developing a new program. This may be accomplished through informal conversations or more formal meetings or written surveys. Asking individuals open-ended questions about what kinds of activities they would like the drop-in to offer is good, but participants may not know what to ask for or what types of activities are possible. Staff should develop a list of activities:

- That they know have been popular or successful elsewhere
- That they might like to initiate at the drop-in
- That the drop-in has the resources or funding for

Participants can use this list, not only to check off which activities they might enjoy or find helpful, but also as a prompt for thinking about the range of activities that are possible. At the end of this list the open-ended question of what other types of activities the participant might like to see at the drop-in should be asked. (See Section 3 for further tips on consulting with participants.)

Continuity. Participants emphasize their need for a "steady rock" in their often chaotic lives, and identify drop-ins as their best hope for this kind of stability. However, they are frustrated at times by the cancellation of an activity or change to programming when a staff member leaves the drop-in. With this in mind, it is a good practice to think about how best to ensure the continuity of a program (if it proves to be popular) at the drop-in. Strategies for promoting continuity include:

- Involving a second "back-up" staff member in the development, planning, and implementation of the program; or
- Keeping detailed notes on how a program operates, where resources are obtained, and so forth, so that these may be used as a kind of "manual" by other staff.

Of course, there is no way to guarantee continuity; some programs may require specialized training or particular skills that cannot be easily communicated to others. Some programs may be run by volunteers or external agencies. Nevertheless, it is a good

[3] Homeless Link, "13: Activities," *Day centres handbook: A good practice guide*, London (UK), 2004, page 13.4.

practice to make an effort to ensure the continuity of programs that are popular (e.g. flower-arranging), or are filling an important niche, regardless of how many people join the program (e.g. a substance use support group).

Evaluating Programs

As a program gets up and running, its philosophical foundation and goals can get lost in the day-to-day operations. When a program becomes entrenched, it stops being flexible and responsive to participants. This is why it is important to build in a system of checks and balances to make sure that objectives are being met, and, if they are not being met, what changes need to be made. Mechanisms need to be built in that keep the focus on participants' interests and needs; these include periodic assessments, retreats, and outcome evaluations.

Periodic assessments. One of these mechanisms is a regular evaluation process – for example, administering a survey once or twice a year for an ongoing program and at the end of each time-limited program. Section 3: Participant Engagement and Governance gives a further discussion of this process and Appendix 3B.1 provides sample survey questions.

Retreats. A second mechanism – where resources permit – is an annual day-long or weekend retreat for staff to take the time to reflect on their work and strategize ways to improve service. Notes should be kept from these retreats and reviewed by the group from time to time to monitor follow-up suggestions.

Points for reflection include:

- In what ways in do our programs and activities fulfill our drop-in's mission statement and mandate? How could they be improved to respond more fully to that vision and mandate?
- What are the needs of our participants? How can we better meet them? Are there any needs that we are not currently meeting? How can we meet them?
- What gives us joy and satisfaction in our work?
- What drains us in our work? What does that mean? How can we find ways to regenerate?
- What resources do we need to continue providing our services or improving our services? How can we access these resources?

It is also a good practice to hold participant retreats, where community leaders can come together to reflect on the year that has passed and develop goals for the year to come. Participant retreats are an excellent evaluation and empowerment tool.

Outcome evaluation. A third mechanism is outcome evaluation. The United Way of Greater Toronto has recently developed a Toolkit that describes this process in detail.[4] Most drop-ins do not use this process to assess their programming, measuring outputs rather than outcomes.

"**Outputs**" are "the direct products of program activities, usually measured in terms of the volume of work accomplished" – for example, how many people visited the drop-in or how many meals were served within a given period of time. "**Outcomes**" are "the benefits or changes for participants (or communities) during or after their involvement with a program or service"[5] – for example, a participant who attended an alcoholics' support group has now quit drinking, or a participant who joined the drop-in's soccer team now has greater self esteem and improved social skills.

Outcomes can be much more difficult to measure than outputs, since changes in attitudes and behaviours are not easy to assess objectively. Often, they are qualitatively assessed through anecdotal stories of how participants have become civically engaged and positively visible in the community, or personal testimonials from individuals who quit using drugs, or move off the street and into an apartment, or find and hold down a steady job.

The United Way Toolkit acknowledges that these stories are compelling, but asks: "how do we know these individual successes are commonplace; that they are the 'rule' rather than the 'exception' in a program?" Evaluating program outcomes helps social service agencies answer these questions.[6]

Outcome measurement is recommended as an evaluation technique that supplements rather than replaces the other tools (such as surveys and retreats) that the drop-in uses. Existing agency practices can also be adapted to measure outcomes, for example:

- Adding or changing questions on participant surveys,
- Training staff to record particular behaviour or attitude indicators regularly, and/or
- Modifying the templates for recording participant information to gather the needed data.[7]

Outcomes are frequently measured by means of **logic models**. Logic models chart the course of a program, from its "inputs" – funding, staff time, and other resources – through its activities to its outputs and outcomes. Logic models help to break the complexity of programming down into its component parts, and this in turn helps to focus attention on the information that will be needed in order to make improvements and increase successful outcomes.

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[4] United Way of Greater Toronto, *A Toolkit for Outcome Measurement: Building on Logic Models*, prepared by Arnold Love, 2005. Available at: www.unitedwaytoronto.com/PEOD/toolkit/Peod_Toolkit.pdf.
[5] *Ibid*, page 184.
[6] *Ibid*, page 1.
[7] *Ibid*, page 4. The United Way Toolkit discusses practical strategies for doing this in some detail in Chapter 5: Developing Effective Questionnaires, Chapter 8: Making the Most of Direct Observation, and Chapter 9: Putting Program Records to Work.

Some questions that are stimulated by this process are:

- **Did we implement the program according to plan?** What worked well, what didn't work as expected? (Look at program records of inputs, activities, and outputs.)

- **Did we reach the intended target population?** (Examine program records or survey program participants.)

- **Was the program effective?** Did it achieve short-term outcomes? (Obtain feedback from program participants, observe changes, review records, etc.).[8]

The first and third of these mechanisms can involve a lot of time, energy, and focus to be effective or productive measures. Collecting and interpreting data, and then reporting on it and using it to effect positive changes, is a time-consuming process. Surveys need to be calibrated to ensure that the questions will be read correctly and yield useful data. Outcomes measurement requires a dedicated focus from the initial design of a program to its evaluation (and possible reorganization).

It is a good practice to have a committed group of people form a committee – sometimes called a Program Committee, an Advisory Committee, or an Evaluation Committee – that reviews and evaluates the agency's programs (see **Appendix 2B.1** for a sample terms of reference).

ATTACHMENT:
- **Appendix 2B.1 – Sample Program Committee Terms of Reference**

[8] United Way of Greater Toronto, *A Toolkit for Outcome Measurement: Building on Logic Models*, prepared by Arnold Love, 2005, pages 2-3. The list given here has been directly quoted from the text. The rest of the information has been paraphrased.

Appendix 2B.1 Sample Program Committee Terms of Reference

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose. To ensure that new and ongoing programs, projects and services are consistent with the mission and abilities of [Drop-In Name] and that they are appropriate for the needs of the communities we serve.

Specific Responsibilities.

- To ensure ongoing monitoring of community needs takes place and to ensure that the information gathered is used in all processes of program development, planning and priority-setting within [Drop-In Name].
- To make recommendations to the Board of Directors concerning new programs, significant program changes and program development.
- To oversee a bi-annual review of all programs.

Committee Membership.
The committee will consist of:

- A minimum of three members of the Board of Directors, one of whom will chair the committee. The President of the Board is an *ex officio* member.
- Four to six community members representing the diversity of our community who live or work in our neighbourhood and include a range of stakeholders, such as service users of the drop-in.

Staff, service users, and volunteers are welcomed as observers at the meetings with adequate notification provided to the Chair.

Staff will support the committee and will not be voting members. The Executive Director will staff this committee. The Program Director(s) will attend when their programs are on the agenda. Each year, a staff member will be appointed by the Executive Director to participate on the committee.

Frequency of Meetings. Meetings shall be held monthly or as deemed necessary by the Chair.

Accountability. The Program Committee reports directly to the Board of Directors through the Chair.

SUBSECTION 2C
Meals

Food is an important part of the life of a drop-in. Meals are not exclusively focused on meeting the physical needs of participants – eating together also plays an important role in **community-building**. One youth-focused drop-in described its evening meal program as an intervention that helps young parents stay housed, because they can put their children in the nursery, spend time with other young people, and go home afterward feeling better. The young people do not have to ignore their responsibilities in order to maintain their social life.

Staff. Cooking good meals for large numbers of people requires a dedicated and talented staff. However, it is often beyond the financial means of most drop-ins to hire all the staff they need to run a kitchen. The solution chosen by most drop-ins is to hire one professional chef who is in charge of the kitchen, and rely on volunteers to supply the rest of the labour.

Volunteers. Volunteers can come from the participants themselves or from the community at large. When there is a regular core group of volunteers, it is a good practice to have them go through **Safe Food-Handling training and certification**. When the volunteers come more sporadically or rotate through different sectors of the community, it is a good practice to have the chef remind each shift what the basic food-handling procedures are and which specific food-handling procedures will be required for the current meal.

One drop-in has volunteers from the community prepare an evening meal for participants once a week. Professional chefs from local restaurants and volunteer groups rotate through and try to outdo each other by providing elaborate meals. The drop-in's full-time cook is also on hand at these events to ensure that the groups follow proper food-handling procedures.

Community kitchens. Community kitchen programs, or communal meal preparation, where participants gather together to cook meals is also an option used by several drop-ins to supplement professional meal preparations.

Servings. Serving as well as preparation should be given some thought. It is important to think through what a **good portion size** is and ensure that equal servings are distributed. It is also helpful to have a **policy about when seconds may be served** and when seconds can no longer safely be distributed. This time limit will vary according your facilities – one drop-in has a buffet-style serving table that keeps food hot for hours. All drop-ins should be aware of the temperatures at which it is safe to serve, cook, and store different types of food (see Subsection 5J: Food and Nutrition).

SUBSECTION 2D
Creative and Therapeutic Activities

Creative and therapeutic programs often involve the same activities – for example, writing, drama, music, and visual art (whether painting, drawing, sculpting, crafts, or any other form). However, therapeutic activities do not need to involve artistic expression; they may involve "talk therapy" counseling and peer support groups.

Support groups may focus on overcoming addictions, mental health system consumer survivor community-building, or any other issue of particular concern to the population of the drop-in. Peer support groups often grow organically out of a particular subset of the drop-in's population whose needs are not being met by the regular programming. For example, newcomers who are learning English often find it useful connect to with others who speak their first language as they study their new language. Age and gender are also important factors. For example, one drop-in has a program running for Chinese mothers and another for Chinese seniors.

Links between Creative Activities and Therapy

Therapeutic groups that use creative activities are explicitly directional – art is used to work through traumas in a safe, low pressure environment, where the artist has the power to tell their story through a separate medium that helps them to distance it from themselves. Creative groups are often promoted simply as a fun activity, but they can have profound effects on participants' lives:

- **Alleviating depression.** Reducing boredom while connecting with a community and producing something of value can alleviate feelings of purposelessness or despair and help foster a state of mind that is open to making positive life changes.

- **Community-building.** Creative groups can also act as an entry point for extremely socially marginalized participants to get involved in activities and start to connect to the community at the drop-in. Because these activities are not explicitly goal-oriented, participants can feel comfortable joining them without feeling pressured to perform at a particular skill level.

- **Maintaining housing.** Creating art can also help formerly street-involved, newly-housed participants maintain their housing. For example, one drop-in offers a flower-arranging class that is run by a former participant. At the end of the day, participants have a beautiful bouquet to bring back to their apartments. This helps them connect to their surroundings, and gain a sense of belonging in their new home.

- **Fostering self-esteem.** Creative activities also help people reconnect to the world by requiring them to reinterpret it on their own terms. Participating in art programs gives people the opportunity to establish a new identity for themselves.

People who have been labeled and dismissed as "homeless" can now begin to redefine themselves as "artist," or "singer," for example.

- **Educating the community.** Art exhibits also help to challenge the public perception of socially marginalized people. Because art engages and communicates on so many levels, it also frees its audience to think differently about people and issues – about what talents or inner thoughts someone who is experiencing poverty might have, their rich histories, and their unique world view.

- **Supplementing income and developing a career.** Creative or art therapy groups can also, over time, become more formalized and develop into businesses. The drop-in can help participants find markets for their work, and participants can supplement their incomes doing something that they enjoy.

As the UK-based organization Homeless Link notes, both creative and therapeutic activities work to effect positive changes in individuals or groups by:[9]

- Building trusting relationships
- Developing communication skills (both verbal and non-verbal)
- Expressing and exploring feelings in a safe and supportive environment
- Developing social interaction skills (e.g. turn-taking, leading, listening, and observing)
- Developing artistic and creative skills
- Improving self-image and confidence
- Working with the imagination
- Creating opportunities and skills for self-advocacy
- Working safely, with clear boundaries
- Having fun

Specialized Training

It is important to recognize that "having fun" is only one element on this list; drop-in staff should be careful not to offer an art therapy class or a craft-making workshop without thinking through the implications. For example, "working with the imagination" can often bring emotional issues and traumas to the surface. The staff leading the group need to know how to provide "a safe and supportive environment" in which these feelings may be expressed and explored. Staff should also be trained in how to establish "clear boundaries" and facilitate the development of "social interaction skills (e.g. turn-taking)." Staff need to be prepared to "build trusting relationships" so that participants can "improve self-image and confidence" and reap all of the other therapeutic benefits discussed above.

For these reasons, it is a good practice to establish a thorough interviewing process and recruit only staff or volunteers who have the necessary specialized expertise to lead creative activities. This expertise can be experience-based and need not be academic.

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[9] Homeless Link, *Activities in day centres*, n.d. Available at: www.homeless.org.uk/db/20010511154556/view. Last modified May 11, 2001.

Academic or professional credentials should also be probed during an interview process; individuals who have been trained as art therapists have not necessarily been trained in how to conduct this process with people who are grappling with many issues at once (for example, poverty, addictions, mental health problems, physical disabilities, domestic abuse, and/or homelessness).

Ground Rules

Staff are not the only ones who need training. All group activities that involve individuals making themselves vulnerable – whether the group is an art class or a peer support talk-therapy session – require the clear articulation of ground rules.

Creative and therapeutic group activities are a way of helping participants help each other through connecting with peers who are, or have been, in similar situations. People can share their insights and struggles with each other, model positive responses, and build a network of friends that may continue to provide support outside of the drop-in. However, in order for these beneficial outcomes to occur, ground rules need to be established and clearly communicated. For example, emphasis should be placed on keeping information confidential, and making sure that all participants are given the space they need to speak and be heard.

SUBSECTION 2E
Educational and Vocational Activities

A number of drop-ins provide training and educational programs for participants. **Training programs** help participants develop skills in fields from cooking to computers to help them add to their résumés, gain admittance to colleges, and increase their employability. **Educational programs** help participants improve their literacy, learn English, or learn about a particular subject area of interest. Educational programs can be ongoing courses, periodic workshops, or talks on different topics – for example, tenants' rights, First Nations healing practices, and so forth.

Education and Training

There is some **cross-over** between educational and training programs; for the most part, the distinction depends on the needs of the population and the resources available. For example, a cooking class could be designed as a training program, or as an educational program, or simply as a social event. As a social program, it would bring people together in a productive and creative activity that would result in a communal meal. As an educational program, it would be seen as a life skills class that teaches cooking in order to help participants maintain their housing and gain more independence. As a training program, it would receive some kind of external official recognition, either as the first step towards accreditation by a college or school, or as a certificate-granting end in itself.

Educational programs can also become training programs if the end goal is for the participants to become educators in their turn. One drop-in is developing a course on anti-oppression and human rights issues. It plans to pay participants an honorarium to attend, and then to seek funding for those participants to teach the program to others and perhaps bring it to other sites.

Partnerships. When developing training programs, it is a good practice to partner with local colleges or businesses to facilitate the transition from the drop-in to the larger community of education and employment opportunities.

One drop-in has an informal partnership with George Brown College for its restaurant training and computer skills programs. The drop-in gives participants the background that they need to pursue a certificate through the College, but they also go on tours to the campus so that they can become familiar with it and overcome anxieties concerning educational institutions. The College also works to make sure that its programming is accessible to socially marginalized people. Educational programs as well often rely on partnerships; for example, with the Toronto District School Board.

Life Skills Programming

Some participants are unable to work due to physical or mental disabilities. Many of these participants want to engage in meaningful activities and contribute to society in other ways. These participants may enjoy productive activities like a drop-in community garden, or may benefit from educational courses in life skills – for example, cooking,

budgeting, or home maintenance. They may also offer to volunteer to help out with drop-in activities (see Subsection 3E for further discussion).

Volunteer and Work Activities

Many participants are interested in volunteering at the drop-in, doing odd jobs where they receive honoraria, or applying for staff positions. This topic is dealt with in Subsection 3E: Volunteer and Employment Opportunities.

SUBSECTION 2F
Other Activities

Social Activities
Social activities are a good way to promote a friendly atmosphere and foster supportive community-building at the drop-in. This includes, for example:

- Movie nights;
- Softball teams;
- Bingo and euchre tournaments;
- Day trips to local attractions or events; and
- Camping trips or retreats.

Several drop-ins delegate social event planning to committees run by participants themselves (see **Appendix 2F.1** for the terms of reference of a Special Events and Outings Committee).

Participants emphasize the importance of being welcomed when they arrive at a drop-in for the first time. It is a good practice to facilitate a participant welcoming committee that takes on the responsibility of greeting new drop-in users, giving them a tour of the facilities, explaining what resources and programs are available (and at which times on which days), and orienting them to the general atmosphere of the drop-in.

Advocacy Activities
Advocacy activities involve exploring with participants the political and systemic barriers that they face, while encouraging and empowering them to take action on these issues. For example, several drop-ins organize regular "town halls" or "action group" meetings, where participants discuss issues that concern them and develop strategies to address them (See **Appendix 2F.1** for the terms of reference of an Advocacy Committee). Some participants request that staff help them understand the intricacies of the Canadian legal and governmental system before they become politically involved. These advocacy groups work on issues within the drop-in as well as wider social and political concerns. Community advocacy is dealt with further in Section 6: Community Relations.

ATTACHMENT:

- **Appendix 2F.1 – Sample Terms of Reference for Social and Advocacy Committees**

Appendix 2F.1 Sample Terms of Reference for Social and Advocacy Committees

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

TERMS OF REFERENCE:
SPECIAL EVENTS AND OUTINGS COMMITTEE

Purpose of the Committee

- Plan and organize special events
- Plan and support outings
- Organize and facilitate member volunteer involvement in special events and outings
- Communicate and provide information to the general membership about upcoming events and outings
- Support seasonal and advance planning of special events and outings (3-6 month time periods)

Roles of the Committee

- Encourage a wide range of members to talk about what kind of outings and special events they would like to have
- Encourage program activity in the community
- Encourage [Drop-In Name] to be a healthy and welcoming place
- Encourage discussion and dialogue between members that supports self-help and member leadership of outings and special events

TERMS OF REFERENCE:
ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

Purpose of the Committee

- Work together as advocates with the Board and staff as well as with other organizations and groups in support of issues that impact on [Drop-In Name]'s participants

Roles of the Committee

- Ensure that the issues that affect [Drop-In Name]'s participants are championed in the wider community
- Remain current on changing social and political trends that affect [Drop-In Name] and its participants
- Support the development of policies, as necessary, related to those priority issues
- Develop and support the implementation of an advocacy action plan in keeping with [Drop-In Name]'s strategic plan
- Monitor and assess the outcomes of the advocacy action plan

DISTRIBUTION OF GOODS AND SERVICES

This Section discusses the good practices involved in supplying goods and services. The topics discussed here are not exhaustive, but are some of the most common services provided by drop-ins in the TDIN:[10]

- **2G CLOTHING**

- **2H SHOWERS AND LAUNDRY**

- **2I MAIL AND MESSAGES**
  - Taking Messages
  - Making and Receiving Calls
  - Receiving Mail
  - Attachment
    - Appendix 2I.1 – Sample Mail Call Form

- **2J COMPUTERS**

- **2K TTC TOKENS**

- **2L LOANS AND GRANTS**
  - Emergencies and Chronic Poverty
  - Rationale and Means
  - Loans and Grants Policy
  - Referrals
  - Attachments
    - Appendix 2L.1 – Sample Loans Policy
    - Appendix 2L.2 – Sample Loan-Granting Contract
    - Appendix 2L.3 – Sample Loan Payment Receipt

[10] Although some kind of food and drink, whether a full meal or simply coffee and cookies, are a staple at every drop-in, food has been omitted from this list because it is covered elsewhere in the Toolkit. Please refer to Subsection 2C: Meals, for a discussion of serving food at the drop-in; and Subsection 5J, Food and Nutrition, for a discussion of food-handling, cooking temperatures, and safe storage.

SUBSECTION 2G
Clothing

Many participants need access to clothes, for a variety of reasons. They may have worn through the soles of their shoes and need a new pair. They may need a new outfit for a job interview. In rainy or snowy weather they may get soaked and not have a dry change of clothes. In the winter they may need hats, gloves, and scarves. Sources for clothing include:

- **Larger organizations.** Some drop-ins are part of larger organizations that also run second-hand clothing stores. The umbrella organization gathers clothes through collection bins and gives some to the store and some to the drop-in.

- **Neighbours and churches.** Some drop-ins rely on clothing donations from neighbours or from church collections.

- **Stores.** Some drop-ins have agreements with local stores or larger chains that donate clothes that have failed to sell, either because of minor flaws or because a particular fashion did not catch on that season.

Ideally, used clothes should be sorted and washed before participants have access to them, though some drop-ins may not have the resources or facilities to do this.

There are two different approaches to clothing distribution:

1. **Restricted access** – Some drop-ins keep clothes separate and have designated days and times when a staff member or volunteer makes them available to participants.

2. **Unrestricted access** – Other drop-ins simply have an unlocked closet or clothing rack in the common room where participants can pick up clothes whenever they want.

Concerns with the restricted access approach are, first of all, that this is not always convenient for individuals who may require an immediate change of clothes. A number of drop-ins resolve this by having set days where anyone may select clothes, and then permitting individuals access to the clothing bank on an as-needed, emergency basis. Second, favouritism – or, at least, the perception of favouritism – may become a problem if distribution is the responsibility of one individual. One drop-in resolves this by having the participants pick numbers to determine who gets the first choice of clothes.

Concerns with the unrestricted access approach are, first of all, that drop-ins may not have the closet space or room lay-out that would make this system feasible. Second, a coping strategy of many people who have become disconnected from their families or other aspects of their former lives is to hoard items that remind them of these times. Accumulating large quantities of goods can make them feel safer, happier, or more successful. If these people have unlimited access to clothes (or other donated items), it can potentially lead to:

- A quick depletion of the items in stock that other participants may need, and
- A dangerous situation for the participant whose home may be so full of goods that it becomes a fire hazard, or so full that the participant does not even have space to sleep in it.

Hoarding may or may not be an issue among participants in your drop-in. If it is, you may need to switch to restricted access model, and develop rules around how many items a participant is permitted to take per week or per month. This strategy could be accompanied by more intensive, one-on-one discussions with the participant about this behaviour and efforts to help them develop more positive coping strategies.

SUBSECTION 2H
Showers And Laundry

If your drop-in does not have the capacity to offer showers or laundry to participants, it is a good practice to know which other drop-ins or community centres in your area provide these services.

Good practices for providing showers require many more resources than the bathing facility alone. **Supplementary goods** – for example, towels – and supplementary services – for example, laundering the towels – are needed. Drop-ins should provide participants with the necessary supplies: for laundry, detergent is needed; for showers, a towel, shampoo, conditioner, soap (or body wash), razor, and shaving cream (if soap is not enough). Participants may also request other personal care products like toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, moisturizing lotion, sanitary pads and tampons, aftershave, hairstyling products, and so forth. Most drop-ins give the basic supplies (e.g. soap) to participants in quantities small enough for a single shower. Items like disposable razors or toothbrushes are made available once a week rather than every day.

Some drop-ins combine the laundry and shower facilities in the same room so that participants who only have one outfit can wash themselves and then put on clean clothes once they are done.

Further issues to consider are:

- **Signing up** – Showers and laundry are often resources in high demand, so a system of allotting specific time limits (e.g. half an hour) or load number limits (e.g. two per day) and requiring participants to sign up can reduce conflicts.

- **Privacy and security** – Showers should, ideally, be placed in private rooms that lock from the inside so that nobody can accidentally or intentionally enter the room while it is in use. However, staff should have a key that can open the door in case the participant refuses to come out or is suspected of attempting to harm themselves. If you make razors available, it is a good practice to monitor and (where necessary) restrict their distribution to ensure that people do not use them to harm themselves or others.

- **Reasons for poor hygiene** – Staff may feel compelled to strongly encourage participants who have not showered or cleaned their clothes in a long time to do so. This is good in theory, and may help the participant improve their health, but care should be taken to understand why the participant has let their hygiene deteriorate to such a degree. Cultivating an exceptionally dirty or smelly exterior may be a coping strategy for individuals who are living on the street and want to repel people who might otherwise harass them. Or it could be a sign of an underlying mental health problem, where the person has lost their self-awareness and does not realize that they have not bathed in weeks.

SUBSECTION 2I
Mail and Messages

Drop-ins are a point of contact and a home base for many people, so helping them gain access to open lines of communication with family members, friends, and support workers is important. However, drop-ins can also be a refuge for marginalized people seeking to escape abusive partners or parents, so preserving their privacy and safety is also important. Taking telephone messages and receiving mail for participants is a good practice, but the policies and procedures that guide this practice need to be carefully thought through.

Taking Messages

It is a good practice to take messages for participants on the drop-in's main telephone line. If a support agency is trying to follow up on a referral, or an employer is trying to contact a participant about a job, the drop-in may be the only place that such a message can be left.

General confidentiality guidelines. Frequently, drop-ins post notes on a public message board. If there are concerns about the confidential nature of a message, the note should simply state that a particular individual has a message waiting for them at the office. The receptionist can then give the participant the full message when they ask for it.

If someone calls and asks if a specific person is accessing the drop-in, the worker should neither confirm nor deny this, but offer to take a message and post it on a board so that if the person is there, and they see it, they can make the decision to call back or not. It is important that staff take down such messages – participants have the right to know that someone is looking for them.

Special cases. The above approach works as a general guideline, but specific circumstances may require a different procedure. For example, an **Outreach Worker** may call or come to the drop-in looking for someone who has gone missing or who has stopped taking their medications. They may have a Community Treatment Order and in those circumstances drop-ins should allow Outreach Workers to come in and look for the person.

If the **police** are looking for someone, they may ask the drop-in to post a picture of, or identifying information about, a person. Each drop-in should determine their position and approach to this situation. Some drop-ins keep the posting restricted to the private office areas, while others post them publicly in the drop-in's common room.

Individual voice mail services. In addition to messages taken by the front desk reception, drop-ins may want to consider providing a voice mail service to participants. Phone companies can set up voice mail boxes with private numbers for nominal fees. It works like an ordinary telephone line so that if potential employers call they do not

necessarily know that it is simply a message system. One drop-in rents these out to participants at $10.00 for three months.

Making and Receiving Calls

Offering free access to a telephone that can allow both incoming and outgoing calls is an important service offered by many drop-ins. One drop-in in downtown Toronto has estimated that over 90% of its participants have no personal access to a telephone other than the one at the drop-in.

When setting up a telephone line for participant use, certain issues should be considered:

- **Minimizing expenses** – Telephone service should be set up so that outgoing 411 and long distance calls and incoming collect long distance calls will not go through. Participants should be advised that they cannot place these types of calls.

- **Comfort and privacy** – The telephone(s) should be set up somewhere that is away from a high traffic area to minimize noise levels and disruptions and to maximize participant privacy. Ideally, a chair should be available near the phone, along with a notepad and pencil or pen for taking down notes or messages during a call. Where facilities permit, these should be secured to the table or wall.

Receiving Mail

For many participants, the drop-in may be the only fixed address where important mail – such as social assistance cheques – can be sent. It is a good practice to require people to sign a form or list acknowledging that they have received mail, especially cheques. Staff should note the date that a particular item of mail was received, and return it to the sender if it is not picked up within a certain time limit. All mail should be stored in a secure place.

It is a good practice for drop-ins to post a list of individuals who have received mail on a public board (see **Appendix 2I.1** for a sample mail call form), but it is also important to ensure that those who are illiterate, or not fluent in English, or have weak vision, or have mental health problems that may prevent them from capably accessing such a system, are informed by staff members when they have mail. These people should also be encouraged to let staff help them read and respond to their official mail.

ATTACHMENT:

- **Appendix 2I.1 – Sample Mail Call Form**

Appendix 2I.1 Sample Mail Call Form

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

MAIL CALL

The listed individuals have mail for pick-up. Please go to the front desk to request it, and be prepared to show your identification so we can be sure that the correct people receive their mail.

NOTE: *Mail will be returned to sender after 45 days, unless we have a written request to hold it longer.*

MAIL RECEIVED	
Date: **For:** **Comments:**	**Date:** **For:** **Comments:**
Date: **For:** **Comments:**	**Date:** **For:** **Comments:**
Date: **For:** **Comments:**	**Date:** **For:** **Comments:**
Date: **For:** **Comments:**	**Date:** **For:** **Comments:**
Date: **For:** **Comments:**	**Date:** **For:** **Comments:**

SUBSECTION 2J
Computers

Computers are provided in many drop-ins to:

- Provide participants with a **resource** they might not otherwise have access to and which they can use for whatever purpose they wish (e.g. checking email, reading online newspapers, etc.), so long as it does not:
    - Interfere with others' use of the space (e.g. playing loud games)
    - Contravene established drop-in rules (e.g. visiting porn sites)
    - Violate any laws (e.g. hacking into other computer systems)
- Serve as a **training tool** in developing computer skills
- Facilitate **employment and housin**g searches

Good practices include:

- **Clear ground rules.** Ensuring that clear guidelines and expectations are in place regarding acceptable use and describing what your response will be to inappropriate and/or illegal use (for example, suspending computer privileges for notifying the police about child pornography or other criminal activity;).

- **Visibility.** Ensuring that computers are located in public and visible areas within the drop-in to ensure that staff can monitor use; or, if the computers are located in a separate room, opening the door for participants only when a staff member is available to be in the room at the same time.

- **Supported learning.** Supporting participants who need to learn how to use the computers and facilitating peer support systems so that participants can help each other.

Having participants sign in to use the computers may also be a good practice, depending on your drop-in's philosophy about signing in.

SUBSECTION 2K
TTC Tokens

Public transportation is vital for participants' access to resources and supports. The issue is not *whether* TTC tokens should be distributed (assuming your drop-in has the resources to do so), but *how* to distribute them equitably and fairly. This is difficult, given that the demand always outstrips the supply, and funders may not always recognize this as an important part of the budget.

Drop-ins have adopted a range of approaches and strategies:

1. **Appointments** – Some provide TTC tokens only for appointments like doctors, housing searches, and court appearances. The premise is that a limited resource should be reserved for those who need it the most. The drawback is that this can foster deception, in that participants may simply lie about appointments in order to get tokens.

2. **First come, first served** – Others provide a certain number of tokens each day, and once these have been distributed, there are no more for that day. The philosophy is that staff do not want to sit in judgment, deciding whose need is more important than another's. The problem of a participant having to justify and possibly lie about their need is averted. However, the drawback is that the tokens disappear quickly, and they are not available to participants who may have an urgent need for them later in the day.

3. **Attendance** – One drop-in has instituted a system where, in order to qualify for TTC tickets, the participant must be a regular, defined as someone who has attended, and signed in to, the drop-in at least 14 times within the previous month. Regulars can receive two tickets per day up to ten tickets maximum for the month. Another drop-in, which is only open two days each week, hands out tokens each time someone comes to the program. The person must sign in and stay for at least an hour (this rule was instituted after people who lived in the neighbourhood would stop by simply to pick up tokens). This method, like the second one, does not account for emergencies (unless it is used in conjunction with a reserve system, described below).

4. **Reserve system** – Some drop-ins resolve the drawbacks of the first three methods by combining them. They provide a certain number of tokens either on a first come, first served basis, or according to attendance, but keep a few tokens in reserve for emergency situations or appointments. (Under the attendance system, regular participants are not eligible for reserve tickets or tokens.)

5. **Decentralized approach** – The strategies described above assume a centralized distribution system. Some drop-ins have no central or drop-in-wide token policy. Instead, each program (for example, a cooking class) or service (for example, an

in-house health centre) has its own supply of tokens and distributes them according to its own policies. For example, program coordinators may distribute tokens to everyone who comes; or they may give them only to those who can demonstrate that they need to take the TTC to get to the program; or they may give them out only when the program takes place off-site or outside of regular drop-in hours. A health nurse or a housing worker may give out tokens when they refer the participant to another agency.

When developing a TTC token policy for your drop-in, it is a good practice to facilitate a decision-making process amongst participants themselves regarding equitable distribution. (See Section 3: Participant Engagement and Governance for a practical guide to this process.)

SUBSECTION 2L
Loans and Grants

The question of whether or not to make loans and grants available to participants is very controversial. It can be a good practice, but it needs to be handled carefully. The tension is between **emergencies** and **chronic poverty**:

1. **Emergencies** – The participant is someone who has been coming to the drop-in for a long time and staff have developed a relationship with them. Then, one day, something unexpected happens – for example, their wallet is stolen, or a family member dies – and they need some extra funds to carry them over until their next cheque.
   - In these cases, it can feel to some staff like a betrayal of trust or a violation of basic human kindness to refuse to help the participant.

2. **Chronic poverty** – The participant is never able to cover their basic needs on the budget that they have. They constantly need extra funds to make it through the month.
   - In these cases, providing loans or grants to the participant can result in a situation where the drop-in is subsidizing their life. This is disempowering, since it creates a dependent relationship and sets the participant up for failure when they can't repay the loans. It is also not sustainable given the limited financial resources most drop-ins have to work with. It may also create unrealistic expectations among all the participants in the drop-in who may start to feel entitled to the money.

The question is: how do you distinguish between a chronic need and an emergency need for funds, given that most participants live in extremely volatile circumstances?

Drop-in staff have resolved this question in a variety of ways:
1. Never give out loans or grants, as a matter of policy.
2. Give out personal loans or grants secretly, against the drop-in policy.
3. Develop a robust loans policy and procedure that is available to participants, but is not very easy to access.

Rationale and Means
If your drop-in does not have the financial means to give out loans or grants, this question is, of course, moot. If your drop-in does have the resources to do so, the third option is the recommended good practice.

The first option, not lending money at all, can strain relationships between participants and staff.

The second option, to give out personal loans under the radar, is problematic for several reasons. First, employees should not violate company policies. Second, the staff member may get a reputation as a "soft touch," or as someone who has "favourite" participants who receive money while others are denied.

The difficulty of **the third option** is that it requires the most resources, both in terms of money, and in terms of staff time and energy. See **Appendices 2L.1**, **2L.2**, and **2L.3** for examples of a policy, a loan-granting contract, and a loan repayment receipt form, respectively. Of course, the question of making loans or grants available to participants is a purely theoretical exercise unless there is a way to finance them. Since most funders earmark their money for particular programs or supplies, and many do not see the advantages of a loan-granting service, it may be difficult to come up with the funds. Think also about your drop-in's book-keeping practices: how will you account for these funds? What is your liability?

Some drop-ins have a separate **Loans and Grants Committee** that includes both participants and staff. The Committee reviews the applications at the end of each month and assesses them based on need and the availability of funds.

Loans and Grants Policy

Some important components of a robust loans and grants policy are:

- **Eligibility.** Define who is eligible and set limits on the amount of money to be loaned at any given time.

- **Budget counseling.** In cases of chronic or ongoing need, whether or not the loan is granted, work with the participants on the life issues that prevent them from keeping within their budget.

- **Small amounts.** When granting loans, keep the size small wherever possible so that the participant does not have an unrealistic amount to repay.

- **Repayment plans.** When granting larger loans, negotiate repayment plans that take into account a person's financial situation, and allow for situations where the person pays very small, token amounts over a long period of time. Accept that the debt may not be paid in full, and that the important factor is that most participants have the chance to prove that they are dedicated to honouring their commitments.

- **Grants.** Define the situations where a "loan" may become a "grant;" for example, if someone living in chronic poverty needs money to go to a funeral out of town, it may be unreasonable to expect them to be able to repay it. Alternatively, you may want to provide grants according to a separate system and apply for funding for specific grants programs. For example, one drop-in provides money for participants' children to go to a soccer camp, or for participants to upgrade their educational credits. Another drop-in has a system of "in-kind grants." For example, a business will donate a large number of computers, and these will be

distributed among housed participants; or an organization will sponsor a family's Christmas dinner; or a beauty school will sponsor a number of female participants to get their hair cut, get their nails done, buy new clothes, have a nice dinner, and go out to a show.

Referrals

Depending on the participant's situation and their reasons for needing financial assistance, you may be able to refer them to other services, such as a local food bank, Ontario Works' (OW) emergency funding program, or the Toronto Rent Bank. Both OW's Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB) and the Toronto Rent Bank provide loans specific to housing, so drop-in participants seeking a loan often may not qualify.

CSUMB makes emergency funding available to OW recipients who are in danger of losing their housing or have been evicted. Families with a dependent child or children may receive up to $1,500 and single people or couples with no dependent children may receive up to $799 every 24 months. For more detailed eligibility criteria, please visit: www.toronto.ca/socialservices/Policy/csumb.htm.

The **Toronto Rent Bank** provides emergency loans to tenants who have a regular income (not receiving OW, ODSP, or OSAP) and are paying market rent. The loan is interest-free for two months and must be paid back in full in monthly installments. For more detailed eligibility criteria and contact information, please visit: www.toronto.ca/housing/rentbank.htm.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Appendix 2L.1 – Sample Loans Policy**
- **Appendix 2L.2 – Sample Loan-Granting Contract**
- **Appendix 2L.3 – Sample Loan Payment Receipt**

Appendix 2L.1 Sample Loans Policy

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

EMERGENCY LOANS POLICY

Policy. Participants who regularly access [Drop-In Name] may request a loan of a small amount of money. The request will be subject to review and approval. No participant can carry an outstanding balance of more than $100.00.

A participant who repeatedly requests loans or continuously carries a balance of $100.00 may be asked to discuss budgeting techniques and implement a plan before an additional loan is granted. Staff will work with participants to address any factors that may be inhibiting their ability to keep within their budget.

Participants who have not repaid past loans may not be eligible for emergency loans.

Procedure

When: A request for a loan may be made any time during weekday drop-in hours. Loans will not be available on weekends.

Who: All participants who regularly access services at [Drop-In Name] can request a loan, although approval of the loan depends on different factors taken into consideration by the team.

Review Process: When a participant requests a loan, the drop-in worker first explores other options to address the issue. If other options are not possible, the worker records the loan request with information about who, how much, why, and how repayment would work; and informs the participant that it will be discussed with the team and a response will be given shortly. Consultation with the team includes consideration of different factors, including the participant's past repayment history (if any), the amount requested, the reason for the request, etc. The team may agree to loan the full amount requested, or part of the amount requested.

Loans of $20.00 or less: These loans can be received on the same day the participant makes a request. Before making a decision, workers need to check the participant's outstanding balance and past repayment history, and consult with team members. If team members agree to the loan, the given amount is obtained from petty cash and the participant signs a receipt for the given amount. The information is also recorded in the participant's loan information file.

Loans between $20.00 and $100.00: These loans may take up to two days to process. Before granting a loan request, a worker explores other options or solutions with the participant. When accessing a loan above $20.00, the participant will be expected to discuss a repayment plan with the worker. Loans above $20.00 must be discussed with

team and approved by a manager. Loans above $20.00 may be administered by cheque and paid directly to the person or company owed. To obtain a cheque, a cheque requisition form must be filled out. Upon receiving the money, the participant signs a receipt for the given amount. The information is also recorded in the participant's loan information file.

Loans above $100.00: Loans above $100.00 can be accessed for unforeseen emergencies. Only the Executive Director may authorize these loans. Participants are required to develop a repayment plan with a Worker before the loan is processed.

Appendix 2L.2 Sample Loan-Granting Contract

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FORM

I, _____, acknowledge the loan of

$_____ from [Drop-In Name], which I promise to repay in full

by _____ *(date)*.

I will do this by:

☐ paying in full on the date given above.

☐ paying by instalments of $_____ weekly/monthly/other

(specify: _____*)* starting on

_____ *(date)* and ending on the date given above.

_____ _____

Signature *Date*

_____

Staff Witness (Printed Name)

_____

Staff Witness (Signature)

Appendix 2L.3 Sample Loan Payment Receipt

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

LOAN PAYMENT RECEIPT

I, _____, have received the sum of

(Staff Person)

$_____ from _____

(Participant)

to be applied toward the outstanding balance on their account, this day,

_____.

(Date)

_____

Participant Signature

_____

Staff Witness Signature

INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT TO PARTICIPANTS

"Directed personal support" or "individualized participant work" are terms used to describe intentional conversations with, or on behalf of, drop-in users that are aimed at assessing and meeting their needs. Drop-ins need to make a decision about the extent to which they will engage in this form of interaction with participants. Considerations in making this decision will include:

- The drop-in's philosophical approach to relationships with participants and the degree of intervention that is considered appropriate;
- The amount of staff time available for individualized support;
- The skills and training background of staff; and
- The availability of alternative resources to address participant needs.

A related decision is the limit that the drop-in will put on its support, including the point at which participants will be referred to other resources for more intensive support.

This Section discusses good practices of:

- **2M RECEPTION AND INTAKE**

- **2N ASSESSMENT AND CARE-PLANNING**
  - Directed Conversations
  - Documentation
  - Communication
  - Progress
  - Attachments
    - Appendix 2N.1 – Sample Participant Planning Form
    - Appendix 2N.2 – Sample Progress Notes Form
    - Appendix 2N.3 – Sample File Closure Form

- **2O CONFIDENTIALITY**
  - Getting Consent
  - Gathering Information
  - Confidentiality and Disclosure Policies
  - Attachments
    - Appendix 2O.1 – Sample Consent to Release Information Form
    - Appendix 2O.2 – Sample Confidentiality Policy
    - Appendix 2O.3 – Sample Confidentiality Agreement
    - Appendix 2O.4 – Sample Participant Information Access Policy

- **2P SUPPORTIVE CONVERSATIONS AND COUNSELING**
  - Formal and Informal Counseling
  - Boundaries

- **2Q RESOURCES AND REFERRALS**
  - Hurdles and Barriers
  - Key Elements of a Good Referral
  - Telephone Referrals

- **2R ADVOCACY**

Although some of these words come from a clinical model – for example, "intake," "assessment," and "counseling" – they are used here in a much more informal sense to refer to the basic processes of greeting participants who come into the drop-in, finding out how they are doing and what they need, and working to meet those individual needs to the greatest extent possible.

SUBSECTION 2M
Reception And Intake

Drop-ins look at participants in a holistic way that sees them not as passive recipients of services, but as strong individuals who are actively engaged in shaping their world. This approach starts at the basic level of permitting drop-in users to access services and activities on their own terms and in their own time. Once participants have gained a certain level of comfort or community within the drop-in, the approach to engage them may become more pro-active.

Informal "intake." Participants emphasize the importance of being welcomed when they arrive at a drop-in for the first time. It is a good practice to facilitate a participant welcoming committee that takes on the responsibility of greeting new drop-in users, giving them a tour of the facilities, explaining what resources and programs are available (and at which times on which days), and orienting them to the general atmosphere of the drop-in.

When individuals first come into the drop-in, staff "intake" tends to be very informal and does not involve intensive questioning or documentation. Often, it consists of a "chatting up" process, where a staff member will approach newcomers to welcome them to the drop-in and start to establish a personal connection. Staff give participants the space to tell their story or request the services they need, but they do not make it a requirement of spending time in the drop-in.

Exceptions. The exceptions to the above approach are drop-ins that operate on a **membership model**. In drop-ins conceptualized as clubs, first-time arrivals at the drop-in must fill out a membership application that includes personal information (for example, name, birth date, languages spoken, next of kin contact information, occupation, social insurance number, health card number, height, weight, hair and eye colour, any distinguishing marks or scars, and so forth). These types of information are collected so that if a member loses their ID cards, the drop-in still has the numbers on file; if a member goes missing, the drop-in has their photograph and identifying characteristics available; or, if a member dies, the drop-in can notify their next of kin. However, filling in some categories is voluntary and all information is not required to register a new member.

Documentation. In the more informal intake model, documentation starts when a participant requests a **specific service** (for example, housing support, counseling, employment, etc.). Here, too, it is important to ensure all personal information is given voluntarily and that no participant feels pressured into sharing information they do not feel comfortable sharing. Many extremely marginalized people have significant barriers to accessing services, and often the only way to reach them is to give them the space and time they need.

In addition to basic personal information, and service- or program- specific information, it is a good practice to get information about the other supportive agencies and individuals in a person's life. Before contacting these supports, however, it is important to get a **signed consent to release information** from the participant (see Appendix 2O.1 for a sample template, in the Subsection on Confidentiality below). Whenever asking someone to reveal personal or sensitive information, it is important to do so in a private space to maintain confidentiality.

SUBSECTION 2N
Assessment and Care-Planning

Homeless Link defines "assessment" as "the process by which information is collected, an opinion is formed, and a care plan produced."[11] Assessment may be based on informal observations and conversations within the drop-in as well as through one-on-one discussions in more formal settings. Informal discussions while playing a game (e.g. cards) are often the most effective way to get a sense of where someone is at in their life and what their goals are.

Directed Conversations

If you have the staff resources and facilities for more focused interactions and interventions with participants, you may want to sit down somewhere private with a participant and initiate a directed conversation with them. It is a good practice to work backward from the goal to the problem; in other words, rather than starting the conversation with what is wrong in someone's life, ask what they would like to accomplish.

Key elements in directed, care-planning conversations:

- Help the participant to set identifiable and **achievable goals**;
- Take a holistic approach that identifies the participant's **strengths and interests** as well as the particular problem they are trying to overcome;
- **Collaborate** with the participant on strategies and a clear plan to accomplish those objectives;
- If the goal will be difficult to attain and require a long period of time, it is good to establish smaller goals or **milestones** along the way to mark the participant's progress and help them stay motivated;
- **Follow up** with the participant as often as is needed and give whatever support is required to help them reach their goals;
- **Document** key interactions and developments; and
- Conduct a **progress revi**ew with the participant periodically to assess the situation and modify the plan as needed (or determine if a file should be closed).

It is important to see this process as a learning experience for the staff person as well as for the participant. Be sure to build some flexibility into the plan to try out particular strategies, make errors, think about what occurred, and then move on.

[11] Homeless Link, "2: Assessment, care-planning, and keyworking," *Day centres handbook: A good practice guide*, London (UK), 2004, page 2.3.

Documentation

As you begin to record information, it may be a good practice to start with a formalized, pre-formatted assessment template. Participants may feel more at ease if they know that everyone is asked the same questions. In addition to the participant's objectives, these may include information on:[12]

- Age, gender, ethnic background, languages spoken, etc.;
- Income, benefits, and budgeting;
- Current housing situation and previous housing experiences;
- Reason for coming to the drop-in;
- Contact with family and friends;
- Involvement with other agencies;
- Interests, hobbies, clubs, etc.;
- Literacy, learning difficulties, education, and work experience;
- Mental and physical health history;
- Risk to self or others;
- Alcohol and drug use; and
- Independent living skills and needs.

Once you have started to work with the participant on care plan goals and strategies, the documentation should include:

- The **identified issues** (e.g., the individual lost their job and reports feeling depressed);
- The **intervention** (e.g., the worker provided support and information about employment services, explore history and referred to staff with mental health resources);
- The **outcome/actions** (e.g., the participant is to call a particular employment counselor for support and is to connect with appropriate support group); and
- Any required **follow-up** (e.g., the worker is to check in with the participant in one week to see where things are at).

See **Appendix 2N.1** for a sample participant goal-setting form, **Appendix 2N.2** for a sample of documentation of key interactions and developments, and **Appendix 2N.3** for a sample file closure form.

Communication

The TDIN staff training materials pinpoint good communication skills as the key to directed personal support, and offer the following tips:[13]

- Be in the moment; listening carefully;
- Be mindful about how you phrase your questions;
- Speak clearly and plainly;

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[12] List adapted from *ibid*, page 2.7.

[13] This list has been adapted from Evelyn Mitchell, "2.4 Good Listening Skills: A Primary Requirement for Getting Information," *Information, Referrals, Individual Advocacy and Negotiation: Workshop Facilitator's Manual*, Toronto (ON): TDIN and THTC, 2005.

- Be aware of your body language and the non-verbal cues (for example, tone of voice, volume, tapping fingers, etc.);
- Understand and acknowledge cultural barriers;
- Explain that the participant does not have to answer all the questions, but the more information you have, the better able you are to make referrals and develop a strategic plan with them;
- Ask the participant to repeat back to you information that they will need to act upon;
- Repeat what the participant has said to make sure you have understood; and
- Do not promise what you cannot deliver.

Progress

The intervention process may take as little as a few days or as long as a few years, depending on the objectives, how often the participant accesses the drop-in, how motivated they are to make changes, their individual circumstances and constraints, and the available resources and staffing capacity of the drop-in. Many participants have had negative institutional experiences and may be suspicious of this type of intensive individualized support. **It is important that participants be permitted to work at their own pace in effecting changes.** The first individualized care-planning sessions should be focused on establishing trust, discussing confidentiality, and explaining the purpose of the intervention.[14]

It is important to ensure that the goals and objectives come from the participant and are not imposed by the staff member. The role of the staff member is to be encouraging, but also to be honest about how realistic particular goals are or how effective particular strategies may or may not be. It is also important to understand that a care plan exists to assist the drop-in worker, to give the worker a frame to work within, not the participant. The engagement of setting goals should be a conversation, not a question-and-answer exchange.

Progress occurs incrementally over time, and after many setbacks. Supporting marginalized people requires that staff do not impose their own expectations of what progress is or looks like. If participants do not "progress" in a straightforward, linear fashion, staff need to keep in mind the systemic oppression that creates barriers for people moving forward, and not judge the participant for individual failings.

ATTACHMENTS:
- **Appendix 2N.1 – Sample Participant Planning Form**

[14] Homeless Link, *Day centres handbook*, page 2.6.

- **Appendix 2N.2 – Sample Progress Notes Form**
- **Appendix 2N.3 – Sample File Closure Form**

Appendix 2N.1 Sample Participant Planning Form

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

PARTICIPANT PLANNING SHEET

Name: _____

Date: _____

GOAL 1: _____

Strategies: _____

_____

_____

Indicator: _____

☐ ***GOAL MET*** ***Date*** _____

GOAL 2: _____

Strategies: _____

_____

_____

Indicator: _____

☐ ***GOAL MET*** ***Date*** _____

GOAL 3: _____

Strategies: _____

_____

_____

Indicator: _____

☐ ***GOAL MET*** ***Date*** _____

Appendix 2N.2 Sample Progress Notes Form

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

PROGRESS NOTES

Participant Name:		
Date	**Issues and Interventions**	**Outcomes and Follow-Up**

Appendix 2N.3 Sample File Closure Form

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

FILE CLOSURE

Participant: _____ ***Date:*** _____

Worker: _____

Participant status:

☐ **Active** ☐ High (>1x/week) ☐ Medium (1-4x/month) ☐ Low (1x/month)

☐ **Inactive** (no contact within the last three months)

What is the reason for the file closure?

☐ All goals have been met and the participant has moved on.
Specify: _____

☐ Participant stopped coming to the drop-in.

☐ Lack of participant follow-through.

☐ Participant moved away.

☐ Other
Specify: _____

Referrals (specify agency/contact worker):

1.	**2.**
3.	**4.**

List any specific concerns or conditions: _____

_____

_____

_____

SUBSECTION 2O
Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be conceptualized as a two-sided issue that involves both keeping information secret and sharing it appropriately with others. Any staff member working one-on-one with a participant should explain up front that key elements of this information may be shared with other staff in order to provide continuity of service and support. Discretion needs to be exercised in terms of what information staff share with each other. One larger-scale drop-in has instituted a new computer system that does not permit anonymous examination of files; it records which staff member looks at which files for how long.

Getting Consent

Some drop-ins have participants sign a consent form when they begin to do individualized support work that acknowledges that the information may be shared with other staff. Within the drop-in, verbal consent is fine for information-sharing among staff. However, staff should obtain participants' written consent before sharing information with external agencies (see **Appendix 2O.1** for a sample participant consent form).

The written consent form should identify:

- The **type of information** that may be shared;
- The **specific workers** and/or agencies among whom information may be exchanged; and
- A **time limit** for this exchange.

Some organizations may require more formal consent forms; for example, to view a participant's mental health records, a Form 14 (Consent to Disclosure, Transmittal or Examination of a Clinical Record) is required.[15]

Gathering Information

Keep in mind that your ethical obligation is to collect only the information you need. When gathering information from participants, it is important to always explain why you are asking particular questions and how the answers will be used. For example, if you take photocopies of picture identification and record Health Card numbers so that you can help the participant if they go missing, are taken to hospital, or pass away, you need to explain this support system. If you are recording information about the participant's

[15] The Ministry of Health's Consent to Disclosure, Transmittal or Examination of a Clinical Record, Form 14 of the Ontario *Mental Health Act*, is available at: www.oma.org/Practice/Tools/forms/FORM%2014%20-%20Mental%20Health%20Act.pdf.

personal life because your funders require statistics on these elements, you need to divulge that.

Confidentiality and Disclosure Policies

It is a good practice to have a policy on confidentiality and to require all staff and volunteers to sign an agreement that asserts their willingness to abide by these rules. See **Appendix 2O.2** and **Appendix 2O.3** for a sample confidentiality policy and a sample confidentiality agreement to be signed by all staff and volunteers. It may also be a good practice to limit volunteers' access to confidential participant information.

It is also a good practice to have a protocol in place that defines the ways in which participants may access their own information on file. They have the right to see what is on file; however, there may be instances where their access to their file should be limited. For example, information provided to the drop-in from other agencies should be obtained by the participant directly from those agencies, and it is not within the drop-in's jurisdiction to disclose it. See **Appendix 2O.4** for a sample information access policy for participants.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Appendix 2O.1 – Sample Consent to Release Information Form**
- **Appendix 2O.2 – Sample Confidentiality Policy**
- **Appendix 2O.3 – Sample Confidentiality Agreement**
- **Appendix 2O.4 – Sample Participant Information Access Policy**

Appendix 2O.1 Sample Consent to Release Information Form

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

CONSENT TO RELEASE INFORMATION

I, _____ *(print name)*, do hereby authorize _____ *(specify organization)* or its official representative to share information, documents, and/or records in their possession concerning myself with _____ _____ *(specify other organization[s])* for the purpose of working on my behalf in order to _____ _____ _____ *(specify purpose)*. This consent is valid for _____ *(specify period of time)* unless revoked in writing.

Notes _____

_____

_____

_____

Date _____

Signature of Participant _____

Name of Witness _____

Signature of Witness _____

Appendix 2O.2 Sample Confidentiality Policy

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Preamble. Confidentiality is a commitment we make to all participants in our drop-in.

Policy. All employees must sign a confidentiality agreement. In general, no information will be shared with any individual or agency without the informed consent of the participant concerned. Participants will be encouraged and supported to communicate directly with workers or officials to promote self-reliance, improved life skills, and the accuracy of shared information. All files containing personal information are property of [Drop-In Name] and will be stored in a locked cabinet.

Breach of confidence: A breach of the confidentiality rules on the part of a staff member may lead to disciplinary action.

Procedures

Co-workers: Information regarding participants may be shared among staff members. Participants must be informed that information they disclose to one staff member or volunteer may be shared with other staff.

Emergencies: Emergencies may require a departure from the general rule. For example, if a participant is threatening harm to herself or others, the information may be passed to the appropriate individual or agency (police, case manager, hostel, etc.). It is unlikely that informed consent can be obtained under these circumstances.

Other agencies: A consent to release of information form is mandatory if any agency is asking for information. A copy of the signed form is given to the participant and to the requesting agency.

Requests for information by police, courts, or other mandated bodies must be accompanied by official documentation. In these circumstances, information may be released only with the knowledge and approval of the Executive Director.

Appendix 2O.3 Sample Confidentiality Agreement

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I understand that in the course of conducting my responsibilities as a staff person or volunteer of [Organization Name], I may have access to personal information about program participants, volunteers, and employees. I promise to hold in confidence all matters that come to my attention as a volunteer or staff member of [Organization Name], including information from and about program participants, other volunteers, staff, and [Organization Name]. I agree to abide by [Organization Name]'s policy regarding confidentiality. In particular, I will:

- Only discuss this information with others as required by my professional duties, and with the knowledge of the person in question;
- Not release or otherwise provide access to such information to another agency or body without prior authorization from the individual or from the Executive Director, as specified; and
- Ensure that confidential participant or personnel information is kept in a secured location at all times.

I will maintain this agreement even after my association with [Organization Name] has ended.

Date:_____

Name of Volunteer / Staff:_____

Signature of Volunteer / Staff:_____

Name of Witness:_____

Signature of Witness:_____

Appendix 2O.4 Sample Participant Information Access Policy

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION ACCESS POLICY

Policy. All drop-in participants have the right to access their personal information. This policy will ensure that information will be provided to participants upon request in an appropriate and timely manner.

Process. Requests from participants for personal information from their file should be in writing. All requests for personal information will be kept in the participant's file.

Requests from participants for personal information held in their file will be reviewed and responded to as quickly as possible, and will be responded to in not more than five regular working days.

The files of a participant requesting personal information will be reviewed by the Program Manager and the Program Coordinator to assess whether disclosure of contents of the file or any part of the file might:

- Cause harm to the participant;
- Cause harm to a third party; or
- Exceed the authority of the drop-in to disclose.

In general terms, the drop-in has the authority to disclose personal information to a participant if that information has been compiled by the drop-in. Information provided by means of a Form 14 or other release consent form from another agency, hospital, or body may only be released by the source of that information.

The Program Coordinator will, after reviewing the file, make a recommendation to the Executive Director as to what personal information should and should not be released.

Should serious concerns arise as to potential damage to the participant or a third party, the Program Coordinator will provide a written record of those concerns to the Executive Director. The final decision to release or withhold personal information will be made by the Executive Director.

Participants will be notified in writing of the decision to release personal information.

SUBSECTION 2P
Supportive Conversations and Counseling

Counseling can take many forms along a continuum from sympathetic peers to trained professionals. This Section does not address professional counselors (in the same way that this manual, as a whole, does not detail good practices for legal, housing, health, and other specialized services). "Counseling" here is used as a short-form term to refer to supportive conversations that aim to help participants grapple with the problems or traumas they may be experiencing. Group counseling and peer support groups are discussed in 2A: Activities and Programming.

As the orientation manual for one drop-in advises, all effective counseling "includes providing support and validation, enabling the development of understanding and growth, and promoting the generation of solutions and strategies. Generally, issues are discussed, goals are identified, interventions are implemented, and outcomes are assessed." (For further disussion of directed conversations, see 2N: Assessment and Care-Planning.)

Formal and Informal Counseling

Individual counseling may take place formally, where a staff person dedicates certain days and times to be available for directed discussions in the privacy of a separate room. This model is most often adopted by specialists – whether mental health, addictions, or spiritual counselors – but may also be adopted by other staff.

Supportive conversations can also be very informal. Often, particularly in smaller drop-ins, participants will develop close relationships with a particular staff member. They may approach that staff to discuss issues they are having in their lives, and the staff will try to help them with these concerns.

Boundaries

For several reasons, it is important to keep this closeness within the bounds of a working relationship, and to not let it cross the line into a personal friendship. Nobody has the resources – of time, energy, emotional strength, or money – to support all participants as they would a personal friend who has fallen on hard times. As a staff person, if you befriend one participant in this way, you invite the expectation that you will do this with all participants. If you restrict yourself to befriending only a few participants, you may create a negative situation in the drop-in where you are perceived as giving preferential treatment to a few favourites. It is important for these reasons to maintain professional boundaries. The main strategy for achieving this is only talking to the participant about their worries while at work. Never give out your personal telephone number.

If you run into a participant on the street, or in a restaurant, or any other public space, be friendly but reserved and make it clear that you cannot engage with them the way you would in the drop-in. Keep in mind also that some participants may wish to remain anonymous in public, especially if they are with someone else.

SUBSECTION 2Q
Resources and Referrals

It is very important for staff to recognize their limits and to share their workload with others. One staff cannot take care of every need and concern a participant may have. For these reasons, staff need to be aware of the resources that exist that can support them, and know how to make effective referrals. Referrals can be made both internally – to specialized programs or staff operating within the drop-in itself – and externally – to services offered by other support agencies. Common referrals include:

- Identification (SIN, birth certificate, landed papers, divorce papers, etc.),
- ODSP or OW,
- Housing,
- Résumé writing and job search facilitators,
- Physical and mental health services,
- Detoxification centres,
- Legal clinics,
- Food banks, and
- Shelters.[16]

Hurdles and Barriers

There are many obstacles to overcome with external referrals; for example:

- **Unreturned calls.** The agency does not return calls or places you (or the participant) on hold for extremely long wait times;

- **Lack of capacity.** The agency does not have the capacity to deal with a particular need or has a long waiting list;

- **Ineligibility.** The participant does not meet the eligibility criteria for the service (for example, some agencies do not serve homeless people); or

- **Language barriers.** The participant does not speak English fluently and there is no translator available.[17]

- **Lack of follow-up.** Participants frequently do not follow up, either with arranging an appointment or showing up for a pre-arranged appointment.

To overcome these obstacles, it is a good practice to incorporate as many external services (e.g. legal aid, tax clinics, etc.) as possible into your drop-in (see Section 7 for further discussion), and, where the service is necessarily external, provide transportation or accompany the individual to their appointment.

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[16] This list has been adapted from Evelyn Mitchell, *Information, Referrals, Individual Advocacy and Negotiation: Workshop Facilitator's Manual*, Toronto (ON): TDIN and THTC, 2005.
[17] *Ibid*.

Key Elements of a Good Referral

The TDIN staff training materials identify four fundamental elements of a good referral[18]:

1. Information & Identification *What do you need to have on hand?*	**2. Appropriate referral** *Is it the right place for the participant?*	**3. Prepare & support the participant** *Does the participant know what's in store?*	**4. Follow-up** *What happens after the referral?*
Collect as much relevant information about the participant's background as is necessary: date of birth, social insurance number, financial history, medical history, social housing, etc. – whatever is relevant to the referral.	Consider any special needs of the participant (pregnant, member of a minority group, living with HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis C, etc.) Women's needs are often different from men's. Know the agency's referral process and capacities and if they work with homeless people. Know the procedures and fill out forms in a timely manner.	Have a plan and communicate the process of the referral to the participant. Do not give the participant unrealistic expectations (e.g. let them know what their chances are of actually getting social assistance or being admitted to a detox centre). Listen to participants who may have had an unsatisfactory previous experience with the agency; if it is the only "game in town," try to ease their fears without being coercive.	Determine how the participant will get to the agency. Can they get there unaided? Can they take TTC? If the participant bows out, call the agency to cancel the appointment, the bed, etc. If the participant doesn't cancel, ask the next time you see them how their visit went and follow up.

Telephone Referrals

The telephone is the basic tool for making referrals and contacting external agencies. The TDIN training workshop manual offers these tips for doing phone referrals:

- Be prepared with as much relevant information about the participant as possible (e.g. the correct spelling of the individual's name, date of birth, etc.).
- Identify yourself and the agency you are calling from.
- Communicate clearly.

[18] This list has been adapted from Evelyn Mitchell, *Information, Referrals, Individual Advocacy and Negotiation: Workshop Facilitator's Manual*, Toronto (ON): TDIN and THTC, 2005.

- Give the reason for referral and ask who you should be speaking to about that matter (this will eliminate revealing personal participant information twice).
- Clarify the person's needs and the agency's capacity to handle them (make sure the hostel will accept someone who smells of alcohol, but is not intoxicated; make sure that a women-only program will accept a transgendered woman; etc.).
- When talking to another agency on the phone, write down any pertinent information (especially the date, the time, and the name of the person you were talking to).

SUBSECTION 2R
Advocacy

There are two basic types of advocacy:

- **Individual** – staff work to strengthen the voice of, and lend support to, an individual (or family). For example, staff help an individual navigate government bureaucracy to access services or intervene on their behalf in a conflict with a housing provider, or OW, or a neighbour, or a parole officer, etc.

- **Community** – staff work to strengthen the voice of, and lend support to, a particular community (for example, transgendered people, or people who have mental health issues) in order to improve the laws and social conditions that affect them. The staff become involved – and often encourage or facilitate participant involvement – in local and national politics, making public statements and presentations on homelessness, poverty, and other issues related to the drop-in population.

Community advocacy is dealt with further in Section 6: Community Relations. The focus here will be on individual advocacy.

The good practice key to successful advocacy is to not speak *for* a participant but rather to strengthen their voice and empower them to speak on their own behalf. This is often a difficult distinction to make in practice, but it is important to keep in mind. Staff intervention is often needed to lend a participant a respected voice for their claim. Some agencies or individuals in positions of power simply do not hear the claims of people living in poverty or grappling with mental health issues as legitimate, no matter how confident or articulate those people may be. However, the ultimate objective should always be to help the participants advocate on their own behalf, rather than come to rely on staff to advocate for them.

The TDIN training manual provides a **helpful list of tips** for drop-in staff to overcome these obstacles and effectively advocate for and with participants:[19]

- Help the participant to make the phone call or meet with the agency when their personal energy level is high and when they have enough time;
- Prepare the participant in advance to meet with the worker, landlord, etc.;
- Make sure that they have all the necessary information at hand;
- Ask experienced team members for tips when dealing with particular agencies;
- Seek out direct numbers;
- Accompany the participant;
- Don't give up – be tenacious and persevere; and
- Don't lose your temper or become sarcastic.

[19] This list has been adapted from Evelyn Mitchell, *Information, Referrals, Individual Advocacy and Negotiation: Workshop Facilitator's Manual*, Toronto (ON): TDIN and THTC, 2005.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This discussion of Participant Rights and Responsibilities should be read in association with Subsection 5F: Crisis Prevention and Subsection 5G: Crisis Intervention and Conflict Resolution. Both Section 2 and Section 5 deal with the same types of situations within the drop-in, but here the emphasis is on policies and procedures governing participant behaviour; in Section 5, the emphasis is on policies and procedures governing staff behaviour.

This Section addresses:

- **2S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**
  - Attachments
    - Appendix 2S.1 – Sample Code of Conduct Poster
    - Appendix 2S.2 – Sample Participant Rights and Responsibilities
    - Appendix 2S.3 – Sample Program Guidelines Poster
    - Appendix 2S.4 – Sample Bill of Rights

- **2T COMPLAINT PROCESS**
  - Problem-Solving
  - Transparency and Accountability
  - Documentation and Review
  - Attachments
    - Appendix 2T.1 – Sample General Complaints Policy
    - Appendix 2T.2 – Sample Harassment and Discrimination Complaints Policy
    - Appendix 2T.3 – Sample Complaint Documentation Form

- **2U SERVICE RESTRICTIONS, BARRING POLICIES, AND APPEALS**
  - Types of Service Restrictions
  - Developing or Revising a Policy
  - Implementing the Policy
  - Communication and Documentation
  - Appeal Process
  - Attachments
    - Appendix 2U.1 – Sample Service Restrictions and Time Away Policy
    - Appendix 2U.2 – Sample Barring Contract
    - Appendix 2U.3 – Sample Appeal Process Policy

SUBSECTION 2S
Rights and Responsibilities

Participant rights and responsibilities are inextricably linked – they form a contract between the staff and the participants. They provide both staff and participants with the means to assess whether certain behaviour is appropriate or inappropriate and what the consequences should be. These ground rules are the foundation for all interactions within the drop-in.

For these reasons, it is important to not only have these ground rules, but also to ensure that participants are aware of them. One of the most common ways of doing this is to post the list of rights and responsibilities on the walls around the drop-in. This makes it a constant reminder and reference point for participants who may dispute a rule.

Good practices to consider when developing a poster for your drop-in are:

- **Clear expectations.** It clearly outlines the general guidelines for behaviour expected of participants.
- **Positive.** It tries to avoid being an exclusively negative list (don't do X, don't do Y, don't do Z, etc.), while continuing to make it clear what activities or behaviours are unacceptable in the drop-in.
- **Rationale.** It provides a reasonable explanation for the rules. Participants feel disempowered by a system that requires them to adhere to seemingly arbitrary regulations in order to access the basic necessities that they need to live. When they understand the rationale for a rule, they are empowered to make the choice to either accept it as reasonable, or develop a critical and legitimate argument against it. Providing a rationale for a rule – whether on a poster, in a policy, or in the course of a discussion with a participant – is always good practice.
- **Accessible.** It uses informal and accessible language.
- **Brief.** It is short and to the point – detailed discussions will likely not get read.
- **Accountable.** It invites participants to talk to staff members if they have questions or concerns about any of the points on the list.

Appendices 2S.1, **2S.2**, and **2S.3** are sample posters that have been attached to this Section to illustrate the good practices discussed above. They are based on common elements from posters in various Toronto drop-ins, and may be adapted to fit your drop-in's particular population and circumstances.

Appendix 2S.1 is a basic list of ground rules for behaviour in the drop-in. **Appendix 2S.2** combines participant rights with participant responsibilities. This is a good strategy for making the ground rules seem less negative, but it has the drawback of making the poster longer and perhaps too detailed.

While the other attachments to this Section detail general principles and guidelines, it is also a good practice to post more specific rules for particular programs (for example, meals), or for specialized areas (for example, the computer room), within your drop-in. **Appendix 2S.3** is a sample poster for an evening meal program. Also, if your drop-in has any conditions of service – for example, participants must be wearing shoes – these should be on a poster by the door.

Appendix 2S.4 is a reproduction of the Bill of Rights contained in the provincial government's Long Term Care Act (1994). Drop-ins receiving funding from the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care for running Adult Day Centres are required to post this Bill of Rights where participants will see it. Drop-ins who are interested in developing their own participants' Bill of Rights may consult **Appendix 2S.4** for ideas; however, it is recommended that participants either be consulted during the development of such a Bill, or be given the full responsibility of writing it.

In addition to posters that lay out the basic ground rules, several drop-ins amplify these with comments that participants themselves make about respecting each other and keeping the drop-in safe. This allows participants to see their words up on the walls and feel a sense of ownership of, and responsibility for, the space.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Appendix 2S.1 – Sample Code of Conduct Poster**
- **Appendix 2S.2 – Sample Participant Rights and Responsibilities**
- **Appendix 2S.3 – Sample Program Guidelines Poster**
- **Appendix 2S.4 – Sample Bill of Rights**

Appendix 2S.1 Sample Participant Code of Conduct Poster

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

DROP-IN CODE OF CONDUCT

Treat others with respect and take care to ensure that the drop-in is a safe and friendly place for everyone who comes in.

This means:

- ✓ **No violence**
  (this includes no threats, no name calling, no yelling, no uninvited physical contact and no intimidation)

- ✓ **No abusive behaviour or intolerant attitudes**
  (this includes no name-calling, no "bosses," no sexism, no racism, no homophobia, no transphobia, and no discrimination of any kind)

- ✓ **No drinking or illegal drug use on the premises**

- ✓ **No selling of illegal goods or services on the premises**

- ✓ **No smoking cigarettes inside the building**

- ✓ **No stealing or damaging other people's stuff**

- ✓ **No weapons**

IF YOU ARE ASKED TO LEAVE THE DROP-IN, PLEASE DO SO!

These expectations are designed to make this drop-in a safe place for people to come to. If you have concerns about these expectations, or if you do not understand any part of these expectations, please feel free to talk to staff about it.

Appendix 2S.2 Sample Participant Rights and Responsibilities

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rights:

- To be treated with dignity and respect.
- To personal safety and security.
- To services that are timely and of good quality.
- To complain without fear and to appeal decisions.
- To reasonable responses to your questions.
- To have input into decisions that affect you.
- To have access to your own information.
- To confidential treatment by staff.
- To referrals to other services when needed.
- To be treated equally regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, culture, citizenship, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, or ability.

Responsibilities:

- To show respect towards all participants, staff, and volunteers.
- To act in a manner that is safe to others.
- To co-operate with the program rules.
- To not be physically or verbally abusive and/or make threats towards others.
- To not bring weapons, drugs, or alcohol on to the premises.
- To not take anything that does not belong to you.
- To actively work towards solutions.
- To treat everyone equally and be sensitive to differences in race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, culture, citizenship, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, and/or ability.

Consequences:

If your actions disrupt the safety of this space:

1. A staff member will approach you to understand the situation and to resolve the problem.
2. Depending on the seriousness of the situation, you may be asked to take some time away from the program. Generally, though, this step will not occur unless the inappropriate behaviour continues.
3. If a staff member asks you to leave the premises more than a few times, and your actions continue, the police may be called. This will be a last resort.
4. If you feel you are not getting the right support from staff you can contact the program manager. You can expect a follow-up meeting.

Appendix 2S.3 Sample Program Guidelines Poster

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

MEAL SERVICE GUIDELINES

So that we can serve *everyone* who comes in for a meal, here's what we're doing:

- Serving of food starts around 6:00 p.m.
- Serving of second helpings does not begin until 7:30 p.m.
- Thirds or take-home containers for leftovers are not available until after 9:00 p.m.

These rules exist because we want to make sure everyone in our community who comes to the program gets something to eat each night. We don't want to have to turn anyone away.

Appendix 2S.4 Sample Bill of Rights

Source: Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, *Long Term Care Act*, Part III: Bill of Rights, 1994. Document collected during the TDIN Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006. Also available at: www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/94l26_e.htm.

Note: This Bill of Rights is drawn from the legislation that governs Adult Day Programs funded by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. If you choose to adopt a similar Bill of Rights for your drop-in, you may want to change the formal opening sentence of each article from "A person receiving a community service has the right…" to "You have the right…"

BILL OF RIGHTS

A service provider shall ensure that the following rights of persons receiving community services from the service provider are fully respected and promoted:

1. A person receiving a community service has the right to be dealt with by the service provider in a courteous and respectful manner and to be free from mental, physical and financial abuse by the service provider.

2. A person receiving a community service has the right to be dealt with by the service provider in a manner that respects the person's dignity and privacy and that promotes the person's autonomy.

3. A person receiving a community service has the right to be dealt with by the service provider in a manner that recognizes the person's individuality and that is sensitive to and responds to the person's needs and preferences, including preferences based on ethnic, spiritual, linguistic, familial and cultural factors.

4. A person receiving a community service has the right to information about the community services provided to him or her and to be told who will be providing the community services.

5. A person applying for a community service has the right to participate in the service provider's assessment of his or her requirements and a person who is determined under this Act to be eligible for a community service has the right to participate in the service provider's development of the person's plan of service, the service provider's review of the person's requirements and the service provider's evaluation and revision of the person's plan of service.

6. A person has the right to give or refuse consent to the provision of any community service.

7. A person receiving a community service has the right to raise concerns or recommend changes in connection with the community service provided to him or her and in connection with policies and decisions that affect his or her interests, to the service provider, government officials or any other person, without fear of interference, coercion, discrimination or reprisal.

8. A person receiving a community service has the right to be informed of the laws, rules and policies affecting the operation of the service provider and to be informed in writing of the procedures for initiating complaints about the service provider.

9. A person receiving a community service has the right to have his or her records kept confidential in accordance with the law.

SUBSECTION 2T
Complaint Process

The way to handle a participant's complaint about another individual or about an aspect of the service provided varies with the severity of the complaint; most complaints can be resolved informally, but more severe complaints require a formal process. Severity can be assessed:

1. **By the content of the claim** (for example, a complaint that the food tastes bland is less severe than an accusation of harassment), and
2. **By the way the claim is expressed** (for example, if a complainant is extremely upset about an issue, regardless of what the issue is, it needs to be treated with urgency and with careful attention to formal process).

The difference between general participant complaints and complaints of discrimination or harassment may necessitate two separate policies. Samples are included here as **Appendix 2T.1** and **Appendix 2T.2**.

Problem-Solving

When a participant makes a complaint, it is a good practice for a staff member not involved in the dispute (often a supervisor, manager, or a staff person who has a solid rapport with the complainant) to take the responsibility of working as an investigator and a mediator to resolve the issue. If a formal resolution process is initiated, this staff person should also be a point of contact for the complainant to keep them updated on what is happening.

Whether a formal or informal process is initiated, the designated staff person should work with the participant to determine what they would see as a positive outcome to the complaint. This discussion should emphasize the importance of a resolution whose purpose is not to reward whoever is "right" and punish whoever is "wrong," but to find constructive ways of healing the rift in the community and making any necessary changes to ensure that the problem does not reoccur.

As an entry point into this conversation, it may be helpful for the staff person to ask the participant: "**What is your goal?**" The staff should make them aware that not all goals are possible – for example, if the participant's complaint is that a staff member plays favourites, and their goal is that the staff be fired – and indicate what possible outcomes the participant has the right to request. For example, these goals may include:

- An apology,
- Improved quality of service, and/or
- An assurance that the problem will not happen again.

This conversation should occur whether a complaint is handled through informal or formal avenues.

Informal process. Since drop-ins tend to be fairly informal places, the best way to handle a complaint is often to try to work it out informally first. This process typically involves getting the individuals involved to discuss the situation with each other and try to resolve it on the spot. Sometimes a second staff member may be needed to help mediate the discussion and defuse some of the tensions. (For a more in-depth discussion of crisis prevention and intervention strategies, please see Subsections 5F and 5G.)

However, it is very important to keep in mind the power imbalance between the participant and the staff member. Participants often do not feel comfortable with the informal resolution process, particularly when their complaint is in regard to a staff member. The informal starting point may not always be appropriate for complaints of a fairly serious nature or complaints about the management of the drop-in. If participants wish to complain about the management of the drop-in they should be given the appropriate contact information in order to do so.

Formal process. If the informal problem-solving process is not satisfactory to the participant or the severity of the complaint is such that the informal process is not possible, the complaint should be brought up the various levels in the decision making structure until it is resolved. This process will vary based on the structures of governance and authority of different drop-ins. General good practices for formal complaints include documenting the complaint, investigating the complaint, and following up with the complainant to let them know of your findings and any corrective action. (See **Appendices 2T.1** and **2T.2** for more detailed examples of this process.)

Transparency and Accountability

Transparency and accountability are key when handling participant complaints. Participants sometimes feel frustrated with the way that complaints are handled within the drop-in. There is often a perception that staff protect other staff, and complaints "go nowhere."

To combat these problems, it is important for staff to be:

1. **Transparent** – Staff need to communicate clearly with participants about what venues are available to them if they want to lodge a complaint; what the process is for handling a particular complaint; how long this might take; etc.

2. **Accountable** – Staff need to communicate clearly with participants about what is being done about their complaint, and acknowledge errors if they occur.

Transparency. Participants should be aware of **what policies and procedures exist** within the drop-in for addressing complaints. These documents may be posted in a central area, or kept in an accessible location, or presented by a guest speaker, or discussed in a

participant committee, action group, or "Town Hall" style meeting.

When a participant lodges a complaint, staff should clearly explain **what types of resolutions are possible**. Participants may expect immediate and drastic consequences (e.g. the firing of a staff) as a result of their complaint, and staff should make them aware of the investigation process (and how long it may take), and what the likely range of outcomes for a particular complaint may be.

Accountability. After a complaint has been made, staff should **report back** periodically to participants about what stage their complaint is at (e.g., it has been documented; it has been brought to the attention of the Executive Director; we are talking about what happened with people who witnessed the incident; staff are meeting tomorrow to discuss potential courses of action; etc.).

Depending on the severity of the complaint and formality of the process being used to address it, staff may be constrained by their Human Resources responsibilities and **confidentiality** policies in what they may or may not divulge. Staff should explain these constraints to participants and provide them with as much information as they can to reassure them that due process is being observed.

Sometimes participants' concerns about staff protecting each other and not following up on complaints are justified. Staff need to be able to **admit their errors** and work with participants toward a resolution of the problem. One way to reinforce both transparency and accountability is to document all complaints and have the participant sign the form (see **Appendix 2T.3** for a sample template).

Documentation and Review

It is a good practice to keep a folder of complaints made, and managers should review it on a regular basis for trends. For example, if you have had six complaints in one month about the food being cold, this may indicate a larger underlying problem that should be discussed with the kitchen staff. Or, if all the complaints are against one staff member, a more intensive investigation and intervention may be necessary.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Appendix 2T.1 – Sample General Complaints Policy**
- **Appendix 2T.2 – Sample Harassment and Discrimination Complaints Policy**
- **Appendix 2T.3 – Sample Complaint Documentation Form**

Appendix 2T.1 Sample General Complaint Policy

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

PARTICIPANT COMPLAINT POLICY

Preamble. [Drop-In Name] attempts to provide the best service possible to our participants. We recognize, however, that from time to time a participant may be unsatisfied with some aspect of our service. This policy is intended to provide these individuals with a means by which they may express their complaint.

Procedure. In the event that a participant has a complaint regarding [Drop-In Name] and its practices, the participant should be referred to the Coordinator of the program to which the complaint refers. The Coordinator will work with the participant to resolve the complaint in a mutually acceptable manner.

If the participant is unsatisfied with the resolution proposed by the manager, he or she may seek a meeting with the Program Director. The complaint may be required in writing in advance of the meeting. If so, writing assistance will be offered to the participant by a staff member not involved in the dispute.

If after meeting with the Program Director the participant is still unsatisfied, they may take their complaint to the Executive Director. At this stage, the complaint must be submitted in writing in advance of any meetings. The participant and the Executive Director will work to arrive at a mutually satisfactory outcome for all parties involved at this final stage of the complaint process.

If the participant is unsatisfied with the Executive Director's decision, they may submit their written complaint to the Board of Directors. The decision reached at this stage is final, as far as the internal resolution process is concerned.

If the participant is unsatisfied with the Board's decision, they may take their complaint to an outside agency, such as a legal aid clinic, a mediator, an ombudsperson, the Ontario Human Rights Commission, or the police, depending on the nature of the complaint.

Appendix 2T.2 Sample Harassment and Discrimination Complaints Policy

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS POLICY

Preamble. All program participants have the right to respectful, non-judgmental support. [Drop-In Name] is committed to ensuring that it is a safe place, free from discrimination, violence, and harassment. Racism, homophobia, sexism, classism, ableism, ageism, or any other kind of oppression will not be tolerated.

[Drop-In Name] provides separate policies for staff and for participants' complaints of harassment and discrimination, because although there is equity of accountability and expectations for a safe environment, there may be some inequity of resources and capacities.

Definitions. Harassment is any behaviour that demeans, humiliates, or embarrasses a person, and that a reasonable person should have known would be unwelcome. It includes actions, comments, or displays. It may be a single incident or may continue over time.

Consensual banter or romantic relationships between participants, where the participants involved agree to what is happening, are not harassment. Appropriate intervention and direction from staff and volunteers is also not harassment.

Policy. Managers and staff have a responsibility to make sure harassment ends as soon as they become aware of it. Complaints will be resolved as quickly as possible, within the timelines described in this procedure and ideally within one month of the complaint being made. Participants should be aware that there is a six month time limit for filing a complaint at [Drop-In Name] and with the Ontario Human Rights Commission unless it is determined that the delay was incurred in good faith and no substantial prejudice will result to any person as a result of the delay.

[Drop-In Name] will provide any reasonable accommodation required to make this process accessible to participants. This could include but is not limited to assistive devices or interpretation.

Procedure. There are two ways you may choose to deal *internally* with a complaint or concern of discrimination and harassment:

- **Option 1:** Informal Resolution Process
- **Option 2:** Formal Resolution Process

Although the Informal Resolution Process is encouraged, you have the right to go directly to the Formal Resolution Process if you prefer.

There are also *external* ways of dealing with a complaint, which include:

- Filing a complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Commission;
- Seeking outside legal assistance; and
- Contacting the police.

Following the internal procedure outlined in this policy does not interfere with your right to pursue these other avenues.

Option 1 – Informal Resolution Process.

- Speak directly to the person with whom you have a complaint or with any staff on duty as soon as you are able, but at least within 10 days. Ask the person to stop their behaviour immediately. Describe specifically what unwelcome behaviours are making you uncomfortable. You may get help or coaching to prepare yourself to speak to the person.
- If you are unable to do this you have the right to speak with the supervisor or Program Manager or if your complaint is about the Program Manager, you have the right to speak with the Executive Director. If the complaint is against the Executive Director, you can proceed directly to the Formal Resolution Process (described below.)
- You have the right to ask a third party to speak to the person on your behalf.
- The person must be given an opportunity to stop the behaviour.

Option 2 – Formal Resolution Process

- You may set up a meeting and/or write out your complaint and leave it for a staff member or the supervisor or Program Manager. If the complaint is against the Executive Director, you can give your complaint to the Chair of the Board of Directors. You must do this as soon as possible, but at least within 10 days of the incident.
- Write down what happened. Write down the date, time, place, and the names of other people who may have seen what occurred.
- Within 10 days of receiving a complaint, unless an extension is needed, a meeting will be arranged to hear the complaint.
- A resolution of the complaint should include a meeting between the parties involved that should take place within 10 days of the initial meeting, unless an extension is needed.
- If you are still unsatisfied, you have a right to meet with the Executive Director. If your complaint is against the Executive Director, you have the right to meet with the Chair of the Board within 10 days.
- If you are still unsatisfied, you may file a complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Appendix 2T.3 Sample Complaint Documentation Form

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

COMPLAINT FORM

Date of incident: _____ **Time:** _____

Location and Program: _____

COMPLAINT

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

ACTION TAKEN

_____

_____

_____

_____

FOLLOW-UP / NEXT STEPS

_____

_____

_____

_____

Participant(s) lodging the complaint: _____

_____

Staff completing report: _____

Supervisor / Manager: _____

SUBSECTION 2U
Service Restrictions, Barring Policies, and Appeals

Service restrictions and barring policies have been developed in drop-ins to protect the safety and well-being of all participants and staff. While this sounds simple on the surface, it is very difficult to balance the needs and rights of all individuals when they come into conflict. Drop-ins exist to serve participants who may have high needs and antisocial behaviours, and, for some of these people, the drop-in may be the only place they access basic services. Often participants develop relationships of trust with particular staff members and build community with other drop-in users, and barring a person can damage this delicate social fabric. However, if the behaviour of an individual is damaging relationships within the drop-in or is making the environment unsafe for staff or other participants, service restrictions may be necessary.

Policy guidelines should be developed with the input of participants, and should keep restrictions to a minimum while ensuring that the centre is a safe place to visit and work (see **Appendix 2U.1** for a sample time away and barring policy). Drop-ins should operate service restriction policies and procedures to:

- Ensure the safety of participants and staff,
- Uphold the rights of participants,
- Empower participants,
- Bring about a learning approach to resolving conflicts,
- Fulfill legal duties, both civil and criminal, and
- Fulfill funder requirements.

Drop-ins can minimize the use of service restrictions and barrings through:

- Employing **risk management** procedures;
- Creating a **calm and supportive environment** that allows participants to express complaints and facilitates the resolution of conflicts;
- Fostering **mutual respect and joint responsibility** between participants and staff;
- Supporting staff in developing **strong interpersonal skills** such as active listening, showing empathy, and de-escalating crises; and
- **Training and encouraging staff** to remember that drop-ins exist and are funded to serve some of the most socially excluded people, and those considered "hard to serve" are the priority.

See Subsection 5F: Crisis Prevention and Subsection 5G: Crisis Intervention and Conflict Resolution for practical strategies for implementing the suggestions given above.

Setting service restrictions and working to avoid restricting service can be the most complex and challenging part of a drop-in worker's job. It can be frustrating and can leave staff feeling unsupported. The management team needs to foster an environment where drop-in workers feel that they can approach and engage managers in discussions about service restrictions.

It is a good practice for all staff to turn the focus away from the participants' behaviours and ask themselves how they can adapt their own reactions to particular situations to reduce the number of service restrictions. Just as in the social housing sector, where staff are expected to have the working objective of eviction prevention, drop-ins should have the working objective of ensuring active use by the participants who face the most challenges in their lives.

Types of Service Restrictions

There are several different kinds of service restrictions. A participant may be prohibited from returning to the drop-in:

1. For a **brief, unspecified cool-off period** (for example, the participant is asked to "take a walk" and come back when they have calmed down and are ready to respect the rules for behaviour, or to come back on the following day);

2. For a **specific, short length of time** (for example, a set number of days or a week);

3. For a **specific, extended period of time** (for example, a month, two months, or a year, during which time the participant may be expected to meet at identified intervals with staff to discuss the incident and work through any related issues);

4. For **life or an indefinite length of time** (a participant should have the opportunity to make an appeal and have the decision reversed).

The first one is the most informal and the most common. The fourth is the most controversial, and many drop-in staff members are reluctant to ever enforce it. As people who work with extremely marginalized individuals, they feel a duty of care that extends beyond the simple provision or restriction of services. If barring someone for an extended period of time or for life is deemed necessary, it is a good practice to work with that individual to connect them with other support agencies or drop-ins to ensure that they will continue to have access to the resources and help that they need. It is also essential to have an appeal process in place so that the participant can challenge the decision.

Strategies of partial restriction. One drop-in balances the need to provide service with the need to restrict service in certain cases by "barring" the individual only from entering the building and from participating in programs, but not from talking to staff or receiving

basic services (for example, they cannot come in to the drop-in for a meal, but a staff member will bring a plate outside). Another drop-in, one which operates out of a multi-service community centre, bars people only from certain programs while allowing them continued access to others. The "barred" individual signs a contract acknowledging these conditions and agreeing to meet with a staff member monthly for ongoing support.

These strategies of partial restriction require the staff resources to make alternative arrangements and a willingness on the part of the staff to allow the participant continued access to the drop-in premises, just not access to the particular program or to the building itself. These strategies differ in terms of resources and capacity for response. However, they both share the common principle that an individual's access to the drop-in should not be restricted or severed as a punishment, but simply to reduce the impact of particular behaviours that threaten the safety of the drop-in or the security of its participants.

Developing or Revising a Policy

If you are developing a new policy on service restrictions, or revising an older policy, it is a good practice to involve participants and staff in the process. This will help foster a sense of ownership. (See Section 3: Participant Engagement and Governance, for further discussion of the advantages and issues for consideration in this approach.) However, many drop-in staff note that participants may call for much stricter policies and procedures than staff are willing to enforce, so this consultation should be prefaced with clear explanations about what is and is not open to change.

When developing a service restriction approach for your drop-in there are a number of issues to consider:

- Think about the **core values** and mission statement of the drop-in and how a service restriction policy fits with them;
- Think about the **environment** you are trying to create within your program;
- Think about how to ensure the guidelines reflect your **organizational context** (the population you serve, the physical space of your drop-in, your staff and resources, etc.);
- Recognize and acknowledge the **power imbalance** between participants and staff;
- Put into place an **assessment process** to ensure that a barred individual has somewhere else to go and has been connected to other social service agencies;
- Create a framework that provides **time for staff to reflect on a situation**, seek the support and counsel of colleagues and make fair,

calm decisions; and

- Build in some time to **think about the impact that a bar will hav**e on an individual and about your responsibilities to the people you are working with, your local neighbours, and fellow service providers.

Implementing the Policy

It is important to have a formalized approach so that staff do not have to rely on making decisions in the heat of the moment, when a participant may be pushing their buttons and a situation may be very chaotic. The process should build in time to cool off, reflect on the situation, and, where appropriate, consult others about the best way to handle it.

Orientation and training are important factors in keeping service restrictions to a minimum. Specific training sessions or staff meetings that discuss the ways a particular drop-in team uses service restrictions can be very useful, as can practice role-playing sessions. Time should be spent in meetings on the process of identifying staff members' "buttons" or "triggers" that can interfere with their ability to de-escalate a situation (see Subsection 5F for further discussion).

Of course, no matter how thoroughly staff are trained or prepared to deal with critical incidents, there will always be unforeseen complications or variables that will affect a particular situation. Therefore, policies should be seen as a set of guidelines – as a framework that balances flexibility and consistency.

Good practices when considering restricting a service or barring an individual should include:

- **Respecting diversity** – Recognizing the rights of people who have a wide range of abilities and behaviours;

- **Problem-solving** – Working to understand where the particular outburst is coming from – is the person intoxicated, or are they suffering from mental health issues, or are they angry at someone else's comments or behaviour, etc. – and what options are available to resolve these concerns;

- **Balancing needs** – Balancing the right of staff and all participants to a safe place, with the disruptive individual's need to access the services provided by the drop-in;

- **Recognizing the power imbalance** – Keeping in perspective the control and power staff have as representatives of the organization;

- **Understanding the context** – Acknowledging that street justice beliefs and actions are different from institutional approaches to solving problems; and

- **Erring on the side of compassion** – Making space for legitimate exceptions to the rule – for example, if the weather is freezing and you know that the participant has nowhere else to go, err on the side of compassion. For example, you may require that the person remain in a part of the drop-in that is separate from other participants and that they not talk to others or further disrupt the drop-in.

Please see Subsection 5G for a more detailed discussion of de-escalation techniques and step-by-step crisis intervention procedures.

Communication and Documentation

The service restriction guidelines should be made available to everyone in the organization to ensure that there is transparency and broad understanding. Participants should be aware of the consequences for particular behaviours. You may consider posting the broad outlines of your service restriction policy in accessible language somewhere in the drop-in. Appendix 2S.2 provides an example of a poster that combines the list of participants' rights and responsibilities with the list of steps that will be taken if people violate others' rights or breach their own responsibilities.

When participants are barred, it important to communicate with them clearly what this means. For example:

- The **length of time** they must stay away from the drop-in;
- Which **services**, if any, they still have access to;
- What steps they need to take to set the **appeals process** in motion; and
- What **other support agencies** and resources you can connect them to.

It may be helpful, during this discussion, to **sign a contract** with the participant that explains these conditions clearly (see **Appendix 2U.2** for a sample template of a barring contract). The contract also helps to facilitate a discussion with the participant about responsibility and accountability. It is important to make participants accountable for their actions; they need to understand that it is necessary to modify their behaviour before they return to the drop-in.

In addition to communicating the core principles and procedures of the policy to participants, drop-ins must also foster effective communication among staff members and volunteers, so that if a critical incident or a service restriction occurs, everyone knows what the situation is, what decisions have been made, and how to handle the situation. For specific communication and documentation tools, including logging, debriefing, and filling out incident reports, please see Subsection 5F: Crisis Prevention and 5G: Crisis Intervention and Conflict Resolution.

Appeal Process

All participants have the right to tell their side of the story and to appeal barring decisions made by staff. It is a good practice for staff to inform participants about the appeal process at the time that they are enacting a service restriction. A sample appeal process policy is given in **Appendix 2U.3**.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Appendix 2U.1 – Sample Service Restrictions and Time Away Policy**
- **Appendix 2U.2 – Sample Barring Contract**
- **Appendix 2U.3 – Sample Appeal Process Policy**

Appendix 2U.1 Sample Service Restrictions and Time Away Policy

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

SERVICE RESTRICTIONS AND TIME AWAY POLICY

Preamble. Although the drop-in attempts to be as welcoming and accommodating as possible, there are times when participants may have their access limited or denied because of their behaviour. If this does not happen the drop-in can feel like a chaotic and difficult place to be, which creates barriers for current or potential participants who may not feel safe accessing services. This Restriction Policy exists to help support the well-being and safety of all stakeholders with a vested interest in the operations of [Drop-In Name]. Stakeholders are identified as participants, staff, volunteers, visitors, and extended community within physical proximity.

Reasons for implementing service restrictions include:

- Participants have engaged in abusive, threatening or violent behaviour;
- Participants have damaged or stolen property;
- Participants have engaged in illegal activities; and/or
- Participants have persistently disrupted programming or have prevented other participants from enjoying the program(s).

Policy. The issuance of any restriction is not taken lightly and will only be imposed after all other resolutions have been exhausted. It is understood and acknowledged that [Drop-In Name] participants are marginalized, socially isolated, at risk and vulnerable. It is also recognized there is an inherent power imbalance between staff members and participants. The application of this restriction policy will accommodate the unique needs of each participant and consider the ability of each to respectfully observe the established guidelines and to exercise control over their behaviour within a communal environment.

Procedures. In the event a service restriction is issued, staff members will inform the participant of the reason for restriction, the date it will be reviewed, and the date the restriction will be lifted. Staff must ensure that the participant is aware of and is connected to other support agencies.

Prior to the issuance of a restriction, staff members are required to examine the factors that could have contributed to the action of the participant. Further, the team will take into consideration alternatives to service restrictions such as verbal warnings and private meetings to discuss the issue. In situations where the only information available is "second-hand" and there are no objective eyewitnesses to the act or actions warranting a service restriction, staff members will give the "benefit of doubt" in favour of the participant involved.

In the absence of the Program Manager or Executive Director, drop-in staff have the authority to issue a temporary restriction on any participant for a period no longer than 48

hours. Restrictions in excess of 48 hours require the approval of the Executive Director or the Program Manager.

All service restrictions, regardless of length, will be entered in the official log. Restrictions of longer than a day will require the filling out of an incident report. These reports will be completed within the shift when the infraction occurred. All staff are required to review incident reports at the commencement of their shift. The outcome of all service restriction review/appeals will be documented, attached to the incident report and stored in the service restriction file.

Whether a participant requests an appeal or not, all restrictions for periods exceeding 48 hours will be reviewed by the Program Manager within 72 hours of issuance, and lengthened or shortened as warranted. Whenever possible, the review will involve all decision-makers for the service restriction and the results of the review will be communicated to all stakeholders involved with the service restriction.

Time limits are left to the judgment of staff, but a restriction of at least two weeks is strongly recommended for all incidents involving violent acts, weapons use, substance abuse, selling drugs, theft of or damage to drop-in or participant property. Any restrictions may be lengthened to a maximum of six months or shortened as warranted by the review or appeals processes. Restrictions beyond six months will require the approval of the Executive Director.

Where it is anticipated that a restriction will need to last longer than two weeks, a meeting will be held with the participant, the involved staff members, and the Program Manager to discuss the duration of the restriction, the terms for readmission, and the other support agencies that could accommodate the participant's needs during their absence from [Drop-In Name]. These conditions will be recorded in the form of a contract that the participant will sign. A copy of this contract will be given to the participant.

Appendix 2U.2 Sample Barring Contract Template

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

BARRING CONTRACT

I, _____, understand that I am barred from entering [Drop-In Name] for a period of _____ days / weeks / months, which will end on _____ *(date)*.

I understand that I may come to [Drop-In Name] premises to access the food service program and to talk to my case worker, but I may not enter the building. I agree that if I act in a way which endangers any person at [Drop-In Name] (including myself) or disrupts programming, I may lose access to these services as well.

At the meeting today, we agreed that the following conditions must be met for my readmission to [Drop-In Name] at the end of the ban: _____
_____
_____
_____

I understand that I may appeal the decision to restrict my access to [Drop-In Name] at any time by arranging a meeting with the Program Manager.

I, _____ *(printed name)*, have read this document and agree to all the terms described above.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2U.3 Sample Appeals Process

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

APPEALING A STAFF DECISION

The program participant should first appeal the decision directly to the involved staff person or the program manager.

If the person to whom the appeal is made is not the program manager, the program participant should be told that the information will be passed on to the program manager, and shared with the staff involved.

The manager has a responsibility to do the following:

- To speak with the involved staff person for further clarification if the rationale for the decision is unclear;
- To uphold the staff decision, if the decision was made appropriately applying the relevant organizational policy;
- To discuss with the involved staff person if the decision needs to be changed;
- To have the staff person carry forward the discussion with the program participant to change or adjust the original decision;
- To re-direct the program participant to speak with staff, or staff to participant, to revisit decision;
- To overturn the staff decision if it contravenes or contradicts the organizational policy, and if there is no opportunity for staff to directly revisit the decision with the program participant, due to time constraints or program liability implications. However, the manager must soon thereafter communicate the rationale to the staff person and, if necessary, the team.

SECTION 3
Participant Engagement and Governance

All drop-ins want to see their participants develop greater independence and self-sufficiency. Most of the tools required for this transition are structural – people need money, food, jobs, housing, health care, child-care, legal aid, and so forth. Drop-ins vary in their ability to provide participants with access to these types of resources; however, one resource that all drop-ins have to offer their participants is a sense of themselves as strong, self-reliant people with something to contribute.

The strategies for doing this are diverse. This Section will focus on engaging participants in the decision-making processes of the drop-in. It will provide examples of strategies that drop-ins in the TDIN and elsewhere have used, and discuss the advantages and issues to consider with each approach.

This Section starts with a general discussion of the philosophy behind the participation approach and of the practical considerations involved in its implementation, and then continues with a more detailed discussion of specific strategies for engaging participants:

- **3D COMMITTEES**
  - Types of Committees
  - Terms of Reference
  - Hiring Committees
  - Attachment
    - Appendix 3D.1 – Sample Terms of Reference

- **3E VOLUNTEER AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**
  - Distinguishing between Volunteer and Paid Positions
  - Accounting Practices
  - Role within the Drop-In
  - Orientation and Training
  - Job Opportunities Outside of the Drop-In
  - Attachment
    - Appendix 3E.1 – Sample Peer Worker / Volunteer Code of Conduct

The items on this list are not exclusive, but are meant to work in combination with each other. Financial capacity, staff time, and organizational structure will affect the degree to which individual drop-ins are able to engage participants. However, as the UK-based organization Homeless Link points out, engaging participants in the governance of the drop-in is "more a process to work toward" than a "rigid or formulaic" approach.[1]

[1] Homeless Link, "12: Participation into Practice," *Day centres handbook: A good practice guide*, London (UK), 2004, page 12.3.

SUBSECTION 3A
The Participation Approach

Philosophy

People who are struggling with poverty, addictions, or mental health issues are sometimes treated as childlike dependents, because they do not have the resources to meet their own needs. Since they are often excluded from participating in the decisions that affect their lives, it is easy for them lose confidence.[2] This helps to perpetuate the cycle, since lack of confidence can become a barrier to reclaiming control of their lives, overcoming addictions, and accessing the support needed to deal with past traumas or mental health issues. The participation approach builds on the concepts of **social justice**, **health promotion**, and **community development** discussed in Section 1.

The participation approach:

- Acknowledges that a person's health and well-being are influenced by their ability to identify and to realize goals, to feel in control of their life, and to have the tools to cope with their environment and social world;
- Works to foster a community within the drop-in that is inclusive and fair, and challenges the unequal power relationships between staff and participants;
- Gives participants the tools to question barriers to social equality outside of the drop-in;
- Empowers drop-in users by involving them in decision-making to the greatest degree possible; and
- Sees participants not as passive or dependent recipients of services, but as individuals who have the power to take control of their lives, and who also have significant expertise in poverty issues and can provide valuable suggestions for improving drop-in policies and practices.

Homeless Link notes that the key components in the participation approach are to understand that drop-in users:

- Are not "the problem," and they must be part of the solution;
- Hold the key to the solutions in their experiences and knowledge;

[2] Homeless Link, "12: Participation into Practice," *Day centres handbook: A good practice guide*, London (UK), 2004, page 12.4.

- Have a right to the information they need to make informed choices about their lives; and
- Can build communities and create positive change by acting together.[3]

Practical Considerations

The following discussion of the practical considerations is, in most cases, relevant not only to participants, but also to anyone else – staff, volunteers, and Board members (particularly those who have been newly hired or recruited)– whom you may engage in decision-making processes at the drop-in.

Boundaries. It is important to clearly set out the boundaries of participants' role in the decision making process from the beginning, so that they do not feel "tricked" or lose trust if told that their suggestions are unrealistic or that a decision on a particular subject has already been made. This will include defining any constraints on the range of choices, providing as much information as possible about the range of choices and being clear about who else will be involved in the decision. Establish open and honest lines of communication, and ensure that decision-making processes are transparent.[4]

Barriers. Drop-in users may be interested in volunteering or participating in decision-making processes, but may find it difficult to make it to meetings regularly or to fulfill all of their commitments. Participants often lead stressful lives in chaotic environments, and this may make it difficult for them to adhere to the structure of committee work. It is a good practice to explore these barriers with participants to see whether there is anything you can do to remove these hurdles – for example, changing the meetings to a more convenient date or time; providing a child-care service during meetings and giving out TTC tokens to facilitate transportation to and from the meetings.

Drop-in users may seem at times to be apathetic, unmotivated, and unreliable committee or working group members. They may not show interest in getting involved in decision-making processes, or they may join a group and then not show up. (This is also true, of course, of many board members, committee members, and volunteers from outside the drop-in.) However, dismissing these behaviours as part of an individual's personality is less productive than asking *why* they might not feel motivated:[5]

- **Do they believe that their participation is unnecessary or that real changes will never be implemented?** Try making public announcements about changes – for example, a change to the menu based on survey feedback – to show that the drop-in is committed to working *with* participants, not just *for* them. On a more long-term basis, ensure that you are being accountable to participants and regularly reporting on the results of their suggestions.

- **Do they think the task will be onerous or boring?** Try getting dedicated participants to recruit their friends, or making meetings more attractive by serving

[3] *Ibid.*, list quoted verbatim from page 12.4.
[4] *Ibid.*, page 12.5.
[5] *Ibid.*, pages 12.13-12.14.

food or scheduling committee meetings just before or just after regular social events or well-attended activities at the drop-in. Or, suggest another group project or initiative with a focus more closely linked to an individual's interests and experiences.

Training. Depending on the level of participation, drop-in users (along with any other new Board or committee members) may need training to understand how to contribute to a formal decision-making body (such as a Board, a committee, or a focus group). You may want to hold an information session to discuss expectations, or, like any new staff member or volunteer, have the participant sign a Code of Conduct or a similar agreement that outlines their roles and responsibilities. Further, participants should be familiarized with the drop-in's vision statement and policies.

Empowerment. Many drop-in users have been marginalized by years of poverty, disability and social exclusion; they may have very low self-esteem. They may not feel empowered to express their opinions or to speak up in a public setting, particularly when others in the group express themselves confidently and hold strong views.

Drop in staff need to begin by acknowledging the power imbalance that exists between drop-in participants, staff, board members, professionals and others in the community. Careful consideration needs to be given to strategies to overcome the power imbalance and give participants a voice. **Techniques** include providing separate groups for drop-in participants to share their views, going around the room in meetings to give each person a chance to speak and educating the more powerful members about their responsibility to listen and hear the voices of the drop-in users.

Compensation. TTC tickets or **tokens** may be given to those who take public transportation to get to the meetings. Depending on the financial resources of your drop-in, you may also consider giving participants an **honorarium** as an indication of your appreciation of their time and expert opinions. Honoraria need to be handled delicately, however. Some drop-ins report that once you give honoraria for one volunteer task, participant-volunteers start to expect remuneration for every volunteer task. Given the limited financial means of most drop-ins, this often is not feasible, so care must be taken to establish transparent and systematic honoraria guidelines. For example, one drop-in limits honoraria to long-term commitments, such as volunteering on a planning committee (see Subsection 3E, below).

Capacity. Financial resources will be a limiting factor in what drop-ins are able to accomplish in terms of participant engagement. Also, many drop-ins are a branch of a larger organization, and as such do not necessarily have absolute decision-making power. The umbrella organization may have a different philosophy about participant engagement, and may not support the strategies suggested here.

SUBSECTION 3B
Feedback and Consultation

Even when resources are an issue, soliciting feedback is a must for drop-ins that are committed to being responsive to the needs of participants. It is important for drop-in staff to hear participants' input on the programs, facilities, services, and activities[6] provided and to implement recommendations wherever possible. You will likely not be able to act on all changes suggested by participants, but you can be accountable to them by discussing with them why it is or is not possible to offer particular services.

Informal mechanisms include:
- Conversations with participants
- Submissions to a suggestion box

More formal mechanisms include:
- Written surveys or questionnaires
- Regularly scheduled meetings

Benefits and Challenges

The advantages of soliciting feedback are:

- **Validation** – participants feel their suggestions are being heard and valued;
- **Empowerment** – participants develop an increased stake in the drop-in centre community and more control over their experience;
- **Advice** – staff gain a better understanding of how the programs are received and how to improve their service;
- **Praise** – staff get a morale boost when feedback is received on what they are doing well;
- **Communication** – channels for constructive dialogue between staff and participants are developed; and
- **Funding** – if minutes are taken at meetings or written surveys are collected, the drop-in has documents that can be used to support their application to certain funders.

[6] For a discussion of the good practices involved in inviting participant feedback on staff performance, see Subsection 4F: Performance Evaluations.

The issues to consider when soliciting feedback are:

- **Creating a safe space** – In order for participants to be open with their feedback, they need to know that criticism will not affect their service or be used against them later. This is especially important in meetings. In written responses, one way to do this is to keep surveys anonymous (or, provide a space for the individual to write their name, but indicate that this is *optional*, not required.)

- **Going further** – Listening to what participants have to say and taking it into consideration is the minimum level of engagement; ideally, the feedback process will include productive discussion and negotiation among staff and participants. The role of participants can also expand from simply advising to involvement in decision-making and implementing changes.

Surveys

Many funders require documentation of participant feedback and evaluation of programming, so it may be worth the time and energy to do written surveys. Several drop-ins solicit general feedback once a year, and more detailed feedback on specific programs more frequently. A sample of survey questions is attached in **Appendix 3B.1**.

Helpful tips for written surveys include:

- **Ask specific questions** – Asking participants to rate the "quality" of a particular service – for example, meals – is vague and will not necessarily help you understand how to improve. Asking specific questions will give you more useful feedback. For example: Was the food served hot? On time? Was it nutritious? Is there a variety? These questions will be based on your program's goals and objectives. It is not useful to ask participants if there is a good variety of choices at meal times if this is a factor beyond your control (for example, if you are relying on donations).

- **Give the rationale** – Tell participants what the purpose of the survey is (for example, "This survey will help us improve the services we offer"). Give a brief explanation for any questions that request sensitive or personal information (for example: "These questions are intended to get a snapshot of our community. We want to know what's going on in your lives so that we can better respond to your needs.").

- **Protect confidentiality** – Ensure that the design of the questions preserves the participant's anonymity (for example, don't ask so many specific questions that it will be obvious to you which person filled out which survey). If you plan to use the survey findings in a report or in a funding application, indicate to the participants that the results will be grouped together and no individual responses will be singled out. Make sure that respondents know that their participation is

voluntary and if they are uncomfortable answering any question they do not have to. Develop an anonymous way for participants to pass in their completed surveys – for example, collect them in blank envelopes or set up a box where participants can submit them without handing them to a staff person.

Meetings

The drawback to conducting written surveys is that not all participants will be able to read or have the English language skills needed to complete written surveys. Depending on the people in your drop-in, formal meetings or informal conversations may be the best way to solicit feedback.

One drop-in has a designated table in the common room where participants meet every other week. Meetings are held on the same day and at the same time so that any interested participants can plan to be there and voice their opinions. A drop-in worker facilitates the meeting, takes minutes, and brings the concerns raised in the session to the next staff meeting. The manager reports back at the next participant meeting on the actions the drop-in plans to take in response. From time to time a representative from the Board of Directors will come to a meeting to present a report. These meetings are seen as a vehicle for communication between participants and drop-in staff and volunteers from all levels of the organization.

Another drop-in has monthly "town hall" meetings which are run by the participants themselves. Chairs are organized in a circle and there is a microphone set up to record participants' comments.

ATTACHMENT:

- **Appendix 3B.1 – Sample Participant Survey Questions**

Appendix 3B.1 Sample Participant Survey Questions

Note: The survey below incorporates elements from several surveys collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations (May-July 2006). It is presented here as a resource of different types of questions rather than as a recommended template. To be used effectively, this survey should be shortened and adapted to address the specific questions your drop-in would like to answer.

PARTICIPANT SURVEY

Please take a few minutes to contribute to the drop-in by filling in this evaluation form. It will give us a chance to learn what you like and don't like about our programs and how we can improve them. Please rate your experience by circling one of the responses below each question.

1. MEALS

How would you rate the meals that are provided in the Drop-in?

	Strongly disagree		*No opinion*		*Strongly agree*
Meals are good overall	1	2	3	4	5
There is a variety of food served	1	2	3	4	5
The food is nutritious	1	2	3	4	5
I get enough to eat	1	2	3	4	5
Servers are courteous	1	2	3	4	5

Please provide comments or suggestions for improvement.

_____

_____

2. BASIC SERVICES

How would you rate the services that are provided by the Drop-in?

	Needs improvement				*Excellent*	*Never accessed*
Overall	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Showers	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Laundry	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Mail service	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Telephones	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Computers	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Food bank	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Clothing bank	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

Please provide comments or suggestions for improvement.

_____

_____

3. SPECIALIZED SERVICES

How would you rate the specialized services that are provided by the Drop-in?

	Needs improvement				*Excellent*	*Never accessed*
Overall	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Health clinic	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Legal aid	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Housing help	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Referrals to other agencies	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

Please provide comments or suggestions for improvement.

_____

_____

4. RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

How would you rate the recreational activities that are provided by the Drop-in?

	Needs improvement				*Excellent*	*Never accessed*
Overall	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Movie nights	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Speakers / workshops	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Trips	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Arts & crafts	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Yoga	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

Please provide comments or suggestions for improvement.

_____

_____

5. INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE

To what degree do you feel that your involvement with [Drop-In Name] has improved the following?

	Made things worse		*No effect*		*Helped a lot*
Quality of life	1	2	3	4	5
Sense of community	1	2	3	4	5
Your self esteem	1	2	3	4	5
Your housing situation	1	2	3	4	5
Your legal situation	1	2	3	4	5
Your health situation	1	2	3	4	5

Has coming to [Drop-In Name] made a difference in your life? If so, how?

_____

_____

6. GENERAL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

What do you like about [Drop-In Name]?

_____

_____

_____

What do you dislike about [Drop-In Name]?

_____

_____

_____

Are there any other comments you would like to make that have not been covered by the questions above?

_____

_____

_____

7. PERSONAL INFORMATION

It helps to know something about you, so that we can make sure that the different needs of participants are met.

About how long have you been coming to [Drop-In Name]?

☐ Less than 6 months ☐ 6 months to 1 year ☐ 1 to 2 years

☐ 2 to 4 years ☐ 4 to 6 years ☐ 6 to 10 years ☐ More than 10 years

About how often do you come to [Drop-In Name]?

☐ Most days ☐ About once a week ☐ About once or twice a month

☐ Every month or so ☐ Hardly ever

Do you have any problems getting to [Drop-In Name]?

☐ Yes ☐ No If Yes, what problems do you have? _____

_____

How old are you?

☐ 16 to 24 years ☐ 25 to 34 years ☐ 35 to 44 years ☐ 45-54 years

☐ 55-64 years ☐ 65 to 75 years ☐76 years and older

Where were you born?

☐ Canada ☐ Other country, please specify _____

If you were not born in Canada, how many years have you been here? _____

What is your housing situation?

☐ Shelter/streets ☐ Boarding house ☐ Rooming house

☐ Subsidized/RGI housing ☐ Supportive housing ☐ Market rent housing

☐ Other, please describe _____

Who do you live with?

☐ By myself ☐ With family ☐ With friend/s ☐ With others

How long have you had this housing situation? _____

What is your main source of income?

☐ Ontario Works (OW) ☐ Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)

☐ Family ☐ Employment ☐ Savings ☐ Old Age Security

☐ Canada Pension Plan (CPP) ☐ Other, please describe _____

It also helps to know if you have any trouble participating because of language or other issues. We can use this information to make its services more accessible.

What is your preferred language?

☐ English ☐ Other, please specify _____

Thank you very much for taking the time to fill out this survey!
We appreciate your input.

SUBSECTION 3C
Board of Directors

Different drop-ins have different structures of accountability. Some answer to a local church, or to a Diocese, or to an umbrella non-profit organization, or to a branch of government. Depending on your organizational structure, you may or may not have a Board of Directors; or you may have a Board, but the organization does not permit participants to become Directors. In this case, you may want to consider initiating a Participant Council or Advisory Committee to make recommendations to the Board.

This Section assumes that your organization has been formally incorporated and you have a Board in place that allows participants to join. If you are a new drop-in and are thinking about starting a Board, there are many books written on the subject and a number of laws that you should be aware of (see **Appendix 3C.1** for a list of resources and **Appendix 3C.2** for an overview of the basic purpose, functions, and composition of a Board).

It is, in principle, a good practice to make space for participants on the Board of Directors. However, in practice, participants may be included in only token ways. Sitting on the Board does not automatically mean playing an active and respected role in the decision-making process. This strategy requires a lot of thought and hard work to be a truly "good" practice.

Education and Training

Both existing Directors and would-be participant-Directors need guidance in integrating participants into a meaningful decision making role. Discussion with existing Directors should focus on being respectful and patient, and understanding that drop-in users will undergo a learning curve. Depending on the background of the existing Directors, it may also be a good idea to do a training session with them on poverty issues, and how to diminish the barriers to effective participation generated by the unequal power dynamic between existing Directors and participant-Directors.

Participants interested in becoming Directors should also have information sessions, where the Board's formal nomination, election, and decision-making procedures and responsibilities are explained to them (see **Appendices 3C.2**, **3C.3**, **3C.4**, and **3C.5** for samples). (Making this kind of information and training available is a good practice for all new Board members, not just participants).

Discussion should focus on the important difference between the individual's role as a private citizen and drop-in participant, and the individual's role as public figure and Board Director. Although personal experiences as a drop-in user will play a large part in

their participation at the Board, personal interests need to be set aside so that the person can conscientiously represent the needs of the community and drop-in as a whole.

Policies and Procedures

If participants are going to be included on the Board of Directors, a policy will be needed which addresses issues such as:

- **Eligibility** for membership (for example, time involved in drop-in and good standing requirements), and
- **Selection process** (for example, election by other drop-in users, selection by staff, and recruitment by board).

See **Appendix 3C.3** for sample guidelines for election.

The drop-in should have a Directors' Code of Conduct and a list of Directors' Responsibilities written up as a resource for all Directors (see **Appendix 3C.4** and **Appendix 3C.5** for samples of these documents); the drop-in may want to consider making these documents into an agreement form to be signed by all Directors. Two key issues are confidentiality and conflict of interest; these issues are especially important for participant members of the Board, since they access drop-in services regularly and know its users intimately, and so the risk for a conflict of interest or breach of confidentiality is high.

Conflict of interest policies and protocols should be developed which define when a conflict of interest exists and how the Board will deal with conflict of interest. (See **Appendix 3C.6** for a Sample Conflict of Interest Policy.) Finally, the Board should evaluate its own performance on a regular basis to assess how well it is doing and what areas could be improved.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Appendix 3C.1 – List of Suggested Board Resources**
- **Appendix 3C.2 – Board of Directors' Purpose, Functions, and Composition**
- **Appendix 3C.3 – Sample Guidelines for Participant-Directors' Election Campaigns**
- **Appendix 3C.4 – Sample Directors' Code of Conduct**
- **Appendix 3C.5 – Sample Directors' Responsibilities**
- **Appendix 3C.6 – Sample Conflict of Interest Policy**

Appendix 3C.1 List of Suggested Board Resources

If you intend to set up a Board of Directors, or are interested in reading tips on how to organize and operate one more effectively, there are many online resources that may be easily accessed.

The Charity Village web site, for example, has links to a number of useful resources related to board development and governance. These include the following:

- **A to Z Directory for Board Governance – Volunteer BC**
  www.vcn.bc.ca/volbc/resources/governance/index.html

- **Board Development – United Way of Canada**
  www.boarddevelopment.org

- **The Effective Board Member's Orientation Manual – Ginsler and Associates**
  www.ginsler.com/documents/bdman.pdf

- **Board Responsibilities for Human Resources Management – HR Council for the Voluntary/Non-Profit Sector (HRVS)**
  www.hrvs-rhsbc.ca/hr_overview/pg002_e.cfm

For a longer list of resources, see:

- **Canadian Online Resources for Nonprofits – Charity Village**
  www.charityvillage.com/cv/ires/ires19.asp

Many non-profit organizations have started to use the "Carver model" of Board governance. For more information on this model, see:

- **The Policy Governance Model – John and Miriam Carver**
  www.carvergovernance.com/model.htm

Appendix 3C.2 Board of Directors' Purpose, Functions, and Composition

Source: City of Toronto, *Toronto Shelter Standards*, 2005, page 8. Available at: www.toronto.ca/housing/pdf/shelter_standards.pdf.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Purpose and Responsibilities

The Board of Directors is responsible for:

- Ensuring the mandate, mission, values, and strategies of the organization are being followed;
- Setting agency priorities;
- Reviewing and approving policies;
- Evaluating services;
- Ensuring that the organization meets funder expectations and contract conditions;
- Reviewing budgets and expenditures;
- Reviewing and approving accounting and reporting procedures;
- Conducting an annual performance review of the Executive Director
- Convening regular meetings;
- Convening an Annual General Meeting (AGM); and
- Maintaining written records (minutes) of all meetings.

Composition

The Board must:

- Have a sufficient number of Directors with the range of skills required to fulfill this role;
- Be composed of volunteers; and
- Not have any paid staff members as Directors (this would be a conflict of interest).

Appendix 3C.3 Sample Guidelines for Participant-Directors' Electoral Campaigns

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

GUIDELINES FOR ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS

1. **Nomination.** To be nominated for the Board, you must:
    a. Be a [Drop-In Name] member in good standing who has not been barred or suspended from accessing [Drop-In Name] in the last twelve months;
    b. Fill out and sign a Nomination Form with signatures from at least three [Drop-In Name] members who nominate you.

2. **Commitment.** You must then agree to your name being placed in nomination for election to the Board. You must also agree that, if elected, you will do the tasks required of a Director to the best of your ability.

3. **AGM.** At the Annual General Meeting (AGM) you and the other nominees will be introduced to the members of the Board. If you like, you may talk for 2 or 3 minutes about why you want to be a Director and what you would do if elected.

4. **Campaign.** Each member candidate who is nominated to the Board of Directors should follow the guidelines listed below to create an individual election campaign platform (what you want to do if you are elected).

Guidelines for Creating a Good Election Campaign

a. Please run a positive campaign. Make constructive suggestions rather than hurtful criticisms – make suggestions for improving programs, policies, organizational structures, and so forth, but avoid making *personal* criticisms of your opponents, drop-in participants, staff, or Board members.
b. Please follow [Drop-In Name]'s policy and refrain from making racist, sexist, or otherwise discriminatory comments.
c. Please use respectful language. Obscene language will not help you in your campaign.
d. Be honest and don't offer any type of bribe.

Appendix 3C.4 Sample Directors' Code of Conduct

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

DIRECTORS' CODE OF CONDUCT

All people who sit on [Drop-In Name]'s Board of Directors must understand, support, and follow this Code of Conduct.

As a Director:

1. You use your position on the Board to represent the interests of all people served by [Drop-In Name].
2. You focus your efforts on the mission of [Drop-In Name] as an organization and not on your own personal goals.
3. You declare any potential conflicts of interest (situations where you may stand to benefit in some way from an issue being discussed by the Board), and, if necessary, leave the room during discussions of the issue in question.
4. You do not use [Drop-In Name] or its programs or services for your own personal gain or the individual advantage of friends, family and/or supporters.
5. You keep confidential information confidential.
6. You approach all Board issues with an open mind, prepared to make the best decision for all of [Drop-In Name].
7. You are loyal to [Drop-In Name] and its goals.
8. You are loyal to the board, stating your views openly at Board meetings and supporting whatever decisions that the board makes.
9. You act in accordance with [Drop-In Name] policies and procedures (for example, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies).
10. You do nothing to violate the trust of those who elected you to the Board.
11. You serve [Drop-In Name] in an honest, open, careful, and committed manner.
12. You exercise your authority as a Director:
    - When acting in a meeting with the full Board, or
    - As delegated by the Board, or
    - When you are listening to [Drop-In Name] members who want their voices heard at the Board.

The Board enforces this Code of Conduct. How the Code is enforced and how a violation of the Code is resolved is the Board's decision.

Appendix 3C.5 Sample Directors' Responsibilities

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES

The following applies to all Directors of the Board. If you are unable to meet one or more of these responsibilities, please talk to one of the Co-Chairs so that we can work something out.

As a Director on the Board of [Drop-In Name], you are expected to:

1. Attend Board meetings regularly.
   - If you will be unable to attend, please contact _____

2. Be on time for meetings.
   - If you cannot be on time, please inform _____

3. Be prepared to participate in discussions at meetings.
   - Understand the meeting minutes well enough to be able to use the information in them at future Board meetings or when talking with [Drop-In Name] members or staff.
   - Be familiar enough with the policies, vision, and objectives of [Drop-In Name] to be able to apply them as necessary to issues that come before the Board.
   - Ask questions if you do not understand what is being discussed, voted on, etc.

4. Serve on at least one committee or working group. If this is your first term as a Director, try to be ready to volunteer for a committee no later than four months after you begin. (If you aren't ready by then, that's okay, too – talk to one of the Co-Chairs.)

5. Report as soon as possible any conflict of interest or suspected conflict of interest you might have in relation to Board work.

6. Keep confidential any information brought to the Board for discussion in closed (*in camera*) session.

7. Act without bias and in the interests of [Drop-In Name]. Put away your personal agenda.

Please note: Directors need to be able to read minutes and other material. If reading is in any way difficult for you, please talk with a Co-Chair to discuss a solution. <u>This is not an impossible or unsolvable issue.</u> It is your responsibility, however, to take the step of letting someone know that this is something that needs to be worked out.

Appendix 3C.6 Sample Conflict of Interest Policy

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Preamble. Board Directors are expected to conduct themselves with personal integrity, ethics, honesty, and diligence in performing their duties for the organization. Board Directors are required to support and advance the interests of the organization and to avoid placing themselves in situations where their personal interests conflict with the interests of [Drop-In Name] as a whole.

Definition. A conflict of interest is a situation that results in personal gain for a Director because of something s/he does or knows as a member of the Board. The gain may be direct or indirect; it may be a financial gain or some other type of benefit. It may also involve a gain for a Director's family, friends or supporters. Some examples of conflicts of interest by a Director include:

- influencing decision-making processes or otherwise using their position to advance their own interests or give friends or family members special treatment;
- receiving gifts, money, discounts, or favours for their own personal use or for the use of family members or friends;
- using [Drop-In Name] property, facilities, equipment, supplies, or other resources for activities not associated with their work as a Director; or
- using confidential information to advance the interests of themselves or their family or their friends.

Policy. A Board Director must declare any conflict of interest that s/he has with an issue being considered by the Board. A Director with a conflict of interest may not take part in any future process, discussion, decision-making (including voting), or in any other way that could influence the outcome of the issue.

Procedures. Determining a conflict of interest should involve, minimally, the following two criteria (other criteria that are specific to the issue at hand may exist and should also be used):

1. Will the participation of any Board member in a process, discussion, or decision be viewed as acting in the specific interest of that Board member? In other words, will that Board member directly or indirectly stand to benefit from the outcome of the process?
2. Will the participation of any Board member in a process, discussion, or decision be in the service of interests other than the interests of the drop-in as a whole?

Once a potential conflict of interest has been identified:

1. The potential conflict of interest must be reported (whether by the individual with the conflict of interest, or by any other Board, staff, or drop-in member) to the Board Chair.

2. The Chair must discuss the potential conflict of interest with the individual in question and come to an agreement.
3. If the conflict of interest is real, it must be announced to the rest of the Board at its next meeting and recorded in the minutes.
4. From that point on, the Director may continue his or her activities on the Board, except when the discussion pertains to the Director's conflict of interest. The Director will not participate in the discussion on the matter in question and may be required to go to another room for the duration of the discussion.

SUBECTION 3D
Committees

Committees can be an excellent way for participants to get involved at a more hands-on, small group level. A drop-in may have a wide range of committees, designed to make decisions or to provide input to decisions made by staff or by the Board of Directors.

Types of Committees

Board committees are sub-groups of the Board of Directors. They contain a certain number of Board members and they make regular reports to the Board about their activities. **Advisory committees** are formed to give advice to staff or to make decisions directly related to the operation of the drop-in. Types of **standing committees** (which can be either Board committees or advisory committees) include: advocacy, building, executive, finance, fundraising, human resources, programming, and special events. Participants may also join **ad hoc committees**, or committees that are struck to make decisions concerning one particular event or situation and are subsequently dissolved; for example, staff hiring committees.

Terms of Reference

For all standing committees, "Terms of Reference" will be required. Depending on the committee, the Terms of Reference may be defined by another body (e.g. Committees of the Board and other advisory committees) or may be developed by the committee itself. Once the Terms of Reference have been developed they need to be written up and discussed with committee members.

These documents spell out the purpose, function, and composition of the committee. Depending on their function, committees may be more or less formal in their organization. See **Appendix 3D.1** for two samples: the first (the Terms of Reference for a Social Events and Outings Committee) is on the less formal end of the scale, while the second (the Terms of Reference for a Program and Advocacy Committee) is more formalized.

Hiring Committees

Inviting drop-in participants to be part of a staff hiring committee gives them a role of authority, fosters a sense of ownership of the drop-in space, and can offer valuable insights into what kind of relationship applicants would have with participants. According to one drop-in, participants are able to pick up on subtle clues and subtexts and "their instincts are right on" when assessing potential staff members.[7]

As with other members of the hiring committee, drop-in participants need to be briefed on how your drop-in's formal hiring process works, what their specific role is, and how much influence they will have over the final choice. Participants should be advised to

[7] Participants are also interested in contributing to the staff performance evaluation process; see Subsection 4F: Performance Evaluations for further discussion.

consider the needs of the drop-in as a whole, and to try to avoid letting personal biases affect their recommendations. As one drop-in noted, "It's a very subjective experience for them, so they don't always realize that they have to be professional."

All committee members should also be informed of the relevant points of applicable employment legislation and the principles of confidentiality. To protect applicant confidentiality, you may want to show the résumés to participants only on the day of the interview, rather than handing them out in advance.

The following questions should be considered and clarified before inviting participants to join a hiring committee:

- Does participants' contribution stop at advice and recommendations, or does it continue into the decision-making discussion? Will the participants have veto power over the final decision?

- What kind of role will the participants play during the interview? Will they ask pre-planned questions? Will they have the opportunity to ask unscripted follow-up questions?

Compensation. It is a good practice to reimburse participants their TTC fare and give them an honorarium, though this may not always be possible within the drop-in's budget. One drop-in gives $20 to each participant who participates in a half-day hiring process, and $30 for a full-day hiring process (see Subsection 3E below for further discussion of honoraria).

ATTACHMENT:
- **Appendix 3D.1 – Sample Terms of Reference**

Appendix 3D.1 Sample Terms of Reference

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

SAMPLE #1
TERMS OF REFERENCE
SPECIAL EVENTS AND OUTINGS COMMITTEE

Purpose of the Committee

- Plan and organize special events
- Plan and support outings
- Organize and facilitate member volunteer involvement in special events and outings
- Communicate and provide information to the general membership about upcoming events and outings
- Support seasonal and advance planning of special events and outings (3-6 month time periods)

Roles of the Committee

- Encourage a wide range of members to talk about what kind of outings and special events they would like to have
- Encourage program activity in the community
- Encourage [Drop-In Name] to be a healthy and welcoming place
- Encourage discussion and dialogue between members that supports self-help and member leadership of outings and special events

SAMPLE #2
TERMS OF REFERENCE
PROGRAM AND ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

Purpose of the Committee

- Ensure that the programs at [Drop-In Name] are developed, implemented, monitored, and evaluated according to the agency's mission, goals, and objectives
- Work together as advocates with the Board and staff as well as with other organizations and groups in support of issues that impact on [Drop-In Name]'s participants

Functions of the Committee Related to Programming

- Assist with program development and approve annual program plans
- Ensure that a system of evaluation is in place
- Monitor program outcomes against established goals and objectives
- Remain current on community and program trends in relation to the needs of participants at [Drop-In Name]
- Make recommendations to the Board on future program development

Functions of the Committee Related to Advocacy

- Ensure that the issues that affect [Drop-In Name]'s participants are championed in the wider community
- Remain current on changing social and political trends that affect [Drop-In Name] and its participants
- Support the development of policies, as necessary, related to those priority issues
- Develop and support the implementation of an advocacy action plan in keeping with [Drop-In Name]'s strategic plan
- Monitor and assess the outcomes of the advocacy action plan

Composition of the Committee

The committee will consist of at least two Board members, two drop-in participants, the Program/Advocacy Director, two staff members, and at least two members from the community at large. The committee encourages a rotation of the chairing of meetings. The President of the Board and the Executive Director are ex officio members of all committees.

The committee meets once a month, approximately 10 times per year.

Term of Office

Two years with the opportunity for reappointment for up to three years.

SUBSECTION 3E
Volunteer and Employment Opportunities

It is a good practice to involve participants in the running of the drop-in. Many participants come to feel a sense of ownership of the drop-in and may want to give back or help out in various ways. Participants at many drop-ins help to prepare meals, serve on planning committees, fix computers, clean rooms, hire new staff members, develop programs, review policies, and so forth. These activities are recognized and organized in different ways.

Participants may contribute to the drop-in in:

- **Volunteer positions** – These tend to be the odd jobs that are involved in running the drop-in, such as preparing meals and cleaning rooms. Participants may also volunteer to serve on various types of committees.

- **Honoraria positions** – If the drop-in receives funding or has the resources to compensate participant volunteers, individuals who perform these odd jobs may be offered an honorarium. An honorarium is a small amount of money that is not a full payment, but a token of appreciation for the work that has been done. For example, a participant who serves coffee may receive $10.00 at the end of a shift.

- **Staff positions** – Participants may be hired as part-time or full-time members of the staff team with the same rates of pay, responsibilities, and privileges that other staff members have.

Distinguishing between Volunteer and Paid Positions

The positive side to providing an honorarium is that it acknowledges and respects a participant's skills and labour. The drawback is that providing honoraria can foster a situation in the drop-in where participants may expect money for everything they do. Most drop-ins do not have enough money to pay an honorarium for all odd jobs, so resentment can occur when one task receives an honorarium while another does not.

It is important to have a **clear and transparent process** for how participants are recruited or hired, since this may easily be perceived by other participants as favouritism. It is useful to implement a **consistent system** that categorizes which jobs are volunteer positions, and which are honoraria positions. For example, one drop-in pays an honorarium for any task that requires a longer-term time commitment – for example, serving on a committee or helping to plan an event – but not for activities which rely on volunteering in the moment – for example, helping the cook prepare and serve a meal.

Other drop-ins do the opposite, providing honoraria for regularly scheduled shifts in the kitchen, but not for committee work.

A job that is not regularly scheduled, but which requires a significant time commitment (e.g. a half-day or a day) and relies on the participants' expertise, is often remunerated with an honorarium where resources permit – for example, if participants contribute to a hiring committee process or to a focus group.

Accounting Practices

If you would like to offer participants payment for their contributions to the drop-in, there are four important points to consider:

1. **Method of payment.** Where possible, participants should be **paid with cheques rather than with cash**. This is not the simplest or easiest course of action, but it can have many positive benefits. First, it makes the money "official" and avoids the perception of the work as an under-the-table job. Second, it facilitates life skills development. Participants who receive cheques must have bank accounts in order to cash them. If they do not have a bank account, staff should help them open one. Having a bank account can be an important step in achieving stability.

2. **Book-keeping.** It is important to discuss book-keeping issues with participants and advise them of their **obligation to report their income** to any social assistance program from which they may be receiving money (e.g. OW, ODSP). Whether the participant is on **social assistance** or not, they should be advised of their duty to report this income (however small) when they file their **taxes**.

   If a participant commits to doing a task regularly and receives an honorarium each time, they are technically a staff member and must be given a **T4** (annual statement of earnings and deductions provided to the employee and to Revenue Canada by the employer). If participants do not have regular shifts, but accumulate a significant amount of honoraria over the course of a year, they should also be given a T4.

3. **Source and stability of funding.** If you are planning to start offering participants honoraria for jobs that were previously volunteer positions, it is important to consider where the money will come from, how stable that source is, and what its limits are. For example, have the funders of particular projects built in honoraria? If you are applying for a grant for the funding, what will happen to the honoraria system when the funding runs out? If you are paying participants from petty cash, how will this be accounted for in your records? And how much money from petty cash can be realistically ear-marked for this purpose? If you are initiating a practice of distributing honoraria, you should be able to keep this system going for the foreseeable future. A related point is book-keeping – how will you record the honoraria paid out?

4. **Exploitation.** Finally, exploitation of the participant by the drop-in should be carefully considered. If participants are putting in regular shifts, for example, in the kitchen, and are doing the job of a part-time cook but are being paid significantly less, this is a problem.

Role within the Drop-In

Volunteer and honoraria positions place participants in a potentially awkward or complicated position between the drop-in community and staff. They do not belong to either category fully, and they should undergo some kind of orientation or training session to facilitate their transition into their new role, responsibilities, and code of conduct.

The complications of belonging both to the participant community and having a position of authority within the drop-in are compounded when a participant is hired in a **staff position**. This appointment may be full-time or part-time; but the individual is a staff member in the sense that there is no differentiation between them and other staff members, in terms of contract, remuneration, and benefits; access to confidential information; use of office space, staff rooms, and any staff-exclusive areas; use of computers, fax machines, photocopiers, or other staff equipment; and so forth.

To become a staff member, a participant must gain some distance from the drop-in community. If a participant still needs the services and resources that the drop-in provides, they are in a potential conflict of interest as a staff member, since there may be a temptation to use their increased access (for example, to locked food cabinets, to confidential information, etc.) to their own benefit. Some drop-ins require that the participant cease receiving services from the drop-in within six months after their appointment; others require that the participant must have not received services from the drop-in for at least a year before they may join the staff.

Orientation and Training

Most drop-in workers have been trained on concepts such as confidentiality, setting boundaries, professionalism, and so forth. They leave their homes in the morning, come to the drop-in to work, then leave at night to return home. Participants, on the other hand, whether they are housed or not, use the drop-in as a kind of living room. It is a space where they come to socialize, to relax, and to get away from the stress of the streets or a troubled home situation.

For these reasons, care needs to be taken that as the role of a participant changes, their understanding of their role within the drop-in also changes. Two strategies for fostering participants' awareness of new professional obligations are:

1. Asking participants to sign a **code of conduct** agreement (see **Appendix 3E.1** for a sample participant-worker/volunteer code of conduct), and
2. Providing participants with **orientation and training**. Training should not be understood as a one-time session; care should also be taken to provide **ongoing and intensive job coaching** as needed.

On-going support is especially important for participants who take on positions where they are in charge of distributing resources, for example, clothing or food. There is significant potential here for conflict of interest, where a participant may be under pressure to favour their friends rather than making the resource equally available to all participants. One drop-in resolves this problem by assigning a staff member to work in the kitchen at the same time as a participant, so that if the participant is asked to make a special exception to the rules and give somebody food outside of designated mealtimes, they can refer the request to the staff member. It is a good practice as well to have very clear rules for tasks that participants perform, so that when these types of requests occur, they can let other participants know that it is not their decision to make.

The supervisor of the newly hired participant should ensure that the participant receives appropriate training in the particular duties of the job, and a general orientation to their position that includes:

- A discussion about the need to maintain **confidentiality** and what that entails. The participant staff, like all staff and volunteers, should be asked to sign a statement that promises confidentiality (see **Appendix 3E.1**).

- A review of the main organizational **policies and guiding principles**, including:[8]
  - The drop-in's Mission Statement,
  - Harassment and Discrimination Complaints Policy,
  - Code of Conduct and Workplace Relationships Policy,
  - Human Resources policy manual,
  - Health and safety protocols,
  - Cultural competence principles, and
  - Policies concerning participants as staff.

- A discussion concerning the **boundaries between personal and professional obligations**, and the important difference between the role of a participant with specific friends in the group, and the role of a drop-in worker who must treat everyone equally (particularly if the worker's job is to distribute resources like clothing, TTC tokens, food, etc.).

- A discussion of **expectations of behaviour** while at work in the drop-in and potential impacts of behaviour while not at work (violence, alcohol or drug use, participation in illegal activity, and so forth). It is a good practice to ask the participant to sign a code of conduct agreement that indicates that they understand what is expected of them in their new role and that they have been familiarized with the drop-in's key policies (see **Appendix 3E.1**).

- If the participant has been hired into a paid position (whether the payment is an honorarium or a more substantial sum), they should be advised of their **obligation**

[8] For sample policies and procedures in these areas, please refer to Section 4: Volunteer and Staffing Practices.

to report their income to any social assistance program they may be receiving money from and to Canada Revenue when they file their taxes.

- An overview of **emergency procedures** in the case of a fire, or other safety concern, including who to contact for support or assistance.

- A demonstration (where necessary) of **how to use drop-in equipment**, such as photocopiers, faxes, office telephones and computers, and a discussion of any guidelines regulating their use.

- Training in de-escalation techniques and **crisis intervention**.

- Any **job-shadowing** or on-the-job training necessary to familiarize the new staff with their duties.

Job Opportunities Outside of the Drop-In

Some participants may be hired through the drop-in to do work outside the drop-in. Some drop-ins have partnerships with stores and restaurants in the neighbourhood, or with the local BIA (Business Improvement Area), or with OCAB (Ontario Council of Alternative Businesses), an organization dedicated to creating employment opportunities for psychiatric consumer / survivors.[9]

The Toronto Enterprise Fund also supports a variety of "social purpose enterprises" – from a restaurant to an urban farm to a print shop to an artist studio to a landscaping company – that offer job opportunities to low-income or homeless people. Funding is provided for start-up and operating costs, training, staffing, materials, and facilities.[10]

ATTACHMENT:

- **Appendix 3E.1 – Sample Peer Worker / Volunteer Code of Conduct**

[9] For further details and contact information, please see the Community Resource Connections of Toronto's (CRCT) entry on OCAB: www.crct.org/choices/show.cfm?id=71.

[10] Toronto Enterprise Fund, "About the Toronto Enterprise Fund," n.d. Available at: www.torontoenterprisefund.ca/program.html.

Appendix 3E.1 Sample Peer Worker / Volunteer Code of Conduct

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

PEER WORKER / VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

Primary Obligation
Our primary obligation is to maintain an environment that is welcoming and safe, and programs that are responsive to the needs and interests of all participants.

Limits to Professional Relationships
No peer worker or volunteer is to exploit the relationship with another participant for personal benefit, gain or gratification. Peer workers and volunteers have a responsibility to not exploit their position of power to benefit some participants more than others.

Confidential Information
Peer workers and volunteers will protect the confidentiality of all information acquired from or about participants, volunteers, staff, and [Drop-In Name].

Policies & Procedures
The policies and procedures of [Drop-In Name] are to be followed at all times.

Peer workers and volunteers take direction from their staff supervisor(s) at all times.

Peer workers and volunteers are expected to be on time and tell [Drop-In Name] if they can't make a shift.

I have read the above code of conduct and a staff person has discussed [Drop-In Name]'s main policies and procedures with me. I understand the above code of conduct and its associated policies and procedures, and I agree to abide by them.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Staff Witness: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

SECTION 4
Volunteer and Staffing Practices

This Section discusses some of the good practices specific to human resource management at the drop-in. While these areas are obviously far more complex than can be thoroughly covered in the space available here, some good practices of particular relevance to drop-ins are provided:

- **4A PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND TEAM DYNAMICS**
  - Participants as Staff
  - Volunteers
  - Specialized Jobs
  - Attachments
    - 4A.1 – Sample Staff Code of Conduct and Workplace Relationships Policy
    - 4A.2 – Sample Staff Harassment and Discrimination Complaints Policy
    - 4A.3 – Sample Volunteer Code of Conduct

- **4B CULTURAL COMPETENCE**
  - Expanding the Definition of "Culture"
  - Defining "Cultural Competence"
  - Individual Cultural Competence
  - Institutional Cultural Competence
  - Attachment
    - Appendix 4B.1 – Cultural Competence Checklists

- **4C STAFF COMMUNICATION AND TEAM-BUILDING**
  - Formalized Communication Mechanisms
  - Informal Communication Methods
  - Team Communication Tips
  - Tips for Managers
  - Benefits of Team-Building
  - Attachments
    - Appendix 4C.1 – Sample Log Book Template
    - Appendix 4C.2 – Sample Team Communication Guidelines

- **4D TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
  - Attachments
    - Appendix 4D.1 – Drop-In Service Skills Training Certificate (DISSTC) Courses
    - Appendix 4D.2 – Sample Staff and Volunteer Training Policy

- **4E RECRUITING AND HIRING**
  - Employment and Hiring Philosophy
  - Job Descriptions and Job Postings
  - Screening and Selection Process

- Volunteers
- Attachments
  - Appendix 4E.1 – Sample Employment Principles
  - Appendix 4E.2 – Sample Employment Equity Policy
  - Appendix 4E.3 – Sample Job Descriptions
  - Appendix 4E.4 – Sample Interview Scenarios
  - Appendix 4E.5 – Sample Letter of Employment Template
  - Appendix 4E.6 – Sample Volunteer Job Descriptions
  - Appendix 4E.7 – Sample Volunteer Application Form

- **4F PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS**
  - Assessment Criteria and Rating Scales
  - Evaluation and Review Process
  - Tips for Making the Review a Positive Experience
  - Attachment
    - Appendix 4F.1 – Sample Performance Evaluation Form

- **4G OVERVIEW OF HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES**
  - Attachments
    - Appendix 4G.1 – List of Relevant Legislation
    - Appendix 4G.2 – Sample Personal Information Confidentiality Policy
    - Appendix 4G.3 – Sample Confidentiality Agreement

SUBSECTION 4A
Professional Conduct and Team Dynamics

Just as it is a good practice for each drop-in to have a code of conduct for participants, and a set of procedures for addressing violations of this code, so each drop-in should have a policy defining appropriate staff conduct and a set of procedures for responding to complaints that staff have behaved inappropriately. **Appendix 4A.1** provides a sample staff code of conduct policy, and **Appendix 4A.2** gives a sample staff harassment and discrimination complaints policy and procedure.

In this Toolkit, the procedures for dealing with complaints of staff harassment or discrimination toward participants are dealt with separately (in Subsection 2T) from procedures for dealing with staff complaints about other staff (discussed here, in Subsection 4A). The two outline a roughly similar process, but have key distinctions based on the different types of power relationships that exist between staff and participants and between staff and other staff.

Reading Section 2 together with this Section will give the reader the complete picture of policies governing behaviours and relationships within the drop-in:

- Expectations for participant behaviour (2S and 2U) and for staff behaviour (4A) within the drop-in
- Expectations for staff treatment of participants (2S and 2T) and for staff treatment of other staff (4A and 4B)
- Complaints policies for addressing violations of participants' rights (2T) and for addressing violations of employee rights (4A)

Participants as Staff

The lines become blurred and power dynamics shift when participants become part of the staff and volunteer team. They occupy a complicated position between the community of participants and the staff team, without fully belonging to either. If the participant is still receiving services from the drop-in, or is likely to need the drop-in's services again in the near future, it is inappropriate for them to join staff in off-site social events. This can blur the necessary boundary between professional and personal relationships outlined in the staff code of conduct (see **Appendix 4A.1**).

Participant-employees cannot be expected to adhere to all aspects of the staff code of conduct. Some elements – for example, treating participants with dignity and respect – will be relevant, but others – for example, prohibitions against developing intimate relationships with participants or seeing them only during working hours – are not reasonable.

Participants will need to undergo some orientation to help facilitate their transition into a new role with a new set of responsibilities and expectations for behaviour; see Subsection 3E for a further discussion of this process.

Finally, it is important to monitor the dynamics among drop-in participants when participants become staff or volunteers. This new role may single them out from the other members of the drop-in community and they may be perceived as receiving preferential treatment by staff.

Volunteers

Most drop-ins rely heavily on volunteers to help them run their programming, and the total of volunteers often outnumbers the total of staff. It is not always financially feasible for drop-ins to invest a lot of time, energy, and money into educating and training volunteers, since volunteers often do not commit to work for long periods of time in the drop-in. However, it is a good practice to give volunteers some **orientation** to the drop-in's core philosophies, key policies and ways of dealing with common situations. It is also a good practice to ask volunteers to sign a **code of conduct agreement** that encourages them to think of their work at the drop-in as a type of professional contract.

Individuals volunteer at drop-ins for a variety of reasons – including a religious calling or faith-based charity, community service requirements, corporate team-bonding, to help make a positive change in the world, school program credit, to give back to their community, to meet people, Ontario Works' extra transportation allowance, to add to their résumé, or some combination of the above – signing a contract helps to formalize the relationship and ensure a clear understanding of their role.

See **Appendix 4A.3** for a sample volunteer code of conduct that can be used both with participant-volunteers and with volunteers from the wider community.

Specialized Jobs

Drop-ins often have a heavy workload and not enough staff to take it on. This problem can be compounded by the way tasks are distributed within the drop-in. Most drop-ins start small, with only one or two staff members who do all the jobs themselves and rely on volunteers to assist them. As the organization expands and becomes more complex, roles and responsibilities become more specialized.

Jobs that require specialized training and skill sets may be compensated at different pay levels than general employees, and specialized staff may have access to scarce resources, such as private offices. Specialized jobs also have more clearly defined boundaries, so that workers are able to refuse tasks that they see as outside of their area of responsibility. These distinctions can divide a drop-in staff team. General drop-in staff may feel resentment. Specialized staff may be reluctant to share information or work collaboratively with other staff. The more these tensions exist, the less cohesive the team becomes, and the quality of service to the participants declines.

There are three main strategies for avoiding or overcoming this negative team dynamic:

1. **Laying the groundwork.** When advertising jobs, be careful not to suggest that a specialized worker's function is separate from other drop-in workers. When interviewing an applicant, assess whether they are interested in working as part of a larger team, or if they are interested exclusively in performing their specialized task. Explain that the drop-in tries to cultivate an informal environment and to avoid becoming overly professionalized. Make it clear that this is an important aspect of the job, so that the applicant can make an informed decision if they are offered the position.

2. **Building on the Foundation.** Build on the principles discussed above by continuing this discussion in an open way among staff members. Facilitate an understanding of the similarities that exist between the two types of jobs and the ways in which the two ways of working support each other. This can be done in informal ways, while working, or in more formal ways, in staff meetings or discussion groups. Thinking through these differences and their associated power dynamics could be incorporated into the organization's work on cultural competence (see Subsection 4B, below).

3. **Rotating Shifts.** One drop-in does not distinguish between staff who specialize as drop-in workers and staff who specialize in other areas. Instead, the drop-in requires that all employees – no matter what their position, whether they are an addictions counselor, trustee, housing worker, manager, director, etc. – take a two-hour shift each week on the floor of the drop-in.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Appendix 4A.1 – Sample Workplace Relationships Policy**
- **Appendix 4A.2 – Sample Staff Harassment and Discrimination Policy**
- **Appendix 4A.3 – Sample Volunteer Code of Conduct**

Appendix 4A.1 Sample Workplace Relationships Policy

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

Preamble. [Drop-In Name] strives to create an environment that is ethical, equitable, and inclusive for everyone. For this to be achieved, all employees, students, volunteers, and program participants must be treated in a fair and equitable manner, with dignity and respect. Due to the nature of the services provided by [Drop-In Name], there is an inherent power imbalance between staff, students, volunteers, and program participants. This power imbalance can lead to potential misuse and consequently requires that clear standards of conduct be maintained.

Policy. Staff, students, and volunteers must maintain the highest standards of judgment and care when dealing with participants of [Drop-In Name] programs to ensure equitable treatment and access to services.

Procedures.
The following guidelines must be respected in interactions with program participants:

- **Respect.** Staff, students, and volunteers will treat program participants with dignity and respect.

- **Relationships.** Staff, students, and volunteers must not become involved in sexual or intimate relationships with program participants. Where such a relationship develops or was part of past history outside the organization, the staff, student, or volunteer must inform their supervisor. Business relationships must also be avoided (for example, staff hiring participants to paint their house).

- **Boundaries.** Staff, students, and volunteers will be respectful of boundaries in their relationship with program participants. They will not meet with program participants outside of [Drop-In Name] or after program hours unless it is work-related. If this occurs, the supervisor must be informed.

- **Alcohol.** Staff, students, and volunteers will discourage program participants from using alcoholic beverages while at programs that take place off-site. Rules that apply to the program on-site still apply off-site.

- **Money.** Staff, students, and volunteers will neither borrow money from nor lend their own money to program participants. Employees must use appropriate loan mechanisms set out by the organization to provide program participants with monetary loans.

- **Gifts.** Staff, students, and volunteers will not accept gifts above a nominal value (for example $5.00).

The following guidelines will be respected in interactions with other employees, volunteers, or students at [Drop-In Name]:

- **Respect.** Staff, students, and volunteers are to treat each other with dignity and respect. They must not engage in conversations or actions which seek to directly or indirectly undermine or demean another staff, student, or volunteer, or their work.

- **Conflicts.** Staff, students, and volunteers who have concerns with another staff, student, or volunteer should discuss those concerns directly and constructively with the person involved. If employees are not able to resolve a conflict between them, they should go to a supervisor to assist them in finding a resolution. If the issue cannot be resolved, it is the supervisor's responsibility to mediate a resolution with both staff. All concerns or issues of conflict should be raised with the staff, student, or volunteer, and/or a supervisor in a timely way.

- **Relationships.** Staff, students, and volunteers must not be involved in a sexual or intimate relationship with another staff, student, or volunteer who is within their scope of supervision. Intimate relationships among peer staff, students, and volunteers are not encouraged, and if such relationships occur, staff, students, and volunteers must tell their supervisor. If such relationships with peer staff, students, or volunteers develop in the same department or team, one of the parties may be relocated, to minimize the potential for conflict of interest and negative impact on the department or team.

- **Boundaries.** Staff, students, and volunteers must maintain professional boundaries and always consider the impact of their relationships with participants. The responsibility falls on the staff, student, and volunteer to recognize issues of power and control, to respect physical and emotional boundaries, and to work in a manner that preserves the trust of the participants as well as each other.

Appendix 4A.2 Sample Staff Harassment and Discrimination Policy

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

Note: This policy is based in large part on the Ontario Human Rights Code; however, the statements and requirements of the Code have been added to and elaborated to meet the needs identified by particular drop-ins. If you would like to know what the basic, legal requirements are for this type of policy, visit: www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/90h19_e.htm.

HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS POLICY

POLICY

Under the Ontario Human Rights Code, every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to services, goods and facilities, accommodation, contracts and employment without discrimination because of prescribed grounds. In recognition of the dignity and worth of each person, [Drop-In Name] has adopted this Harassment and Discrimination Policy to ensure service and employment practices which incorporate equitable treatment for all employees, volunteers, and users of services.

The goal of this policy is the creation of a climate of understanding and mutual respect where each person feels a part of the community and is able to contribute fully to [Drop-In Name]'s development and well-being.

[Drop-In Name] will not tolerate or condone discrimination or harassment. All employees are responsible for respecting the dignity and rights of their co-workers and the public they serve. Discrimination and harassment are serious forms of employee misconduct which may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

Nothing in this policy can be considered to override or affect the collective agreement, the Criminal Code, or the Ontario Human Rights Code.

APPLICATION

Services and facilities. Every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to [Drop-In Name]'s services and facilities, without discrimination or harassment because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status, family status, income level, receipt of public assistance, political affiliation, disability or level of literacy.

Contracts. Every person having legal capacity has a right to contract on equal terms without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status, family status, political affiliation, disability or level of literacy.

Employment. Every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to employment with [Drop-In Name] without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin,

colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status, family status, disability, level of literacy, political affiliation, membership in a union or staff association, or any other personal characteristic.

DEFINITIONS

Equal treatment. Equal treatment refers to the parity of results, rather than to behaving in identical ways toward all individuals. Different actions may sometimes be required to ensure parity of results. For example, to give all employees equal treatment in entering a building, it may be necessary to provide a ramp for an employee who uses a wheelchair.

Discrimination. Discrimination is any practice or behaviour, whether intentional or not, which has a negative effect on an individual or group because of personal characteristics or circumstances unrelated to the person's abilities, or to the employment or service issue in question (e.g., disability, sex, race, sexual orientation). Discrimination may arise as a result of direct differential treatment or it may result from the unequal effect of treating individuals and groups in the same way. Either way, if the effect of the behaviour on the individual is to withhold or limit full, equal and meaningful access to goods, services, facilities, employment, housing accommodation, or contracts available to other members of society, it is discrimination.

Harassment. Harassment means engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome, offensive, embarrassing or hurtful. Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to: derogatory remarks; threats; inappropriate jokes, innuendos and teasing; insulting gestures; practical jokes which result in embarrassment; displaying pin-ups, pornography, or other offensive materials; actions that invade privacy; spreading rumours that damage a person's reputation; refusing to work with particular individuals; condescending or patronizing behaviour; abuse of authority; unwelcome touching; physical assault; or sexual assault.

Workplace Harassment. The workplace includes all locations where [Drop-In Name] business or social activities are conducted. Workplace harassment can also include incidents that happen away from work (e.g., inappropriate phone calls or visits to an employee's home) or harassment from participants and service recipients.

Employee. For the purpose of this policy, the term employee includes staff, appointees, volunteers, board members, students and other placements, contractors, and consultants working with [Drop-In Name]. Any person on the premises is expected to adhere to this policy.

PROCEDURES

[Drop-In Name] recognizes that not every incident in which harassment may have occurred is deliberate and that people make mistakes. In light of the fact that many incidents derive from misunderstandings, it is often useful to seek an informal resolution. Such a resolution can offer an occasion for learning.

However, complainants have the right to go directly to the formal resolution process or to external agencies.

The procedures described here include:

1. **Informal Resolution**
2. **Formal Complaint Process**
3. **Other Avenues of Complaint**
4. **Complaints involving the Executive Director or Board Members**
5. **Appeals Process**

1. Informal Resolution – Employee responsibilities.
This procedure is intended as an alternate dispute resolution process. All employees are encouraged to attempt to resolve matters themselves before filing a complaint or grievance. If employees feel they have been harassed or discriminated against, or if they have witnessed harassment or discrimination, they are encouraged to raise the matter and explain their concerns to the co-worker or manager who is the source of their concern. Employees can seek advice and assistance from their supervisor, or the Executive Director, or their union. When presented with such a concern, all employees and managers are expected to make reasonable adjustments to their behaviour to resolve the matter.

The following suggestions are intended for employees who have been harassed or who have witnessed harassment and wish to attempt to resolve the problem themselves (these suggestions are not preconditions for filing a formal complaint):

- **Tell harasser to stop.** If possible, the employee should tell the harasser that the behaviour is offensive and against this policy.
- **Keep a record.** The employee should make a note about the incident, including when it happened, and who was present. Clearly stating the objection in a letter or memo to the harasser can be a good record of events.
- **Support.** The employee has the right to have a support person present during a discussion with the supervisor or the harasser, both to help the employee, and to provide a witness if needed for a formal complaint.
- **Tell supervisor.** In some situations objecting may be difficult or objections may be ignored. Employees should then bring any concerns to their supervisor or the harasser's supervisor (if their own supervisor is the harasser). The incident and its effects should be explained to the supervisor. A plan of action should be agreed upon and a follow-up meeting scheduled.

Informal Resolution – Management / Supervisory responsibilities. Managers and supervisors are responsible for providing a workplace free from discrimination and harassment and for intervening when these problems occur. They will be held responsible for their own actions and for dealing with the actions of their staff.

The following is a list of measures and informal actions which can often prevent or resolve problem situations without a formal complaint and investigation:

- **Set a good example.** Supervisors should let their staff know that they take the issue of workplace human rights seriously by supporting this policy and not participating in or ignoring discrimination and harassment.
- **Approach employees if something is suspected.** Employees may be embarrassed and reluctant to approach their manager or supervisor. Symptoms of harassment or discrimination may include: reduced productivity, changes in behaviour, rumours, increased sick leave, increased resignations, or sudden changes in performance evaluations. Once an employee is aware that these changes have been noticed, he or she may be more willing to discuss the problem.
- **Seek advice.** If it is not clear that the employee's problem involves discrimination or harassment, discuss the matter with the Executive Director. A formal complaint may be needed if the complaint involves: several incidents of harassment over a long period of time, situations which may not be easily corrected, or behaviour which may require discipline.
- **Discuss the situation with the alleged harasser.** She or he may be unaware that their behaviour is offensive. Even if the allegations are denied, the discussion should serve as a warning that inappropriate workplace behaviour will not be tolerated.
- **Advise the relevant manager.** Staff should advise the Program Manager of all relevant issues and their suspicions. This will help the organization to be aware of patterns that might occur in more than one program area.
- **Bring in the relevant manager.** If staff members are unsure whether their intervention would be effective, or if it has been ineffective, they should ask the relevant manager to intervene. The relevant manager will maintain notes of all such interventions.

2. Formal Complaint Process.
If informal attempts at resolving the problem are not appropriate or prove ineffective, a formal complaint may be necessary. Complaints about a contravention of the policy will be accepted from any source that provides reasonable grounds to initiate an investigation (i.e., the involved person or group, witnesses, other third parties). The time limit for the filing of complaints under the policy is 6 months from the time of the alleged discrimination or harassment. Exceptions may be made in extenuating circumstances.

Formal complaints must be in writing and signed by the complainant. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted. All formal complaints will be referred to the Executive Director for mediation and investigation.

The Executive Director will notify the Chairperson and relevant manager of a formal complaint as soon as it is received. Individual respondents to a complaint will be notified as soon as possible during the mediation and investigation process.

Settlement and Mediation. Depending upon the circumstances, it is often possible to resolve a complaint without an extensive investigation. [Drop-In Name] may attempt to mediate a settlement of a complaint at any point during an investigation. All settlement discussions will be held on a "without prejudice" basis. Any settlement would have to be

satisfactory to both parties and be consistent with this policy. Parties will be required to sign Minutes of Settlement.

Investigation. [Drop-In Name] has the choice of handling a complaint internally or requesting outside consultation to deal with the matter on the centre's behalf. [Drop-In Name] may also refuse to investigate, or may discontinue an investigation, where: an adequate remedy already exists; the complaint is frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith; or, having regard to all the circumstances, further investigation of the matter is unnecessary.

Investigations will be conducted by [Drop-In Name]'s Executive Director or an outside consultant. Investigations will include a comprehensive and impartial review of all relevant information, including the position of the respondent(s) and witness interviews. The investigator has the authority to speak with anyone, examine any documents, and enter any work locations which are relevant to the complaint.

Completion of Investigation/Mediation. Proceedings under the policy will be completed within 6 months of receipt of a formal complaint.

Representation. Parties to a complaint have the right to a representative of their choice during meetings regarding a complaint under the policy. However, since this complaints procedure is a mechanism for alternative dispute resolution, a mediation or investigation may be terminated if either party to the complaint retains legal counsel during the mediation or investigation.

Disclosure to Parties. At the conclusion of an investigation, the investigator's findings and conclusions will be shared with the Executive Director, the complainant, the individual respondent and the relevant manager. These parties will also be given an opportunity to submit comments before a final decision is made.

Findings and Recommendations. Once the investigation is complete, the investigator will prepare a written report summarizing investigation findings and recommending corrective action if necessary.

Final Decision. Decisions regarding the disposition of a complaint will be made by the Executive Director and communicated in writing to the parties.

Separation. In some circumstances, the complainant and respondent should be separated from each other or from the workplace during the investigation. With agreement from the investigator, the complainant can request a paid leave from work, alternate duties or an alternate location until the complaint has been resolved. Alternatively, the respondent might be assigned alternate duties or an alternate location or a paid leave. In either situation, other relevant staff must be informed of the change.

Both parties should be consulted on this decision. It is important that the complainant does not feel further victimized and that the respondent does not feel prejudged.

Discipline. Depending upon the circumstances, contravention of this policy will be considered a form of employee misconduct. As in any other case of misconduct, corrective action can vary from verbal counselling or a written reprimand to suspension or discharge.

Confidentiality. All persons involved with a complaint must ensure that the matter remains confidential. However, complainants should be aware that other staff, participants, and volunteers may realize that there is a problem and its nature.

In accordance with Freedom of Information and Privacy legislation, the investigator will only release information on a need-to-know basis. Whenever possible, investigation reports are to be presented in a summary format without the names of witnesses.

During the investigation of the complaint, the Executive Director or investigator may need to consult with the Board of Directors, the Legal Department, the union, the Ontario Labour Relations Board, and/or the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Reprisals. This policy strictly prohibits any retaliation against an individual for pursuing their rights under this policy, initiating a complaint, participating as a witness in an investigation, or having been associated with a complainant or witness.

Complaint Records. No records of a complaint will be placed on the personnel file of the employee who files a complaint or the files of any of the witnesses. The only time a record of a complaint will be placed on the file of the respondent to a complaint is when it results in disciplinary action.

All records pertaining to a complaint are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

All records which are not placed on the personnel file of an employee will be kept in the Executive Director's office.

3. Other Avenues of Complaint

Employees have a legal right to pursue a human rights concern under a variety of complaint avenues:

- A grievance under collective agreement,
- A complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Commission or the Ontario Labour Relations Board, or
- A criminal complaint with the police if appropriate.

Complaints under this policy will be held in abeyance if a grievance has been filed under a Collective Agreement, Human Rights Code, or other avenue regarding the same events.

Grievances of Discrimination or Harassment. The Employee and Labour Relations Office will inform [Drop-In Name]'s Executive Director of grievances regarding discrimination or harassment filed under the collective agreement.

4. Complaints Involving the Executive Director or Board Members
Complaints involving the Executive Director should be brought to the Chair of the Board of Directors; complaints involving Board Members should be brought to the Executive Director. This person will serve as the investigator of the complaint, or will bring in outside consultation to serve as the investigator.

Notification. The investigator will notify the persons named in the complaint of the specific allegations against them as soon as possible.

Authority and Duties of the Investigator. The investigator will be able to investigate and/or attempt to settle the complaint, and to speak with anyone, examine any documents and enter any work location relevant to the complaint for the purposes of investigation and settlement. Unless otherwise stated, the investigator will follow the principles and procedures outlined above.

Interim Report and Discontinuance of Complaint. As required, the investigator may make in camera reports to the Board as a whole, or to the Board Chair, Vice-Chair and Chair of the Personnel Committee as appropriate, to address instances of interference, obstruction, retaliation or breaches of confidentiality encountered while dealing with the complaint.

Upon receipt of the complaint, or at any point during the investigation or mediation, the investigator may submit a report to the Board, or to the Board Chair, Vice-Chair and Chair of the Personnel Committee, recommending that the investigation be discontinued where:

- The complaint is outside the scope of this section;
- An adequate remedy already exists;
- The complaint is frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith; or
- Further investigation is unnecessary.

[Drop-In Name] may approve or reject the recommendation after considering submissions from the parties to the complaint.

Other Avenues of Redress. Nothing in this section should be interpreted as denying or limiting access to other avenues of redress available under the law (e.g. criminal complaint, civil suit, or a complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Commission). The Board (or Board Chair, Vice-Chair and Personnel Chair), however, may decide to postpone, suspend or cancel any investigation into a complaint under this policy if it is believed that the investigation would duplicate or prejudice such a proceeding.

Investigator's Final Report. The Board (or Board Chair, Vice-Chair and Personnel Chair) will be presented with a final report outlining the findings, conclusions,

recommended corrective action, or terms of settlement, within 90 days of the making of the complaint. Upon the request of the investigator, an extension may be granted.

The complainant and respondent will be given 30 days to review and comment on the final report. Comments are to be sent to the investigator.

Final Decision. Final decisions regarding complaints involving Board members or the Executive Director will be made by the Board (or Board Chair, Vice-Chair and Personnel Chair) in camera, after reviewing the final report and any comments received. They may approve, change or reject any proposed terms of settlement or recommended corrective action.

The investigator will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the decision and for providing regular progress reports.

Confidentiality. All persons involved with a complaint are expected to treat the matter as confidential. Breaches of confidentiality will be addressed by the Board (or Board Chair, Vice-Chair and Personnel Chair) in camera.

5. Appeals Process

If any party is unsatisfied with the final decision, she or he may appeal the decision by writing to the Executive Director within 15 working days of the recommendations. The Executive Director will determine whether the appeal is to be based on new information, or issues of fairness or process.

If new information is the basis of the appeal, the Executive Director will inform the investigator who will take appropriate action to hear the new information.

If issues of fairness or process are the basis of the appeal, the Executive Director will inform the Board. The Board will address it at the next Board meeting. It will make its findings and recommendations known to the Executive Director, the complainant, and the respondent.

If the original complaint was against the Executive Director or Board Members, the internal appeals process cannot apply. If the complainant is still unsatisfied, she or he may file their grievance with an external body, such as the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the Ontario Labour Relations Board, or with the police (if appropriate).

Appendix 4A.3 Sample Volunteer Code of Conduct

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

Primary Obligation
Our primary obligation is to maintain an environment that is welcoming and safe, and programs that are responsive to the needs and interests of participants.

Limits to Professional Relationships
No volunteer is to exploit the relationship with a participant for personal benefit, gain or gratification. Volunteers should not develop personal relationships with participants. If a personal relationship already exists, volunteers have a responsibility to inform their supervisor(s) and to not exploit their position of power to benefit some participants more than others.

Confidential Information
Volunteers shall protect the confidentiality of all information acquired from participants or others regarding participants.

Policies & Procedures
The policies and procedures of [Drop-In Name] are to be followed at all times.

Volunteers take direction from their staff supervisor(s) at all times.

Volunteers are expected to be on time and tell [Drop-In Name] if they can't make a shift.

I have read the above code of conduct and a staff person has discussed [Drop-In Name]'s main policies and procedures with me. I acknowledge an understanding of the above code of conduct and its associated policies and procedures, and I agree to abide by them.

Volunteer Name: _____

Signature: _____

Staff Witness: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

SUBSECTION 4B
Cultural Competence

The concept of "culture" has historically referred to the institutions, linguistic practices, and ways of life of particular groups of people. These communal life experiences help to form a distinctive world view that people share. This has recently become a more generalized definition of "culture," and applied more broadly to any section of the population with a shared understanding of the world; for example, we now talk about "organizational cultures" within a place of work, the "culture of poverty," "youth culture," and "street culture."

Expanding the Definition of "Culture"

This broadened definition of "culture" has been adopted by drop-ins to refer to the diversity of communities they serve. It is too simple to say that all drop-in participants are "socially marginalized," or "oppressed;" it is important to look at the varying ways in which they are oppressed, and how these intersect: for example, the experience of being a person of colour in Canada is not the same as the experience of poverty, and the experience of prison is not the same as the experience of being a Muslim in a post-9/11 world, although all of these experiences may be lived by the same individual.

The concept of "culture" is a useful way to describe these types of differences, because it places the focus on the ways that communities make sense of these experiences, adapt to these situations, and respond to these challenges. "Being a Muslim in a post-9/11 world" may include, but cannot be reduced to, the experiences of racism and religious intolerance; it may also include particular experiences of faith, community, and political belief.

The culturally diverse population served by drop-ins includes people:

- Who come from different ethnic, religious, or national backgrounds;
- Who come from a spectrum of mental, social, and physical abilities and challenges;
- Who come from different class backgrounds and have different employment histories;
- Who speak different languages;
- Who are at different ages and at different stages of life;
- Who express a range of gendered identities and sexual orientations;
- Who have been institutionalized in mental health hospitals or prisons;
- Who have different educational backgrounds and literacy levels;
- Who have experienced, or are currently experiencing, abuse or traumatic situations; and
- Who inhabit a variety of living situations (e.g. rooming houses, ravines, parks, streets, hostels, apartments, motels, etc.).

These categories are, of course, not exclusive. Cultures overlap each other and do not have clear boundaries. And, of course, there can be significant differences between members of the same culture. Knowing that a person is Muslim, or that a person has been recently released from a mental health facility, will not tell you everything about that person, but it will help you to begin to understand their experience.

The risk with using this new broadened definition of "culture" is that it may be confused with a view of "culture" as a timeless and unchanging quality of a group of people, rather than a dynamic and adaptive response to social opportunities and oppressions. Thinking about participants' cultural differences may be very useful for creating a safe, open, and supportive environment in the drop-in, but less useful when exploring systemic oppression with a participant advocacy group, or when protesting new legislation that may adversely affect single mothers on social assistance. Advocacy work requires that poverty and social marginalization be understood not as part of a "culture," but as part of a social and economic system.

Defining "Cultural Competence"

"Cultural competence" developed as a set of good practices and policies for working with diverse populations. It is defined by cultural competence consultants Gloria Murrant and Douglas Stewart as an approach that "acknowledges and incorporates, at all levels, the importance of culture, the assessment of cross-cultural relations, vigilance toward the dynamics that result from cultural differences, the expansion of cultural knowledge, and the adaptation of services to meet culturally unique needs."[1]

The basic tenets of cultural competence are:[2]

- The personal recognition and acceptance that all types of cultures have a profound influence on our lives.
- The personal awareness that oppression is pervasive in Canada, it is a part of Canadian History, and as much as we want to escape the fact, it affects all of our relationships.
- The acceptance that there are cultural differences and we need to learn to respect what we may not understand.
- Having the humility to accept that we do not know everything about others, never will and therefore need to ascertain what it is we need to

[1] Gloria Murrant and Douglas Stewart, *Cultural Competence: Framework for Facilitating Service User Accountability*, prepared for Sistering, September 2005, page 10.
[2] *Ibid.*, pages 4-5. The list given here was adapted by Murrant and Stewart from Inca Mohamed, "Steps to Cultural Competence" handout, August 1991, cited in Susan A. Messina, *A Youth Leader's Guide to Building Cultural Competence*, Washington (DC): Advocates for Youth, 1994, pages 6-7. Available at: www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/guide.pdf.

know about people we are working with and providing service for.

- A willingness to pursue that information in all the ways available to us.
- When we are unable to do the above, having the courage to identify and confront our personal resistance, anger and especially our fears.

Cultural competence works on both individual and institutional levels.

Individual Cultural Competence

According to Murrant and Stewart, "behaviours of the culturally competent individual include":

- Engaging in self-assessment and expression of individual heritage, identity, values, beliefs and biases;
- Studying concepts relevant to diversity, such as power, privilege, and prejudice;
- Forming relationships based on trust and caring even in the face of individual differences;
- Acquiring knowledge about and being willing to listen to other perspectives;
- Recognizing different and similar learning, communication, motivational, and decision-making strategies;
- Developing effective responses to challenges posed by new behaviors; Using inclusive language and appropriate questioning;
- Becoming involved with diverse individuals outside of work and classroom environments;
- Taking responsibility for one's own personal, professional, and educational development; and
- Developing the ability and willingness to challenge prejudice and oppression.[3]

Individual staff members should cultivate self-awareness of their own cultures, positions of privilege, and experiences of oppression. They should practice **ongoing self-reflection**, examining their responses to situations, their treatment of others, and the ways in which they communicate.

Some strategic questions for facilitating this process include: Who is in the room during meetings? Who speaks and who is silent? How many times do I speak, and for how long? How does this compare to other people's contributions to the discussion? Who speaks with the most authority, and whose work is most respected or recognized? Do I listen actively, or am I just waiting until I can take the floor again with my next point? How often do I support other people's ideas?[4]

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[3] *Ibid.*, pages 11-12. The list given here is directly quoted from the text.

[4] *Ibid.*, pages 14-15. These questions were reproduced by Murrant and Stewart from Chris Crass, "Tools for White Guys Who are Working for Social Change and Other People Socialized in a Society Based on Domination," May 2001. Available at: www.uuallies.org/Tools_for_White_Guys__2_.doc.

Institutional Cultural Competence

Cultural competence at an institutional level involves assessing the organizational culture of the drop-in, formalizing policies and practices that help all staff work to their full potential, and developing strategies that support inclusion, empowerment, and shared governance. According to Murrant and Stewart, culturally competent behaviours at an institutional level include:

- Explicating a vision that connects the organization's mission with support of diversity that values both the dignity of individuals and their peoples;
- Accepting that change is inherent in bringing together people with diverse perspectives and experiences;
- Supporting diversity in recruitment, retention, rewards, education, and governance;
- Providing academic programs, mentoring, and professional development designed to support a diverse community;
- Instituting an appropriate and timely process of response to incidents of discrimination;
- Providing multiple ways of accomplishing work tasks;
- Explicitly articulating expected behaviors; and
- Making space for employee participation in decisions about policies and procedures that affect them.[5]

See **Appendix 4B.1** for a set of questions designed to help drop-ins assess and improve their cultural competence.

ATTACHMENT:

- **Appendix 4B.1 – Cultural Competence Checklists**

[5] Gloria Murrant and Douglas Stewart, *Cultural Competence: Framework for Facilitating Service User Accountability*, prepared for Sistering, September 2005, page 25. The list given here is directly quoted from the text.

Appendix 4B.1 Cultural Competence Checklists

Source: Gloria Murrant and Douglas Stewart, "Tool #11: Cultural Competence in Organizations," *Cultural Competence: Framework for Facilitating Service User Accountability*, prepared for Sistering, September 2005, page 26.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN ORGANIZATIONS

- ✓ Does the mission statement specifically reflect the organization's commitment to equity, diversity and/or accessibility?
- ✓ Do all communication materials and mechanisms reflect the organization's commitment to equity, diversity and/or accessibility?
- ✓ Are there concrete, measurable goals to increase the diversity of the Board, staff, and volunteers to reflect the community?
- ✓ Is there an equity/diversity/anti-harassment statement/policy/philosophy in place?
- ✓ Is this equity/diversity/anti-harassment statement/policy/philosophy up-to-date with current legislation?
- ✓ Is this equity/diversity/anti-harassment statement/policy/philosophy proactive?
- ✓ Are the organizational systems and procedures consistent with this policy and the legislation?
- ✓ Are the organizational systems and procedures consistent with each other?

CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEMS

- ✓ Is there a clearly defined, determined, identified system?
- ✓ Is the system consistently applied or followed by frontline service providers?
- ✓ Is the system managed and applied consistently by managers?
- ✓ Is the system's "areas of adaptability" clearly documented? In other words, are the "exceptions" or areas of adaptability in the system documented? It is important to identify up front in what circumstances and in what way people need to be treated differently. This evolves with each new situation.
- ✓ Does the system have assumptions about the service user?
- ✓ Are there assumptions in the questions asked to service users?
- ✓ Are there assumptions in how the questions are asked?
- ✓ Is there clear language concerning literacy and language levels, including Braille, sign and spoken language?
- ✓ Is the "step in the system" or "approach to doing something" written down?
- ✓ Is there consistency in language and application of tools/policies?
- ✓ Are there definitions for commonly used words (for example, "needs," "advocacy," etc.)?

SUBSECTION 4C
Staff Communication and Team-Building

Formalized Communication Mechanisms

It is a good practice to establish formal and consistent mechanisms for staff communication in order to understand what kinds of issues participants may be experiencing, and how service may be improved. It is important to build in mechanisms that give staff the space to challenge themselves, reflect on their approaches, and adapt their thinking and practice. Suggestions include:

Frequency	*Mechanism*	
Daily (or after each drop-in session)	**Log book**	This is a written record of significant events that occur when the drop-in is open. It should be filled out as the employee's shift is ending and contain any information that staff on subsequent shifts should know (e.g. if a participant has been barred from a program, or if a plan has been made to escort a participant to a doctor's appointment the following day, or if some equipment malfunctioned). See **Appendix 4C.1** for a sample log book sheet.
	Debriefings	These are, in some ways, the verbal equivalent to the written log books. They are used to convey the same information that log books do, with the same frequency of communication. They may take the form of a group meeting or a conference call after the drop-closes.
Weekly or monthly	**All-staff meetings**	These should occur regularly to keep staff lines of communication open, particularly if different workers from different shifts, on different teams, or with different job descriptions rarely cross paths otherwise.
Yearly or semi-annually	**Staff retreats**	These are a good way for staff to relax together, reflect on the successes and challenges of the year that passed, recharge their energies, and focus on the goals for the year ahead.
As-needed basis	**Various**	These mechanisms are formalized, but are invoked in response to particular situations, rather than at timed intervals. Examples include updating participant files and filling out incident reports.

Informal Communication Methods

There are also more informal communication methods used on an "as-needed" basis – for example, telephoning, emailing, or walking up to a coworker to ask a question or to strategize about a particular issue of concern. The use of the formal communication mechanisms varies according to the size and organizational structure of each drop-in. The key is to prioritize and set aside time for communication as an integral part of the job, rather than an add-on.

Team Communication Tips

Communication is key to working as a team, serving participants effectively, and maintaining good staff morale. The Toronto Drop-In Network's Training Manual gives the following chart of examples of good communication, and the effects that these have on the work environment:[6]

Examples of Good Staff Communication and Team Work	Effects
• Check in with co-workers when you arrive. • Keep the lines of communication open when on the floor.	• Safe working environment • Staff know where coworkers are and that they can call on them if they need assistance
• Don't talk about other team members behind their backs. This practice reflects badly on you, not on them. • When socializing, be inclusive. • Don't undermine co-workers' authority or decisions in front of participants. If you have a concern with a comment they have made or an action they have taken, discuss this with them in private (and see **Appendix 4C.2** for tips on how to present a criticism effectively).	• Hurtful gossip and negative comments behind the backs of team members can lead to cliques and divisions among the team. • Staff tension can also affect participants' enjoyment of the space. Participants may also take advantage of divisions to play staff members against each other. • Cultivating openness and inclusiveness results in a more effectively communicative team who trust each other and work well together.
• Let colleagues know if you are having a bad day (but don't have a bad day every day).	• Coworkers can put negative attitudes or behaviours into context and avoid judging you based on these attributes.

[6] Adapted from Evelyn Mitchell, "The Next Challenge: Team Work," *Drop-In 101: Workshop Facilitator's Manual*, Toronto (ON): TDIN and THTC, 2005, pages 13-14.

Examples of Good Staff Communication and Team Work *(continued)*	Effects *(continued)*
• Pass on relevant information to co-workers as soon as it comes up. • Consult co-workers about any major decision or change.	• The team is cohesive and participants can tell that staff are working from the same page, and will behave consistently. • Reaching consensus about a decision can help the team as a whole feel ownership of it and feel good about it.
• Acknowledge when a colleague has done a good job and give credit where credit is due. • Recognize when another staff may be able to handle a situation more effectively than you can, and ask for assistance. • Show appreciation.	• Supportive working environment • Staff feel valued and the sense of goodwill among colleagues is increased. A coworker will be more likely to return the compliment the next time you have done something positive.

It may also be helpful to develop guidelines that structure how to constructively criticize colleagues. **Appendix 4C.2** gives a sample of team communication guidelines.

When there is tension or friction between two or more staff members, the team needs to ensure that this interpersonal dynamic does not get in the way of the ability to provide services. Staff need to know that, whatever their disagreements or differences, they can count on each other. This security results from an environment where consistent communication mechanisms are in place (discussed above), so that the passing on of relevant information is a matter of course, rather a matter of personal discretion.

Professional Conduct

Staff communicate their professionalism not only through speaking to a staff or a participant in a respectful way, but also through their body language. It is not just what you are saying but how you are saying it; tone of voice, volume, eye contact, and facial expression all contribute to how your message is understood.

This is true not only during a particular conversation, but before and after it as well. In the drop-in environment, it is important to recognize that communication between individuals also occurs in front of others. As one participant explained: “I’ve seen this happen so often. Staff are dealing with a participant and they are being really professional, and then the participant walks away and staff start giggling to themselves. They’re saving the story to tell at dinner time about how crazy or messed up someone is. But that’s completely unacceptable, laughing at someone else’s problems. We are not your dinner table conversation.”

Tips for Managers

The staff team, led by the manager, should model the healthy workplace behaviour that they would like to see happen. This includes:

- Not taking criticisms or problems personally;
- Not talking behind other staff members' backs and fostering divisions within the team;
- Being willing to step back if another staff person has a better rapport with a particular participant; and
- Seeking advice and sharing information.

The manager should also stay connected to day-to-day life on the drop-in floor so they can support staff, reinforce their confidence and trust, and foster the team dynamic. In smaller drop-ins, this may not even be in question, but in larger drop-ins, managers may need to make a special effort.

Benefits of Team-Building

Fostering and maintaining a strong team has many benefits, and can help:[7]

- To keep employees and reduce costs related to employee turnover;
- To hold on to valuable organizational knowledge that comes with the continuity of staff and sharing of information;
- To enhance the power and feeling of satisfaction of individuals working on the team;
- To build organizational competence and stability;
- To establish trust relationships that lead to better sharing of knowledge and understanding;
- To achieve objectives because individuals are working together;
- To create an environment where the input from people at all levels is valued;
- To provide a process and place for multiple perspectives to be applied to complex problems and issues; and
- To turn knowledge into practical results that improve the organization's services.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Appendix 4C.1 – Sample Log Book Template**
- **Appendix 4C.2 – Sample Team Communication Guidelines**

[7] Human Resources Council for the Voluntary/Non-profit Sector (HRVS), "Work Teams," *The HR Management Toolkit*, N.d. The list given here is directly quoted from the text. Available at: www.hrcouncil.ca/people/pg005_e.cfm. Last updated November 17, 2004.

Appendix 4C.1 Sample Log Book Template

Source: Adapted from Evelyn Mitchell, "Handout #5: Sample of Documentation," *Building and Maintaining Successful Groups: Workshop Facilitator's Manual*, Toronto (ON): Toronto Drop-In Network and Toronto Hostels Training Centre, 2005.

SAMPLE LOG BOOK SHEET

Date	Activity	Comments	Participants	
			Total Number	
			Total New	
			Total Number	
			Total New	
			Total Number	
			Total New	
			Total Number	
			Total New	
			Total Number	
			Total New	

Appendix 4C.2 Sample Team Communication Guidelines

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006; and from Gracie Lyons, *Constructive Criticism: A Handbook*, Berkeley (CA): Issues in Radical Therapy, 1976.

TEAM COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

These guidelines are to assist you in communicating with your peers. It is important that you are clear in your communication, honourable in your intention, and solid in your commitment to find a constructive resolution. It is important to value your capacity for change, and to respect that of your peers. Clear communication can assist in minimizing the potential for conflict within the team. This should be our goal in doing this work.

It is challenging to give or receive a criticism. It is important that peers in the team support those who are engaged in this process. When receiving a criticism, listen carefully to what is being said. This can assist in clear communication. Be aware of feeling defensive. Know that criticism is difficult to receive, and is a challenge for many.

If you want to deliver a criticism, it helps to write it out ahead. Check what you have written to see that it is not expressing value-laden language, judgments, anger, or an attack on someone's personality. Be specific. Focus on the particular action, behaviour, or statement that you want to address, and avoid making global statements. For example, say: "You made a comment that concerned me yesterday," rather than "You are always making derogatory comments" or "You are a racist." It is important to be clear. Criticism should not focus on an analysis of your peer's character, but rather should focus on the action or statement that created discord, impacting on your working relationship and team dynamics. The form below is intended to help you express your criticism effectively.

Form for Constructive Self-Criticism or Criticism of a Peer

When (I/you) (said/did) _____
_____,
I experienced _____
_____.

In the future, (I will / I hope you will):
1. _____
2. _____
because _____
_____
_____
(Give reasons the change in behaviour will be helpful to you and/or the team.)

SUBSECTION 4D
Training and Professional Development

It is a good practice for drop-ins to recognize the importance of ongoing training, and to commit to supporting their staff (and regular volunteers) to access training. There are special considerations to take into account when hiring participants as staff or volunteers within the drop-in; these are dealt with in Subsection 3E.

The Toronto Drop-In Network (TDIN) and the Toronto Hostels Training Centre (THTC) have recently developed a core training program called the **Drop-In Service Skills Training Certificate**, for staff, volunteers and agencies. Individuals take six mandatory courses and two electives, in topics ranging from crisis prevention techniques, to understanding mental health issues, to First Aid, to advocacy. For a complete listing of courses, please see **Appendix 4D.1**. Registration forms are available online at the THTC website. They must be printed and mailed or brought in person to THTC.[8]

It is a good practice to identify which types of training are needed to perform which tasks within the drop-in, and how this training will occur. Where resources permit, drop-ins should fund essential staff training sessions. Volunteers who make long-term commitments to the drop-in should also receive basic training. See Appendix 4D.2 **for a sample staff and volunteer training priorities policy.**

Feedback from drop-in participants echoed the importance for training relevant to drop-in work. Similar to courses found in the Drop-In Service Skills Training Certificate, drop-in participants emphasized a number of key areas to cover, including:

- First Aid and CPR,
- Conflict resolution,
- Vicarious trauma and self-care,
- Ethics,
- Communication,
- Poverty issues, and
- Sign language.

Participants underlined sign language as a major gap that exists in Toronto drop-ins. They noted that people with severe handicaps are often not able to access the services they need because staff are unable to communicate with them. They indicated that, where possible, committed volunteers should also receive this training.

[8] Toronto Drop-In Network (TDIN) and Toronto Hostels Training Centre (THTC), "Drop-In Service Skills Training Certificate (DISSTC)," n.d. Available at: www.thtcentre.com. Last updated July 26, 2006.

One community centre that runs a number of drop-ins trains its volunteers fairly intensively, requiring its hundreds of volunteers to attend five information sessions that cover some of the "**core skills**" of working or volunteering at the centre (for example: team-building, working with socially marginalized people, advocacy, confidentiality, anti-oppression, policies and procedures, harm reduction, crisis intervention, and self care). In addition to these general sessions, volunteers are also trained in their specific tasks through on-the-job training, job-shadowing, and periodic workshops organized by their program.

The idea behind this intensive training program is to help all volunteers develop a framework for working with marginalized people and a consistent approach to working with volunteers. The training also emphasizes "**self-care**," or tools to cope with emotional and physical stress. This is important for both staff and volunteers.

Participants emphasize **vicarious trauma** and self-care training as essential for staff and committed volunteers. "Vicarious traumatization" is defined as "the cumulative transformative effect experienced by those working directly or indirectly with survivors of trauma." It is the impact of hearing "graphic descriptions of violent events," and "being a helpless witness to past events and sometimes present re-enactments."[9] Staff empathetically respond to these stories and integrate these traumatic events into the way they look at the world. Staff may become demoralized, depressed, and physically ill. They may take these feelings out on their families at home or on co-workers and participants at work. **Self-care** training provides positive strategies to minimize the negative impact of vicarious traumatization and provide staff with the tools to handle it effectively.[10]

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Appendix 4D.1 – Drop-In Service Skills Training Certificate (DISSTC) Courses**
- **Appendix 4D.2 – Sample Staff and Volunteer Training Policy**

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[9] Women's Health Statewide, *Vicarious Traumatisation Occupational Health and Safety Draft Policy*, Government of South Australia, n.d., page 3. Available at: www.whs.sa.gov.au/pub/draft_VT_polic_1.pdf.
[10] *Ibid.* and Jan I. Richardson, *Guidebook on Vicarious Trauma: Recommended Solutions for Anti-Violence Workers*, Ottawa (ON): Health Canada, 2001, pages 7-14. Available at: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/familyviolence/pdfs/trauma_e.pdf. The *Guidebook* provides positive solutions for both individuals and organizations dealing with vicarious traumatization. Developing a policy similar to the WHS Draft Policy may also be an effective strategy for handling vicarious trauma as an organization.

Appendix 4D.1 Drop-In Service Skills Training Certificate (DISSTC) Courses

Source: Toronto Drop-In Network (TDIN) and Toronto Hostels Training Centre (THTC), "Drop-In Service Skills Training Certificate (DISSTC)," n.d. Available at: www.thtcentre.com/; last updated 26 July 2006; accessed 29 July 2006.

TDIN AND THTC DROP-IN SERVICE SKILLS TRAINING CERTIFICATE (DISSTC) COURSES

***Mandatory Courses*:**

1. **Drop-In 101**
2. **Drop-In 201**
3. **Crisis Prevention Training** – choose:
    a. Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, or
    b. Understanding and Managing Aggressive Behaviour, or
    c. Defusing Hostility – Crisis Intervention with the Hostile and Aggressive Individual
4. **Training in Mental Health Issues** – choose:
    a. Mental Health: An Overview, or
    b. Mental Health Part II, or
    c. Mental Health and Homelessness
5. **Standard First Aid and CPR**
6. **Successful Information, Referral and Individual Advocacy**

Elective Courses:

1. **Building and Maintaining Successful Groups**
2. **Case Management**
3. **Cultural Training** – choose:
    a. Exploring Aboriginal Issues and Culture, or
    b. Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Training, or
    c. Cultural Sensitivity Training
4. **Food Handler Certification**
5. **Legal Issues in Housing** – choose:
    a. Tenant and Landlord Law, or
    b. Discrimination Human Rights in Housing
6. **Legal Issues in Immigration** – choose:
    a. New Directions Seminar on Immigration and Refugee Law, or
    b. Refugee Determination Process
7. **Substance Use And Abuse** – choose:
    a. Introductory, or
    b. Advanced
8. **The Social Assistance System**

Appendix 4D.2 Sample Staff and Volunteer Training Policy

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEER TRAINING POLICY

Purpose. The purpose of this policy is to improve staff and volunteer competence and capacity to provide services and programs, and to ensure minimum qualifications and skills or competencies among staff, as identified by position.

Policy. All staff and volunteers will undergo the training sessions identified below. Primary Priority items will be achieved within six months of becoming a permanent employee. Secondary Priorities will be addressed as soon as feasible.

Qualifications and Competencies by Position

Position	Primary Priority	Secondary Priority
Support Care Workers	• First Aid and CPR • Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) • Conflict resolution • Poverty, ethics, & advocacy • Cultural competence	• Basic computer skills • Vicarious trauma and self-care • Sign language
Cooks	• Food-Handler Certification • Certification of training in cooking from a recognized institution	• Volunteer supervision and motivation
Volunteers	• Internal orientation and familiarization with drop-in policies and procedures • Poverty, ethics, & advocacy • Cultural competence	*If volunteers make a long-term commitment:* • Conflict resolution • First Aid and CPR • Vicarious trauma and self-care • Sign language
Kitchen Volunteers	• Internal orientation and training on safe food-handling techniques	*If volunteers make a long-term commitment:* • Food-Handler Certification • Workplace Hazardous Materials Information Systems (WHMIS)

Procedures. [Drop-In Name] will cover the costs associated with any of the above noted Primary or Secondary Priorities.

Management or Supervisors may advise volunteers or staff under their supervision to take any course offered by an accredited institution. Routine performance reviews will ensure questions are raised relating to training at least annually. Training may be recommended as a result of performance reviews.

Any staff member may request enrolment in any course, and their request will be considered in light of budgetary constraints, work schedule, and past history of use of training funds.

In instances where the staff member or volunteer requests a course which is not wholly directed to improving work performance, a cost-sharing arrangement may be considered.

A training log will be kept by the employer to record the details of training events or courses, including: dates, who attended, costs, and any other relevant notes. The employer will also search out and evaluate courses, seminars, and other training opportunities.

SUBSECTION 4E
Recruiting and Hiring

Drop-ins should treat the hiring process with careful attention to detail to reduce the likelihood of problems or misunderstandings later on.

It is a good practice to have:

- An **employment and hiring philosophy** (including a statement on employment equity);
- A system for **developing and reviewing job descriptions**;
- A **job posting process**; and
- A **screening and selection** process.

Employment and Hiring Philosophy

It is a good practice to have a statement of principles that clearly outlines the approach to hiring. Having something written down makes it easy to distribute to members of a selection committee and ensure that everyone is on the same page. See **Appendix 4E.1** for an example of employment principles and **Appendix 4E.2** for a sample employment equity policy.

Job Descriptions and Job Postings

It is a good practice to review job descriptions whenever vacancies come up, to assess whether the duties have changed. It is a good practice to **consult with coworkers and participants** about the job description to assess whether it accurately covers what is required. The job description should be reviewed by the Executive Director for final approval.

As you develop a **job description**, you should include the following information:

1. Title of the position;
2. Context of the position (e.g. which program it is for, or which department it is in), if your drop-in is a larger, multi-service agency;
3. The supervisor's title (or the title of the person that the new person must report to);
4. General job summary;
5. Specific job responsibilities;
6. Job qualifications; and
7. Working conditions.

The **job posting** should contain the additional information:

1. How many hours per week;
2. Starting date of the job and, if the contract is for a limited time, specify its term (e.g. one year);
3. Pay rate or salary;
4. Instructions on how to apply (e.g. contact name, contact information, etc.), and acceptable methods (e.g. mail, fax, email);
5. The final due date for applications;
6. Any important details of the screening process (e.g. whether a TB test is required, or preference will be given to applicants who can speak French, etc.);
7. A note about the drop-in's employment equity policy: for example, "We are dedicated to achieving a workforce that is reflective of the communities we serve;" and
8. A note that explains how or whether applicants will be contacted; for example: "We thank all applicants but only those selected for an interview will be contacted."

Qualifications. It is good practice to carefully describe the specific qualifications for the position to ensure that the hiring process will select someone that is capable of doing the job well without eliminating people from the competition based on inappropriate grounds. Avoid the requirement for specific education or credentials, choosing instead to define the skills and abilities required to perform the job. Qualifications will often include a combination of past experience and knowledge of issues related to the people served by the drop-in. Be careful to avoid excluding people that may have excellent skills but who do not have experience. **Appendix 4E.3** provides sample job descriptions.

It is a good practice to advertise all employment vacancies internally to give any interested employees a chance to apply. When deciding whether to advertise job postings externally as well, managers should consider:

- Whether the required qualifications and ability to meet the requirements of the position exist in the current employee group; and
- Whether the current qualified employee group is reflective of the population that the drop-in serves.

If these two criteria are not met, the job should be posted externally as well.

Screening and Selection Process

Screening criteria. If you receive a high volume of applications, it is useful to have a short set of criteria that you can use to eliminate the bulk of résumés quickly. These criteria must be tied to the specific skills and abilities required to do the job – for example, if it is essential for the person to speak Spanish, or to have been trained as a

cook, or to have basic computer skills, or to have a background in working with marginalized people.

Hiring committee. The selection and interview committee should have at least two members. Committees should include staff members who will be working closely with the new staff person, and, wherever possible, should reflect gender and cultural diversity. It is also a good practice to **involve participants** in the hiring process (see Subsection 3D for further discussion of this process).

Before making applicants' résumés available to the committee, or interviewing the short-listed candidates, review with the committee the importance of respecting **confidentiality**, the selection criteria, and the mechanisms for making a decision about which candidate to hire. Committee members must declare any prior association they may have had with the candidates, whether personal or professional, past or present. The committee will decide whether a **conflict of interest** exists, and, if so, the committee member will need to be replaced by someone else.

Interviewing. To ensure fairness for all candidates the interview process should be consistent, using the same questions and process for all those interviewed. At least one committee member should be responsible for taking **detailed notes** of each candidate's responses and of any discussions that follow the interview.

The interview process should combine questions related to experience with questions related to understanding of the issues. You may also want to ask candidates to take part in a **demonstration of a required skill or knowledge** (e.g. do a writing sample or write a test), or discuss how they would respond to sample drop-in situations (see **Appendix 4E.4** for sample scenarios).

Selecting. The committee should discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate in turn, and make every effort to achieve **consensus**. Once the committee is in agreement, the chair recommends the candidate for final approval. If consensus is not achieved, the chair of the committee may make the selection and recommend a candidate for approval. It is critical that committee members be aware of this mechanism before the hiring process begins.

If after the interview process no qualified or suitable candidate has been found, the committee should review the applicants who did not make the short list to see if there is anyone who could be asked back. If not, the vacancy should be re-posted, taking into consideration possible revisions to the job description and a wider search area including a wider range of organizations and media.

Reference checks. It is a good practice to request at least two work-related references for the selected candidate.

When speaking with the referees, keep questions focused, objective, job-related, and in accord with the Ontario Human Rights Code. Sample questions include:

- In what capacity did you work with the applicant, when, and for how long?
- How would you describe the candidates role in the position in which you worked with them?
- Describe the applicant's ability to work with participants and coworkers.
- Describe the applicant's abilities to handle multiple demands, manage their work, take initiative, work independently, work within a team structure, and respond to constructive feedback.
- Describe how well the applicant adapts to changing circumstances or work demands.
- What are the applicant's strengths and are there any areas of development needed?
- Do you have any concerns about recommending the applicant for this position?

Informing stakeholders of the decision. All candidates who were interviewed should be telephoned and informed, whether they were selected or not. If an internal candidate does not make the interview short list, or interviews for the position but does not get the job, the chair of the selection committee should contact them to explain and discuss the decision. It is good practice to contact the selected candidate first to offer the position. Once the selected candidate has agreed to accept the position, the unsuccessful candidates should be contacted.

The selected candidate should be sent an official letter of employment (see **Appendix 4E.5** for a template) by the appropriate person in the organization.

Once the candidate has accepted the offer, the appropriate person will send an email or a memo to staff to let them know who has been hired and what their start date is. Those who will be working closely with the person should also be informed of the skills and experience the person brings to the job.

Criminal Reference Check. If your drop-in plans to run a Criminal Reference Check, this is the time to initiate this three-month process. It is important that this process not be discriminatory; a past that includes illegal activities is not necessarily an indication of future behaviour. If there is something on a potential employee's record, the drop-in should be aware of it. However, depending on what shows up, it **should not automatically discount an applicant**.

An employee who was formerly street-involved, or who worked in the drug trade or in the sex trade, has life experiences that can inform their work in the drop-in and their

rapport with participants. Whatever the information on the record says, it should be kept **confidential** and knowledge should be restricted to as few staff as possible. If the new staff person wants to share the information with others in the drop-in, that should be their choice.

Volunteers

Volunteer job postings should be designed along similar lines to those for staff vacancies (discussed in detail above). **Appendix 4E.6** provides sample volunteer job descriptions. Prospective volunteers do not need to be interviewed as intensively or as formally as prospective staff, but **it is a good practice to screen them, interview them, and check their references**. These practices help to ensure participants' safety and maintain a positive drop-in environment.

One good screening question is simply to ask "Why do you want to volunteer?" The answers to this question should be assessed to determine how closely they fit with the mission and values of the drop-in. Interviews should also be designed to help assess what kind of work the volunteer would be most interested in, and what sorts of skills they might have to offer at the drop-in. Volunteers should also fill out an application form that records some of this information. See **Appendix 4E.7** for a sample form.

It is also a good practice to hold an **exit interview** with volunteers who are leaving. This is a good way to get useful feedback and constructive criticism. **Appendix 4E.8** provides a sample list of questions that may used as the base for a conversational interview, or may be used as a written questionnaire that the volunteer fills out before leaving.

Participants as Staff or Volunteers

See Subsection 3E for a discussion of recruiting and hiring participants as volunteers and as staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Appendix 4E.1 – Sample Employment Principles**
- **Appendix 4E.2 – Sample Employment Equity Policy**
- **Appendix 4E.3 – Sample Job Descriptions**
- **Appendix 4E.4 – Sample Interview Scenarios**
- **Appendix 4E.5 – Sample Letter of Employment Template**
- **Appendix 4E.6 – Sample Volunteer Job Descriptions**
- **Appendix 4E.7 – Sample Volunteer Application Form**
- **Appendix 4E.8 – Sample Volunteer Exit Interview**

Appendix 4E.1 Sample Employment Principles

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

STATEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT PRINCIPLES

1. Hiring is done on the basis of a person's qualifications for a given job.
2. Qualifications can include life experiences as well as, or instead of, education and/or work experience.
3. All hiring processes will be appropriate and transparent while respecting confidentiality.
4. Remuneration is based on the position, not the incumbent.
5. Fair treatment and respect are given to all employees.
6. All employees should have a clear job description, a clear understanding of the expectations and accountability of the position and an orientation appropriate to the position.
7. All employees should have access to relevant information appropriate to the position.
8. There needs to be consistency across the organization in the application of employment practices.
9. There needs to be clarity about the nature, expectations, and designation of any job at the time of grading and posting.

Appendix 4E.2 Sample Employment Equity Policy

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006, which themselves drew on employment equity policies from Nellie's women's shelter, the University of Toronto, and the University of Dalhousie.

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY POLICY

Preamble. In accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code, [Drop-In Name] recognizes the right of every person having legal capacity to contract on equal terms without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, or disability.

[Drop-In Name] is committed to employment equity through affirmative action. [Drop-In Name] will take pro-active steps to acknowledge and eliminate both discrimination against individuals and systemic discrimination in its hiring systems, even if it is unintentional.

Policy. [Drop-In Name] recognizes the need to remedy the effects of past discrimination against specific groups in society and is committed to reversing the historic under-representation of these groups. In particular, [Drop-In Name] will strive to foster a workforce that reflects the diversity present in its participant population.

Procedures. To this end [Drop-In Name] will:

- Remove barriers that lead to discrimination in employment and advancement to people who have been discriminated against according to the characteristics defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code. This includes eliminating or modifying all practices and systems, unless they are authorized by law, that are not necessary job requirements.
- Establish positive policies and practices designed to remedy the effects of past discrimination against members of the designated groups; this includes increasing the recruitment, hiring, training, and promotion of designated groups when key aspects of diversity are not reflected in the existing staff composition or are not a bona fide requirement for a designated position, such as language.
- Maintain accessibility and accommodation as an organizational priority and reflect this in all aspects of the agency. Reasonable accommodation will be made by [Drop-In Name] for persons with disabilities, providing there is no "undue hardship." [Drop-In Name] will ensure, to the best of its abilities, that the job and workplace are accessible, by reviewing the following:
  - The possibility of redesigning job duties;
  - Adjusting work schedules;
  - Providing technical, financial or human support services whenever funding exists; and
  - Upgrading facilities whenever possible.

- Advertise job postings in diverse organizations and media in addition to mainstream organizations and media. The employment equity statement will appear on all job postings.
- Select new employees based on skills and experience, and, where these factors are relatively equal, select people from under-represented groups.
- Train all staff, Board and volunteers in the area of anti-oppression and issues of equity.
- Review all employment systems and evaluate the employment equity policies and practices of [Drop-In Name] annually. The review will include recruitment, selection, promotion, evaluation, training and termination of all employees.

Appendix 4E.3 Sample Job Descriptions

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.
Note: There are four job descriptions given here to provide a range of examples from types of jobs and types of qualifications required. The four jobs are: 1) General – Doorperson (Program Assistant), 2) Professional – Cook, 3) Case Manager – Housing Worker, and 4) Program Manager – Manager of Homeless and Housing Services.

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Job Description #1: General Drop-In Worker

POSITION: Doorperson (Program Assistant)
LOCATION: [Drop-In Name and address]
STATUS: Part-time (20 hours/week), one-year contract
REPORTS TO: Program Manager

General Functions:

- To welcome participants into the building and monitor behaviour in and around the drop-in site to ensure positive interactions with neighbours and visitors.
- To monitor property and maintain frequent contact with surrounding businesses and residents.
- To enforce our rules of appropriate behaviour on our property as part of a staff and volunteer team.

Service Responsibilities:

1. Doorperson will be posted **outside** the entrance to monitor participant activity and safeguard peaceful coexistence with our neighbours.
2. To assist staff within the drop-in as needed if a participant becomes aggressive.
3. To alert staff should activity on the street or sidewalk require intervention.
4. To maintain a list of outside resources (Out of the Cold programs, shelters, etc.) for members and visitors needing referrals.

Organizational Responsibilities:

1. To work as part of the drop-in staff team.
2. To participate in staff meetings and debriefings as required.
3. To assist drop-in reception as required when participants are being escorted from the building.
4. To represent [Drop-In Name] in a friendly and cheerful manner to our neighbours, and to respond to them in a polite and helpful manner.

Qualifications:

1. Knowledge and understanding of homeless and/or socially isolated adults.
2. Ability to tolerate extreme cold and heat since this position requires outside monitoring
3. Strong interpersonal skills
4. Friendly, flexible manner and ability to interact effectively with local merchants and residents.

This position requires a current TB test.

Salary: [*Salary*]
Hours: 7:30-11:30 a.m., Monday-Friday, with some flexibility required.
Apply to: Manager of [*Drop-In Name*], [*Address*]
No faxed or emailed resumes will be accepted.

We thank all applicants but only those selected for an interview will be contacted. [*Drop-In Name*] is dedicated to achieving a workforce that is reflective of the communities we serve.

Applications Closing Date: [*Month, Date, and Year*]
Job Starting Date: [*Month, Date, and Year*]

Job Description #2: Professional Drop-In Worker

POSITION: Cook
LOCATION: [*Drop-In Name and address*]
STATUS: Full time, permanent position in the bargaining unit
REPORTS TO: Program Manager

General Functions: This position is responsible for the ongoing development, functioning, and delivery of the food service component of a busy drop-in centre. The Cook works as a team member with other staff in the provision of services to the drop-in population and to be a role model and trainer for the participant-volunteers. As well as cooking a hot meal for large numbers of participants daily, the Cook organizes all purchasing, storage and preparation of donated and purchased food in the drop-in.

Service Responsibilities:

- To prepare daily meals of sufficient quantity, variety and nutritional value to accommodate the many who rely on the drop-in for meals.
- To coordinate the purchase and delivery as appropriate of food from a variety of food sources, including wholesalers and donated food sources such as Daily Bread and Second Harvest. To maintain good working relationships with food donors and suppliers, ensuring conditions of receiving donated food are met.
- To ensure that food storage, preparation and distribution comply with health and safety standards. To ensure kitchen facilities are kept clean and in good working order. To maintain a proper, up-to-date inventory system for both food and kitchen supplies.

- To train and work directly with kitchen participant-volunteers in all aspects of the food program. To work with the Drop-in Coordinator on recruitment, supervision and evaluation of volunteers.
- To be responsible for planning annual food-related special events and programs such as the Summer Picnic, Thanksgiving, Christmas Dinner and community kitchens as assigned.
- To respond to enquiries from participants regarding basic information on income, shelter, food, clothing, health and personal needs.
- To work with other team members in preventing and appropriately handling crises and maintaining a safe and peaceful environment.
- Other duties as assigned.

Organizational Responsibilities:

- To attend meetings as appropriate/assigned.
- To prepare for and actively participate in supervision meetings, including the establishment and evaluation of annual goals.
- To participate in drop-in activities as appropriate and/or assigned.
- To maintain accurate records required by the drop-in.
- To ensure a team approach to service provision.
- Other duties as assigned.

Qualifications:

- Strong demonstrated cooking and food handling skills.
- Strong demonstrated meal planning, food ordering, and food purchasing skills.
- Knowledge of needs, experiences and services for homeless people.
- Training in crisis management, CPR, and first aid.
- Strong communication skills in English.
- Sensitivity and the ability to work in a multicultural organization and a dynamic community-based setting with marginalized people.

This position requires a current TB test.

Salary: [*Salary*]
Hours: [*Hours per day and/or hours per week and/or days per week*]
Apply to: Manager of [*Drop-In Name*], [*Address*]
No faxed or emailed resumes will be accepted.

We thank all applicants but only those selected for an interview will be contacted. [*Drop-In Name*] is dedicated to achieving a workforce that is reflective of the communities we serve.

Applications Closing Date: [*Month, Date, and Year*]
Job Starting Date: [*Month, Date, and Year*]

Job Description #3: Case Manager

POSITION: Housing Worker
LOCATION: [*Drop-In Name and address*]
STATUS: Full time, permanent position in the bargaining unit
REPORTS TO: Program Manager

General Functions: Provides housing assessment and referral for newly homeless and chronically homeless members of the drop-in as part of an inter-disciplinary team. Maintains a current list of suitable and available housing and maintains strong relationships with landlords and newly placed tenants. Works as a member of the team to provide an enriched drop-in setting for homeless and socially isolated adults.

Service Responsibilities:

- To assist individuals to obtain and maintain housing through interviews, assessment, referral, placement and follow-up. To educate homeless members about social housing and to assist them in completing social housing applications.
- To ensure that ongoing support and services are provided through direct outreach and case management with participants. To provide support to tenant and landlord following placement.
- To act as a resource person for the agency in the area of housing. To work with other agency staff in a case management function.
- To outreach to landlords and maintain a current list of suitable and available housing for homeless adults. To prevent evictions through education on landlord and tenant rights, mediation, referral to legal services and referral to financial resources.
- To be pro-active in community development and initiatives aimed at creating housing for homeless people. To provide group education and support for homeless people on housing issues.
- To provide information, referrals and advocacy in the following areas: income, shelter, food, clothing, health and personal needs.
- To work with other team members in preventing and appropriately handling crisis.
- To work with other team members in monitoring activities in common areas of the drop-in.
- Other duties as assigned.

Organizational Responsibilities:

- To attend meetings as appropriate/assigned.
- To prepare for and actively participate in supervision meetings, including the establishment and evaluation of annual goals.
- To participate in drop-in activities as appropriate and/or assigned. To maintain accurate records required by the drop-in.
- To ensure a team approach to service provision.
- Other duties as assigned.

Qualifications:

- Knowledge of needs, experiences and services for the homeless population.
- Superior knowledge of social housing, tenant protection legislation, and eviction prevention strategies.
- Sensitivity and the ability to work in a multicultural/multiracial organization and a dynamic community-based setting with marginalized populations.

This position requires a current TB test.

Salary: [*Salary*]
Hours: [*Hours per day and/or hours per week and/or days per week*]
Apply to: Manager of [*Drop-In Name*], [*Address*]
No faxed or emailed resumes will be accepted.

We thank all applicants but only those selected for an interview will be contacted. [*Drop-In Name*] is dedicated to achieving a workforce that is reflective of the communities we serve.

Applications Closing Date: [*Month, Date, and Year*]
Job Starting Date: [*Month, Date, and Year*]

Job Description #4: Program Manager

POSITION: Manager of Homeless and Housing Services
LOCATION: [*Drop-In Name and address*]
STATUS: Full time, permanent position
REPORTS TO: Executive Director

General Functions: Responsibility for the effective operation of Homeless and Housing Services, including the daily drop-in for homeless and socially isolated people and case management supports for people with mental health, substance use and housing needs. To plan, administer, and evaluate the program and undertake responsibilities including personnel management, budgeting, grants preparation, statistics and record-keeping. To ensure that the program participates in lobbying and advocacy issues related to housing and homelessness, poverty, addictions and mental health issues.

Service Responsibilities:

- To recruit, hire, supervise, and evaluate all staff of the drop-in. To manage the daily operations of the program and foster a team approach to service provision.
- To oversee maintenance, up-keep and security of the drop-in facility
- To prepare program funding applications and reports. To assist in the preparation of an annual program budget and monitor program expenditures. To ensure that accurate and timely program records, statistics and reports are maintained.
- To identify needs of participants for the purposes of program evaluation and development. To be responsible for program evaluation and service planning for the program. To ensure community participation in the development of programs

and services. To develop community advisory committees or task forces as needed.

- To maintain a good knowledge of community services and emerging needs of people served by the program. To actively network with other related community agencies.
- To ensure coordination and effectiveness of services to drop-in participants. To develop, plan, monitor and evaluate special projects.
- To promote awareness within the drop-in catchment area of homelessness and related issues.
- To act as resource person for homelessness issues and to represent the drop-in on external networks, community consultations, and other homeless-related forums.

Organizational Responsibilities:

- To prepare for and actively participate in supervision meetings with the Director, including the establishment and evaluation of a personal annual work plan.
- To attend meetings and other drop-in activities as assigned.
- To ensure confidentiality is maintained on all participant and personnel matters.
- Other duties as required.

Qualifications:

- Knowledge of the areas of homelessness, supportive housing, addictions, and mental health.
- Experience in program development, implementation, and evaluation.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills.
- Sensitivity and the ability to work in a multicultural organization and a dynamic community-based setting with marginalized populations.
- First Nations language skills or Spanish, Portuguese, or Chinese-speaking an asset.

Salary: Competitive management salary and full benefit package
Hours: [*Hours per day and/or hours per week and/or days per week*]
Apply to: Executive Director of [*Drop-In Name*], [*Address*]
No faxed or emailed resumes will be accepted.

We thank all applicants but only those selected for an interview will be contacted. [*Drop-In Name*] is dedicated to achieving a workforce that is reflective of the communities we serve.

Applications Closing Date: [*Month, Date, and Year*]
Job Starting Date: [*Month, Date, and Year*]

Appendix 4E.4 Sample Interview Scenarios

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

Note: It is a good practice for the candidate to be given time to read over and think through their response to these sample situations. All candidates should be presented with the same scenarios.

SCENARIOS

Scenario #1

It is a busy Saturday, and you are running the Bingo Program. A second staff member who was assisting you with the game has had to leave the room to attend to a person in crisis. As you call out the Bingo numbers, participants begin to complain that you are too slow and several participants at one of the tables begin to argue about the number of chips they have left. More participants begin to become agitated and upset. The noise level in the room keeps rising and you appear to be losing ground.

What do you do?

Scenario #2

It is the end of the day at the drop-in and the TTC tickets have already been counted and recorded for the day. It is five minutes before closing and one of the regular participants arrives with her cart overflowing with clothes and papers. She explains to you that she "desperately" needs a TTC ticket because her plan to stay at a friend's has just fallen through and she now needs to go to her boyfriend's place to spend the night. She says that she is coming to you with this request because "You are the only nice staff who works at this drop-in," and because she knows that the other staff working that day "only give tickets to the Spanish-speaking participants anyway."

What are the issues and what do you do?

Appendix 4E.5 Sample Letter of Employment Template

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

LETTER OF EMPLOYMENT

To: *Name of prospective employee*
Address
Telephone number
Fax number
Email address

Date:

Position Title:
Status: permanent, contract (*specify start and finish dates*), full-time (*specify # of hours*, part-time (*specify # of hours*), relief

The [Drop-in Name] is pleased to confirm this offer of employment in the above noted position.

The body of the letter should include:

- Salary and benefits (*if applicable*),
- Official date of hire, and an explanation of probationary period (if any),
- Confidentiality clause,
- Termination clause for contracts, and
- Reference to the organization's Human Resources Policy Manual, Code of Conduct, Harassment and Discrimination policies, and any other key policies (e.g. Internet and Email policies, etc).

_____
Signature of the Program Manager

_____
Signature of the Executive Director

I accept the position and agree to abide by the terms of the organization.

_____ _____
Signature *Date*

Appendix 4E.6 Sample Volunteer Job Descriptions

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.
Note: There are three volunteer job descriptions given here to provide a range of examples from types of tasks and types of qualifications that may be required. The three positions are: 1) General Service – Kitchen Assistant, 2) Distributing Resources – Clothing Assistant, and 3) Professional Service –Legal Advice Lawyer.

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

Job Description #1: General Service

POSITION TITLE: Kitchen Assistant
PROGRAM NAME: Weekly Drop-In Dinner
TIME COMMITMENT: One weekly or biweekly 4-hour shift, for a minimum of six months
SUPERVISOR: Kitchen volunteers report to the Team Captain and the staff cook. The Homeless and Anti-Poverty Coordinator supervises volunteers.

Purpose: To assist staff with the preparation and serving of meals in the drop-in.

Qualifications:

- Must be at least 18 years of age.
- Have a clear understanding of agency policies, including boundaries and confidentiality (these will be covered during orientation).
- Have good interpersonal skills.
- Have an understanding of kitchen safety and safe food handling.
- Basic cooking skills.

Responsibilities:

- Arrive at the kitchen on the scheduled day and time.
- Call the Team Captain if unable to make a scheduled shift. Call the Coordinator if a Team Captain is not available.
- Prepare meals at the direction of the staff cook.
- Assist with serving the meals in the auditorium.
- Assist with the cleaning of the kitchen area and the storage of food and items relevant to meal preparation.

Orientation and Training

- Have attended the general volunteer orientation.
- Have completed an interview with the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Have attended a Homeless and Anti-Poverty Program volunteer training session.
- Have attended or be willing to attend a Safe Food Handling Certificate course within three months of becoming a kitchen volunteer.
- On-site training of the kitchen and storage area by the Team Captain.

Job Description #2: Distributing Resources

POSITION TITLE: Clothing Assistant
PROGRAM NAME: Clothing Bank
TIME COMMITMENT: One weekly 4-hour shift during clothing bank hours of operation, for a minimum of six months.
SUPERVISOR: The Homeless and Anti-Poverty Coordinator supervises volunteers.

Purpose: Responsible for equitable clothing distribution including sorting, organizing and distributing clothes.

Responsibilities:

- Arrive at the Clothing Bank at the scheduled time.
- Greet participants and assist them with clothing selection.
- Ensure equitable distribution of the clothing to participants.
- Sort clothing donations and organize them in the clothing cupboards.
- Assist with determining which clothing will be passed on to other agencies, bagging it, and labeling it as "pass on."
- Alert staff on duty of any aggressive behaviour or disputes in the clothing bank.

Qualifications:

- Must be at least 18 years of age.
- Have a clear understanding of agency policies, including boundaries and confidentiality (these will be covered during orientation).
- Have excellent interpersonal skills.
- Have basic customer service skills.

Orientation/Training:

- Have attended the general volunteer orientation.
- Have completed an interview with the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Have attended a Homeless and Anti-Poverty Program volunteer training session.
- On-site training of the clothing bank by the supervisor.

Job Description #3: Professional Service

POSITION TITLE: Legal Advice Lawyer
PROGRAM NAME: Legal Advice Clinic
TIME COMMITMENT: One monthly 2-hour shift, for a minimum of one year
SUPERVISOR: The Legal Clinic Facilitator supervises the Legal Advice volunteers. The Volunteer Coordinator is an indirect supervisor.

Purpose: To provide legal advice to [Drop-In Name] participants through the on-site legal clinic.

Qualifications:

- Must be a lawyer in good standing with the Law Society of Upper Canada.
- General knowledge of a wide range of areas of law, including (but not limited to): immigration and refugee claims, housing, discrimination and human rights, criminal and violent acts, labour, and social assistance.
- Sensitivity to issues faced by people who live in poverty and may be socially marginalized by other factors as well (e.g. people who have mental health issues, who are LGBT, who do not speak English as their first language, who have addictions to alcohol or drugs, and so forth).

Responsibilities:

- Provide legal advice to participants face-to-face.
- Record anonymous statistics regarding participant issues and provide them to the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Work with the Front Desk staff on duty to ensure the smooth operation of the legal clinic.
- Ensure participant access to the clinic in an equitable and fair manner.
- Ensure that adequate and effective referrals are provided to participants regarding their situation.
- Shall not be retained by [Drop-In Name] participants for legal representation until a period of six months after the participant has attended the legal clinic.

Appendix 4E.7 Sample Volunteer Application Form

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

Contacting You

Name: *Miss/Mrs./Ms./Mr.* _____
First Name *Last Name*

Date of Birth: _____ **I prefer to be contacted by:** phone [ ] e-mail [ ]
DD / MM / YY

Email: _____

Home Phone: _____ **Alternate phone:** _____

Address: _____
Number *Street* *Apt. #*

_____
City *Province* *Postal Code*

Availability

	Morning	**Afternoon**	**Evening**
Monday	_____	_____	_____
Tuesday	_____	_____	_____
Wednesday	_____	_____	_____
Thursday	_____	_____	_____
Friday	_____	_____	_____
Saturday	_____	_____	_____
Sunday	_____	_____	_____

Information about You *(Please attach your résumé)*

Do you have any access needs we should accommodate, such as using a wheelchair?

_____

_____

What languages do you speak? _____

_____

Previous experience as a volunteer: _____

_____

_____

How did you find out about this organization? _____

Why do you want to volunteer here? _____

_____

_____

What sorts of volunteering activities would you like to do here? *(e.g. meal preparation and serving, special events, front desk, committees, teaching, clothing bank, information tables, professional skills – e.g. legal clinic, health clinic, etc.)* _____

_____

_____

_____

Education, work, or life experiences or skills that are relevant to the volunteer work you would like to do with this organization: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Emergency Contact Information

Name: _____ **Relationship to you:**_____

Daytime phone: _____ **Cell/evening phone:** _____

References

References can be a coworker, friend, supervisor, or employer. It is best to list someone you have volunteered with. You may not list a family member.

#1 Name: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Relationship to you: _____

_____

#2 **Name:** _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Relationship to you: _____

_____

I hereby confirm that all information in this application is true and accurate. I authorize [Organization Name] to check the above references and conduct a police reference check if necessary.

Name: _____

Signature: _____
(Applicant signature, or Parent or Guardian signature if under 18 years of age)

Date: _____

Appendix 4E.8 Sample Volunteer Exit Interview

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

EXIT INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

We are always trying to improve the performance of our volunteer management system. As one of our volunteers, you can help us to identify areas in which we might do better. Please be as complete and honest as you can in answering the following questionnaire. All responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Volunteer position held: _____

1. *How long did you volunteer with us?*

2. *Why are you leaving?*

3. *What did you like best about volunteering with us?*

4. *What suggestions would you make for changes or improvements in our volunteer effort?*

5. *From 1 to 10 (10 being the best) how would you rate your volunteer experience?*

6. *Additional Comments*

SUBSECTION 4F
Performance Evaluations

It is a good practice to conduct regular staff evaluations as a way to ensure effective performance by staff. The procedure needs to be handled carefully if it is to be an accurate measure of an employee's performance and if it is to lead to positive improvements in the quality of service within the drop-in as a whole.

Assessment Criteria and Rating Scales[11]

Staff should be aware well in advance of any review what the criteria of the evaluation will be, and what the expectations are for their performance. The reviewers should also be briefed on how to evaluate staff appropriately. An evaluation is not an occasion to remember every mistake or every kind gesture a person has made, but rather to assess their overall performance during the period under review.

The main challenge in conducting a performance evaluation is producing an accurate and reliable assessment. You should have a form with clearly defined criteria and rating scales so that all staff will be evaluated consistently by different raters.

The Human Resources Council for the Voluntary / Non-Profit Sector (HRVS) gives the following tips for increasing the reliability of your evaluation:

- Avoid language that may be inflammatory;
- Avoid words that are ambiguous in meaning or open to interpretation, if possible;
- For words that are open to interpretation, provide definitions and examples to clarify what is meant; and
- Use simple rating scales.

Criteria should be as objective as possible. Rather than asking open-ended questions – such as, "Does the person operate well with the team?" – ask specific questions – such as "Does the person accept constructive criticism and adjust behaviour to meet the team's goals?" Questions should be accompanied by a rating scale like the one below:

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Almost always	Frequently	Sometimes	Seldom	Almost never

[11] This section on assessment criteria and rating scales has been adapted from Human Resources Council for the Voluntary / Non-profit Sector (HRVS), "Designing a Well-Crafted Performance Management Form," *The HR Management Toolkit*, n.d. Available at: www.hrcouncil.ca/people/pg002a_e.cfm. Last updated November 17, 2004.

HRVS identifies two types of criteria against which employee performance may be evaluated: **objectives** and **competencies**. The sample question regarding teamwork above is an example of a competency.

Competencies measure the skills needed to provide a high quality of service. Objectives are the key responsibilities identified in each job description. An example of an objective is "The person provides quarterly written updates on the work of volunteers to the Program Manager." Objectives are assessed according to the rating scale below:

1	**2**	**3**
Exceeded Objective	Met Objective	Did Not Meet Objective

A sample performance evaluation form developed by HRVS for supervisors to fill out is provided as **Appendix 4F.1**.

Evaluation and Review Process

The first question to answer in a review process is who will be responsible for assessing staff performance. Traditionally, this task was taken on by the employee's direct supervisor. However, this process provides only one point of view, and the employee may benefit from a broader scope of evaluation.

Some organizations have started to adopt a "**360 degree**" review process that invites a broad range of stakeholders to assess the person under review. In a drop-in, stakeholders might include supervisors, employers, co-workers, participants, volunteers, and community peers. Self-assessments are also part of this process. In this way, as full and accurate a picture as possible of the employee's strengths and areas for improvement can emerge.

The performance evaluation form attached as **Appendix 4F.1** was designed for the traditional type of supervisor-employee assessment; however, it may easily be adapted to suit the needs of a 360 degree review. The supervisor should still assess the key work objectives – such as whether the employee submits reports on schedule – but the competencies – such as quality of service – could be assessed by a variety of observers.

Involving participants. While it is important to give participants opportunities to evaluate the quality of service they are receiving from staff, this process needs to be handled carefully to ensure that it remains respectful and does not become a personalized attack on individual staff members.

If participants have concerns about a particular staff member, the drop-in should have a **complaint policy and procedure** in place for dealing with these (see Subsection 2T). The staff evaluation process is intended to assess performance according to a variety of factors to get a complete picture of the quality of service being offered, not to address complaints regarding specific incidents.

With these considerations in mind, the best way to engage participants in a staff review may be to make it a **group process**. Once a year, convene a meeting of participants who are interested in evaluating staff performance. **De-personalize** the process by asking participants at the start not to name any names in their criticisms.

Develop a set of objective criteria for assessing service within the drop-in, and rather than focusing attention on particular staff members, **focus feedback on the drop-in as a whole**. For example, ask participants how they would rate the quality of service they receive at the drop-in; what they expect from the drop-in and what they receive; what difficulties they may encounter in accessing services they need; what gaps in service may exist; what they appreciate most about the drop-in; what strengths and what weaknesses the staff (as a whole) have; and so forth.

This process will provide drop-in staff with excellent feedback on what they need to improve and what further training they may require, without targeting specific individuals.

Scheduling. The challenge with the 360 degree evaluation is that is a **time- and resource- intensive** process. It may help to assess people on a **schedule** determined by a minimum number of hours, rather than on an annual basis. For example, a part-time worker may be evaluated after they have worked for 2,000 hours (the equivalent of 8-hours a day for 50 weeks out of the 52-week year). You may want to place an upper limit on this schedule and say, for example, that every employee will be assessed after 2,000 hours of work or every three years, whichever comes first.

Tips for Making the Review a Positive Experience

The staff evaluation process needs to be carefully handled so that it remains an avenue for obtaining professional and constructive feedback, rather than an avenue for subjective and personal attacks that may demoralize staff and create divisions within the drop-in.

Tips for ensuring that the review is a positive experience and yields constructive feedback:

- **Provide clear guidance.** All evaluators need to receive some guidance in how to assess the employee under review. Instructions should be given both in a discussion prior to the evaluation, and written on the assessment form itself (**Appendix 4F.1** provides space where such instructions may be provided).

- **Objective criteria.** Use objective criteria that refer to specific behaviours; general questions can be ambiguous and leave too much room for assessments of personality rather than performance. This is especially important when involving participants in the assessment process, since they may evaluate staff based on who is the most popular

or the most lenient if they do not have clear criteria to work from.

- **Build in opportunities for positive feedback.** Evaluation processes can all too easily become focused exclusively on criticism and areas that need to be improved. It is important to remember that positive reinforcement and praise are an essential part of the assessment process. In addition to providing objective rating scales and criteria, you may want to include a subjective question that asks simply: "What are the employee's main strengths?" or "What is the employee doing well?"

  A staff member who feels strong and confident that their efforts are appreciated is more likely to be motivated to work on their weak points, while a staff member who feels demoralized and attacked by their colleagues may feel that there is no point in trying improve their service since their efforts go unrecognized.

- **Hold a staff appreciation dinner.** Participants emphasized the importance of establishing mechanisms for maintaining staff morale, and suggested the performance evaluation process as one possible avenue. While the review itself assesses all aspects of performance, the appreciation dinner would focus exclusively on the positive elements. Participants suggested that the dinner could also involve an awards component, where they nominate individual staff to receive recognition for their strengths and exceptional efforts over the past year. The nomination process could be incorporated into the participant group evaluation process described above, and the staff appreciation dinner could take place within a few weeks after the group evaluation.

ATTACHMENT:

- **Appendix 4F.1 – Sample Performance Evaluation Form**

Appendix 4F.1 Sample Performance Evaluation Form

Source: Adapted from Human Resources Council for the Voluntary/Non-profit Sector (HRVS), "Performance Management Form," January 2005. Available for download as a Word document at: www.hrcouncil.ca/people/docs/sample_pm_form_e.doc, or as a PDF file at: www.hrcouncil.ca/people/docs/sample_pm_form_e.pdf.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FORM

Employee's Name:	
Job Title:	
Review Period:	
Supervisor's Name:	
Date of Review:	
"How To" Section – *provide instructions on how to complete the forms*	

Key Work Objectives	Performance Measures (or Indicators)
To be completed at the beginning of the performance management cycle.	
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
5)	

Key Work Objectives Assessment *To be completed at the end of the performance management cycle.*		
Rating Scale: 1. Exceeded Objective, 2. Met Objective, 3. Did Not Meet Objective		
Objective	**Results Achieved**	**Assessment 1,2,3 (see scale above)**
1) *Same objective as listed above.*	*What was achieved: overall results plus quantity, quality, cost, time frame, and so forth.*	*How well did the results compare to the measures established at the beginning of the cycle?*
2)		
3)		
4)		
5)		

Training Objectives	**Relationship to Responsibilities**	**Activities**	**Results**
To be completed at the beginning of the performance management cycle.			*To be completed at the end of the performance management cycle.*
Development Objectives	**Relationship to Career Plan**	**Activities**	**Results**
To be completed at the beginning of the performance management cycle.			*To be completed at the end of the performance management cycle.*

Summary		
The employee's overall performance is described.		
Overall Rating		
_____ Exceeded Expectations	_____ Met Expectations	_____ Did not meet Expectations

By signing this performance management form, both parties acknowledge that they have read and discussed the contents of the form.

Employee's Signature: _____

Supervisor's Signature: _____

Date: _____

SUBSECTION 4G
Overview of Human Resources Policies

Every organization must have a set of policies that clearly outline its contractual agreement with its workforce, in terms of how rates of pay, shifts, overtime, leaves, vacations, and so forth are calculated. These specific policies will vary according to a number of factors; for example, whether or not the workers in a drop-in are covered by a Collective Agreement that articulates particular human resources policies.

Each drop-in needs to develop its own policies and practices in the context of its own organizational culture, any Collective Agreement, and the relevant laws and regulations (see **Appendix 4G.1** for a list of relevant legislation). These policies and practices should be regularly reviewed and updated.

This Subsection gives a list of topic headings for which your organization should have policies, and suggests criteria that should be used when developing or reviewing these areas:

Hours of Work

- Need to specify the normal hours of work for each position.
- Must be consistent with the ESA (*Employment Standards Act*).
- Need to define lunch hours, breaks, etc.
- Need to define start time and end time.

Overtime Compensation

- Must be consistent with ESA.
- Required after 44 hours in a week.
- May be compensated through extra money (e.g. time-and-a half) or through time off with pay.

Leaves of Absence

- Need to define how many and what purposes are legitimate; for example:
  - **Sickness** – Is a doctor's note required? Immediately, or only if the illness lasts for some time?
  - **Sickness of family member**.
  - **Bereavement leave** – How long? For whom?
  - **Other** – Any other defined days off?
- Which types of leave will be granted with pay? Which will be granted without pay?
- What is the approval process?

Vacation

- ESA requires vacation pay.
- Need to specify how much after how long.

- Need to think about how people get approval for when to go.

Holidays

- ESA sets out public holidays (usually referred to as statutory holidays).
- Your drop-in may choose to have additional holidays.
- ESA defines compensation requirements.

Performance Evaluation

- Should be one for the benefit of employer and employee.
- Tied to probation, merit increases.
- See detailed discussion above in Subsection 4F.

Hiring

- See detailed discussion above in Subsection 4E.

Termination

- The amount of notice time required for either the employer or the employee to end the relationship.
- Conducting an exit interview is a good practice.

Employee Information and Privacy

- How will information be stored securely? (Both electronically and as hard copies.) Is there a time limit on storage or are records kept indefinitely?
- How will information be transmitted (e.g. by fax, email, etc.) securely?
- What mechanisms will be put in place to control and document employee access to their records on file?
- See **Appendix 4G.2** for sample policy.
- All staff and volunteers should sign a confidentiality agreement that indicates their knowledge of, and commitment to abide by, the confidentiality policies (see **Appendix 4G.3**).

It may be helpful for you to consult other resources as you develop new human resources policies or revise old ones. The HR Council for the Voluntary/Non-profit Sector (HRVS) provides a number of helpful online resources from its website at: www.hrvs-rhsbc.ca/index_e.cfm. It has also published a helpful *Guide to Human Resource Policies and Procedures* that is targeted to smaller organizations. The Guide contains practical advice and sample policies, and is available at: www.hrvs-rhsbc.ca/policies/pg002_e.cfm. Charity Village's online library is also an excellent resource and is available at: www.charityvillage.com/cv/charityvillage/ires.asp.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Appendix 4G.1 – List of Relevant Legislation**
- **Appendix 4G.2 – Sample Personal Information Confidentiality Policy**
- **Appendix 4G.3 – Sample Confidentiality Agreement**

Appendix 4G.1 List of Relevant Legislation

LIST OF RELEVANT LEGISLATION

The following is a list of provincial and federal legislation relevant to staffing practices and human resources policies. Each is available online and is usually kept current (nevertheless, it is always a good idea to check the "notice of currency" or the "last updated" date on each).

1. ***Employment Standards Act***

www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/00e41_e.htm

CanadaOne, a free online magazine for small businesses in Canada, has developed a useful *Guide for Ontario Employers* that was written to help employers interpret and apply the *Employment Standards Act*. This is available at:
www.canadaone.com/ezine/nov99/new_ontario_employers_guide.html

2. ***Occupational Health and Safety Act***

www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/90o01_e.htm

3. ***Canada Labour Code***

http://lois.justice.gc.ca/en/L-2/fulltoc.html

4. ***Human Rights Code***

www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/90h19_e.htm

5. ***Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms***

http://lois.justice.gc.ca/en/charter/index.html

6. **Updates to Labour Laws**

Human Resources and Development Canada publishes an annual report that summarizes significant changes, amendments, and updates to labour laws regarding minimum employment standards, industrial relations (i.e. collective bargaining), and occupational health and safety. This is available at:
www.hrsdc.gc.ca/asp/gateway.asp?hr=en/lp/spila/clli/dllc/01Developments_in_Labour_Legislation_in_Canada.shtml&hs=oxs

Appendix 4G.2 Personal Information Confidentiality Policy

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.
Note: You may find it easier to combine your participant confidentiality policy (see Appendix 2O.2) and your employee confidentiality policy into one streamlined document.

PERSONAL INFORMATION CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Policy. [Drop-In Name] will respect and safeguard the confidentiality all personal information shared by staff members or volunteers during the course of their work for this organization.

Procedures. Staff and/or volunteer personal information (such as telephone numbers and addresses) will not be given out. Staff and/or volunteers will not give out their own telephone numbers or addresses to clients.

Personal Access. Contents of a staff person's file are accessible to his/her Manager and Human Resources staff. A staff person requesting to see his/her file will be allowed to do so in the accompaniment of a management staff at the earliest mutually agreeable time. A record of all documents that are copied will be initialed by the staff member and the attending manager.

Use of Technology. If confidential information must be transmitted by fax or modern, staff and/or volunteers will ensure that the fax is either going to a confidential fax machine or is being received immediately by the recipient. Verification after faxing is recommended.

Staff and/or volunteers will use passwords to protect confidential computer files.

Storage and Destruction of Files. All personnel files are property of [Drop-In Name] and will be stored in a locked cabinet. Employees and/or volunteers are responsible for the proper security and safety of all House files, documents, equipment, and tools.

As a general rule, confidential papers will not be held for more than seven years. Confidential papers (e.g. résumés, case notes, personnel information, and confidential budgets) will be shredded before disposal. Staff and/or volunteers will ensure that confidential papers are not recycled without being shredded.

Police. Formal requests from police regarding staff must be directed to the Executive Director.

Appendix 2G.3 Sample Confidentiality Agreement

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I understand that in the course of conducting my responsibilities as a staff person or volunteer of [Organization Name], I may have access to personal information about program participants, volunteers, and employees. I promise to hold in confidence all matters that come to my attention as a volunteer or staff member of [Organization Name], including information from and about program participants, other volunteers, staff, and [Organization Name]. I agree to abide by [Organization Name]'s policy regarding confidentiality. In particular, I will:

- Only discuss this information with others as required by my professional duties, and with the knowledge of the person in question;
- Not release or otherwise provide access to such information to another agency or body without prior authorization from the individual or from the Executive Director, as specified; and
- Ensure that confidential participant or personnel information is kept in a secured location at all times.

I will maintain this agreement even after my association with [Organization Name] has ended.

Date:_____

Name of Volunteer / Staff:_____

Signature of Volunteer / Staff:_____

Name of Witness:_____

Signature of Witness:_____

SECTION 5
Health and Safety

It is critical to create a workplace that is healthy and safe for all participants, staff, and volunteers. "Health" and "safety" are two short words that cover a lot of territory, from personal physical well-being to healthy interpersonal dynamics; from safe food-handling to sanitary cleaning practices; from fire emergency plans to safe garbage disposal; from nutritious cooking to building security.

This Section covers the good practices involved with:[1]

- **5A HEALTH AND SAFETY OVERVIEW**
  - Attachments
    - Appendix 5A.1 – Health and Safety Checklist
    - Appendix 5A.2 – List of Relevant Legislation and Websites

- **5B DROP-IN HEALTH AND SAFETY**
  - Infection Control
  - Managing Staff Health
  - Hand-Washing
  - Routine Practices
  - Cleaning up a Mess
  - Safe Handling of Sharps
  - Outbreak Contingency Plan
  - Immunization
  - TB Testing
  - Emergencies
  - Maintaining Safe Facilities
  - Attachments
    - Appendix 5B.1 – List of Reportable Communicable Diseases in Ontario
    - Appendix 5B.2 – Sample Incident Report Form
    - Appendix 5B.3 – First Aid Kit Contents
    - Appendix 5B.4 – Sample Emergency Search and Evacuation Procedures
    - Appendix 5B.5 – Sample Fire Safety Policy
    - Appendix 5B.6 – Calling 911: Tips for Front Desk Staff

- **5C STAFF HEALTH AND SAFETY**
  - Safety Training
  - Safe Money Handling
  - Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)
  - Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC)
  - Refusal to Work

[1] The headings and subheadings in Section 5 are based on and adapted from the Metro Association of Family Resource Programs (MAFRP), *Effective Practices Project: Family Support Health and Safety Toolkit*, prepared by Leslie Wright, Novita Interpares Limited, 2005.

- **5D PARTICIPANT SUBSTANCE USE**
  - Defining Harm Reduction and Abstinence Approaches
  - Harm Reduction Strategies
  - Harm Reduction as Outreach and Entry Point
  - Attachment
    - Appendix 5D.1 – Sample Suspected Drug Overdose Policy

- **5E PARTICIPANT SEXUAL HEALTH**
  - Indirect Interventions
  - Direct Interventions
  - Combining Direct and Indirect Strategies

- **5F CRISIS PREVENTION**
  - Managing the Space
  - Physical Environment
  - Spatial Capacity
  - Staff Training and Preparation
  - Inter-Agency Coordination
  - Informal Counseling and Conflict Resolution Workshops

- **5G CRISIS INTERVENTION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION**
  - Step-By-Step Intervention Process
  - Communication
  - De-Escalation Techniques
  - Documentation
  - Attachment
    - Appendix 5G.1 – Sample Incident Report Form

- **5H CLEANING AND SANITATION**
  - Sanitizing Solution
  - Surfaces and Appliances
  - Dishes and Utensils
  - Kitchen Linen
  - Bathrooms
  - Attachment
    - Appendix 5H.1 – Bleach and Water Solutions

- **5I SAFE STORAGE**
  - Dishes and Utensils
  - Cleaning Materials
  - Garbage
  - Pest Control

- **5J FOOD AND NUTRITION**
  - Obtaining Food
  - Fruits and Vegetables
  - Special Diet Needs
  - Allergies
  - Food Storage
  - Food Preparation
  - Temperature Control
  - Hand-Washing
  - Cross-Contamination
  - Attachment
    - Appendix 5J.1 – Temperatures for Cooking and Reheating Hazardous Food

SUBSECTION 5A
Health and Safety Overview

It is vital to create a workplace that is healthy and safe for all participants, staff, and volunteers. This involves creating health and safety policies and guidelines that comply with current legislation. It is a good practice to update these policies as legislation is amended and review these policies on a regular basis with feedback from stakeholders within the drop-in.

When developing or reviewing your health and safety guidelines, ask yourself:[2]

- Do you have policies and procedures that promote the health, safety, and well-being of those involved with the drop-in?
- Are the health and safety policies and guidelines current with municipal, provincial, and federal legislation?
- Do all new employees receive a copy of a health and safety manual or set of guidelines? If not, are there other mechanisms in place to ensure that new employees are familiar with the drop-in's health and safety policies? Are they sufficient? Do all new employees have a person they can speak with if they have any questions or concerns about the policies, and their responsibilities for ensuring compliance with the policies and procedures?
- Are the health and safety guidelines kept in an accessible location for easy reference?

Appendix 5A.1 provides a checklist to facilitate the review and development of policies and guidelines in your drop-in. This checklist outlines some of the main health and safety topics in workplace legislation and relevant to drop-ins.

Health and safety legislation regulates the standards of workplace safety with the aim to prevent workplace accidents and injuries, and outlines the consequences of breaching those standards. It details responsibilities of employers, supervisors, and employees. Generally, this legislation requires that employers do everything they can reasonably do to protect the health and safety of their employees; for example, providing appropriate training for handling potentially dangerous equipment or material, informing employees

[2] Metro Association of Family Resource Programs (MAFRP), *Effective Practices Project: Family Support Health and Safety Toolkit*, prepared by Leslie Wright, Novita Interpares Limited, 2005.

of potential dangers in the workplace, and setting up safe work practices. Employees have the right to refuse work that is unsafe.

Drop-ins need to consult health and safety legislation and regulations on a variety of issues, including (but not limited to):[3]

- Employee refusal to work because of unsafe conditions,
- Violence in the workplace,
- Dangerous equipment or material,
- Lifting heavy objects,
- Emergency procedures,
- Food preparation and storage,
- Infection control, and
- First Aid skills requirements.

You may contact your provincial office dealing with Occupational Health and Safety if you have any questions or concerns about your workplace. See **Appendix 5A.2** for a list of relevant legislation and helpful websites.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Appendix 5A.1 – Health and Safety Checklist**
- **Appendix 5A.2 – List of Relevant Legislation and Websites**

[3] *Ibid.*

Appendix 5A.1 Health and Safety Checklist

Source: Adapted from the Health and Safety Checklist in the Metro Association of Family Resource Programs (MAFRP), *Effective Practices Project: Family Support Health and Safety Toolkit*, prepared by Leslie Wright, Novita Interpares Limited, 2005.
Note: The following checklist is a point-form list of the good practices discussed more fully throughout Section 5. For clarification or more information, please refer to the relevant Subsections indicated in the list.

CHECKLIST

Health and Safety Overview (5A)		
CRITERIA	**In Place**	**To Be Developed**
Policies and Procedures • Policies and procedures are in place that promote the health, safety, and well-being of those involved with the drop-in • Policies and procedures are in line with current legislation and are periodically reviewed • All staff are familiar with the drop-in's health and safety policies and procedures • Policies and procedures are stored in an accessible location for easy reference including incident/accident report forms. • The drop-in has a Joint Health and Safety Committee or Representative as required by law		
Personal Safety (5B, 5C, 5D, & 5E)		
CRITERIA	**In Place**	**To Be Developed**
Staff and Volunteers • Safety training (e.g. First Aid and CPR, Food Handling Certification, WHMIS Handling and Storage of Chemicals, Conflict Resolution)		
Participants • Substance use interventions (e.g. safe space, monitoring, overdose protocol, crack kits, non-judgmental conversations, referrals) • Sexual health interventions (e.g. condoms and lube, brochures, workshops, testing, education, non-judgmental conversations, referrals)		

Drop-In *Infection Control* • Infection control practices consistent with local public health requirements • Proper hand-washing practices by staff • Hand-washing posters are on display • Baseline and periodic TB testing for all staff • Staff immunizations are current • Staff are trained in how to clean up messes involving body fluids and have the tools to do so (e.g. bleach, disposable gloves) • Container(s) for safe sharps disposal • Outbreak contingency plan		
Emergencies • First Aid kits are accessible and well stocked • A fire safety plan has been developed and approved by the Fire Marshall and is posted in a visible place • Search and evacuation protocol • Emergency numbers are posted by every phone • Current emergency contact information for every staff and volunteer is on file		
Maintaining Safe Facilities • Joint Health and Safety Committee or Representative conducts regular inspections of workplace, following guidelines set out by the City • All equipment and furniture is maintained and broken items repaired promptly • The maximum capacity of the drop-in space is known and is not exceeded • There is no smoking within the building and "No Smoking" signs are posted • Fire extinguishers are available and checked regularly • Chemicals and cleaning supplies are labeled clearly and stored out of reach of children		
Crisis Prevention and Conflict Resolution (5F & 5G)		
CRITERIA	**In Place**	**To Be Developed**
Crisis Prevention • Rules for behaviour within the drop-in exist and are clearly posted		

• Drop-in has an anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policy • Staff know how to manage and monitor the space effectively (e.g. look for warning signs, do not exceed maximum capacity, respond to harmful comments and behaviours in timely and appropriate ways) • Staff have been trained in crisis prevention, de-escalation techniques, and conflict resolution • Staff are aware of their own triggers		
Crisis Intervention • Staff have ways to communicate with each other while in different rooms of the drop-in • Staff have procedures in place for handling a crisis situation • Staff debrief after a crisis • All crisis situations are documented in standardized incident reports		
Cleaning and Sanitation (5H)		
CRITERIA	**In Place**	**To Be Developed**
General • Staff are aware of and use proper cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting procedures • Staff have been trained in routine practices for cleaning up body fluids • Bleach and water solution is made fresh for disinfecting purposes		
Dishes • The drop-in has a dishwasher • If the drop-in washes dishes manually, dishes are soaked in a sanitizing solution for at least 45 seconds		
Surfaces • Counters, tables, and cutting boards are sanitized before and after each use • High-traffic surfaces (e.g. door knobs, light switches) are sanitized at the end of each drop-in day		
Appliances • Appliances that come into direct contact with food (e.g. dishwasher strainer, sinks, blenders) are sanitized after each use		

• Microwaves are cleaned immediately when there is a spill and thoroughly at least once a week • Other appliances are cleaned immediately when there is a spill and thoroughly at least once a month (e.g. ovens, fridges) • Freezers are cleaned immediately when there is a spill and thoroughly at least twice per year • Freezer food is not stored for over 1 month		
Other • Kitchen linen is changed at least once a day and as required throughout the day • Toilets and flushing handles are cleaned and sanitized at least once a day • Bathroom sinks and countertops are cleaned and sanitized at least once per day • Bathroom floors are swept or vacuumed daily and mopped with cleaner when obviously dirty		
Safe Storage (5I)		
CRITERIA	**In Place**	**To Be Developed**
Dishes and utensils • Knives, spoons, and forks are stored in clean containers with the handles all pointing in one direction • Glasses and cups are stored upside-down on a clean, dry surface • All dishes are stored on clean shelves or in clean cabinets		
Cleaning materials • Soap, detergents, sanitizer, and any other cleaning products are clearly labeled and kept in a locked cupboard • Staff are familiar with the requirements of the Workplace Hazardous Material Information System (WHMIS) • Dry floor mops are shaken outside after every use and laundered when noticeably dirty • Sponge mops are hung with the head up to dry and the head is washed in a sanitizing solution and wrung out once a week • Rag mops are hung head up to dry and laundered once a week		
Storing and disposing of garbage		

• Separate garbage containers are available in the washrooms, kitchen, eating, and program areas • Garbage containers are waterproof, lined with plastic bags, kept tightly covered, and distanced from food • Garbage is disposed of daily • Garbage containers are sanitized once a week and whenever containers are visibly soiled • Staff follow proper recycling methods • Staff never touch garbage; they lift it out of the container by the bag, or, if the bag breaks or overflows, by using tongs or some other tool		
Pest control • The areas behind stationary equipment and shelves are kept clean • Doors and windows have screens, and all holes and crevices are caulked or stuffed with steel wool • Received goods are checked for infestations • Staff report any sightings of pests or infestations • Any dead pests are disposed of immediately		
Food and Nutrition (5J)		
CRITERIA	**In Place**	**To Be Developed**
Planning Menus • Meals are planned, nutritious and balanced • Participants' special dietary needs are taken into consideration (e.g. health concerns, allergies, religious restrictions) • Donations of food are accepted from reliable sources		
Handling Food • Staff and regular volunteers have taken the Food Handler Certification Program • Food is prepared, served, and stored in a safe and hygienic manner • Hand soap and paper towels are available • There is a separate hand-washing sink in the kitchen • There are mechanisms in place to avoid cross-contamination		
Food Storage • Food items are stored at least fifteen centimeters (6 inches) above the floor		

• Items are checked regularly for expiry dates and thrown away as needed • Food is not stored in the same areas as possible sources of contamination • Refrigerated food is kept below 4°C and frozen food is kept below -18°C • Meat and non-meat items are stored separately • Ready-to-eat foods are stored in a separate fridge or on a shelf above raw foods • All food and drinks are kept covered inside the fridge		
Temperature Control • Hazardous food is not permitted to remain in the danger zone (4°C to 60°C) for more than two hours • Food is cooked thoroughly and until its internal temperature has reached the appropriate level according to a probe thermometer • There are reliable thermometers in the fridges and freezers • Leftover food is reheated to at least 74°C • Participants who take home leftover food are aware of the temperatures it must be stored at and the timeframe within which it must be eaten		

Appendix 5A.2 List of Relevant Legislation and Websites

LIST OF RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND WEBSITES

1. ***Occupational Health and Safety Act***

www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/90o01_e.htm

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety has an excellent, comprehensive web site (www.ccohs.ca). The "OSH Answers" section (www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/) addresses common questions, including information about legislation, and is a good source of information about occupational health and safety.

2. ***Workplace Safety and Insurance Act***

www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/97w16_e.htm

3. **Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)**

www.wsib.on.ca

A copy of the Employer's Report of Injury / Disease (Form 7) is available at: www.wsib.on.ca/wsib/wsibsite.nsf/LookupFiles/DownloadableFileReportofInjuryForm7/$File/Form7.pdf

A copy of the Worker's Report of Injury / Disease (Form 6) is available at: http://www.wsib.on.ca/wsib/wsibsite.nsf/LookupFiles/DownloadableFileForm6forWorker/$File/0006A.pdf

4. ***Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) Regulation***

www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Regs/English/900860_e.htm

WHMIS is a Canada-wide system that was put in place through a range of complementary federal, provincial and territorial legislation. In Ontario, it was incorporated into the Ontario Health and Safety Act as Regulation 860. The OSH Answers page (www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers) responds to frequently asked questions about the legislation, and the Ontario Ministry of Labour provides a comprehensive guide to each of its component sections (www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/whmis).

5. **Toronto Public Health**

www.toronto.ca/health/index.htm

The home page of Toronto Public Health, given above, is an excellent source for up-to-date information on health issues affecting Toronto. For example, it tells you when there is an extreme heat alert or a cold weather advisory in effect for the day you are checking it on. For more general information, the A-Z index is an excellent resource (www.toronto.ca/health/az_index.htm).

6. Health Canada

www.hc-sc.gc.ca

The Health Canada website provides connections to a variety of federal laws, regulations, programs, and general information sources. For example, it gives information on Diseases and Conditions (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dc-ma/index_e.html), Environmental and Workplace Health (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/index_e.html), First Nations and Inuit Health (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fnih-spni/index_e.html), Food and Nutrition (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/index_e.html), and the Health Care System (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hcs-sss/index_e.html), among others.

7. Toronto Fire Services

www.toronto.ca/fire/prevention/workplace.htm

The Toronto Fire Services website has links to a variety of useful resources, including by-laws and safety standards (www.toronto.ca/fire/bylaws.htm) and a downloadable pamphlet on "Fire Safety in the Workplace" (www.toronto.ca/fire/prevention/pdf/fire_work_place.pdf).

SUBSECTION 5B
Drop-In Health and Safety

Ensuring the safety and well-being of drop-in participants, staff and volunteers is one of the primary concerns in running a drop-in. In general, unsafe situations should be:

- Prevented where possible,
- Anticipated and prepared for,
- Addressed calmly and quickly,
- Reported and documented immediately, and
- Followed up with appropriately.

Infection Control

Many drop-in participants lead lives that put them at risk for a variety of infectious diseases, and many already have compromised immune systems. Drop-ins need to be aware of specific diseases and their means of transmission, and take careful precautions to avoid this.

Infection control is the use of proper procedures to reduce the likelihood of infection or the spread of infectious disease. These procedures include:[4]

- Hand-washing,
- Using routine practices when handling body substances,
- Using gloves and other methods of barrier control,
- Safe handling of sharps (sharp objects),
- Proper handling of waste, and
- Cleaning physical facilities.

This Subsection draws on Toronto Public Health's recently developed manual called ***Breaking the Chain: Infection Prevention and Control for Homeless and Housing Service Providers.*** This manual will be distributed to all service providers working with socially marginalized people, and TPH will be conducting training sessions in Fall 2006. It is also available online at the City of Toronto's website, and contains posters that service providers are encouraged to download, print, and post (www.toronto.ca/health/cdc/infectioncontrolmanual.htm).

[4] Metro Association of Family Resource Programs (MAFRP), *Effective Practices Project: Family Support Health and Safety Toolkit*, prepared by Leslie Wright, Novita Interpares Limited, 2005 and Toronto Public Health (TPH), *Breaking the Chain: Infection Prevention and Control for Homeless and Housing Service Providers*, March 2006. Available at: www.toronto.ca/health/cdc/infectioncontrolmanual.htm.

Managing Staff Health

Staff and volunteers have an important role to play in managing their own health. It is recommended that everyone eat well, exercise moderately, get sufficient rest, and practice proper hygiene in order to stay healthy and avoid getting sick. When staff are sick and there is the possibility of transmitting their illness to others, they should not come into work. Even a relatively minor illness, like a cold or a flu bug, can have serious consequences for participants living with HIV/AIDS, with chronic pulmonary infections, or with otherwise compromised immune systems. Compensating employees while they are off sick is good practice. Staff and volunteers should be encouraged to get flu shots and check with their physician to ensure that they receive immunizations when appropriate.

Hand-Washing

Hand-washing is the single most important thing drop-in staff (and especially food workers) can do to control the spread of pathogenic bacteria. Hand-washing posters should be posted in the drop-in; posters are available for downloading and printing from the Toronto Public Health web site.[5]

The following hand-washing procedure should be followed by all staff and volunteers:[6]

1. Use liquid soap and warm running water.
2. Wet your hands and add soap.
3. Rub your hands vigorously for fifteen seconds.
4. Wash all surfaces, including the backs of hands and between fingers.
5. Rinse your hands well under running water.
6. Dry your hands thoroughly with a single-use towel.
7. Turn off the taps with a single-use towel and dispose of it in waste container.

Hand-washing is always done:[7]

- Before and after all meals, snacks, and food-handling of any kind;
- After using the bathroom;
- After sneezing, coughing, blowing your nose, touching or scratching the body;
- After touching pets or other animals;
- Before and after assisting with or performing First Aid;
- Before and after handling clean dishes or utensils;
- After handling garbage; and
- After outdoor activities.

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[5] TPH, "Handwashing:" www.toronto.ca/health/sars/pdf/sars_handwashing.pdf.
[6] This list has been adapted from TPH, *Breaking the Chain*, page 103, and MAFRP, *Family Support Health and Safety Toolkit*, 2005.
[7] *Ibid*.

Routine Practices

"Routine practices," "universal precautions," and "blood-borne precautions," are all terms that are used to describe the process of treating all blood as if it were infected with blood-borne germs, such as HIV or Hepatitis B. This means that basic procedures are to be followed either to avoid or prevent contact with blood, to use a barrier (such as gloves) when blood contact is unavoidable, and to kill germs correctly.[8]

All body fluids from any individual should be handled in a routine manner to prevent the spread of infection, and staff and volunteers should recognize that infectious disease does not have to be evident to be present. Good routine practices are based on an understanding of the chain of infection. The chain shows that disease-causing organisms must first be transmitted in the environment from an infected person, contaminate a new person, and enter that person's body.[9]

The single most important method of reducing the spread of infectious diseases is frequent and thorough hand washing with soap and water and hand disinfection with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer is an effective disinfectant, but it does not replace hand-washing. If there is any dirt or debris on your hands, use soap and water.[10]

The drop-in should also develop a systematic approach for dealing with people who are already exhibiting signs of illness. For example:[11]

- Any participant, staff, or volunteer cannot come to the drop-in if they have a contagious illness;
- Anyone who is suffering from vomiting and/or diarrhea will not be permitted into the program until it has stopped for at least 24 hours;
- Anyone with an extensive rash will be asked to see a doctor before returning to the program;
- Everyone should be asked to advise staff if they have been diagnosed with a communicable disease that could be transmitted through incidental contact with others;
- Signs of illness should be recorded in the daily log; and
- Any signs of a serious infectious illness should be reported to the Communicable Disease Surveillance Unit (CDSU). See **Appendix 5B.1** for a list of reportable communicable diseases in Ontario.

Cleaning up a Mess

[8] TPH, *Breaking the Chain*, page 24, and MAFRP, *Effective Practices Project*, 2005.
[9] MAFRP, *Effective Practices Project*, 2005.
[10] *Ibid.*, page 25.
[11] Adapted from MAFRP, *Effective Practices Project*, 2005.

Messy accidents that involve urine, feces, vomit or blood are events that happen in drop-ins. Because body fluids can be infectious, it is important to clean and sanitize surfaces after a spill. However, when following these precautions and procedures, it is important avoid creating an atmosphere of fear and suspicion.[12]

Toronto Public Health's *Breaking the Chain* manual recommends cleaning up messes involving body fluids in the following way:[13]

1. Make sure that the area where the body fluid spill has occurred is blocked off and program participants are away from the affected area.
2. Wash hands for at least 15 seconds using soap and water.
3. Put on disposable rubber gloves specific for cleaning. Latex gloves should not be worn as they are not designed for withstanding cleaning solutions.
4. Wipe up the spill using disposable paper towels, then place paper towels in a garbage bag.
5. Clean area using soap and water or a detergent solution. Rinse and dry the area with disposable paper towels.
6. Sanitize all contaminated areas using a fresh bleach solution of nine parts water to one part bleach. Be careful not to spill the bleach on your skin or clothing.
7. Let the area air dry for 20 minutes.
8. Any mops or non-disposable materials should be soaked in the bleach solution and air dried.
9. Remove gloves and place in the garbage bag. Double bag and secure the garbage bag before throwing out.
10. Wash hands for at least 15 seconds using soap and water.

Kit. A clearly labeled "Cleaning up Messes" kit should be kept in the centre in a safe place containing:[14]

- One plastic pail,
- One mop,
- One or more package(s) of disposable gloves,
- One large container of bleach,
- Two packages of paper towels, and
- One package of heavy plastic bags.

Wearing gloves. [15] Gloves do not replace hand washing; they provide additional protection over and above hand washing. Gloves should be worn whenever you expect

[12] MAFRP, *Effective Practices Project*, 2005.
[13] TPH, *Breaking the Chain*, page 30.
[14] MAFRP, *Effective Practices Project*, 2005.
[15] *Ibid.*

your hands to have direct contact with blood, body fluids or substances, mucous membranes, non-intact skin, or the surface of articles that are soiled with the same.

Recommended guidelines for using gloves:

- Gloves must be worn when there is contact with most body parts or bodily substances;
- Gloves must be worn to clean soiled supplies or surfaces;
- Use either non-latex or vinyl gloves;
- One pair of gloves should be used for one person only;
- Thoroughly wash your hands before putting gloves on, removing them, or changing pairs; and
- Do not wash or otherwise attempt to reuse gloves.

You should not delay emergency action (such as stopping bleeding) because you do not have gloves. The risk to you is not nearly great enough to justify further endangering the person who needs your help. It is important, however, to check to see if your hands already have breaks in the skin.

Safe Handling of Sharps

Blood-borne infections are often transmitted by sharp object injuries. "Sharps" refer to items such as **syringes, razors, and broken glass**.

Needles are especially dangerous, since it is relatively easy to accidentally puncture your skin when attempting to dispose of them. There is potential for injection of hazardous drugs, but injection of infectious fluids, especially blood, is by far the greatest concern. Even small amounts of infectious fluid can spread certain diseases, such as HIV, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C.

If you find a needle, do not attempt to re-cap it – this is one of the major causes of needlestick injury. It is essential to dispose of needles properly. If needles are tossed into the garbage, they can poke through the bag and injure people. If a needle punctures your skin, make sure that it does not plunge and release its contents. You need to report this injury right away and seek immediate medical attention. You should also complete an incident report as soon as you can (see **Appendix 5B.2** for a sample form).

It is a good practice to provide **needle disposal containers** made of puncture-resistant material at the drop-in, so that participants know they have safe methods for throwing out their syringes. Some drug stores or pharmacies will provide sharps containers and will empty them for you when they are full. You may also contact hospitals, health units, and municipal waste facilities for assistance in disposing of sharps.[16]

[16] TPH, *Breaking the Chain*, pages 27 and 107.

Outbreak Contingency Plan[17]

A centre is having an outbreak if the number of ill participants and/or ill staff exceeds what you would normally expect for a certain time period, age group, program time, geographic area.

The following steps are to be followed if an outbreak is identified:

1. Clarify housing status with the ill individual.
2. Send any ill individual home or make arrangements for accommodations.
3. Exclude participants, staff and volunteers until symptom-free for a prescribed period of time before returning to the program.
4. Record names, all symptoms, and the date and time of the onset of illness for each individual.
5. Contact the Toronto Public Health Regional Office to report the outbreak or contact Communicable Diseases Surveillance Unit (See **Appendix 5B.1**).
6. Step up sanitizing procedures. Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfecting. Some program participants have allergies so it is a good practice to sanitize after programs have ended and participants have left (if possible).
7. Reinforce the importance of good and frequent hand-washing for all participants, staff, and volunteers.
8. Suspend any water play activities.
9. Post a notice in the centre to advise participants of the situation.

Immunization

Drop-in workers should be encouraged to maintain up-to-date and age-appropriate immunization as recommended by the current Canadian Immunization Guide.[18] Because of the risk of exposure to blood and sharps injury, it is recommended that drop-in staff be immunized for Hepatitis B.

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[17] MAFRP, *Effective Practices Project*, 2005.

[18] See the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) website for the latest edition: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cig-gci/index.html.

Drop-in centre staff and volunteers are encouraged to check with their physician to ensure that they receive immunization when appropriate, and to check whether specific types of immunization (e.g. the flu shot) are appropriate for them given their medical history.

Toronto Public Health recommends flu shots for everyone except:[19]

- Anyone who is allergic to eggs, thimerosol, neomjyen or gelatin.
- Anyone who has had a reaction to the shot in the past.
- Anyone who has a fever (you must be recovered prior to getting the shot).
- Anyone who has a history of Guillain-Barré syndrome.

TB Testing

Tuberculosis (TB) is more common in homeless and underhoused populations. It can remain latent within the body for months or years, and then flare up when the body's immune system is weak. TB is only contagious during the active phase when symptoms are present.

To protect both their own health and the health of participants, staff must take a **"baseline" two-step TB skin test (TST)** when they first begin work at the drop-in (ideally, before they begin work, but otherwise within 7 days of beginning employment). Regular volunteers should be encouraged to take the test as well.

If staff have had a positive TST within the last 12 months, they should not take the test again. They should visit their family physician for medical assessment including a chest X-ray and counseling on the signs and symptoms of active TB disease.

Staff whose baseline TST shows a negative result should continue to take the TST once a year to monitor for any changes in their status. It is also a good practice for the drop-in to hold annual educational sessions on how to identify TB symptoms, risk factors for contracting and spreading the disease, reporting requirements to Toronto Public Health's Communicable Disease Surveillance Unit, and referral requirements to appropriate medical personnel.

Emergencies

First Aid. It is important to recognize that emergencies that require First Aid will occur. The following guidelines ensure that your organization is prepared to respond to emergencies quickly and effectively:

- Always have at least one staff member on site during program hours who has a current Standard First Aid Certificate and Basic CPR Certificate.
- Always keep a minimum of two, well-maintained First Aid kits at the drop-in. One of these kits can be brought on external trips when necessary. See **Appendix 5B.3** for a list of the contents of First Aid kits.

[19] MAFRP, *Effective Practices Project*, 2005.

Emergency searches and evacuations. Emergency search and evacuation policies should be followed in any situation where remaining in the building may put people at risk.
Examples of when to use emergency evacuation procedures include:

- Fire,
- Gas leak or chemical spill,
- Natural disaster,
- Finding a suspicious object, and
- Any other threatening situation which could affect people's safety.

All staff and volunteers should be familiar with the drop-in's evacuation policies and procedures and review them with program participants during orientation. See **Appendix 5B.4** for sample emergency search and evacuation procedures.

Fire safety.[20] Every drop-in centre site needs to have a Fire Safety Plan posted in a very visible place that is approved by the Fire Marshall. **Appendix 5B.5** provides a sample outline of the steps and procedures that need to be considered as part of a Fire Safety Plan. Part of this plan involves regular education and drills with staff, volunteers, and participants to prepare for the event of a fire. After a fire has occurred, an incident report should be filled out (see **Appendix 5B.2** for a sample incident report form).

You should consult with Toronto Fire Services to develop a plan tailored to your programs and sites. For the Fire Prevention Office in your area visit www.toronto.ca/fire/contact_tfs.htm#prevention or call Access Toronto at 416-338-0338.

Emergency numbers. Drop-in centres need to ensure that emergency numbers (e.g. 911, Works Department, Toronto Public Health, etc.) and the location of the closest major intersections to the organization are posted by all phones. Drop-ins can access emergency contact information from the City of Toronto annually for posting in each site. Dialing 211 or visiting www.211toronto.ca are also ways to access information about community, social, health and government services, including medical and emotional crisis supports.

Calling 911 is appropriate in the following situations:

- Someone has become violent or aggressive with staff or others;
- Someone is seriously ill (e.g. seizure, bleeding, or injury);
- Someone is actively suicidal (they have threatened to kill themselves or have already taken steps to harm themselves);
- You believe that you or others are in immediate danger; or
- Another staff requests that you call 911.

[20] Adapted from MAFRP, *Effective Practices Project*, 2005.

For tips on how to handle 911 calls, please see **Appendix 5B.6**. In non emergency situations, call the Toronto Police Service non-emergency line at 416-808-2222. You may also reach this line by dialing *TPS on a cell phone.

Emergency contact information. Emergency contact names and numbers should be on file for all staff and volunteers. This information should be kept confidential, yet stored in an easily accessible location in case of an emergency. This information must be kept up-to-date; inform your supervisor if it changes.

Maintaining Safe Facilities[21]

It is the responsibility of the Joint Health and Safety Committee or the Health and Safety Representative (discussed in detail in Subsection 5C: Staff Health and Safety) at your organization to conduct regular inspections of the workplace to ensure its safety; however, everyone in a drop-in has an important role to play in ensuring that the space is safe. This includes the following considerations:

- **Basic safety protocols.** Working safely and using common sense can prevent many accidents and injuries. For example, all equipment and furniture should be well maintained and all broken items removed promptly; and all cleaning materials and supplies should be clearly labeled and stored safely.

- **Maximum capacity.** Drop-in centres need to know what their maximum capacity is and not exceed it in any room or program. The Toronto Fire Services will come and inspect your premises and advise you as to how many people can be in any one area at a time. In consulting with Toronto Fire Services about a Fire Safety Plan (as discussed above), they will address room capacity with you.

- **Non-Smoking.** The *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* came into effect on May 31, 2006, prohibiting smoking in enclosed workplaces and public places. Designated smoking rooms are no longer permitted, "No Smoking" signs must be posted in highly visible places, and ashtrays must be removed.[22]

- **Reporting Unsafe Conditions.** Drop-in centres need to be committed to promptly addressing any and all unsafe conditions. Taking a risk management approach to health and safety requires staff to think ahead and work to prevent accidents before they happen. All staff and volunteers should report any conditions or situations that appear unsafe to your immediate supervisor and to the Health and Safety Committee or Representative.

ATTACHMENTS:
- **Appendix 5B.1 – List of Reportable Communicable Diseases in Ontario**
- **Appendix 5B.2 – Sample Incident Report Form**

[21] Adapted from MAFRP, *Effective Practices Project*, 2005.
[22] For information on acquiring signs, contact Toronto Health Connection at 416-338-7600.

- **Appendix 5B.3 – First Aid Kit Contents**
- **Appendix 5B.4 – Sample Emergency Search and Evacuation Procedures**
- **Appendix 5B.5 – Sample Fire Safety Policy**
- **Appendix 5B.6 – Calling 911: Tips for Front Desk Staff**

Appendix 5B.1 List of Reportable Communicable Diseases in Ontario

Source: Toronto Public Health, "Communicable Disease Reporting," September 2004. Available for download at: www.toronto.ca/health/cdc/communicable_disease_surveillance/monitoring/pdf/reportable_diseases_list_2004.pdf.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE REPORTING

Communicable Disease Surveillance Unit (CDSU)
277 Victoria St., 10th Floor, Toronto, ON M5B 1W2
Phone: 416-392-7411 * After hours: 416-690-2142 * Fax: 416-392-0047

Timely reporting of communicable disease is essential for their control. The following specified Reportable Communicable Diseases (Ontario Regs 559/91 and amendments under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*) are reportable to the local Medical Officer of Health:

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)
Amoebiasis
***Anthrax**
***Botulism**

***Brucellosis**

Campylobacter enteritis

Chancroid
Chickenpox (Varicella)
Chlamydia trachomatis infections
***Cholera**
***Cryptosporidiosis**

***Cyclosporiasis**

Cytomegalovirus infection, congenital
***Diphtheria**
***Encephalitis**, including:
1. ***Primary, viral**
2. Post-infectious
3. Vaccine-related

4. Subacute sclerosing panencephalitis
5. Unspecified

***Hepatitis, viral, including:**

1. ***Hepatitis A**
2. Hepatitis B
3. Hepatitis C

4. Hepatitis D (Delta hepatitis)

Herpes, neonatal

Influenza
***Legionellosis**
Leprosy

***Listeriosis**
Lyme Disease

Malaria

***Measles**

***Meningitis, acute**, including:
1. ***Bacterial**
2. Viral
3. Other
***Meningococcal disease, invasive**
Mumps

Ophthalmia neonatorum

***Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)**
***Shigellosis**
***Smallpox**
***Streptococcal infections, Grp A invasive**
Streptococcal infections, Grp B neonatal
Streptococcus pneumoniae, invasive
Syphilis
Tetanus
Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy, including:
1. Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, all types
2. Gastmann-Straüssler-Scheinker Syndrome
3. Fatal Familial Insomnia
4. Kuru
Trichinosis
Tuberculosis
***Tularemia**

***Typhoid Fever**

***Food poisoning, all causes**

***Gastroenteritis, institutional outbreaks**

***Giardiasis, except asymptomatic cases**

Gonorrhea

***Haemophilus influenzae b disease, invasive**

***Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome**

***Hemorrhagic fevers, including:**

1. ***Ebola virus disease**
2. ***Lassa Fever**
3. ***Marburg virus disease**
4. ***Other viral causes**

***Paratyphoid Fever**

Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

***Plague**

***Poliomyelitis, acute**

Psittacosis/Ornithosis

***Q Fever**

***Rabies**

***Respiratory infection outbreaks in institutions**

***Rubella**

Rubella, congenital syndrome

Salmonellosis

***Verotoxin-producing E. coli infection indicator conditions** including Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome

***West Nile Virus illness,** including:

1. West Nile fever
2. West Nile neurological manifestations

***Yellow Fever**

Yersiniosis

Note: *Diseases marked with* ******* *(and influenza in institutions) should be reported immediately to the Medical Officer of Health by telephone. Other diseases are to be reported by the next working day by fax or mail.*

Appendix 5B.2 Sample Incident Report Form

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

Note: This incident report form is intended to be general enough to be used in a wide variety of situations (e.g. fires, medical emergencies, participant service restrictions, etc.), so not all lines will need to be filled out for all situations.

INCIDENT REPORT

Date of incident: _____ **Time:** _____ **Duration:** _____

Location and Program: _____

Participant(s) involved: _____

Staff involved: _____

Name of Ambulance Attendant / Police Officer and badge # (if applicable):

_____

TYPE OF INCIDENT

Behavioural □ **Medical** □ **Injury** □ **Property damage** □

Emergency □ **Specify:** _____ **Other** □ **Specify:** _____

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT *(attach another page if more space needed)*

_____

_____

_____

ACTION TAKEN *(attach another page if more space needed)*

_____

_____

_____

Service restrictions or time away? □ **If yes, please state:**

Who? _____

Type/length of service restriction? _____

Follow-up / next steps: _____

_____

Staff completing report: _____

Witness: _____

Supervisor / Manager: _____

Appendix 5B.3 First Aid Kit Contents

Source: Metro Association of Family Resource Programs (MAFRP), *Effective Practices Project: Family Support Health and Safety Toolkit*, prepared by Leslie Wright, Novita Interpares Limited, 2005.

FIRST AID KIT CONTENTS

- Scissors (1)
- Blunt-nosed tweezers (1)
- 5 cm x 5 cm (2 in. x 2 in.) sterile gauze dressings (10)
- 10 cm x 10 cm (4 in. x 4 in.) sterile non-adherent dressings (5)
- Regular-size plastic bandages (10)
- Sling or triangular bandage (1)
- 8 cm (3 in.) gauze roll (1)
- Roll of non-allergenic adhesive tape (1)
- 8 cm (3 in.) elastic tensor bandage (1)
- Safety pins (5)
- Small bottle of skin antiseptic (Note: Soap and water should be used at all times, and antiseptic only with the permission of the individual, or their parent/caregiver)
- Pocket-sized First Aid reference book (1)
- Pairs of disposable non-latex gloves (2)

Appendix 5B.4 Sample Search and Evacuation Procedures

Source: Adapted from the Metro Association of Family Resource Programs (MAFRP), *Effective Practices Project: Family Support Health and Safety Toolkit*, prepared by Leslie Wright, Novita Interpares Limited, 2005.

EMERGENCY SEARCH AND EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Basic Emergency Evacuation Procedure:

- Pick up sign-in sheets (if any) and leave the area immediately.
- *Follow any procedures specific to the situation (see below for more details).*
- Ensure that all disabled persons have the assistance they need to evacuate the building.
- Designated staff must check washrooms, offices, meeting rooms, etc.
- Go to the nearest exit and leave the building. DO NOT use elevators.
- Close all doors behind you. Take keys with you.
- Call 911 as soon as possible. Give the correct name and address of the building, the type of emergency, and your name.
- Meet at a designated nearby location and verify that all program participants, staff and volunteers are accounted for. (When conducting drills or discussing evacuation procedures with participants, volunteers, and staff, emphasize the importance of meeting at this designated spot and not leaving the area until others have been able to account for your whereabouts. Explain that if others do not know you are safe, someone may risk their lives to try to find you.)
- Advise emergency officials of any missing person, their age, physical description, and possible whereabouts in the building.
- Notify the Executive Director and/or supervisor.
- No employee other than the Executive Director or his/her designate may speak to the public or the media about the emergency or evacuation.
- Do not re-enter the building until you are given permission to do so by emergency officials on the scene.
- Complete any reporting required as per your organizational policies.

In addition to the basic procedure outlined above, the following measures should also be used in specific evacuation situations:

<u>In the event of a fire:</u>

- Before opening any door, feel the knob for heat. If it is not hot, brace yourself against the door slightly and open it. If you feel air pressure or a hot draft, close the door quickly.

- If you encounter smoke, consider taking an alternate stairwell/exit. Crawl low under the smoke.
- Activate fire alarm and call 9-1-1 regardless of the size of the fire. Never assume that this has already been done. Give the correct name and address of the building, the location of the fire, and your name.
- If parents are meeting in a separate room from their children, the staff who are with the children are responsible for evacuating them

If you cannot leave your room or have returned to it because of fire or heavy smoke:

- Close your door.
- Be sure the door is unlocked so that firefighters can reach you.
- If you require assistance and can call 9-1-1, do so and let the Fire Department know where you are in the building.
- If smoke comes into the room, seal the base of the door with a wet towel or blanket and crouch down low to the floor.
- Move to the most protected area you can, and partially open a window if possible. (Keep the window closed if smoke comes in).
- Wait to be rescued.
- Listen for any instructions by emergency personnel.

If an unidentified and suspicious object is found in the building, a quiet and systematic evacuation of the building is required. In such an event, staff must:

- Direct people to quickly and quietly leave the building, maintaining control and minimizing panic.

In conducting searches of their designated area, staff should:

- Look for something that doesn't belong or seems out of the ordinary.
- Conduct your search quickly but thoroughly (maximum of 15 – 20 minutes).
- If you find a suspicious object, DO NOT TOUCH IT.
- Note the description of the object, its location, and any other important pieces of information, and report it immediately to the authorities.

Appendix 5B.5 Sample Fire Safety Policy and Procedures

Source: Adapted from the Metro Association of Family Resource Programs (MAFRP), *Effective Practices Project: Family Support Health and Safety Toolkit*, prepared by Leslie Wright, Novita Interpares Limited, 2005.

FIRE SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Policy. Fire safety is an important consideration of [Drop-In Name]. To ensure the safety of all individuals in our programs, we have established the following procedures.

Procedures.

- Fire drills will be conducted by a designated staff person in coordination with the Toronto Fire Department. Drills will be done on a regular basis to ensure that all participants, staff, and volunteers are familiar with building evacuation procedures.
- After each drill a designated person will complete a Fire Drill Report.
- Fire extinguishers will be placed throughout the facility and will be tested annually and logged by a designated person.
- Fire extinguishers do not replace the need to call Toronto Fire Services. Always call 9-1-1 when a fire occurs, even a small fire. Fire extinguishers are not designed to fight large or spreading fires.
- All staff and volunteers must be familiar with the location and operation of fire extinguishers.
- All new staff, volunteers, and program participants must be oriented to fire exits and building evacuation procedures.
- At least one staff member per shift, and, where possible, all staff members, is required to have a recognized First Aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification and should be trained in basic First Aid and emergency procedures. This will be updated every two years.
- If an individual is injured, staff will ensure that the person receives appropriate First Aid and medical attention. An accident report will be completed and filed in the program's records.
- The program must complete any reporting required as per organizational policy.

Appendix 5B.6 Calling 911: Tips for Front Desk Staff

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

CALLING 911: TIPS FOR FRONT DESK STAFF

There will be times when you are on shift when the drop-in will require emergency services to intervene in a volatile situation.

When you call 911:

- The operator will ask you which emergency service you require: police, ambulance, or fire.
- They will ask the address. Say the address clearly and give them the nearest major intersection.
- Give them your name and explain that you are staff.

Answering 911 Operator Questions

911 will ask a series of questions about the location of the incident, how many people are involved, and for a description of the individual(s) in question. Answer as calmly as possible and give as much detail as you know. If the incident is happening in another part of the building, explain to the operator that you are communicating with other staff on-site and must have information relayed. Use the radio to ask each question as it is asked to you and get a response from staff.

When 911 asks what the problem is, stick to the facts but ensure that they understand the urgency of the situation. If someone is violent or has a violent history, tell them. If someone has issued a threat of any kind of violence, tell them.

Managing communications

Communicate urgency. If they do not believe the situation is serious, they will give the call a low priority. The 911 operator may make judgmental statements about the situation: simply reiterate that it is very serious, that you would not have called otherwise, and urge them to send help.

911 may ask questions that we cannot answer (i.e. do you know the person's name). If it is not reasonable to obtain this information safely, then explain that you can't provide it but reiterate that help is still needed.

If the situation escalates, call 911 back immediately and tell them. If emergency crews do not respond, call back and ask for a re-call. Continue to do this until the situation is completely resolved to staff satisfaction.

Do not cancel police calls, even if an individual leaves the building. The person may stay in the area and it is important to make a report.

Back-up
Make sure that you are safely able to make a 911 call. Front Desk staff must be able to stay on the line uninterrupted with 911 during an incident. If you are being threatened directly, call maintenance or other staff for back up and maintain a safe distance.

For All 911 Calls
Document all dealings with 911 in an incident report and a report to the Manager. Give details about how the operator treated you, whether or not emergency crews responded, and what the outcome of the incident was.

Any contact with 911 is considered an incident and requires an incident report to be filled out and filed with the appropriate managers.

SUBSECTION 5C
Staff Health and Safety

Safety Training
Safety training is defined as workshops or programs that a drop-in provides to improve the general safety of participants, volunteers and employees. It is a good practice for drop-ins to make every reasonable effort to provide personal safety training for its staff and, where resources permit, its volunteers, as well. Safety training includes, but is not limited to:

- First Aid
- Crisis Prevention and Conflict Resolution Training
- Workplace Hazardous Material Information System (WHMIS) Training
- Food-Handling Certification

These specific training topics are discussed in more detail elsewhere in Section 5. General good practice tips for training staff and volunteers are in Section 4.

Safe Money Handling
Money may be located in some program sites, and safe cash handling practices should be in place to ensure the security of staff managing cash on site.

Good practices for safe handling of money include:

- Storing cash in a safe or lock-box;
- Keeping petty cash floats in a locked and hidden location;
- Ensuring that money management occurs out of public view and, when possible, involves two people;
- Never leaving cash unattended;
- Not moving cash around unless it is being used for purchases or for a deposit to the bank; and
- Obeying the robber's orders when harm is being threatened.

Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)
In Ontario, the Worker's Compensation Board is called the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB). The WSIB oversees Ontario's workplace safety education and training system, provides disability benefits, monitors the quality of health care, and assists in employees' safe return to work.

The WSIB provides a range of benefits to injured or ill workers for health care, loss of earnings, and loss of retirement income, as well as survivor benefits for families of workers who die as a result of workplace injuries and illnesses. The WSIB also protects employers from being sued by their employees.

Drop-in centre coverage. Drop-ins are not automatically covered under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*. This means that staff in these organizations may not be covered in the case of work-place injuries. Since workplace injuries and illnesses can happen to anyone and the consequences for people, families, and organizations can be devastating, drop-ins may choose to voluntarily apply to the WSIB for coverage.

The premium you pay for WSIB coverage is based on several factors including the nature of your business, the size of your payroll, and your injury-and-illness experience. Benefits to employers include:[23]

- Protection from lawsuits,
- No-fault insurance,
- Workplace insurance benefits for workers,
- Prevention and training programs, and
- Help in returning injured workers to the job.

Further, if your drop-in centre is covered through WSIB, it can access resources as a member of the Health Care Health and Safety Association of Ontario (HCHSA). HCHSA is a non-profit organization that is a "designated entity" under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act* and provides the following services to its members:[24]

- Conducting needs assessments,
- Developing strategies and implementation plans,
- Procuring training and delivery of resources,
- Evaluating trends on a sector basis for employers, and
- Providing education and informational resources and technologies.

Basic requirements. For drop-ins that have WSIB coverage, it is critical that all reporting requirements and timelines are met in order to ensure that coverage is provided as required.

If someone is injured on the job, the employer must ensure that:[25]

1. First Aid is given immediately and an incident report is completed;
2. The person is taken to a doctor or hospital if necessary, and any fees associated with transporting them are paid by the employer;
3. The causes of the incident are investigated, and all steps taken are recorded;
4. The employee is paid a full day's wages for the day of the injury (any WSIB benefits begin the next working day after the incident occurs).

[23] List from WSIB, "Benefits – An Employer's Perspective:" www.wsib.on.ca/wsib/wsibsite.nsf/public/EmployersBenefitsbyemployers. Last updated May 18, 2006.
[24] For more information about the HCHSA, visit their website at www.hchsa.on.ca.
[25] WSIB, "What Should I Do Immediately when a Worker Is Ill or Injured?" www.wsib.on.ca/wsib/wsibsite.nsf/public/EmployersIIimmediately. Last updated May 18, 2006.

In the case of a workplace fatality or critical incident, the employer must, in addition to the steps outlined above:[26]

- Contact the police and ambulance services immediately;
- Immediately contact by telephone, telegram or fax, the local office of the Ministry of Labour and the employee's union (if applicable). Within 48 hours, you must also notify, in writing, the Ministry of Labour, giving the circumstances of the incident; and
- Contact your customer service representative or account manager, or call the Occupational Disease and Survivor Benefits Program at 416-344-1010 or 1-800-465-9646. The WSIB can provide a Crisis Intervention Counsellor to help you and your employees deal with the incident.

Reporting. To report the work-related injury or disease to the WSIB, the employer needs to fill out an Employer's Report of Injury/Disease (Form 7). This form, along with a reference guide to help you complete the report, is available for download from the WSIB website.[27] If possible, have the worker sign your Form 7. This signature permits the worker's doctor to send you a report that helps identify what tasks your worker can take on during recovery.

The Worker's Report of Injury/Disease (Form 6) and a reference guide for filling it out are also available for download from the WSIB website. Workers are not required to fill out this form, but may do so if they wish to make a claim. Please note that there is a time-limit to making a claim and it is best to do so as soon as possible.

Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC)[28]

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* requires that all workplaces that regularly employ 20 or more workers establish a Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC). This Committee must meet at least four times per year. In smaller workplaces where six or more workers are regularly employed, and where no JHS Committee has been established, a Health and Safety Representative is required. The individual must be chosen by the workers or by the union if there is one. The Health and Safety Representative has many of the same powers and responsibilities as a JHSC except for the power to stop work.

In workplaces with more than 50 employees, the Act further specifies that such Committees must be made up of at least four people and at least half of those people must be workers not in managerial functions.

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[26] *Ibid.*

[27] For more information, or to download Form 6, Form 7, or reference guides for completing these forms, visit www.wsib.on.ca.

[28] Adapted from Metro Association of Family Resource Programs (MAFRP), *Effective Practices Project: Family Support Health and Safety Toolkit*, prepared by Leslie Wright, Novita Interpares Limited, 2005.

According to the Act, Health and Safety Committees or Representatives are responsible for:

- Identifying situations that present a danger to workers;
- Investigating critical injuries and work refusals;
- Designating a worker member of the Committee to be responsible for inspecting the workplace monthly (or yearly) according to a pre-determined schedule; and
- Making recommendations to management and/or the Board for programs and procedures to improve the health and safety of workers.

The City of Toronto's online Human Resources Policies provide two useful documents for JHSCs:[29]

1. **JHSC Recommendations Guidelines** – this document gives advice to JHSCs on how to make effective recommendations and to organizations on how to respond to these recommendations.

2. **JHSC Workplace Inspection Checklist Template** – this document provides a checklist for specific structural and environmental problems to look for when assessing the safety of the building.

Refusal to Work[30]

According to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, staff have the right to refuse to do work that they believe may endanger themselves or others.

Any employee who feels that work may endanger themselves or others are to follow the following steps:

1. The employee should promptly report the work refusal to his or her supervisor.

2. The supervisor should promptly investigate the grounds for the refusal with the employee present. If possible, a Health and Safety Representative (where applicable) should also be present.

3. If the problem can be resolved and an agreement reached, then the work can resume.

[29] These documents (along with other Human Resources policies, guidelines, and templates) are available for download from City of Toronto's website at: http://wx.toronto.ca/intra/hr/policies.nsf.
[30] MAFRP, *Effective Practices Project*, 2005.

4. If a resolution cannot be reached and the employee still believes the work is unsafe, then the employee should notify the Ministry of Labour about their refusal to work.

5. The Ministry of Labour inspector should respond within two hours, during which time the employee shall remain in a safe place or continue with reasonable alternate work.

6. No other employee will be assigned the refused work pending the decision of the Ministry of Labour inspector.

7. The Ministry of Labour will render a judgment.

SUBSECTION 5D
Participant Substance Use

It is a good practice for drop-ins to take an approach to substance use by participants which balances:

- The recognition that addictions to alcohol or drugs are harmful, and providing options or referrals for counseling and treatment to overcome these addictions, with

- The recognition that people need to overcome their addictions at their own pace, and interventions that are too aggressive can have the unwanted effect of closing down the lines of communication between participants and staff, or cutting participants off from much-needed services.

This balanced approach can be incorporated into either a harm reduction or an abstinence model.

Defining Harm Reduction and Abstinence Approaches

The ways that drop-ins deal with substance use fall into two broad categories: harm reduction or abstinence. Both are operating approaches that dictate how staff handle participants' substance use in their practical, day-to-day work. However, harm reduction is a rationale for a particular set of practices, while abstinence refers to one practice with many different rationales.

The **abstinence** model requires participants to abstain from using drugs or alcohol as a condition of service. If someone comes to the drop-in who is demonstrably high or drunk, they will not be permitted access. This practice is adopted for a number of reasons:

- The drop-in may be faith-based and oppose drug or alcohol use on moral grounds;
- The drop-in may not have the staff or resources to handle the disruptions that intoxicated people may cause;
- The drop-in's main population may be individuals who are recovering from addictions and need to have access to a place where there will be no temptations for them to fall back into old patterns.

This approach is fairly rare among drop-ins, but it fills an important niche for individuals who are trying to "dry out" or to quit drugs.

It is a good practice for staff running on an abstinence model to provide help to people even as they deny them access to the drop-in. This means that, rather than simply turning someone away at the door, chat with them awhile to determine what kinds of services

they came to your drop-in looking for. Let them know about other drop-ins or agencies nearby that could help them. If it is within your drop-in's means to do so, it is a good practice to accompany them to make sure that they get there safely, or, if your drop-in has a vehicle, to provide them with transportation to the referral site.

This approach has been instituted in abstinence-based homeless shelters in Toronto. They are required to refer individuals to other shelters if they cannot accommodate them; contact the other shelter to ensure that there is space; help the individual to get there; and follow-up with the other shelter to make sure that the individual arrived safely.[31]

The **harm reduction**[32] approach works to reduce the negative consequences of substance use by meeting individuals "where they are at." If a person is not ready to consider quitting, harm reduction workers accept that and work with the individual on strategies for staying safe while using drugs.

It is important to note that abstinence and harm reduction approaches are **not necessarily exclusive**; a drop-in may generally operate according to a harm reduction model, while some of its programs or activities may have an abstinence requirement.

Harm Reduction Strategies

These strategies vary according to the resources that an agency is able to offer and the legislation and regulations in place governing local initiatives of this kind. Some strategies currently adopted by Toronto drop-ins are:

- **Crack kits.** Toronto has recently begun making crack cocaine kits available for distribution by drop-ins and other social agencies. The kit contains a variety of elements, including, among other things, mouthpieces and glass stems – to reduce the likelihood of people burning their lips on more heat-conducting materials and the risk of Hepatitis C transmission through sharing pipes; a condom – because crack users often trade sex for drugs or money; and information on disease prevention practices.[33]

- **Clean needle exchange.** A few drop-ins contract with Toronto Public Health to provide needle exchange services. TPH runs a program called "The Works" that provides free clean needles to intravenous drug users, and safely disposes of used

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[31] City of Toronto, "4.5 Substance Use," *Toronto Shelter Standards*, 2005, page 13. Available at: www.toronto.ca/housing/pdf/shelter_standards.pdf.

[32] "Harm reduction" is often defined exclusively in terms of illicit drugs, but this distinction is not necessarily helpful to on-the-ground strategies for dealing with people who are under the influence. This section on substance use discusses "harm reduction" as an approach to dealing with participants who have taken any mood-altering substance; while this Toolkit, more generally, defines harm reduction more broadly and discusses harm reduction strategies that relate to behaviours other than substance use (see Subsection 1B, Framing Our Work, and Subsection 5E, Participant Sexual Health, for further discussion.

[33] City of Toronto, "Fact Sheet: Distribution of Safer Crack Use Kits," June 2006. Available at: www.toronto.ca/health/drugstrategy/pdf/tds_crack_kits.pdf. See also City of Toronto, *The Toronto Drug Strategy: A Comprehensive Approach to Alcohol and Other Drugs*, Toronto: Drug Strategy Advisory Committee, 2005, pages 31-32. Available at: www.toronto.ca/health/drugstrategy/pdf/tds_report.pdf.

needles. The program also provides condoms; education about safe injection and safer sex practices; testing for HIV, hepatitis, and syphilis; free vaccinations for Hepatitis B, the flu, tetanus, and pneumococcal infections; a methadone maintenance program; basic medical care; support for HIV-positive drug users; and referrals to detox, drug treatment, and other services.[34] The Works is a good example of the harm reduction approach because it illustrates the combination resource provision (e.g. condoms, clean needles, etc.) with outreach and intervention (education, referrals, testing, and so forth).

- **Safe use sites.** Many drop-ins have indicated their interest in operating safe use sites, or supervised consumption sites, that offer a safe, non-judgmental space for people to imbibe, inject, or inhale their pre-purchased substances. Aside from some managed alcohol consumption programs (for example, the Annex at Seaton House and the Lounge at Women's Residence), Toronto has not yet authorized safe use sites (though the City is considering this possibility).[35] Research has shown that these programs can:[36]
  - Reduce the risk of overdose and the potentially fatal consequences of overdosing,
  - Reduce criminal activity by those using the site,
  - Reduce the transmission of blood-borne viruses,
  - Lead to a significant increase in users seeking detoxification help,
  - Reduce the number of needles and other drug-related equipment being discarded in public spaces, and
  - Alleviate community concerns regarding intoxicated individuals on public streets or in parks.

- **Safe post-use sites.** Most Toronto drop-ins allow intoxicated or inebriated participants to access the drop-in and its services, unless or until their behaviour becomes disruptive to others. This practice provides a safe space where people can be under the influence and not be vulnerable to attack, sexual exploitation, or theft. Also, if the person begins to have a negative reaction to substances in their system, their condition will be monitored and they will be taken care of in whatever way they need (for example, they may become dehydrated and need water, or they may have a reaction that requires medical attention). It is a good practice to have procedures and resources in place to ensure staff know how to handle overdoses. This requires specialized staff training and/or medical supervision. (**Appendix 5D.1** gives a sample.)

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[34] Toronto Public Health (TPH), *Breaking the Chain: Infection Prevention and Control for Homeless and Housing Service Providers*, March 2006, pages 37 and 112. Available at: www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/committees/hl/hl060410/it009.pdf.

[35] City of Toronto, *The Toronto Drug Strategy: A Comprehensive Approach to Alcohol and Other Drugs*, Toronto: Drug Strategy Advisory Committee, 2005, pages 33 and 58. Available at: www.toronto.ca/health/drugstrategy/pdf/tds_report.pdf.

[36] This list has been adapted from the City of Toronto, *The Toronto Drug Strategy*, 2005, and from Rod Mickleburgh, "Safe drug sites lauded," *Globe and Mail* (British Columbia), July 20, 2006, page S1.

Harm Reduction as Outreach and Entry Point

All harm reduction practices are intended to act as point of entry for people who might not otherwise be able to access much-needed services. By not restricting service because of substance use, the harm reduction approach opens the lines of communication so that participants can talk to staff without feeling judged or punished, or that they must keep their addiction a secret. It allows staff to ask participants how they are doing and how they are keeping safe.

Distributing crack kits provides a way to reach out to marginalized people who otherwise might not come in to a drop-in or make contact with any social service agency. Harm reduction street outreach workers emphasize that crack kits give them a way to connect with people by providing them with items they need and establish trust relationships that can help them access other services.[37]

ATTACHMENT:

- **Appendix 5D.1 – Sample Suspected Drug Overdose Policy**

[37] City of Toronto, *The Toronto Drug Strategy*, page 32.

Appendix 5D.1 Sample Suspected Drug Overdose Policy

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

SUSPECTED DRUG OVERDOSE POLICY

Policy. Drop-in staff will coordinate emergency response when they suspect that a participant has taken a drug overdose.

Procedures. If staff suspect that a participant has taken a drug overdose, they should take the following actions:

- Immediately notify another staff member of this suspicion (ideally the supervisor or coordinator of the program area involved)
- Clarify the kind of substance ingested
- Clarify the amount of the substance ingested. If it is a liquid, find out the amount in fluid ounces. If it is a medication, find out the number of pills taken and the dosage amount of each pill
- Clarify or estimate the time lapse since ingestion of the substance
- Call for an ambulance and provide basic response information:
  - Gender and age of the person
  - Description of substance and amount taken (if known)
  - Current physical status (e.g. conscious or unconscious)
  - Location of drop-in
- Document the time of the emergency response request
- Arrange for staff to meet the emergency response unit at the front door
- Make the person as comfortable as possible. Assign a staff to remain with the person and provide support. Your single responsibility at this point in time is to try to and link the person to emergency ambulance services for further assessment and transportation

If staff are unsure of the validity of the reported overdose they should still respond in accordance with this protocol. They should not let their investigation slow down potential emergency response to the incident.

In the event that emergency response services are unable to assist the person in difficulty, staff should continue to monitor the suspected overdose and take further action as necessary.

SUBSECTION 5E
Participant Sexual Health

Sexual health is often a difficult subject to bring up in drop-ins. Some participants come from cultures where there are strong taboos against having sex outside of marriage or discussing sex in any setting. They may not benefit from attempts to initiate open discussions about sexual health in group settings, especially if those groups include other members of their culture. Some participants may not feel comfortable discussing sexual matters in front of people of the opposite gender. Other participants may not feel comfortable coming out to a community that may have shown violently homophobic tendencies in the past. There may be a strong feeling in both participants and staff that sexuality is a private issue, to be dealt with privately.

However, drop-ins work with many people who are at risk sexually; they may be professional sex workers or they may occasionally exchange sexual favours for drugs; they may be vulnerable to sexual predation, whether because they are very young, new to the street, frequently intoxicated, or have mental health problems; they may not know the risks of unprotected sex, or be aware of the range of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) that exist; and so forth. Drop-ins should recognize sexual health, like food or housing, as one of the primary needs of their community, and should do their best to respond to it.

This involves taking both **direct and indirect approaches** in an effort to create a positive environment where people feel like they can talk about these issues if they want to, but can still access important resources (like condoms or informative pamphlets) on their own if they don't want to talk to a staff member. Some excellent resources are available on the Toronto Public Health website, which gives information on sexual health matters, workshops, and training sessions, and provides telephone numbers, links to other resources, and brochures for downloading.[38]

Indirect Interventions

Addressing sexual health in the drop-in is often best accomplished through indirect approaches to reduce individuals' discomfort in accessing information or resources. Indirect intervention strategies include:

- **Discreet condom distribution.** Making baskets of condoms and lube available in a variety of locations around the drop-in, including in semi-private areas like bathrooms. This way, a person may access condoms and lube without it being obvious. It is important for staff to monitor the contents of the basket – sometimes it will become empty, or it will contain only packets of lube, and participants will not inform staff.

[38] See TPH's Sexual Health homepage at: www.toronto.ca/health/sexualhealth/index.htm or TPH's Sexual Health homepage for community workers, educators, and health care providers at: www.toronto.ca/health/sexualhealth/sh_educator_actual_main.htm.

Toronto Public Health provides a yearly allotment of condoms to service providers who request it (the telephone number to call is: 416-338-0901). Drop-in staff often ask for twice as much as they estimate they will need for the year, because TPH is typically only able to provide half of the amount requested by each group. Other drop-ins have partnerships with local health centres, and receive condoms from them.

- **Brochures.** Including sexual health pamphlets in a rack of brochures that cover a range of topics relevant to the drop-in population – for example, housing, extreme weather, West Nile Virus, tuberculosis, police, English classes, etc. – allows people to access any sex-related information they might need without doing so overtly.

- **Combination packs.** The crack kits distributed by Toronto Public Health contain condoms along with the glass stems and other equipment that are more directly connected to crack use. If there is any other type of packaged resources that drop-in staff are making available to participants, it may be a good practice to add condoms and lubrication packets.

- **Risk management.** The strategies here depend in part on the population of your drop-in. One drop-in, which works primarily with adults in their thirties who have been street-involved for a long time, does not permit younger people to come in. Staff explain that this drop-in is not a place for youth and that there are people with predatory behaviours there. They direct the person to other drop-ins and agencies that are more youth-focused (for example, YouthLink or Evergreen.)

Direct Interventions

While indirect interventions can be very effective, direct interventions are often necessary to ensure that people are aware of the risks associated with particular behaviours and are receiving the services and resources they need to manage those risks. Direct intervention strategies include:

- **Interventions on the drop-in floor.** People do not (for the most part!) have sex on drop-in centre premises. However, sexuality may be a factor in the way that participants interact in the drop-in – people flirt, fall in love, break up, get back together; some prey on vulnerable individuals; some sex workers seek out new clients; some participants physically or verbally harass people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, queer (LGBTTQ) or involved in the sex trade.

  When these interactions involve conflict or predatory behaviours, staff should intervene and **talk about the situation with those who are involved**. For example, if there is a man who you know has a history of violent relationships and coercive sexual behaviour, and you see him making advances toward a vulnerable woman (she may be new to the drop-in, or intoxicated, or mentally challenged, for example), you should intervene. Discuss the situation with both parties. Reiterate

to the man that predatory behaviours are not acceptable and recommend that he not pursue this relationship further. Chat with the woman about your concerns.

In the case of intolerance toward sex trade workers, staff should try to **negotiate respect**. This may involve reiterating that all participants have the same right to enjoy the drop-in space, and holding participants **accountable to the drop-in's anti-harassment and discrimination policies**. This conversation may involve discussion of systemic oppression and the criminalization of poverty, as a way of connecting sex trade workers' lives and histories with those of other participants.

In order for staff to intervene effectively in instances of intolerance toward transgendered or transsexual people, **staff may need training** so that they can accurately and sensitively discuss these issues with participants. This is particularly important in drop-ins that are either women-only or men-only, because in these situations participants may feel strongly justified in their exclusion of the a trans person, on the grounds of the drop-in's rules themselves. Staff must be educated on trans issues if they are to be able to effectively explain why "that man" is allowed in a "woman's space," or vice versa. In addition to welcoming LGBTTQ people into the drop-in and negotiating respect with other participants, it is also a good practice to advise them about LGBTTQ-specific programs and drop-ins in the city (for example, the 519 Community Centre and its Meal Trans program).

Finally, it is important to recognize that intolerance – whether sexual, racial, religious, or any other form of discrimination – can't be separated from **power dynamics**. Engaging participants in debates or discussions about the content of their remarks addresses only part of the problem. Discriminatory comments are also a way of asserting one's power or dominance over other people in the drop-in. People who make these comments may be "backed up" by other participants as a political survival tactic – side with the strongest – rather than as an expression of agreement with their statements.

- **Workshops and focus groups.** It is a good practice to run workshops, focus groups, or any other type of educational sessions that raise awareness of sexual health issues. If you would like a Sexual Health Educator to come in and talk to a group, you can access one through a referral process by calling the Toronto Health Connection number (416-338-7600).

  It is a good idea to **consider cultural issues and differences** when planning workshops. For example, one drop-in with a large community of First Nations people has an elder come in who discusses relationships, HIV, and other sexual health issues from a specific cultural perspective. A staff member from another drop-in reported that in discussing AIDS with Afro-Canadian youth living in Scarborough, the message did not begin to penetrate until he showed a video of, specifically, young, Afro-Canadians in Toronto who were living with AIDS.

On the other hand, drop-ins report strong resistance from members of specific communities – for example, Chinese Torontonians and newcomers from Eastern Europe – to discussing sexual health issues or attending workshops where there is a possibility that they might see someone they know. Drop-in staff who work with Chinese participants emphasize the importance of **building trust over a long period of time**; once this rapport has been established, participants will feel more comfortable in discussing sexual issues.

Attendance at workshops is often very low, particularly among men. One way to overcome this is to provide **incentives** – for example, food, gift certificates for a popular local restaurant or business, and/or TTC tokens. Another way to increase attendance is to combine the sexual health information with other useful health information, and to cut the word "sex" from the title. For example, one drop-in worker organized a successful "Health and Wellness" workshop.

- **Shots and vaccinations.** There are vaccines available for Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B (there is no vaccine for Hepatitis C). Contact Toronto Public Health's Immunization Information Line at 416-392-1250 for information on immunizing drop-in participants to these diseases.

- **Testing.** Street-involved people are at higher risk for contracting and spreading sexually-transmitted infections and diseases. Some drop-ins hold health clinic sessions two or three times a year where participants can get tested for HIV and Hepatitis C, two of the most dangerous STIs. The difficulty lies in convincing participants to come back a few weeks later to pick up their results. It is a good practice to offer incentives – for example, food, gift certificates for a popular local restaurant or business, and/or TTC tokens.

Combining Direct and Indirect Strategies

It is also a good practice to combine direct with indirect approaches. For example, when intervening in situations on the drop-in floor, discuss the specific interpersonal issues directly with the involved participants, but also bring up the larger social issues later in an action group meeting or organize a workshop or training session. When holding a sexual health workshop, make brochures and pamphlets available. Consider holding a question period with anonymous submissions – for example, questions written down and placed in a box to be withdrawn and responded to by the presenter later on.

SUBSECTION 5F
Crisis Prevention

Note: *This Subsection should be read in conjunction with Subsections 2S: Participant Rights and Responsibilities, 2T: Complaint Process, 2U: Service Restrictions, Barring Policies, and Appeals, and 5G: Crisis Intervention and Conflict Resolution.*

There is an old saying that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," and this may be nowhere more true than when dealing with crises in drop-ins. One TDIN drop-in notes that "the best crisis intervention responses are not the work you see acted out occasionally on the public stage of the drop-in floor or the street. Crisis intervention at this stage is often indicative of gaps in earlier prevention strategies that observe, anticipate, and respond to the stress signals and needs of the person in crisis."

Managing the Space

It is important to create and foster an atmosphere of respect, tolerance, and security within the drop-in. As the UK-based organization Homeless Link notes, "Setting the culture of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and challenging unacceptable behaviour at an early stage is vital."[39]

Rules. "Setting the culture" of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour means, among other things, making sure that there are clear rules for conduct within the drop-in that everyone is aware of. These rules also need to be applied consistently or they will not be respected.[40]

Mood. Moods are catching – if your family, friends, or coworkers are in a good mood, this can lighten your own spirits. If a dark cloud is hanging over one person, it often drifts over to others. In this way, the drop-in space itself can develop a collective mood or personality of its own that is generated and influenced by everyone in it. One of the goals in running a drop-in is to keep this mood on an even keel.

Staff contribute to this mood through their own attitudes and behaviours, but they should also take on the task of monitoring, assisting, and communicating with the mood of participants. For example, if it is clear that a participant is having a rough day and is feeling tense, it is a good practice to get them talking about it with you away from the group dynamic, to give them a chance to let off some steam in a safe way. This should be done informally, by asking them to come with you for a walk or a coffee, not formally, by asking them to step into an office. It should be a friendly and relaxed gesture, not a gesture that makes the participant feel singled out and called to account.

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[39] Homeless Link, "5: Implications for Safety," *Day centres handbook: A good practice guide*, London (UK), 2004, page 5.4.
[40] *Ibid.*, page 5.9.

Monitoring. As discussed above, it is important to monitor the mood of the drop-in as an indicator of the potential for a crisis to erupt. This can be done through:

- **Observing the general behaviour of participants.** What is participants' body language telling you? Are they sitting in relaxed postures, or are they restlessly pacing? Are there people who seem upset and are isolating themselves from others? Is their behaviour a response to the way other people are acting? Is this behaviour different from the normal conventions of participants using the drop-in?

- **Listening to the conversational patterns of the drop-in.** Is the general emotional content of the conversations calm, or can you hear agitation in rising volume levels and breaks in the normal rhythms of speech? If the latter, what is this agitation in response to? Interpersonal disagreement? An environmental disturbance? Inner conflict?

- **Communicating with participants.** It is a good practice for staff to develop good relationships with participants and engage them in warm, friendly chats whenever time permits. Whether or not the person is behaving calmly or erratically in the moment, these conversations will help to give a window on what is going on in people's lives and what the interpersonal dynamics in the drop-in are, so that you can see early on what kinds of tensions are building.

- **Communicating with participants who are potentially at risk.** Some participants may demonstrate over time that they are more emotionally volatile or less able to control their impulses. These participants should be welcomed at the door by a drop-in staff member as soon as they come in, both as a way to gauge their mood and as a way to set a positive tone for their time in the drop-in. These steps are also important with new participants whose personalities, histories, and needs are unknown, and with participants, regardless of past behaviour, who arrive at the drop-in intoxicated.

  However, it is very important to keep these interventions friendly and low-key. When individuals who have exhibited violent or harassing behaviour in the past are subjected to vigorous monitoring when they enter the drop-in, this can trigger them to react aggressively. The key is to remember that crisis prevention and intervention are about engagement, not control.

- **Identify triggers and flashpoints.** In observing and monitoring the drop-in's mood and community dynamics, you may come to recognize "flashpoints," or particular situations where tensions run high and may erupt into crises. For example, any time people are required to wait in a long line for a particular resource or service, tempers may flare.[41] In communicating with participants about their lives, you may come to understand their "triggers," or particular

[41] *Ibid.*, page 5.4-5.

situations that will set them off. For example, a particular offensive slang term might trigger them, or a particular behaviour (e.g. somebody cutting into a line).

- **Communicating regularly with other staff.** Staff should regularly check in with each other to share their assessments of the drop-in's mood and to let each other know if they perceive a problem brewing.

Fostering Respect for the Physical Environment

Part of fostering a safe, calm, positive atmosphere in the drop-in has to do with improving the physical environment. **Make the drop-in space attractive and pleasant**, not "institutional" in appearance. If you have funding to make structural changes, try to reduce or eliminate any "blind spots" in the building. Keep the drop-in as open-concept as possible. When furniture or equipment breaks, repair it promptly: if the management and staff take care of the surroundings, this will encourage participants to do so as well.[42]

Another technique is to **encourage participants to take ownership of the space**. If they feel that the drop-in is their place, they will be more likely to treat it with respect and to criticize inappropriate behaviours or try to defuse crisis situations themselves. There are two main ways for staff to work toward fostering participants' sense of ownership:

- Involving participants in **decision-making** processes and hiring them to do odd jobs around the drop-in (see Section 3 for further discussion); and
- Involving participants in the **decoration** of the drop-in, whether this is through displaying participant artwork, or hiring participants to decorate the space before a special event, or hanging photographs of participants, or putting up posters on the walls with motivational sayings, poems, or words of wisdom from participants.

Spatial Capacity

The number of people your drop-in can accommodate at any given time depends on:

- The maximum capacity of the **physical space** itself, and
- What the **staff** working that day can handle (for example, newly hired staff with no established relationships with the participants may not be able to handle the same number as a staff member who has been working in the drop-in for years).

You should have a rough number in mind of how many people the drop-in space can accommodate at any given moment, and take steps to ensure that this number is not exceeded. Not only is overcrowding a **legal and safety issue** (since it contravenes the Building Code and the Fire Code), but it is also a highly stressful situation that can lead to crisis situations. Overcrowding also limits the ability of staff to respond to conflicts, and the situation can quickly get out of control.

Strategies. Strategies for ensuring that your drop-in's capacity is not exceeded vary according to how much of a concern this is for you. For example, if one of your programs is very over-subscribed and you consistently have dozens of people arriving that you

[42] *Ibid.*, "9: Warnings and exclusions," page 9.4.

cannot accommodate, you may want to institute a **ticket system**, where the first hundred (or whatever your limit is) participants to show up receive a ticket and may come into the drop-in when it opens its doors, and the others are not permitted to come in until the first group leaves.

If your drop-in rarely experiences a demand that it cannot meet, this formal type of system may be unnecessary. However, it is a good practice for all drop-ins to have some kind of **door-person, front desk worker, or greeter**. This person's job is twofold: to encourage access – to welcome people into the drop-in and help direct them to whatever services or staff they may be looking for – and to limit access – to prevent participants from coming in if the drop-in is overcrowded or to get people to leave if they are violating the rules for behaviour within the drop-in.

Staff Training and Preparation

As good as your drop-in team is at heading off conflicts before they have a chance to fully develop, crisis situations will still occasionally occur. These situations can be extremely volatile, since the safety of many people – the agitated participants, other drop-in users, staff, and volunteers – may be at risk. In high stress situations, the smallest gesture or most seemingly inconsequential word can provoke someone's anger further. It is important to be prepared for these situations so that you can keep your cool and handle the situation effectively.

Training. It is a good practice for staff to receive training in crisis prevention and de-escalation techniques. The Toronto Hostel Training Centre offers courses in crisis prevention, which include:

- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention,
- Understanding and Managing Aggressive Behaviour, and
- Defusing Hostility – Crisis Intervention with the Hostile and Aggressive Individual.

These are now offered through the Drop-In Service Skills Training Certificate (DISSTC), a program developed by the THTC in conjunction with the Toronto Drop-In Network. Further information and registration forms are available at the THTC website.[43]

Personal and staff dynamics. Handling a crisis situation involves effectively managing internal, personal dynamics as well as external, interpersonal dynamics. **Self-knowledge is an important tool for constructively handling conflicts.** Staff need to be encouraged to trust their intuition and gain insights into their own anxieties and feelings about crisis situations and their own styles or preferences regarding conflict management as well as those of others.

Just as participants have "triggers" that should be monitored, so too staff have **"triggers"** that should be monitored. "Triggers" or "buttons" are sensitive points that, when activated, can cause the individual to become emotional and escalate the situation rather

[43] Toronto Drop-In Network (TDIN) and Toronto Hostels Training Centre (THTC), "Drop-In Service Skills Training Certificate (DISSTC)," n.d. Available at: www.thtcentre.com; last updated July 26, 2006.

than defuse it. Staff need to identify and discuss their triggers with coworkers so that they can strategize on how to handle these concerns as a team. For example, some staff mentioned that any hint of domestic abuse will set them off, and they have trained the volunteers and other staff members that they work with to intervene in those situations. Other staff members may be triggered when participants use racial slurs to address them. **Recognizing your own triggers and developing contingency plans with other staff members can help to defuse these situations and result in constructive resolutions for all individuals involved.**

Management strategies. Staff team leaders – whether supervisors, managers, or coordinators – should work actively to foster a safe space for staff to talk about their personal triggers, anxieties, and concerns in dealing with crisis situation. This may not be easy to do, because it requires talking about vulnerability in situations where staff are most worried about being or appearing to be vulnerable.

Management should also ensure that a discussion of **service restrictions** occurs in the team. In the heat of the moment during a crisis, it may seem like the best course of action for all concerned to bar an individual. However, drop-ins exist to serve the most marginalized populations, and "hard-to-serve" people should be their priority. Subsection 2U provides a further discussion of these points and outlines alternative service restriction and time away strategies.

In a moment of crisis, staff can feel vulnerable and as though the agitator is in control of the situation. However, even in these moments staff need to be conscious of the fact that they have the power to cut the participant off from much-needed services and resources, and that they should avoid doing this if at all possible.

Management should also take care of staff – providing opportunities for frontline workers to de-stress and **encouraging self-care or ways to debrief and wind down**. The best learning comes from a debriefing meeting after a crisis situation. Staff can take the time to reflect on the experience and their reactions, and build these insights into plans for handling the next crisis. It is important for staff to have **open lines of communication** so that staff know that they can speak to each other honestly about their concerns or suggestions. **Team-building** is also important – coworkers need to know that they can rely on each other in crisis situations. (See Subsection 4C for a more detailed discussion of staff communication and team-building strategies.)

Inter-Agency Coordination

It is a good practice for drop-ins that are located near each other to coordinate on issues of safety and security. Often agencies coordinate their hours of operation and programming so that the participants who frequent both (or all) of them have increased access to service and expanded choices; it is a good practice for these drop-ins to communicate with each other both formally and informally about concerns regarding their shared population. Formally, they may hold monthly meetings to coordinate their approach with particular individuals or to discuss security mechanisms. Informally, they

may simply call each other on an as-needed basis, for example, when a frustrated and angry participant storms out of one drop-in and is likely heading to the next.

Informal Counseling and Conflict Resolution Workshops

Participants often lead very stressful lives and many may not have the emotional tools to resolve conflicts constructively. It is a good practice for staff to work with participants both informally, as part of the daily round of the drop-in, and formally, over the course of directed training sessions or workshops, on positive conflict resolution techniques. This approach puts some of the power and responsibility into participants' hands, and gives them the tools they need to defuse situations both within and outside of the drop-in.

SUBSECTION 5G
Crisis Intervention and Conflict Resolution

Note: *This Subsection should be read in conjunction with Subsections 2S: Participant Rights and Responsibilities, 2T: Complaint Process, 2U: Service Restrictions, Barring Policies, and Appeals, and 5F: Crisis Prevention.*

As much as it is important for staff to train, prepare, and think through their responses to crisis situations ahead of time, it is also important for them to recognize that every conflict is unique, every person in crisis is an individual, and every conflict resolution approach needs to be tailored to the context of the situation and the particular people involved.

Team-building also needs to continue, not just in training, meetings, or social events, but also on-the-spot during crisis situations. It is a good practice for staff to work on building the capacity and confidence of all staff, recognizing each team member's skills and drawing on them to help resolve a situation. Sometimes there are one or two people who happen to be very skilled at crisis intervention, but you should avoid the temptation to let them handle every conflict.

Step-By-Step Intervention Process

The TDIN and THTC training program offers the following steps and strategies for intervening effectively in a crisis situation:[44]

1. Make other staff on duty aware of the situation. Do not challenge the participant.

2. The first staff member on the scene becomes the **"lead" staff**, and the others act as **back-up**. If this is you and you feel that you are unable to handle the situation, ask reinforcement staff to act as the lead while you act as back-up.

3. **Back-up staff should not rush into the situation**, even if they assume they have a good relationship with the participant. It can be very intimidating for a participant to suddenly be surrounded by staff, and this may serve to escalate the situation rather than defuse it.

4. "Back-up" staff should provide exactly that – back-up. It is important for staff to **present a united front**. It is more useful for all staff to be working together on one solution, than for each person to try to

[44] Adapted from Evelyn Mitchell, "Non-Threatening Crisis Interventions," *Drop-In 101: Workshop Facilitator's Manual*, Toronto (ON): TDIN and THTC, 2005.

implement their own solution. If you have a concern with the way the lead staff is handling the situation, this should be addressed later, in private, or during the debriefing.

5. **Ensure that other participants are out of the way.** This will both ensure their safety and may help prevent escalation of the situation. If other participants remain present, their "audience participation" may trigger the participant who is "ready to blow."

6. If another participant is the target, get them to a **safe place**, and if possible, have someone else stay with them.

7. Place yourself in such a way that you can leave the room without obstruction (look for the **nearest exit**).

8. Keep a **safe distance** from the participant (but not so far that you have to shout). Give participant space to move and do not reach out to touch the person if they are agitated or angry. Do not turn your back on participant.

9. Advise participant, in a calm, steady voice, of **consequences** if this behaviour continues. Give participant time to back down.

10. Use **de-escalation techniques** (described further below) as you engage the participant.

11. Encourage the person to leave so that they can **cool down**. Do not follow participant through the door as many violent incidents happen in a doorway. Your guard may be down and then there is a shift in power. Let them leave of their own accord.

12. If the participant refuses to go, warn them that you will have to call the **police** if they will not leave. Often, talking about calling the police is enough to convince the participant that it is in their best interests to leave. However, if they continue to refuse to leave, you should follow through with the call.

13. Do a **debriefing with the targeted participant(s)**.

14. Do a **debriefing with the staff** involved.

15. Fill out an **incident report** (see **Appendix 5G.1**).

Communication

Making other staff at the drop-in aware of the escalating crisis is, in some ways, the most important step. There need to be mechanisms in place to facilitate your ability to make other staff on duty aware of the situation.

Often, a drop-in is small enough that staff elsewhere in the building can hear loud and agitated voices. Nevertheless, it is a good practice to have other communication mechanisms in place; for example, **walkie-talkies**, **intercoms** in each room, or "**floating staff**." The latter is a system where there is a worker in each room of the drop-in, and one additional worker who moves from room to room. This means that if coworkers have messages for each other, they can communicate them through the floating worker.[45]

De-Escalation Techniques

Often the best way to defuse an explosive situation is simply to talk to the person and give them some space to let off steam. Anger and belligerent behaviour require a lot of energy to maintain, and talking can be a kind of pressure-release valve that keeps these outbursts short. As people begin to talk, you can validate their feelings and help them find constructive solutions to their problems.

In addition to the steps described for the intervention process above, there are some further tips to help you as you engage the participant in conversation:[46]

- **Active listening.** Show support in a way that is respectful and real, and not condescending. Explain to the agitated person that you want to understand what is going on, and that you want to hear both (or all) sides of the story. Give them supportive feedback, even as you are trying to make suggestions for modifying the behaviour. For example, "I understand why you became angry, but we need to find another way to resolve this situation."

- **Separate space.** If at all possible, take the agitated person to a separate space that provides confidentiality and allows the participant to save face when they back down. It is best to take the person to a neutral area, like outside the drop-in, or down a hall, or to go get a coffee, or out for a smoke. Taking them into an office can feel punitive, humiliating, and infantilizing.

- **Avoid "why" questions.** Avoid asking participants "why" questions, because this can exacerbate aggression and frustration.

- **Tone of voice.** While it is a good practice to speak in a calm voice and not get agitated in response, be wary of being too calm or too soothing. Appearing too calm can seem like an inappropriate emotional response to an intense situation,

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[45] Homeless Link, "5: Implications for Safety," *Day centres handbook: A good practice guide*, London (UK), 2004, page 5.7.

[46] These tips are adapted from a list given in Homeless Link's *Day centres handbook*, page 5.6, and somewhat modified according to information gathered during the Good Practices Project consultations with TDIN drop-in staff.

while being soothing can be perceived as condescending and can trigger participants further. Further, these soft tones of voice are often part of a therapeutic approach that individuals who have been recipients of mental health services have experienced before, and this as well may trigger them further.

- **Panic spots.** Recognize and take advantage of "panic spots" – these are moments where the person loses steam and is unsure how to continue or end the conflict. Staff may be able to use this hesitation to make their own suggestion of the direction this interaction should take, and participants may be more willing to agree at these times.

- **Writing it down.** Depending on the explosiveness or intensity of the outburst, it may be helpful to offer the person a piece of paper and a pen and ask them to write down their concerns. This may help them calm down and focus, and it can help you demonstrate that you are committed to working with them on the particular issues they are having.

- **Talking someone down.** As you are talking someone down, use their name, and your name. This shows that you see them as a person and encourages them to see you the same way. Keep your points short and simple. You may find it effective to repeat the same point.

- **Slow things down.** You may feel that you need to act quickly, but it is critical to take a few moments to reflect, order your thoughts, and bring coworkers in. Often situations can ignite by sudden movements, noise, gestures, or obvious displays of nerves. Tell the other person what you're going to do before you do it, particularly if it means moving about, and certainly if you have to move out of sight.

Documentation

After an incident occurs in the drop-in, a report must be filled out as a record of what happened, who was involved, what staff interventions took place, and any required follow-up that needs to be done.

The incident report form should be a **standardized template**, rather than a blank piece of paper. This will ensure that important details do not get lost and forgotten, and will help to standardize the information that gets recorded and how it is used. Further, staff will be less vulnerable to individual criticism or accusations of bias if the matter ever goes to court or becomes part of an inquiry.[47]

It is important that this record be **filled out as soon after the event as possible**, so that the memory of all the details is still fresh. It should be signed, not only by the staff who completed the form, but also by a staff who witnessed the situation occur as well.

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[47] Homeless Link, "4: Dealing with serious incidents," *Day centres handbook: A good practice guide*, London (UK), 2004, pages 4.4-4.5.

If the manager is present, the manager should also sign the report. If the manager is not present, they should be given the report the next time they are at the drop-in and they should sign it at that point. See **Appendix 5G.1** for a sample incident report form.

ATTACHMENT:

- **Appendix 5G.1 – Sample Incident Report Form**

Appendix 5G.1 Sample Incident Report Form

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

INCIDENT REPORT

Date of incident: _____ **Time:** _____ **Duration:** _____

Location and Program: _____

Participant(s) involved: _____

Staff involved: _____

Name of Ambulance Attendant / Police Officer and badge # (if applicable):

_____

TYPE OF INCIDENT

Behavioural □ **Medical** □ **Injury** □ **Property damage** □

Emergency □ **Specify:** _____ **Other** □ **Specify:** _____

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT *(attach another page if more space needed)*

_____

_____

_____

ACTION TAKEN *(attach another page if more space needed)*

_____

_____

_____

Service restrictions or time away? □ **If yes, please state:**

Who? _____

Type/length of service restriction? _____

For how long? _____

Follow-up / next steps: _____

_____

Staff completing report: _____

Witness: _____

Supervisor / Manager: _____

SUBSECTION 5H
Cleaning and Sanitation

Many sanitation practices and guidelines are determined by the requirements of drop-in funders, Toronto Public Health, and local municipal regulations. A drop-in is responsible to comply with these specific procedures to ensure good health. This Section covers some of the basic expectations for cleaning and sanitation protocols in Toronto drop-ins.

Sanitizing Solution

A mix of bleach and water is an effective sanitizing solution. **Appendix 5H.1** gives instructions on the proper ratios of bleach and water.

To use the bleach and water solution as a disinfectant, follow these procedures:

1. Ensure that the area to be disinfected is first washed with soap and water.
2. Rinse area thoroughly with clean water.
3. Apply bleach solution.
4. Leave the bleach solution on the surface for at least 20 minutes.
5. Let air dry, or wipe with a clean disposable towel.

Please note that this sanitizer will lose its strength easily. It may be kept for two weeks if it is stored in an airtight container and kept away from the light. If you are cleaning a mess that involves body fluids or you are disinfecting a potentially contaminated area, it is best to mix a fresh solution. Use caution on metal; if the solution is found to be corrosive, a different sanitizer should be chosen.[48]

Surfaces and Appliances

All surfaces and appliances need to be carefully and regularly cleaned and sanitized to prevent the sharing of bacteria or other germs. Good practices governing both the timing and the techniques of these procedures are described below.[49]

The following surfaces should be cleaned and sanitized **before and after each use**:

- Counters
- Worktables
- Cutting boards

[48] Metro Association of Family Resource Programs (MAFRP), *Effective Practices Project: Family Support Health and Safety Toolkit*, prepared by Leslie Wright, Novita Interpares Limited, 2005.
[49] The following lists have been adapted from MAFRP, *Effective Practices Project*, 2005; and from Toronto Public Health (TPH), *Food Handler Certification Program*, 4th Edition, 2004, page 27. Available at: www.toronto.ca/health/foodhandler/pdf/fh_document.pdf.

Surfaces that are touched regularly by a large number of people should be cleaned and sanitized **at the end of each drop-in day**. These include:

- Door knobs / door handles
- Windows and window latches
- Taps in bathroom
- Toilet seats and toilet handles
- Sinks
- Light switches
- Telephones
- Furniture (where possible; it is a good practice to have chairs made of material that can easily be wiped down, e.g. vinyl)

The following appliances should be cleaned and sanitized **after each use**:

- Dishwasher strainer
- Sinks
- Can openers
- Blenders and food processors
- Stove tops

The following are to be cleaned **immediately when there is a spill and thoroughly at least once a month**:

- Ovens
- Dishwashers
- Cupboards, drawers, shelves
- Refrigerators
- Oven fan hoods

Microwaves should be cleaned immediately when there is a spill and thoroughly at least once a week. **Freezers** are to be cleaned immediately when there is a spill and thoroughly at least twice per year. Freezers are to be emptied out monthly; food should not be stored for over one month.

Dishes and Utensils

In some drop-ins, plastic cutlery and paper or Styrofoam cups and dishes are used. This helps small-scale drop-ins with smaller kitchen facilities provide food in a sanitary way; however, the toll this takes on the environment can be severe. It is a good practice for drop-ins to look into funding sources for a more environmentally sustainable system (for example, money is available through the Health and Safety branch of the City of Toronto's Homeless Initiatives Fund for dishwashers and other appliances).

All dishes and utensils used in cooking should be washed in the dishwasher, if you have one.

If you are washing dishes by hand, you should follow this procedure:[50]

1. Sort, scrape, and pre-rinse dishes.
2. Wash dishes with warm water and detergent.
3. Rinse with clean water (the water should have a minimum temperature of 43 degrees Celsius).
4. Soak the dishes for a minimum of 45 seconds in:
   - A 100 mg/Litre chlorine solution at a minimum temperature of 24°C (see **Appendix 5H.1**), OR
   - Clean water at a minimum temperature of 77°C.
5. Change sanitizing water frequently to maintain its temperature and/or to maintain its concentration of bleach.
6. Sanitize sinks, taps, and faucets after washing dishes.
7. Allow dishes to air dry rather than using a towel to dry them.

Ideally, a **three-compartment sink** should be used – one compartment for washing, one for rinsing, and one for sanitizing. If you do not have a three-compartment sink, washing and rinsing may done in the same compartment, but sanitizing must always be done separately – whether in a different sink compartment, or in another basin or container.

Kitchen Linen

It is a good practice to change kitchen linen at least once a day and as required throughout the day. Do not use cloths designated for washing utensils, food preparation areas, or serving surfaces for any other purposes.[51]

Bathrooms

Toilets and flushing handles should be cleaned and sanitized at least once a day, and the toilet paper supply should be checked daily. Bathroom sinks and countertops should be cleaned and sanitized at least once per day. Bathroom floors should be swept or vacuumed daily and mopped with cleaner when obviously dirty.[52] The frequency of these cleanings and checks may increase if you have a high volume of participants coming through your drop-in.

ATTACHMENT:
- **Appendix 5H.1 – Bleach and Water Solutions**

[50] Adapted from TPH, *Food Handler Certification Program*, pages 53-56, and from MAFRP, *Family Support Health and Safety Toolkit*, 2005.
[51] MAFRP, *Family Support Health and Safety Toolkit*, 2005.
[52] *Ibid.*

Appendix 5H.1 Bleach and Water Solutions

Source: #1: Toronto Public Health (TPH), "Fact Sheet: Bleach and Water for Disinfecting," 2 April 2003 (poster available for download at: www.toronto.ca/health/sars/pdf/sars_disinfecting.pdf); #2: TPH, *Breaking the Chain*, March 2006, page 30 (document available for download at: www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/committees/hl/hl060410/it009.pdf); and #3: TPH, *Food Handler Certification Program*, 4th Ed., 2004 (available at: www.toronto.ca/health/foodhandler/pdf/fh_document.pdf).

BLEACH AND WATER SOLUTIONS

#1 Everyday Cleaning Bleach and Water Solution

Use:
For disinfecting surfaces such as:

- Counter tops;
- Sinks, faucets, and toilets;
- Building fixtures, including door handles and telephones; and
- Toys.

Preparation:
Mix 1 teaspoon of household bleach with 2 cups of water. (The ratio is about 99 parts of water with one part bleach.) Be careful not to spill on your skin.

#2 Extra-Strength Cleaning Bleach and Water Solution

Use:
For cleaning-up surfaces where there are bodily fluids (e.g. blood) or other contamination (not skin).

Preparation:
Mix nine equal parts of water with one part bleach. Be careful not to spill on your skin.

#3 Dishes Sanitizing Bleach and Water Solution

Use:
For sanitizing dishes after they have been hand-washed using detergent and rinsed.

Preparation:
Mix 100mg of bleach with one litre of water at a minimum temperature of 24 degrees Celsius in a clean sink compartment or separate container. Let dishes soak for a minimum of 45 seconds.

SUBSECTION 5I
Safe Storage

Dishes and Utensils
When putting away the clean dishes and utensils, examine them carefully. Rewash any soiled items and discard any damaged items. Store knives, spoons, and forks in clean containers with the handles all pointing in one direction to avoid hand contact with eating surfaces.[53] Store glasses and cups upside-down on a clean, sanitized, and dry surface, and store all dishes on clean shelves or in clean cabinets. All utensils and dishes, including paper service, must be protected from contamination.[54]

Cleaning Materials
Staff should be familiar with the requirements of the Workplace Hazardous Material Information System (WHMIS).[55]

Soap, detergents, sanitizer, and any other washing solutions should be clearly labeled and kept in a locked cupboard if possible. Dry floor mops should be shaken outside after every use and laundered when noticeably dirty. Sponge mops should be hung with the head up and the handle down to dry. The sponge head should be rinsed in a sanitizing solution and wrung out once a week. Rag mops should be hung head up to dry and laundered once a week.[56]

Garbage
Handling, storing, and disposing of waste material safely is important in maintaining a clean facility and preventing the spread of disease.

Good practices include the following:[57]

- Make separate garbage containers available in the washrooms, kitchen, eating, and program areas.
- Keep garbage containers tightly covered and away from food.
- Ensure that program sites have enough covered metal or durable plastic containers for all garbage and waste materials.
- Ensure indoor garbage containers are waterproof and have a tightly fitting lid, preferably operated by a foot pedal.
- Plastic liners must be used in garbage containers.

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[53] Toronto Public Health (TPH), *Food Handler Certification Program*, 4th Edition, 2004, page 56. Available at: www.toronto.ca/health/foodhandler/pdf/fh_document.pdf.
[54] Metro Association of Family Resource Programs (MAFRP), *Effective Practices Project: Family Support Health and Safety Toolkit*, prepared by Leslie Wright, Novita Interpares Limited, 2005.
[55] See www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Regs/English/900860_e.htm for the WHMIS regulation in the Ontario Health and Safety Act. See also www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers and www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/whmis for answers to frequently asked questions about the regulation.
[56] MAFRP, *Family Support Health and Safety Toolkit*, 2005.
[57] Adapted from *ibid*.

- Dispose of garbage daily and insert a new liner in the container. Garbage must not be left overnight in the kitchen area or wherever food is kept.
- Clean and sanitize containers once a week and whenever there is a leak or containers are visibly soiled.
- Keep outside garbage areas clean and sanitary, minimizing odours.
- Follow proper recycling methods.

When disposing of garbage, make sure never to touch it with your hands or any other part of your body – for example, don't put your foot inside the container to stamp it down, or reach in with your hand to push it down (even if you are wearing gloves). Containers may contain dangerous or contaminated materials such as sharps. If a container is overflowing, use tongs (or some other type of tool) to move excess garbage from one bag to another.[58]

Pest Control

Pests such as cockroaches, flies, mice, and rats contribute to the spread of dirt and disease in food areas.

A pest control program including the following points should be in place:[59]

- **Keep all areas clean** – It is important to clean, not just the tops of counters and other surfaces (as described above), but also behind for stationary equipment and shelving. Items must be stored on racks or shelves at least fifteen centimeters (6 inches) above the floor.
- **Exclude pests** – Screen doors and windows. Caulk and fill all holes and crevices.
- **Eliminate all breeding and nesting areas** – Keep storage areas clean and free of unused equipment. Eliminate any food and water source such as food scraps, spillage, or water leaks. If possible, store all food in sealed containers.
- **Check goods received for infestations** – Dried food must be inspected for food infesting pests, their eggs and larvae. Examples are moths, beetles and worms
- **Reporting** – Make sure to report any sightings of pests or infestations.
- **Disposal** – Properly dispose of any dead pests immediately
- **Pest control services** – Look up the number of a local licensed pest control company and include it on the list of emergency contact numbers by the phone.

[58] TPH, *Breaking the Chain: Infection Prevention and Control for Homeless and Housing Service Providers*, March 2006, page 27. Available at: www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/committees/hl/hl060410/it009.pdf.
[59] Adapted from TPH, *Food Handler Certification Program*, pages 60-61.

SUBSECTION 5J
Food and Nutrition

Drop-in centres need to ensure that the food and snacks they provide for participants are nutritious and take into account health issues and respect individual preferences.

Obtaining Food

Obtaining food is one of the major difficulties faced by drop-ins. Fresh and nutritious food can be expensive, and most drop-ins must rely on donations.

Food donations come from three main sources:

1. **The general public** (through food drives and Daily Bread);
2. **Local businesses** that develop relationships with their neighbourhood drop-in and regularly send over surplus food; and
3. **Charitable organizations** (like Second Harvest) that pick up excess, unused, or recently expired perishable foods from grocery stores, food manufacturers, hotels, and caterers and redistribute them to social service agencies.

The two main challenges to relying on donated food are **consistency** and **quality**. In the first instance, it is difficult to ensure consistent amounts of particular food staples, particularly when attempting to plan meals for hundreds of people in advance. In the second instance, donations often consist of expired foods that are no longer saleable.

Some drop-ins refuse to accept **expired food** from these organizations on the grounds that, if it is not fit for general consumption, it is not fit for anyone's consumption and should not be served to socially marginalized people who often have poor health and compromised immune systems. An alternative strategy to accepting expired food donations is to accept only surplus food donations. This may be achieved through developing friendly relationships and formal partnerships with local merchants who can vouch for the quality of the food they pass on.

Other drop-ins argue that expiry dates always err on the side of caution, and that market demands for fresh food are often based on aesthetics or taste rather than health concerns. For example, most people would eat day-old bread, but few would pay full price for it in a store. It is important, of course, to examine the food that is donated and determine whether or not it is still good; **a basic rule of thumb is to not serve anything that you would not eat yourself**.

Fruits and Vegetables

It can be a challenge to include healthy portions of fruits and vegetables in the meals served. Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating recommends that people eat 5 to 10 servings of vegetables and fruit every day. The health benefits of this diet are high; people who eat five or more servings of fruit and vegetables as part of a balanced diet each day have a reduced risk of developing heart disease, hypertension, some types of cancer, diabetes, and other chronic diseases.[60] It is also important for people whose immune systems are already compromised to eat healthy food.

A "serving" is defined as:[61]

- 1 medium-sized vegetable or fruit;
- 125 mL (½ cup) of raw, cooked, or canned vegetables or fruit;
- 250 mL (1 cup) of raw, leafy vegetables, such as salad;
- 50 mL (¼ cup) of dried fruit; or
- 125 mL (½ cup) of 100% fruit or vegetable juice.

There are many challenges to drop-ins who want to serve fruits and vegetables:

1. **Stable sources of food.** For drop-ins who do not have stable funding for meals and rely heavily on donated items, it is difficult to get large quantities of fresh produce (see "Obtaining Food" above).

2. **Cost.** Fresh fruit and vegetables can be expensive. Buying **in-season** Ontario fruits and vegetables can greatly reduce the cost, as can shopping at **farmers' markets** rather than grocery stores. Toronto Public Health provides a list of seasonal and year-round farmers' markets, with a chart indicating the availability of local produce by month at: www.toronto.ca/health/vf/vf_your_barriers.htm. Certain vegetables and fruits – such as potatoes, squash, cabbage, apples, and pears – are still locally available and relatively inexpensive out of season and throughout the winter. Finally, **frozen or canned options** are still nutrient-rich and are often cheaper than fresh produce.[62]

3. **Taste preferences.** Many participants who are simply uninterested in eating fruits or vegetables, and may push them to one side on the plate. If this is a concern at your drop-in, it is a good practice to purée vegetables and make them part of the sauce, stew, casserole, or chili that you are preparing.

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[60] Toronto Public Health (TPH), Invite Us Along: Fruit and Vegetable Campaign, "5 to 10 a day; Are you getting enough?" (www.toronto.ca/health/vf/vf_5to10.htm) and "What are YOUR barriers to getting enough vegetables and fruit?" (www.toronto.ca/health/vf/vf_your_barriers.htm).
[61] TPH, "5 to 10 a day; Are you getting enough?"
[62] TPH, "What are YOUR barriers to getting enough vegetables and fruit?"

Special Diet Needs

It is a good practice to think about the diversity of participants and their special food requirements. Some participants may not be able to eat food such as pork or beef due to **religious restrictions**; others may have **allergies** or other food sensitivities; others may have **health conditions** like diabetes or AIDS that require particular attention to nutritional balance and food preparation; others may be **vegetarian**.

With vegetarians, drop-ins often respond with a "**double-double**" approach – two servings of the starch, two servings of the vegetables – rather than plan separate meals. The drawback to this approach is that it may not provide adequate protein or nutritional balance. However, most drop-ins report only a very small minority of vegetarians and inadequate resources to cook separate meals.

One solution is to work out an agreement with local grocery stores or small businesses to donate frozen vegan and vegetarian entrées. These can be kept in the freezer for long periods of time, and quickly heated up when a participant requests a vegetarian option. This approach can be taken whenever there are infrequent requests for special diets.

Whenever there are one or more individuals with special needs who regularly access the drop-in, it is a good practice to take these needs into account when preparing the main meals. For example, if cooking a pot of chili, pour some into a smaller container and add chickpeas, then add meat to the bigger pot.

Allergies

Although you cannot plan for every allergy that a potential drop-in participant may have, it is a good practice to avoid some of the most common and most dangerous items linked to food sensitivities. For example, use vegetable oil when cooking rather than peanut oil.[63] Servers should be aware of which ingredients were used in the preparation of the meal so that if a participant asks, the servers can respond appropriately and a potentially hazardous situation can be avoided. If a person has a severe allergic reaction, call 911.

Food Storage

Dry goods should be stored at least fifteen centimeters (6 inches) above the floor to make it more difficult for pests to access them. It is a good practice to store bulk items (e.g. cereals or rice) in re-sealable jars, since the cardboard or plastic packages they come in may be easily gnawed through. These practices not only protect dry goods from pests, but also protect them from flooding or spilled water (for example, from a mop bucket). Food should not be stored in the same area as possible sources of contamination (for example, cleaning supplies). Items should be checked regularly for expiry dates and thrown away as needed.

Please read the sections below on temperature control and cross-contamination for a discussion of proper storage of perishable goods such as meat and dairy products.

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[63] TPH, *Food Handler Certification Program*, 4th Edition, 2004, page 26. Available at: www.toronto.ca/health/foodhandler/pdf/fh_document.pdf.

Food Preparation

It is recommended that all staff handling food and, ideally, all volunteers handling food, take the Toronto Public Health Food Handler Certification Program. You can call 416-338-FOOD for more information.

The Good Practices Toolkit extracts and summarizes some of the basic protocols for safe food preparation from Toronto Public Health's *Food Handler Certification Program*, but this should not be understood as a substitute for the training provided by TPH or the full discussion contained in the original document (available online at www.toronto.ca/health/foodhandler/pdf/fh_document.pdf).

Temperature Control

Most food poisonings occur because hazardous foods were improperly stored, giving pathogenic bacteria a chance to grow. Toronto Public Health defines pathogens as "harmful micro-organisms that can cause disease in humans" and hazardous food as "food that is able to support the growth of pathogenic micro-organisms or the production of toxins." This includes dairy products and meat, especially poultry and ground meats.

Although food-borne illness is one of the most common diseases affecting people, it often goes untreated. Symptoms can include mild stomach discomfort, vomiting, diarrhea and, in some cases, death. Illness can occur within one hour to several days after consuming the contaminated food.[64]

The Danger Zone

"The danger zone" is the temperature range between 4 and 60 degrees Celsius (4°C to 60°C). This is the temperature range that allows bacteria to multiply fast enough to cause food-poisoning. When preparing or serving meals, do not allow hazardous food to remain in the danger zone for more than two hours. If you are using steam tables, cover food to keep the heat in, and regularly check that the temperature is above 60°C using a thermometer.[65]

Using the Thermometer. To check the internal temperature of food, use the following procedure:[66]

1. Insert a probe thermometer into the thickest part of the food. Be careful to ensure that it does not touch the pot, container, or bone (if meat); this will give a falsely high reading.
2. Clean and sanitize the probe after each use and before inserting it into the next food item.

[64] *Ibid.*, pages 31, 11, and 16.
[65] *Ibid.*, page 32.
[66] *Ibid.* page 31.

Before checking temperatures, it is important to calibrate your thermometer to ensure that your reading is accurate:[67]

1. Fill a medium-sized glass with ice. Add water to ice. Place thermometer in glass.
2. Wait 3 minutes. Stir water occasionally.
3. After 3 minutes, thermometer should read 0°C (32°F).
4. If not, leave probe in ice water.
5. Using pliers or a small wrench, turn the adjustable nut on the back of the thermometer head until the needle reaches 0°C (32°F). You may need to add more ice.
6. Wait 3 minutes. Stir occasionally. Readjust the nut if required for the needle to read 0°C (32°F).

Refrigeration. Each refrigerator and freezer must be equipped with a reliable thermometer to ensure that proper temperatures are maintained. In general, food should be kept at a temperature below 4°C (outside of the danger zone). Frozen food should be stored at temperatures below -18°C. Hazardous food stored below -20°C for 7 days, or below -35°C for 15 hours will kill parasites and their eggs. Pathogenic bacteria do not grow at temperatures below -18°C, but will survive. Do not allow food to cool to room temperature before storing it in the refrigerator; cool food quickly using shallow pans of cold water or an ice bath.[68]

Cooking Food Thoroughly. Different types of hazardous foods have different cooking and reheating temperatures. See **Appendix 5J.1** for a chart.

Leftovers. Foods that have been frozen and allowed to thaw should not be refrozen unless cooked first. Food should be reheated to at least 74°C. Drop-ins that provide participants with leftover food to take away with them should educate people about safe food storage. One approach is to ask people to sign a waiver when they take food with them that indicates their understanding that food needs to be stored under specific conditions (e.g. in a freezer or fridge) and eaten within a specific timeframe.

Hand-Washing

Staff should wash their hands thoroughly before preparing food. The kitchen should be equipped with a hand-washing sink. If it is not, drop-ins should prioritize seeking the funding to install one. Ensure paper towels are available to dry hands; do not use linen towels.[69] Hand-washing posters should be posted in the drop-in; posters are available for downloading and printing from the Toronto Public Health web site.[70]

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[67] *Ibid.*, page 67.
[68] *Ibid.*, pages 32-33 and 36.
[69] Metro Association of Family Resource Programs (MAFRP), *Effective Practices Project: Family Support Health and Safety Toolkit*, prepared by Leslie Wright, Novita Interpares Limited, 2005.
[70] TPH, "Handwashing:" www.toronto.ca/health/sars/pdf/sars_handwashing.pdf.

The following hand-washing procedure should be followed by all staff and volunteers:[71]

1. Use liquid soap and warm running water.
2. Wet your hands and add soap.
3. Rub your hands vigorously for fifteen seconds.
4. Wash all surfaces, including the backs of hands and between fingers.
5. Rinse your hands well under running water.
6. Dry your hands thoroughly with a single-use towel.
7. Turn off the taps with a single-use towel and dispose of it in waste container.

Cross-Contamination[72]

It is important to prevent contact between food that is ready to eat and raw food, pathogenic bacteria, or chemicals. Such cross-contamination can make prepared food unsafe to eat.

Cross-contamination can be avoided through:

- Washing hands before and after handling food;
- Making sure cutting boards, knives, and equipment are cleaned and sanitized after they come in contact with hazardous food;
- Using plastic cutting boards for meat rather than wooden cutting boards (it is more difficult to sanitize the wooden surface and pathogenic bacteria may become trapped in its cracks);
- Storing cooked or ready-to-eat food in a separate refrigerator or on a shelf in the fridge above raw food;
- Covering all food and drinks inside the fridge;
- Labeling chemicals and cleaning products and storing them away from food;
- Using specially designated surfaces for foods (for example, using a separate cutting board for meat exclusively); and
- Ensuring that tabletops are free of dents, chips, and cracks.

ATTACHMENT:
- **Appendix 5J.1 – Temperatures for Cooking and Reheating Hazardous Food**

[71] This procedure has been adapted from TPH, *Breaking the Chain*, page 103, and MAFRP, *Family Support Health and Safety Toolkit*, 2005.
[72] TPH, *Food Handler Certification Program*, pages 37-38.

Appendix 5J.1 Temperatures for Cooking and Reheating Hazardous Food

Source: Toronto Public Health (TPH), *Food Handler Certification Program*, 4th Edition, 2004, pages 34-35. Available at: www.toronto.ca/health/foodhandler/pdf/fh_document.pdf.

COOK FOOD THOROUGHLY

Hazardous Food Item	Cooking ºC (ºF) for 15 seconds	Reheating ºC (ºF) for 15 seconds	Additional comments
Poultry: Whole	82 (180)	74 (165)	Make sure poultry is fully cooked; do not partially cook poultry and finish cooking it at a later time. Poultry is one of the most common sources of food-borne illness. Assume all poultry is contaminated with pathogenic bacteria (e.g. Salmonella and Campylobacter).
Poultry: • Other than whole poultry • All parts of ground poultry • All parts of ground meats that contain poultry	74 (165)	74 (165)	
A **food mixture** containing poultry, egg, meat, fish or another hazardous food	74 (165)	74 (165)	
Pork and pork products	71 (160)	71 (160)	
All parts of **ground meat**, other than ground meat that contains poultry	71 (160)	71 (160)	Cook hamburger all the way through, making sure the juices run clear and the meat is brown or grey. Ground meat is very dangerous as the pathogens (e.g. E. coli 0157:H7) are mixed throughout the meat mixture in the grinding process.
Fish	70 (158)	70 (158)	

SECTION 6
Community Relations

Building and maintaining strong community relations are an important part of the work of a drop-in. This Section starts with a descriptive overview of different levels of interaction between drop-ins and the wider community of individual neighbours and local businesses; the second is a discussion of a variety of methods for developing and improving these relationships:

- **6A COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP MODELS**

- **6B STARTING A NEW DROP-IN AND CONSULTING THE COMMUNITY**
  - Attachments
    - Appendix 6B.1 – Tips for Establishing Strong Community Relations when Starting a New Drop-In
    - Appendix 6B.2 – Tips for Holding Public Meetings

- **6C FOSTERING POSITIVE COMMUNITY RELATIONS**
  - Writing Community Relations into Job Descriptions
  - Soliciting Donations
  - Space-Sharing
  - Emergency Response
  - Attachments
    - Appendix 6C.1 – Sample Space Use Policy
    - Appendix 6C.2 – Sample Space Use Application

- **6D IMPROVING NEGATIVE COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

SUBSECTION 6A
Community Relationship Models

Relationships with neighbours range from active antagonism to peaceful coexistence to mutual support. These models are not exclusive categories; at any given time there may be individuals or groups in your community who fall into one of these categories. However, peaceful coexistence should be the baseline of community interactions, and mutual support should be a goal to work toward with as many neighbours and local businesses as possible.

Community relationship models include:

1. **Active antagonism.** Neighbours and local businesses view the drop-in and its participants as a problem. They do not understand what the drop-in does and they may actively work to close the drop-in (often through the local MP or City councilor). Drop-in participants may not, for their part, respect the property of neighbours or respond in constructive ways to their concerns (for example, they may ignore requests to not crowd the sidewalks in front of local stores when out for a smoke).

2. **Peaceful co-existence.** There is no animosity between the drop-in and its neighbours. Each group has a separate life, and only sporadic and minimal interactions occur (for example, individuals may say hello to each other on the street, or the drop-in may distribute flyers to advise when a renovation is about to take place). Most drop-ins need this basic level of tolerance and mutual respect to operate; however, an outbreak of violence in the community or another kind of critical incident can quickly change a peaceful situation into one of active antagonism.

3. **Mutual support.** Each group recognizes it has something to offer the other, and resources of time, space, money, and goods, are shared. These relationships between the drop-in and members of the wider community are spontaneous and may or may not be formalized. For example, staff may make a point of patronizing local businesses; a local restaurant, in turn, may cater a fundraising event for the drop-in. The drop-in may make its space available to community groups like the Rotary Club or the BIA, and these, in turn, may donate goods or services to the drop-in. Individuals may stop by the drop-in with donations of surplus goods.

SUBSECTION 6B
Starting a New Drop-In and Consulting the Community

Community consultations may be required for a variety of reasons – you may be starting a new drop-in, or moving an old drop-in to a new neighbourhood, or seeking neighbours' input on plans to renovate, re-zone, or build an addition onto an established drop-in. If you are starting a new drop-in, you will want to do some groundwork before you open your doors – you are not walking into a "blank slate" situation.[1]

Every area has a unique history and set of population demographics, local personalities, and political hot buttons, so getting a sense of the community is important:

- Find out who your neighbours are – what languages they speak, what their political leanings are, and what types of businesses they operate in the area
- Identify potential supporters, potential opponents, and community leaders (e.g. local politicians, BIA members, etc.)
- Network with other support agencies in the vicinity
- Assess how the site of your drop-in is currently perceived and used by your neighbours

For further elaboration of these points and for tips on how to establish strong community relations when starting a new drop-in, please see **Appendix 6B.1**.

You may consult with the community formally or informally. **Informal techniques** involve a lot of legwork – walking around the neighbourhood and talking to local people and local businesses. This method has the advantage of putting a friendly face to the drop-in and laying the groundwork for personal relationships.

Formal consultations may involve:

- Public meetings,
- Open houses,
- Canvassing neighbours, and
- Sending out flyers (translated into the main languages spoken in the community).

[1] This section on Community Consultations has been adapted in large part from HomeComing Community Choice Coalition, *Yes, In My Backyard: A guide for Ontario's supportive housing providers*, Revised edition, 2005. Available at: www.homecomingcoalition.ca/pdfs/YIMBY.pdf.

Formal consultations can sometimes have the unwanted effect of creating an issue where there does not need to be one, and pitting the drop-in against the community in an "us-them" struggle. However, formal consultations may be required by a re-zoning, renovation, or building process. One of the best ways to change the tone of a formal meeting is to invite local neighbours, business, and agencies who support the drop-in to the meeting to express their support. If possible, try to ensure that your supporters are the first speakers so that they can set the tone of the meeting. Please see **Appendix 6B.2** for more tips on holding public meetings.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Appendix 6B.1 – Tips for Establishing Strong Community Relations when Starting a New Drop-In**
- **Appendix 6B.2 – Tips for Holding Public Meetings**

Appendix 6B.1 Tips for Establishing Strong Community Relations when Starting a New Drop-In

Source: Adapted from HomeComing Community Choice Coalition, *Yes, In My Backyard: A guide for Ontario's supportive housing providers*, revised edition, 2005. Available at: www.homecomingcoalition.ca/pdfs/YIMBY.pdf.

Note: This document was written as a guide for supportive housing providers, but many of its points are relevant to drop-ins, as well; particularly when conducting community consultations for a new building or an addition to an older building.

TIPS FOR ESTABLISHING STRONG COMMUNITY RELATIONS WHEN STARTING A NEW DROP-IN

Keep in Mind

✓ **You are not asking a favour from the neighbours.**
✓ **You do not need the community's permission.**
✓ **This is not necessarily the time to educate the public about mental illness, poverty or other issues.** Although providing basic information to neighbours is a good practice, you do not want to suggest that neighbours have the right to choose their neighbours or restrict your ability to serve the population that you serve.

What Can You Do?

1. Find potential supporters that work or live near the site

As soon as you identify the location for the drop-in, begin to compile a list of friends, allies and supporters. These supporters will be your first source of information. Talk to them before you plan your strategy or approach the broader community.

You will draw on these friends to:

✓ Learn more about the location, and how it is seen by neighbours.
✓ Give you information about the community itself.
✓ Be a supportive voice at community meetings.
✓ Speak on behalf of your drop-in at public meetings.
✓ Write letters of support.

The most valuable supporters are individuals who live or own businesses closest to the site, and organizations that are respected in the immediate neighbourhood.

Consider:

✓ **Members of your own Board of Directors and staff who live near the site**.
✓ **The Board and staff of other social service organizations.** Contacts can be made through the Toronto Drop-in Network or the City of Toronto.
✓ **Other community or service agencies.** Again, speak to your own contacts first. Contact information can also be found through the Community Information Centre or, in Toronto, through the Network for Social Justice listserv.
✓ **Members of faith groups**, particularly those involved in Out of the Cold and other programs for homeless or under-housed people, who live in the neighbourhood.

2. Learn how the community sees the location now
Visit the area several times at different times of the day. Talk to your friends and supporters. Find out:

- ✓ **What the neighbourhood values about the site or building now.** If the site is a vacant lot, for example, are there mature trees? Is it a convenient short cut? Is it used as a playground? If the site has a building on it, will tenants be evicted? Is there anything attractive about the building's exterior that should be maintained? You may be able to adapt your proposal to preserve those things the neighbours value most.
- ✓ **What the neighbourhood dislikes about the site now.** You will want to show how your development improves the neighbourhood. If your site is a vacant lot, is it filled with trash? Do neighbours feel it is an unsafe hangout? Does it present an unsightly gap on a commercial street? If there is a building on the site now, will you be improving the exterior? Is it seen as a centre for crime now?

3. Learn about influential community members
Local support or opposition for your proposal will be shaped by community leaders. Community leaders also expect to be consulted – even if they have no official role in the approval of your development – and may be insulted if they are overlooked or deliberately ignored.

These leaders can include:

- ✓ Elected officials, especially the city councillor, but also the MP, MPP and school trustee
- ✓ The chair of community groups, residents' or ratepayers' associations, business improvement or business development groups
- ✓ Chairs or Executive Directors of local community centres or major agencies
- ✓ Local school principals
- ✓ Local religious leaders
- ✓ Editors of local newspapers
- ✓ Political aspirants (this is particularly crucial in election year)

You will need to develop an outreach strategy for these leaders. To inform this strategy, ask your supporters:

- ✓ Who the local leaders are.
- ✓ How they might be expected to respond to your proposal.
- ✓ Any public statements leaders may have made, for or against social housing or community services of any kind.
- ✓ Whether any of your known supporters have a close relationship with them.
- ✓ Any interest they might have in the outcome.

4. Hone your message
You know what your organization does. You also know your plans for the location. You may have described these plans to government funders. Now, you need to find the best way to describe yourselves, and your plans, to both supporters and opponents. You need a "message."

Start with your research. Have you found ways of describing your proposal that seem to resonate with the people you have interviewed? When do you find yourself having to clarify or explain? How are supporters describing the benefits of your proposal? And what are opponents saying about you, or about other drop-ins? There are also many resources in both the library and on the internet on creating a message and delivering it to the public and through the media. Once you have found a simple, compelling message, use it consistently in all written materials and public presentations. Imagine questions you will get, and practice answering them, always turning your answers back to your key message.

5. Canvassing neighbours

Some tips for knocking on doors to gain support for your proposal:

- ✓ **This is a good "early outreach" strategy**, timed before rumours have begun to circulate. Door-knocking can also be used after the drop-in is open as a "meet our neighbour" outreach.
- ✓ **Go out in pairs.** The ideal team includes someone who lives or works in the neighbourhood, as well as someone who is very informed about the details of the proposal. Early evening (before dark) and weekends are often the best times to visit.
- ✓ **Start with the most immediate neighbours to the site.** Ideally, you should have a flyer or handout describing the main features of the proposal (see Written Materials, below) to hand to people at the door, or to leave behind if no-one answers (with a "sorry we missed you" handwritten on the flyer).
- ✓ **At the door, explain briefly who you are and your proposal and the site involved, and offer to answer questions.** If they support the proposal, ask if they would be willing to come to a meeting and repeat what they have just said. Be sure to get their name and phone number. If they oppose the proposal, do not get into an argument. Answer questions or provide factual information, and show you are taking their concerns seriously. Say that you are carefully noting down their concerns, and will take their thoughts back to your board. You may also use these comments to develop a Question and Answer sheet. If you hear discriminatory comments, be sure to write these down and read them back to the speaker. This gives the speaker a chance to reflect on and retract their comments.
- ✓ **Keep a record of all the houses you visited** (to demonstrate your commitment to outreach), the names of any supporters (to invite to public meetings or other events), and comments or questions raised (to inform future meetings or written materials).

6. Written materials

Written materials can take the form of letters (ideally signed by a board member who lives or is otherwise known in area), or flyer-style invitations to an open house or other event. A two-page "frequently asked questions" can be an effective attachment. Use it both to explain your proposal and deal with concerns. All written materials should be cleanly designed and easy to read. But they do not need to be fancy. An expensive brochure can suggest you are squandering money.

Your written materials should convey:

- ✓ Who you are, and how your organization has been successful in the past.
- ✓ What you propose.
- ✓ What opportunities there are for input (this should not look like either a "done deal" or a "free for all," but rather a process of orderly consultation).
- ✓ How the drop-in will be managed, including the support you will provide.
- ✓ How to contact you.

If possible, translate your written materials into the languages most often spoken in the community around the site. Local libraries, community centres and schools may be able to suggest which languages to choose.

7. Open houses

Many organizations use open houses, rather than public meetings, as their chief way to inform and consult with the community. Unlike public meetings, which often foster an "us-them" dynamic, open houses offer opportunities for both informal and in-depth conversations.

Some tips:

- ✓ **Invite all neighbours within the immediate area, other community leaders, your own board, some tenants, the architect and your supporters.** Your Board and staff should have name tags, and be ready to greet visitors and answer questions. If extensive opposition is expected, some organizations have begun their outreach by asking supporters living near the site to invite their neighbours to open houses in their homes. In areas where many neighbours share a common religion, the local faith leader has been asked to host an open house, inviting members of the congregation to learn more about the proposal.
- ✓ **You may want to organize two open houses**, one on a weekday evening, the other on a weekend afternoon.
- ✓ **Create an inviting atmosphere.** Serve refreshments. Have at least one person equipped to amuse bored children while their parents talk. Have a "welcome" table. Invite visitors to sign a guest book, but do not require them to do so. Have written materials available to take away. Distribute "comment sheets" that allow people to write comments or ask questions. Thank visitors for coming.
- ✓ **Display photos of other drop-ins, letters of recommendation from neighbours or community organizations, and descriptions of the proposal.** Do not, however, have detailed architectural plans that suggest all important decisions have already been made.
- ✓ **Ask supporters whether you can contact them, or invite them to speak on the drop-in's behalf on other occasions.** Record concerns or objections, ideally obtaining the visitor's name and contact information. Do not get into arguments. Just repeat the facts, answer questions, and thank visitors for their input.

Ongoing Relations with Neighbours

Once your drop-in is under construction or renovation, keep neighbours informed of unavoidable disruptions (noise from heavy equipment, blockages to the street) and

particularly when the disruption will end! Give neighbours a contact number for complaints or concerns. After your drop-in is open is another major opportunity for community outreach. Many organizations have invited neighbours to open houses or barbecues. Other organizations maintain links with the community by sending representatives to residents' association meetings (not to report, but to participate as one member of the community).

Appendix 6B.2 Tips for Holding Public Meetings

Source: Adapted from HomeComing Community Choice Coalition, *Yes, In My Backyard: A guide for Ontario's supportive housing providers*, revised edition, 2005. Available at: www.homecomingcoalition.ca/pdfs/YIMBY.pdf.

Note: This document was written for supportive housing providers, but its suggestions have been adapted to drop-ins.

TIPS FOR HOLDING PUBLIC MEETINGS

1. Try to Break Down the "Us-Them" Dynamic that Can Plague these Meetings

✓ Invite both neighbours in immediate area, and your own **supporters**, to the meeting.

✓ Make sure the invitation **clearly describes the purpose** of the meeting, and where it fits in the entire consultation process.

✓ Choose a **neutral chair** to host and facilitate the meeting. A chair that both knows the community and exudes moral authority, such as a local religious leader, school principal or community centre director, is ideal. The chair should set the **ground rules** at the beginning of the meeting, and enforce these rules. A chair who states outright his or her commitment to human rights, including the rights of people with disabilities, can be a powerful force against slurs.

✓ One effective way to focus discussion is to post **flip-chart** paper across one wall. All comments are then recorded. If speakers repeat arguments, the chair can then note, "Yes, we have written that comment down. Are there any new comments?"

✓ If you can, organize **chairs in a semi-circle** or U-shape. Presenters should speak briefly, cover the key aspects of the proposal, and then rejoin the "circle" when they are not speaking.

✓ Set up **microphones** for speakers, and ask speakers to identify themselves before they speak.

✓ Often the **tone** of the meeting will be set by the first few speakers. Ensure your supporters are among the first, ideally the very first, speakers to approach the microphone.

✓ Ensure that **all comments are directed to the chair**. The chair can then ask you, as the proponents, to answer questions or clarify information. You should not be jumping up to argue with or refute speakers. Nor should you make any **promises** except to listen carefully, and bring back comments to your board.

2. Know the Difference between Discrimination and Legitimate Opposition

There could be many legitimate reasons for opposing a new drop-in: concerns about design, parking, access or other characteristics of the proposed building or site plan. You may not agree with these concerns, but they are not discriminatory. It is only discrimination if the opposition is based on the characteristics of the people who will be using these facilities.

✓ **Use the "cringe" test.** To identify discriminatory statements, start by using the "cringe" test. If you substituted the word "black" or "Greek" or "gay" for the term "homeless people" or "people on welfare" or "people with addictions," would the statement make any fair-minded person cringe?

✓ **Point out the discrimination.** People or organizations who would never think of opposing a proposal on racial or ethnic grounds will oppose it for homeless people or people with mental health issues. Simply reminding them that the Ontario Human Rights Code prohibits discrimination on various grounds (including disability and the receipt of public assistance) can make them stop. This is especially true of community leaders who would be shamed by charges of discrimination. Does this mean your opponents will simply cover up their prejudices? Of course. On the other hand, changing language can be the first step in changing hearts and minds – as many human rights activists know. And once you are talking about legitimate issues, then you can respond with facts and arguments.

3. Be Prepared for Opposition

Changes of any kind – even positive changes – often receive a wary response from neighbours. The widespread prejudice and fear that surrounds homeless people or people living in poverty almost guarantees that, no matter how good your proposal, or how carefully you plan, you will receive some community opposition.

The articulated opposition to any social service development typically centres on two issues:

✓ **Design issues** –building dimensions, appearance and parking.

✓ **Process issues** – how and when the community is consulted, and whether the rights of the community (perceived or actual) are being upheld.

However, actual opposition is also likely to be based on:

✓ Context and history – issues that may have nothing to do with your proposal but affect how people feel about it. These could include the community's experience with existing services or a history of feeling ignored as a community.

✓ Prejudices about social service facilities – concerns about property values, traffic, noise and property management.

✓ Prejudices and fears about homeless people or people living in poverty and particularly fears about safety and exposure to people who are "different."

✓ Concerns about the impact of "different" people in their neighbourhood.

4. Predictable Objections – And How to Deal with Them

Below are some of the most commonly heard objections, and a response to each. You may not have the chance to give the entire answer at a public meeting; sometimes people are too angry or upset to hear a reasoned answer. However, you can go to meetings with confidence, knowing there are answers, backed by research and hard facts, to unfair questions or objections. These objections are rooted in fears and biases that can be challenged and refuted.

"Our neighbourhood already has its fair share of social services"

If this neighbourhood had a large percentage of Greek people, or Catholics, or Black people, would you say the neighbourhood had more than its fair share, and similar people should be turned away? Probably not – partly because we know it is against the law to discriminate against Greeks, Catholics, and Black people. It is

also against the law to discriminate against homeless people or people living in poverty. No part of the city can be, or should be, "off limits" to any group of people.

But there is another reason we don't object to Greek or Chinese or Caribbean communities: we see ethnic neighbourhoods as part of the richness of the city. Homeless and marginalized people are also part of this city. The concept of "fair share" implies that these people are a burden that must be "spread out" to allow neighbourhoods to manage the burden. Homelessness and poverty can certainly be a burden to the people who find themselves in this state, just as cancer is a burden to the people who have it. But that does not translate into a burden to people who live next door, or on the same street.

"When you bring in problem people, you get problem neighbourhoods."

Some people who are homeless do have a problem. That problem is inadequate housing, or not enough money to afford the housing they have now, or inadequate support services. And these problems can become neighbourhood problems if people end up spending their days and nights on the sidewalk or in the parks. These problems are not created by good support services such as the ones we propose – they are solved by them.

"This development is too close to the school (or the daycare, or the playground, or to family homes)."

Your question implies that homeless people are dangerous. This is simply not the case.

"You're spending taxpayers' money, so we have a right to say how our money is being spent."

I know my tax dollars pay for hospitals, but that doesn't give me the right to cruise around hospital wards and decide who should be there and who should not. Instead, we elect officials who support policies we believe in. We have a civil service that carries out these policies, and we have professionals who make decisions according to the standards of their profession. It's the same with social service facilities.

SUBSECTION 6C
Fostering Positive Community Relations

Many drop-ins have discovered that without active public relations and community relationship-building, a situation of peaceful co-existence can rapidly change into hostile antagonism. A clash between a program participant and a local resident or business owner can ignite a neighbourhood backlash against a drop-in. Even well-established drop-ins may be vulnerable to these types of backlashes, as they can endanger their standing with their landlord, funders, Board of Directors, sponsoring agency, insurance company, and so forth.

For these reasons, it is a good strategy to proactively develop community relationships that will allow neighbours to put such incidents into context or to respond to them with requests for a mutually-developed resolution, rather than with calls for the drop-in to close its doors.

Writing Community Relations into Job Descriptions

When advertising for a position, or reviewing an employee's job description, build in a community relations component. As one drop-in manager notes, "There is no replacement for walking around the neighbourhood and having daily interactions with local people and businesses." This should not be seen as an "add-on" to a position, but an integral part of the job. Some drop-ins hire a Doorperson to foster and maintain positive community relations. The Doorperson works primarily in front of the drop-in's doors. They welcome participants to the centre, monitor behaviour in the vicinity of the drop-in, and maintain frequent contact with nearby residents and businesses. (See Appendix 4E.3 for a sample Doorperson job description).

Soliciting Donations and Fundraising

Often the most common form of positive community relations is donations. Asking for donations – whether of money, in-kind gifts, or volunteer time – is a way of educating your neighbours on the work that you do and giving them a stake in your success. When neighbours volunteer or make donations to the drop-in, they may feel more protective of it and defend it to detractors. It is important to recognize these donations, whether by a thank-you letter, a tax receipt (if your organization is a registered charity), or both. See Section 8 for strategies in soliciting donations and further discussion of fundraising issues.

Fundraising events offer opportunities to socialize with neighbours and raise the visibility of the drop-in and its participants in a positive way. Open houses, bake sales, and other social events are a good way to challenge negative stereotypes of drop-in participants. One participant suggested that drop-ins find ways to reach out to the wider community by filling business niches. For example, the New Years celebrations at Nathan Phillips Square can be expensive; it might work for a drop-in or several drop-ins to organize a food stand there that served cups of hot chocolate and plates of pancakes for a dollar each. These sorts of fundraising activities help to foster community support and give

people who might normally donate to large, international charities a sense of the initiatives that are going on locally.

Space-Sharing

It is a good practice for drop-ins to find ways to give back to their local community; this will help neighbours to see the drop-in as a resource and a benefit to the neighbourhood. One much-needed resource that a lot of drop-ins can share with their communities is space. Many drop-ins have large rooms that individuals, clubs, or other organizations can make use of. Some drop-ins also have an outdoor courtyard or front yard space.

Space-sharing may be done informally or formally, depending on the size and complexity of your drop-in. **Appendix 6C.1** gives a sample space use policy and **Appendix 6C.2** gives a sample space use application form from a large, multi-service community centre. If you run a smaller drop-in, you may not need such a complex policy and detailed application form.

When developing your own space-sharing policy, you may find it useful to consider:

- **Costs** – Will you provide the space for free or for a price? If the latter, will you charge market rates or reduced rates? Will you charge everyone the same amount? The detailed space use policy attached as **Appendix 6C.1** applies a different set of charges to different types of users. For example, rental fees are charged for fundraising events, LLBO licensed events, conferences, parties, election campaign events, and space booked outside of the building's regular hours. Meeting space is free for organizations and programs that serve the centre's priority communities.

- **Rules** – What are the guidelines for appropriate use of the space? What are the responsibilities of the users? To what extent must they clean up afterward?

- **Restrictions** – Is there any activity or group that your drop-in would not feel comfortable accommodating? For example, if your drop-in has a no-alcohol policy, does that extend to other groups who may want to organize events in your space? If you decide to permit alcohol, how will you ensure that the group has obtained the appropriate permit to sell or serve it?

- **Monitoring** – How will you ensure that the rules you set out are being followed? How will you monitor whether a group is using your space appropriately or not? The sample space use policy attached as **Appendix 6C.1** subjects programs operating in its space to periodic review, and gives a list of types of organizations that may be restricted from using its

space altogether.

- **Priorities** – If the demand for use of your space becomes very high, how will you determine which groups or individuals get priority?

- **Participant Reactions** – How will participants respond to sharing their space with neighbours? It is a good practice to consult with participants about whether or not the drop-in space should be made available to others and what the basic expectations for use of the space should be.

Emergency Response

Drop-in space can also be used to respond to local emergencies, as a central gathering place for neighbouring residents.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Appendix 6C.1 – Sample Space Use Policy**
- **Appendix 6C.2 – Sample Space Use Application**

Appendix 6C.1 Sample Space Use Policy

Note: This policy has been adapted from a multi-service community centre space use policy (collected during the TDIN Good Practices Toolkit consultations in May-July 2006). As such, the policy is very elaborate and addresses a wide range of circumstances and conditions. Smaller-scale drop-ins may not need this level of complexity.

[DROP-IN NAME] SPACE USE POLICY

Article I
General Statements and Policies

Purpose: The purpose of this document is to describe the policies and priorities for space to be allocated among different community groups and activities at [Drop-In Name]. An addendum to the policy outlines processes and procedures.

Policy in relation to strategic planning processes: From time to time the Board of Management or its committees may review or amend this policy to reflect emerging community needs. The review process will respect and seek input from the community.

Who starts activities: [Drop-In Name] sees itself as a resource to be used by the community as well as a creator of activities for the community. Therefore activities can be started by individuals and/or groups approaching staff with their ideas and needs. The Board and staff at [Drop-In Name] may also promote and create new activities.

Context: This document is grounded in the mission statement, strategic plan and policies of The [Drop-In Name]. Here are some of the important points from those documents:

1. **Mission Statement:** [Drop-In Name] is a meeting-place and focus for its vital and varied downtown community. Within a supportive environment, it responds to community issues and needs by supplying the resources and opportunities to foster self-determination. It is committed to principles of accessibility, voluntarism, individual dignity and value, participation, and celebration.
2. **Policy on Non Discrimination:** [Drop-In Name] adopts and upholds the City of Toronto policy statement which prohibits discrimination and harassment and protects the right to be free of hate activity based on age, ancestry, citizenship,

creed (religion), colour, disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender identity, level of literacy, marital status, place of origin, membership in a union or staff association, political affiliation, race, receipt of public assistance, record of offenses, sex, sexual orientation or any other personal characteristics by or within the organization.

Article II
Responsibilities

Responsibilities of [Drop-In Name] to Organizations and Individuals using [Drop-In Name]:

1. [Drop-In Name] supplies the resources and opportunities to foster self determination.
2. [Drop-In Name] has clear and transparent procedures for allocating space.
3. [Drop-In Name] provides free space to programs (Article III, parts 1, 2 and 3) which serve our priority communities, to the best of its ability, given competing demands and limited capacity. It also provides free organizational meeting space (Article III, part 4) and provides space for rental activities and individuals (Article III, parts 5 and 6).
4. [Drop-In Name] resolves disputes between groups regarding space, when conflicts arise.
5. [Drop-In Name]'s anti harassment and anti discrimination policies, and their implementation, ensure that all users enjoy safe space, free from discrimination.
6. [Drop-In Name] has safety procedures in place, including procedures for fire safety. These procedures are posted and otherwise available to facilitators and program leaders.
7. [Drop-In Name] promotes programs that take place at [Drop-In Name].
8. [Drop-In Name] communicates with program leadership and fosters communication between groups and throughout the community.
9. [Drop-In Name] has a co-operative working relationship with all partnership programs.
10. [Drop-In Name] may advise program leaders and facilitators regarding recommended meeting guidelines, leadership changeover, governance, and other issues.
11. Program leaders and facilitators are given a free membership in recognition of their contribution as volunteers, and to facilitate communication between [Drop-In Name] and the program.

Responsibilities of Organizations and Individuals to [Drop-In Name]:

1. Activities taking place at [Drop-In Name] enhance and promote the purposes of [Drop-In Name], as stated in the Mission Statement and Anti-Discrimination Policy.
2. All groups, including those which are chapters of larger organizations, remain fully subject to [Drop-In Name]'s policies, constitution and administrative guidelines.

3. All users of [Drop-In Name] co-operate with the staff in keeping the building clean and safe. This includes, out of courtesy, stacking furniture and leaving a room neat and clean for the next user.
4. The leadership in every organization using space at [Drop-In Name] is encouraged to become familiar with safety issues, such as fire exit procedures, and communicate regularly with their members about safety.
5. After each meeting, the number of attendees at the meeting should be reported to the front desk staff for [Drop-In Name]'s records.
6. When there are leadership changes, the front desk staff must be notified of the contact information for the new facilitator or program leader.
7. Program leaders and facilitators are asked to encourage participants to become members of [Drop-In Name] and to participate in other [Drop-In Name] activities
8. All programs are open to new members. Facilitators and leaders are asked to encourage people in the local community to join or participate in their program.
9. Community Programs are non-profit in organization and operation.
10. Community Programs have an inclusive decision making process, with members able to participate in activities as organizers and coordinators, not merely as observers and supporters.
11. Partnership and community programs should demonstrate the ability to successfully administer their own affairs, including keeping accurate financial records. These records may be reviewed by drop-instaff on request.

Article III
Priorities and Definitions

Priorities: The following types of groups and activities are given priority for use of space at [Drop-In Name]:

- [Drop-In Name] Programs and Partnership Programs, as defined below, have the highest priority for use of space.
- Community programs have the next priority for use of space.
- Groups holding organizational meetings, rental groups and individuals have a lower priority for use of space.

Once space is booked a group is not cancelled to accommodate a group from a higher priority category, unless there are exceptional circumstances. In exceptional circumstances, [Drop-In Name] may clear the building by moving scheduled programs off site or by canceling regularly scheduled meetings.

Definitions:

1. **[Drop-In Name] Programs** are approved by the Board and
   - Provide services to the local community.
   - Are co-ordinated by program staff of [Drop-In Name].
   - Have volunteers who are recruited through [Drop-In Name]'s volunteer program.
   - Are funded through [Drop-In Name]'s self-sustaining budget lines.

- Receive administrative and communications (design) support from the front desk / information centre staff.

Space Use: [Drop-In Name] Programs have free use of space.

2. **[Drop-In Name] Partnership Programs** are created by another agency in partnership with [Drop-In Name] and
   - May include courses or workshops offered by partner agency staff.
   - Serve the local community.
   - Provide activities at [Drop-In Name].
   - Activities are coordinated and provided by the partner agency's staff. The partner agency is a social service agency, non governmental organization (NGO) or government department with staff expertise in the program they are offering.
   - Volunteers are recruited through the partner agency.
   - Activities are funded by the partner agency.

Space Use: [Drop-In Name] Partnership Programs may be charged rental fees for use of space. Rental fees for ongoing space are based on the cost to provide the space and utilities, and not on market value rents. Full rental fees will be charged for fundraising events, LLBO permitted events, conferences, parties, and for space booked outside of regular [Drop-In Name] hours.

3. **Community Programs** are proposed to [Drop-In Name] by volunteers in the community and
   - May include courses or workshops offered by volunteer instructors.
   - Serve the local community.
   - Core meetings and activities take place at [Drop-In Name].
   - Services are provided by volunteers who are peers and who have come together to form an independent group within [Drop-In Name]'s structure. Volunteers are therefore recruited within each group.
   - Have an inclusive decision making process, with participants involved as organizers and co-ordinators.
   - Are organized on a non-profit basis. Any fees charged are for expenses of the program offered on site. Fees are approved by [Drop-In Name] staff. Financial records are open to [Drop-In Name] staff if requested.
   - [Drop-In Name] front desk/information centre staff liaise with volunteer leaders and may provide support to these independent volunteers depending on needs and available resources.

Space Use: Space for Community Programs is provided free of charge. Rental fees will be charged for fundraising events, LLBO permitted events, conferences, parties, and for space booked outside of regular [Drop-In Name] hours.

4. **Organizational Meetings** include the following groups:
   - Social Activists

- Professional Associations & Unions
- Tenants' Groups & Housing Co-ops
- Political Parties
- Community Fundraising Organizations
- Community Based Research Projects
- Social Service Agencies
- Non Government Organizations (NGOs)
- Government Departments

Space Use: Meeting space at [Drop-In Name] is available to organizations whose major activities take place away from [Drop-In Name]. Organizational meeting space is provided free of charge. Rental fees will be charged for fundraising events, LLBO permitted events, conferences, parties, and for space booked outside of regular [Drop-In Name] hours. In addition, political parties must pay a rental fee during election campaigns.

5. **Arts, commercial and individual rentals** involve organizations not included in the categories.

Space Use: These groups and individuals will be considered on an individual basis by staff to assess their compatibility with the mission statement and policies of [Drop-In Name], and the needs of the local community [Drop-In Name] serves. (See also Restrictions, below.)

Article IV
Restrictions

Restrictions are in place for both free use of space and rental use of space.

Religious interests: [Drop-In Name] is a secular organization. All organizations and groups may engage in religious activities only on an occasional and peripheral basis. Under no circumstances are groups using space at [Drop-In Name] to be involved in recruiting new members for any religion, faith, belief system or spiritual organization.

Commercial interests: [Drop-In Name] is a community resource. Commercial rentals are restricted to company meetings or parties, and commercial film making. Other commercial activity is strictly prohibited, including commercial advertising, promotional meetings and sale of goods or services for personal or corporate profit.

Exceptions to commercial rates and "no sale of goods" policy: Cultural and educational activities relevant to [Drop-In Name]'s community may have a commercial component. Book launches and art exhibits, for example, may take place as long as the event has a component relevant to our priority communities. Staff approval of the sale must be obtained in advance.

Health Care and Health Education: [Drop-In Name] is not equipped for the provision of health care. However, community-based health service agencies may provide health education workshops on an occasional basis, as long as these activities complement the work of [Drop-In Name] Programs.

Self Help and Peer Support Groups: Peer support groups may not hire a professional facilitator. Self help groups with a professional facilitator must show [Drop-In Name] staff that arrangements for appropriate supervision are in place.

Counseling: All professional counselors operating as such in [Drop-In Name] must have appropriate supervision either through [Drop-In Name]'s counseling program or through another agency, even if they are volunteers. Fees will not be charged to users of any counseling service taking place inside [Drop-In Name].

Courses: Courses must meet a need in the community and may not serve a commercial interest. Instructors' credentials will be examined by [Drop-In Name] staff to ensure the proposed course has educational merit. Courses may be time limited or ongoing, and must strictly follow the policy on program fees, below.

Article V
Program and Course Fees

All programs (Article III, parts 1, 2 and 3) providing activities or courses at [Drop-In Name] may charge fees to participants. Fees are for the expenses of the program offered on site, for example, for materials, memberships, and refreshments.

In addition, programs may charge a fee to participants in order to provide honorariums to people assisting in the provision of the program, such as the life drawing model, the square dance caller, or the leader of a tai chi practice group.

Programs and courses must adhere to [Drop-In Name]'s fundamental philosophy that no one will be turned away due to lack of finances. Programs must have a method, approved by the office manager, for accepting members who are unable to pay set fees.

Fees will be reasonable for non-profit organizations, and are subject to approval by [Drop-In Name] staff. Groups which

- refuse to admit people who can't afford the fees, or
- set fees that are at a commercial rather than non profit level,

may have their privileges at [Drop-In Name] terminated.

[Drop-In Name] does not monitor fees of groups holding organizational meetings (Article III, part 4).

Donations to [Drop-In Name]: All programs charging a fee for any purpose are encouraged to make a yearly donation to [Drop-In Name]'s general fund, for the purpose of supporting its programs.

Article VI
Review and Appeal

[Drop-In Name] is not responsible for the content of community programs, organizational meetings, or rental events (Article III, parts 3, 4 and 5) taking place on the premises. However, complaints can be brought forward to any staff person. Staff will direct the complaint for appropriate resolution.

Review: Programs are subject to periodic review regarding compliance with this and other [Drop-In Name] policies.

The following are examples of serious concerns: undue noise, causing disturbances within [Drop-In Name], engaging in commercial activities, allowing hate language to go unchallenged in meetings, or giving false information on the space use application form or update form.

For serious and unresolvable breaches of [Drop-In Name] policy, a program or organization may have their privileges at [Drop-In Name] terminated with one week's written notice.

Appeal: Community members who have an issue with the administration of this policy should discuss possible resolution of the issue with [Drop-In Name] staff. Community members may appeal a staff decision to the Board through its space use and program planning committee.

Matters eligible for appeal include:

- denial of a new program or meeting space request
- termination of a group's meeting privileges at [Drop-In Name]
- conflict over participant fee levels

Appeals must be made in writing, and be submitted within 30 days of the incident in question. Appeals will be considered at the next meeting of the Board's space use and program planning committee.

Article VII
Rental Fees

Rental fees, based on [Drop-In Name]'s rental fee schedule, are charged to groups defined above in Article III, as being engaged in rental activities. On rare occasions, at [Drop-In Name] initiative, rental fees or a performance bond may be waived. Rental space is made available in part to raise funds for [Drop-In Name]'s programs.

Setting Rental Rates: Rates and requirements for performance bonds will be reviewed by [Drop-In Name] staff from time to time.

Performance Bonds: A performance bond will be required for most rentals, the level to be determined by [Drop-In Name] staff. The performance bond may be retained, in full or in part, if the conditions of the contract are not fully observed. For individuals, a signed credit card slip will be required instead of a performance bond.

If [Drop-In Name] retains the entire performance bond due to serious breach of contract, then the group will no longer be permitted to use space at [Drop-In Name]. Serious breach of contract may include, but is not limited to, the following: total failure to clean up space, failure to comply with LLBO regulations even when requested to do so by [Drop-In Name] staff, failure to cooperate with staff on other matters, overcrowding, harassment of staff or other users.

Categories for rental fees:

1. **Non Commercial Rates** – Non-commercial fees for space are set so that non-profit groups have access to space at prices comparable to other community halls. These fees are offered to programs and organizations, as defined in Article III, when they are involved in an activity requiring rental payments.
2. **Theatre and Arts Rates** – Theatre and Arts groups are permitted to use space only during off-peak times. Theatre groups and artists may book space by the hour, day or week, if available.
3. **Commercial Rates** – Businesses may rent space for commercial film-making, business meetings or private parties. Minimum commercial rates are set, but commercial enterprises may be assessed for higher fees depending on activities planned, and anticipated general disruption to the building. In exceptional circumstances and for the purpose of fundraising for programs, [Drop-In Name] may clear the building for commercial film making by moving scheduled groups off site, or canceling meetings.
4. **Individual Rates** – Rates for individuals are set at slightly higher than non-commercial rates but at prices comparable to other community halls. A signed credit card slip will be required instead of a performance bond. Individuals holding a special event should fall within the following guidelines:
    - Priority is given to residents of [Drop-In Name]'s catchment area, users, and members of [Drop-In Name].
    - Individuals must be holding a special event such as: a wedding, cultural event, ceremony, memorial, birthday, or other one-time-only or infrequent event.
    - To help prepare staff so that they can provide better service, the individual will give a description of any ceremonies to staff at the time of booking.
    - Individuals may not book on a recurring basis
    - Individuals may not conduct personal fundraising and/or business activities in [Drop-In Name].
5. **Staff Charges** – When the building is open beyond the regular hours, additional staffing will be required. Staff charges will be added to any rental fees for space.

Appendix 6C.2 Sample Space Use Application

Note: This policy has been adapted from a multi-service community centre space use policy. As such, the policy is very elaborate and addresses a wide range of circumstances and conditions. Smaller-scale drop-ins may not need this level of complexity.

[DROP-IN NAME] SPACE USE APPLICATION

Please complete this form and return it to the Office Manager at _____

_____

Be concise, but if you need additional space, feel free to continue your answers on the back of the form.

GROUP NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION

1. Name of Group or Activity: _____

_____

2. Contact people: Two contact people must be identified for this application to be considered.

	Contact Person # 1	**Contact Person # 2**
Name		
Address		
Phone (Home)		
Phone (Other)		
Fax		
Email		
Position in group		

3. Group mailing address if different from above: _____

_____

4. Group Web Site: _____

_____

GROUP STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES

5. Is this group: ☐ Established ☐ A new endeavor ☐ A chapter or branch of another group (please specify: _____)

6. Explain membership criteria, if any: _____
_____

7. Briefly describe the goals and objectives of your group: _____
_____

8. Briefly describe what a meeting or activity would include: _____
_____

9. How do participants have input into how the group is run? _____
_____

[DROP-IN NAME]'S POLICIES AND YOUR GROUP

10. [Drop-In Name]'s Mission statement reads as follows: [Insert your mission statement here.]_____
_____

How will your group help [Drop-In Name] fulfill its mandate?
_____
_____
_____

11. At [Drop-In Name], discrimination on the following grounds is prohibited: Age, Marital Status, Number of Dependents, Political Affiliation, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Gender Orientation, Race, Ethnic Background, Colour, Creed, Citizenship, Physical or Mental Handicap, Membership in a Collective Bargaining Unit, or any other factor that is a violation of fundamental human rights.

[Drop-In Name] serves _____ [*Describe your population here. For example, "people who are socially marginalized and living with poverty, mental health problems, and addictions"*]. Mutual respect between the people we serve is an essential component that all users of [Drop-In Name] are expected adopt.

Will your group be able to respect the policies stated above? ☐ yes ☐ no

INCORPORATION AND FINANCES

12. Is your group incorporated? ☐ yes ☐ no

☐ non-profit ☐ co-operative ☐ sole proprietorship ☐ corporation

☐ other (please specify: _____)

13. Does your group have charitable status through Revenue Canada? ☐ yes ☐ no

14. How is your group funded? _____
_____

15. Will participants be charged a fee? ☐ no ☐ yes (please specify: $_____ per _____)

Please check off the expenses that this fee is meant to cover:

☐ Membership information (e.g. a newsletter)

☐ Materials costs

☐ Refreshments served at the meeting / activity

☐ Wages or salary for facilitator or group leader

☐ Other (please specify: _____)

16. It is a policy of [Drop-In Name] that no individual be denied access to a group or activity because of their inability to pay. Can your group accommodate this policy?

☐ yes ☐ no

If no, please explain: _____

_____

17. Does anyone receive compensation for their participation in the group?

☐ yes ☐ no If yes, who receives compensation, for what purpose, and how much do they receive? _____

_____

_____

18. Are financial records maintained for your group? ☐ yes ☐ no

19. Would your financial records be accessible to [Drop-In Name] for review?

☐ yes ☐ no

GROUP MEETING TIME REQUEST AND PREFERENCES

20. Our group wants to meet: ☐ occasionally ☐ weekly ☐ monthly

☐ twice monthly ☐ other (please specify: _____)

21. We hope to have space that is: ☐ ongoing

☐ seasonal (please specify months: _____)

☐ time-limited (until _____)

22. For weekday meetings, choose preferred days and time slots:

☐ Mondays ☐ Tuesdays ☐ Wednesdays ☐ Thursdays ☐ Fridays

☐ mornings – time:_____ ☐ afternoons – time: _____

☐ evenings ☐ 6 - 8 p.m. ☐ 8 - 10 p.m.

For weekend meetings, choose preferred days and time slots:

☐ Saturdays (please specify time slot: _____)

☐ Sundays (please specify time slot: _____)

23. How many people do you anticipate will be attending this group's meetings?

☐ fewer than 15 ☐ 16 - 40 ☐ 41-75 ☐ 75-250 ☐ _____

Please note that a request for a particular time does not guarantee that an appropriate room will be available at that time. When a group is approved we try to accommodate the group based on this request.

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

24. If someone inquires about joining your group, how would you like our front desk staff and volunteers to handle their request? Choose one of the following:

☐ Give them the following name and contact number: _____

_____

☐ Tell them when the next meeting is, and invite them to attend.

☐ Give them the following address so they can write for more information: _____

_____

☐ Other: _____

25. How do you plan to publicize your group? _____

_____

AGREEMENT AND SIGNATURE

We certify that we have given accurate information about our group, and our signatures below confirm our intent to abide by [Drop-In Name]'s policies.

Contact Person # 1	Contact Person # 2
Name (printed):	***Name (printed):***
Signature:	***Signature:***
Date:	***Date:***

This Space for Office Use Only

Group Code: _____ Group Category _____ Status _____

Regular Meetings ☐ yes ☐ no Effective _____

Days _____ Times _____ Room _____

Letter sent date: _____ ☐ accept ☐ conditional ☐ reject

SUBSECTION 6D
Improving Negative Community Relations

Some community members may see a drop-in as a "problem" – as something that negatively impacts a neighbourhood or lowers property values. **The challenge is to change this perception so that community members see a drop-in as a resource and benefit that adds to the neighbourhood, rather than detracts from it.**

Subsection 6C discusses ways to work toward this goal in an environment of neutral or positive community relations; this Subsection discusses ways to work toward this goal in an environment of negative community relations.

The tactics and tips discussed below may not be feasible for all drop-ins; the strategies a particular drop-in uses will depend on its size, resources, and organizational capacity:

- **Develop a policy and procedure for neighbour complaints.** Develop a policy that addresses how the drop-in will deal with participants' actions outside of the drop-in itself and/or outside of drop-in hours. In the case of extreme neighbourhood antagonism toward the drop-in, you may want to dedicate resources to a separate telephone line or email system to neighbours' complaints.

- **Be an advocate for both populations.** Drop-ins are responsible both to the particular community they target for service, and to the wider community to which they belong. When there is a clash, the safety of both populations must be protected. Get the full story from both sides before deciding what course of action is appropriate.

  Example – safeguarding drop-in participants: One local convenience store owner accused a drop-in participant of robbing their store and attacking their staff. The program coordinator asked to watch the in-store camera's videotape of the incident and was able to prove to the store owner that the perpetrator was not actually a drop-in participant.

  Example – safeguarding community: On another occasion, some drop-in participants made offensive and discriminatory comments to two local residents as they passed through the community park attached to the drop-in building. The program coordinator discussed the inappropriateness of this behaviour with the participants and, over the course of their discussion, made the decision to bar them from using the drop-in for a specified amount of time.

- **Improve communications.** Find ways to facilitate positive communications with the community, so that there is a basis for interaction that does not rely exclusively on a complaint-and-response model. For example, one drop-in is starting to print a newsletter about the drop-in's social events, newsworthy

occasions, and success stories, that will go out to businesses and residents in the neighbourhood as well as being distributed among participants.

- **Attend BIA meetings.** The local Business Improvement Area (BIA) association can become a focal point for neighbours who are not happy with the drop-in or have complaints about its participants. Local store owners may feel that participants are shoplifting from them or bringing down the property values of their business.

  It is a good practice to work with the BIA so that its members understand what the value and purpose of the drop-in is. Staff and interested participants should commit to attending BIA meetings regularly to represent the positive aspects of the drop-in. Too often business owners only see the worst aspects of participants – for example, a participant panhandling in front of their store – and they don't see the positive aspects of how that person is working to find meaningful employment.

  Participants argue that the BIA and the neighbourhood as a whole need to learn about poverty and oppression. They want to join with staff to advocate and "translate" their life experiences into terms that these neighbours can understand and identify with. They say that the BIA needs to be reminded that mental and physical illness can hit anyone at any time, so it is important not to judge other people or look down on them. Staff who have themselves dealt with addictions, or struggled with mental health issues, are particularly powerful voices to send these messages.

  A particularly effective argument for drop-ins based in the downtown core is that socially marginalized people have been gathering here for a long time and would continue to spend time here whether the drop-in was here or not. The drop-in provides a valuable service to local businesses by providing a place for people to go and access important resources like food. If the drop-in was shut down, these people would be lacking in vital social supports.

- **Identify the individual.** Often, in situations where a community becomes galvanized against a drop-in, the problems stem from one individual or a small group of individuals. They gain power – whether through the BIA, local politics, or some other avenue – and begin to promote a different vision for the community. When you first join a community, it is important to get a sense of who the local power-brokers are and what their politics are.

- **Be on-call.** If you have the staffing capacity, develop relationships with local businesses and landlords so that they know they can call a staff person to come and deal with a problem involving a drop-in participant. Respond to these calls immediately, so that a relationship of trust is developed. However, you should make sure that you have the resources to handle this level of involvement with participants outside of the drop-in before instituting this system. Otherwise, it may

detract from the quality of service that participants within the drop-in are receiving.

- **Engage participants.** In the case of legitimate neighbour complaints about participants' off-site behaviour, discuss these concerns with participants in an open and collaborative way. Explain that even when they are not in the drop-in, their behaviour impacts the drop-in and affects the drop-in's position in the neighbourhood. Ask them for help in maintaining positive community relations. In the case of discriminatory neighbour complaints (or, speaking more broadly, discriminatory municipal bylaws, or provincial, or federal legislation), some participants may be interested in advocating on their own behalf. This may involve attending community meetings or protests on issues that concern them.

  Example: One women's drop-in organized a social action working group that works with women to help them develop leadership skills and empower them to take action. Some participants contribute to letter-writing campaigns, put up posters, and go to International Women's Day meetings.

- **Public relations.** See Subsection 6B (and Appendices 6B.1 and 6B.2) for tips on how to conduct community consultations, hold open houses, canvas neighbours, distribute promotional brochures, and so forth. It may be useful to establish a standing public relations committee to work on the strategies discussed above for improving community relationships (e.g. attend BIA meetings, engage participants in advocacy, and handle neighbour complaints).

The Training Manual prepared for the Toronto Drop-In Network gives some more useful tips on how to develop constructive neighbourhood relationships and improve strained relationships.[2]

Individual/Personal Actions	Agency/Management Responses
Community Outreach • Walk around the neighbourhood and look at your agency in the context of the neighbourhood • Don't get defensive when a neighbour makes offensive comments • Pop into a new store and introduce yourself • Patronize local businesses Know what services are available in the area and if they are "homeless friendly"	**Complaint System** • Have a formal complaint system in place that includes documentation of complaint action taken and the follow up • Listen attentively to local businesses' or neighbours' complaints • Report complaints to the supervisor • Follow up on the complaint • Check in with the person

[2] This table is adapted from Evelyn Mitchell, "PART A. Positive Strategies (To Improve Neighbourhood Connections),"*Drop-In 201: Workshop Facilitator's Manual*, Toronto (ON): TDIN and THTC, 2005.

Individual/Personal Actions *(cont'd)*	Agency/Management Responses *(cont'd)*

Community Outreach *(cont'd)*
• Never use neighbours' parking
• Hold participant meetings to talk about supporting neighbours and why it's important to remain as part of the community
• Be pro-active – for example:
  • Set up a separate smoking area to avoid neighbour complaints
  • Organize neighbourhood clean-up days
	Complaint System *(cont'd)*
	• Be aware of your manner of speaking (are you coming across as polite, patient, sarcastic…?)
	• Don't engage in a shouting match
	• Recognize what is legitimate in their complaint
	• Address problems in a staff meeting

Relationships between the drop-in and other support agency services Friendly communication when doing referrals, seeking information, or doing advocacy work	**Community outreach** • Form a community advisory group and enlist sympathetic friendly neighbours who have been responsive to the program • Advise neighbours of upcoming events and invite them to special occasions • Participate in local events

SECTION 7
Organizational Linkages and Partnerships

Drop-ins develop relationships with organizations based on shared communities – whether this is a **geographic community** (for example, neighbourhood businesses or a local police division) or a **community of interest** (for example, research institutions or other drop-ins and service providers across Toronto).

Relationships with businesses, organizations, and institutions in the local area may be informal – mutually supportive contributions based on friendships between individual staff members – or formal – official letters of agreements with specific negotiated terms. Informal relationships are discussed in more detail in Section 6: Community Relations.

This Section discusses formalized interactions based on shared populations and shared interests:

- **7A STUDENTS AND RESEARCHERS**
  - Criteria
  - Community-Academic Partnerships

- **7B POLICE**
  - Attachment
    - Appendix 7B.1 – Sample Protocol for Police Activity within the Drop-In

- **7C SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES**
  - Outreach and In-Reach
  - Types of Inter-Agency Interactions
  - Programming Partnerships
  - Tips for Working with Other Organizations
  - Communication and Confidentiality
  - Attachments
    - Appendix 7C.1 – Memorandum of Understanding and Service Delivery Plan Guidelines
    - Appendix 7C.2 – Sample Partnership Agreement
    - Appendix 7C.3 – List of Protection of Privacy Legislation

SUBSECTION 7A
Students And Researchers

Drop-ins regularly find themselves being asked to participate in various research projects and fieldwork studies; many service providers lament that the population they work with is over-studied yet under-served.

There are many compelling reasons to participate in the research process; for example:

- Having the work of the drop-in validated by an objective third party;
- Forming bridges between social service agencies and academic institutions;
- Learning new research skills, enhancing the drop-in's research capacity, and improving existing data collection and analysis efforts (e.g. participant surveys, focus groups, etc.);
- Stimulating dialogue and reflection among staff, Board members, volunteers and participants, and fostering a "culture of inquiry" within the wider drop-in network;
- Integrating evaluation into day-to-day practice and program development;
- Informing and strengthening strategic planning, fundraising activities and public relations; and
- Obtaining documentation of the impact of funder dollars to assist with future grant applications.

However, each proposal should be considered very carefully before the drop-in grants permission to conduct research.

Criteria

There are different types of research and each brings different considerations of their impact on the drop-in environment:

- **Students** (e.g. nurses, social workers, or, in faith-based drop-ins, seminarians) may apply to do a fieldwork placement at the drop-in; this integrates them into the staff of the drop-in.
- **Professional health workers or medical researchers** may want to conduct controlled trials, physical tests, surveys, and/or interviews with participants.
- **Anthropologists or social scientists** may request permission to spend time in the drop-in to work with participants on any number of social issues; they may have a course of study in mind or they may wish to develop one in collaboration with you and with participants.

Student placements are a fairly regulated type of academic involvement in the drop-in. The sponsoring school will often have forms and agreements to sign that specify the drop-in's responsibilities, the school's responsibilities, the student's responsibilities, and the mechanisms for monitoring these.

Professional researchers from the health or social sciences need to be assessed on a proposal-by-proposal basis. Your drop-in should have a basic set of criteria for handling these types of requests.

The following are some questions that will help you assess professional research proposals:

1. **Institutionalized support.** Is this research project associated with a university or some other form of legitimate institution?

2. **Ethics review.** Has the research proposal been evaluated by a Research Ethics Board (REB)? If so, how did the REB rank the project's "research risk"?[1]

3. **Purpose and methods.** What do the researchers want? What types of information are they looking for? Will they be asking highly sensitive questions? If this is medical research, will the researchers be requesting blood, tissue, or other types of physical samples?

4. **Informed consent.** What is the researchers' process for obtaining informed consent from participants? In other words, what is the researchers' strategy for asking individuals to participate in the study, and are they disclosing fully the purpose, methods, and future uses of the research?

5. **Risks and benefits.** Will the participants be compensated for their time and work (e.g. through honoraria, TTC tokens, refreshments, etc.)? What are the risks involved? Will there be any immediate or future benefits to the drop-in and its delivery of service? How will the research project benefit the community it reports on?

6. **Needs.** What resources and facilities do the researchers require from the drop-in? (For example – A private room to conduct interviews?

[1] "Research risk" is defined by the University of Toronto's Ethics Review Office as "the probability and magnitude of harms participants may experience as a result of the proposed methods to be used and types of data to be collected, e.g., relating to physiological or health issues such as clinical diagnoses or side effects, cognitive or emotional factors such as stress or anxiety during data collection, and socio-economic or legal ramifications such as stigma, loss of employment, deportation, or criminal investigation (e.g., in the event of duty to report intent to cause serious harm, subpoena, or breach of confidentiality)." See the Ethics Review Office website at: www.research.utoronto.ca/ethics/eh_when.html#req.

Temporary filing space? Drop-in staff facilitation and supervision? Use of the photocopier, telephones, and/or computer printer?)

7. **Outcomes.** What do the researchers plan to do with the information they have gathered? How do they plan to safely store sensitive information? How long will this information be kept? Where will the results be published? Will the researchers make copies of their work available to you?

Community-Academic Partnerships

In the case of research that is envisioned as an intensive, longer-term project, it may be worthwhile for your drop-in to build a community-academic partnership project with the researchers. This **collaborative approach** has the goal of combining knowledge with action and achieving social change. It involves:

- Determining a topic for study of mutual interest or benefit;
- Recognizing the strengths and areas of expertise of all collaborators (including researchers, drop-in staff, and participants);
- Understanding the needs and constraints of all collaborators; and
- Jointly developing operating procedures, leadership protocols, and communication mechanisms with the input and agreement of all partners.

In this model, all interested collaborators participate in authoring publications, presenting conference papers, and giving media briefings. Findings are disseminated in accessible ways to all those who participated in the study. Projects have an agreed upon method and timetable for: evaluating both the project activity and the collaboration itself, and revising partnership activities to incorporate these learnings.

SUBSECTION 7B
Police

The needs and interests of drop-ins and police divisions can sometimes clash. The primary objective of drop-ins is to create a safe space for socially marginalized folks to go and develop a community of trusting relationships with staff and other participants. The primary goal for police, on the other hand, is to stop people from engaging in illegal activities and to get criminals off the streets. Some drop-in users may be involved in illegal activities such as the drug trade and prostitution, and many participants have regular interactions with the police. There are times when police will want to come into the drop-in to see if someone they are pursuing is there; there are also times when staff need to call on the police to intervene in a crisis situation at the drop-in.

These conflicting mandates require some management. It is a good practice for drop-ins to develop guidelines for police activities within the drop-in (see **Appendix 7B.1** for a sample protocol). These guidelines may be most effective when developed collaboratively with police representatives. However, whether or not individual police officers have a hand in writing this document, all local police divisions need to be made aware of its existence and its requirements.

It is important to build relationships with local officers so that they understand what kind of work the drop-in does. There are various ways to do this; one of the best is simply to strike up conversations with local officers and develop a **friendly rapport**. Another way is to serve on a **police liaison committee**. Another way is to run a workshop or give a **presentation** to the local police division on what your drop-in does, its role in the social service sector, its philosophy in dealing with socially marginalized individuals, and what your staff expect in terms of police interactions with the drop-in. It is important to **set boundaries**: the idea, as one drop-in staff phrased it, is that "We will help each other to meet our separate goals, but we are not an extension or a part of your organization."

ATTACHMENT:

- **Appendix 7B.1 – Sample Protocol for Police Activity within the Drop-In**

Appendix 7B.1 Sample Protocol for Police Activity within the Drop-In

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR POLICE ACTIVITY WITHIN THE DROP-IN

Policy. In order for a co-operative, positive, and mutually beneficial relationship to be built between the drop-in and the police force, several qualities must be present.

1. **Respect.** One of the primary qualities essential to such a relationship is respect. Police and drop-in staff must treat each other, and community members, with the utmost respect, on the understanding that we are all trying to fulfill our respective responsibilities.
2. **Trust.** While Police and drop-in staff may have different primary responsibilities, they are both working for the improvement of society by helping individuals arrive at a place where they can be contributing members of society. This can only happen if Police and staff learn to trust one another and work hard to gain the trust of community members. This will be achieved most easily if both groups continue to develop a relationship of honesty.
3. **Cooperation.** In order to achieve the goal of having community members achieve healthy and full lives, it will be necessary for Police and staff to cooperate with one another. While there may sometimes be some tension between Police and staff because of their different approaches, they must agree to cooperate to the extent that they are able within the constraints of their particular positions.

Procedures. When members of the Police come to the door of the drop-in:

- Police will speak politely to staff, asking permission to enter, and announcing their reason for wishing to do so. They will offer their names and badge numbers, or at least ensure that their badge numbers are visible.
- Staff will greet officers politely and respectfully and invite officers to enter, once they have been informed of the reason for the visit.
- If officers come to the door with an arrest or a search warrant, they will inform staff at the door and staff will immediately assist the officers in whatever way they can.
- In situations when officers come to the drop-in with a warrant of apprehension for an individual, Police will take the person to a site nearby for conversation, rather than talking with them within the building, recognizing the unsettling impact that prolonged Police presence within the drop-in can have on community members.
- When Police are in “fresh” or “hot” pursuit of a suspect who enters the drop-in, officers will simply state that they are police in “fresh” or “hot” pursuit and they will be admitted promptly without challenge. Staff will be educated to respond without challenge to officers apparently in “fresh” or “hot” pursuit.
- In situations when staff call Police to intervene in an altercation, Police will respond promptly as requested. In these situations, it may be more expedient for officers to conduct their interviews on-site. In these situations, staff will assist officers in whatever way they can.

SUBSECTION 7C
Social Service Agencies

Outreach and "In-Reach"

Relationships and interactions between the drop-in and other social service organizations can take many different forms. One important distinction may be made between agency outreach and agency "in-reach." **Agency outreach** involves referrals and continuity of care as an individual travels to different agencies to access services. **Agency in-reach** refers to representatives from other agencies or professions who come into the drop-in to conduct workshops – for example, tenant rights activists – or provide services – for example, legal aid lawyers, nurse practitioners, or housing workers.

Both outreach and in-reach are important, and neither can be used to the exclusion of the other. However, in-reach has been recommended by a number of drop-ins as an extremely effective way to help participants overcome barriers to accessing services (such as bureaucratic red tape, individuals' fear of authority and transportation to distant locations).

Types of Inter-Agency Interactions

Organizational linkages can be either formal or informal, regularized or sporadic. Agencies may continue to run as separate entities, operating according to their own mandates, and interacting with other agencies only to make and accept referrals or to make and accept donations of goods, services, or space. At the other end of the scale, inter-agency partnerships are always formalized and involve joint decision-making and integration of visions. Partnerships are often entered into in order to harmonize services to a particular population, or to access a source of funding that will allow for the development of a new program.

Types of inter-agency interactions include:

- **Donations of goods** – As discussed above, you may develop an agreement with another organization (e.g. Second Harvest or Moores), where they make regular and dependable donations of food, clothing, or other useful goods;

- **Donations of services** – You may get legal clinic lawyers, student nurses, or counselors, to come in at regular times during the week (or the month) during drop-in hours to make themselves available for clients who need to access these services;

- **Referrals** – You have a strong working relationship with other agencies in your area and you can refer the client to the services and programs they offer as required. The strong working relationship between

organizations is necessary for the referral to be effective and for the client to not get lost in bureaucratic red tape or bounced from agency to agency;

- **Workshops** – You may organize workshops periodically where a speaker from another organization comes in to give a presentation (e.g. on tenants' rights);

- **External programs** – You may get an external organization to run a program at regularly scheduled hours each week at your drop-in;

- **Joint programs** – You may work with another organization to jointly develop and operate a program; or

- **Agency-mandated drop-ins** – Your drop-in operates as one part of a larger umbrella organization (e.g. Canadian Red Cross or Fontbonne Ministries). This agency provides all of your funding, or a significant portion of your funding, and your main policies are determined by the larger organization.

Some of these types of inter-agency interactions are discussed elsewhere; see Section 2 for a discussion of referrals and programming activities, and Section 8 for a discussion of financial and in-kind donations.

The rest of this Section focuses on formalized working agreements or partnerships between agencies.

Programming Partnerships

Developing inter-agency partnerships is a complex and challenging endeavour. It is important to start with an open, honest discussion about each organization's resources, capacity and mandate. Clearly define boundaries and roles, and don't avoid difficult questions. It is better to expose and manage potential disagreements from the start, rather than have these explode halfway through a project.

Be aware that potential tensions may arise over funding sources; for example, some drop-ins refuse to accept money from pharmaceutical companies or weapons manufacturers (see Subsection 8B for further discussion of the ethical considerations involved with funding). It is also a good practice to build in partnership evaluation mechanisms; for example, a review period every year that assesses program outcomes, communication and decision-making among partners, and any barriers to success of the program.

Continuity. For many drop-ins, partnerships or in-reach service provision relationships tend to be fairly informal and based on goodwill between individuals. The problem with this is that whenever there is a period of transition – for example, if an individual chiropodist offering weekly services to drop-in participants leaves, that service is no

longer offered by the drop-in. Or, on the other side of the coin, if the individual staff member who was coordinating the service leaves, the drop-in's relationship with the service provider may break down.

To ensure continuity of care and stability of the partnership, it is a good practice to sign a formal agreement with the partner agency (or agencies). This letter of agreement, or memorandum of agreement, should spell out:

- Project objectives and core principles;
- Each agency's responsibilities and shared policies;
- Mechanisms for decision-making; program development, management, and evaluation; inter-agency communication; conflict resolution; staff hiring, supervision, and training; getting funding, setting budgets, and managing finances.[2]

A **service delivery** plan is also useful, and should involve a more detailed and practical description of the project, including timelines for each aspect of the service delivery, anticipated outcomes of the project, a detailed project budget, and so forth.[3] For more detailed discussion and a useful step-by-step guide to creating a memorandum of agreement and a service delivery plan, please see **Appendix 7C.1**.

Strategies for smaller drop-ins. Smaller agencies, some of which do not have staff exclusively dedicated to administrative duties, may not have the capacity to do a detailed letter of agreement or service delivery plan. These drop-ins should still work to formalize their partnerships with other agencies, through:

- **Regular communications** between different staff members (to ensure that strong working relationships are fostered between more than two individuals); and
- **Writing a less-detailed memorandum of agreement.** Even you lack the time and resources to think through this agreement in the detail discussed above and in **Appendix 7C.1**, it is still important to document the terms of the partnership. This documentation could take the form of minutes from the first meeting and a letter briefly outlining the main terms that confirms for both parties what was discussed. See **Appendix 7C.2** for a sample partnership agreement template.

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[2] Adapted from United Way of Greater Toronto, "Developing a Memorandum of Understanding," *Suburban Strategy Multi-Agency Partnership Project (MAPP) Partnership Workbook*, prepared by Community Consultant Rob Howarth, April 2002.
[3] *Ibid*.

Tips for Working with Other Organizations

The first step is to find and select a partner agency or partner agencies. Finding the right match of both people and programs involves a process of trial and error:

- **Know what programming resources you are looking for** and then seek out a partner (e.g. Community Health Centres are often a great resource for those wishing to provide basic health support);

- Think about your **approach and values** – what is needed at the drop-in versus what someone wants to offer; and

- Remember that finding good programming partners takes **work, time, and outreach**. For many drop-ins, outreach, community relations, and fostering strong inter-agency relationships are seen as a key role of the Executive Director.

Once you have located a potential partner or potential partners, you may want to consider the following checklist of good practices for working with other organizations:[4]

- Keep the arrangement **as simple as possible**: vast and detailed service level agreements may stimulate the conflict they are designed to avoid;

- There must be someone who can make **real time decisions** on the partnership's behalf (committees are, on the whole, not very good at this);

- **Progressive partnerships** where one partner takes the service user to a certain stage, and the other then takes over, seem to work better than horizontal partnerships, where both partners deliver the same services and simply pool resources (this is generally due to the fact that the former avoids "competition");

- Recognize the **value of different agendas**, and identify "what's in it for them?" for potential partners; and

- Ensure that both parties have a **similar level of interest** – if they don't, then the partnership will tend to fall apart as the high interest group starts to dominate and the low interest group leaves.

[4] Adapted from Homeless Link, "11: Working with other organisations," *Day centres handbook: A good practice guide*, London (UK): Homeless Link, 2004, page 11.3.

Specific tools and mechanisms for successful partnerships include:[5]

- Agreed principles of joint working;
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities of partner agencies;
- Joint training and visits between agencies;
- Organizational, not just individual, commitment to joint projects;
- Clear work plans specifying who will do what and giving a timeline;
- Explicit acknowledgement that agencies might sometimes be in competition for funds and agreeing how to deal with such occurrences; and
- An identified individual who will facilitate and drive the process of joint work.

Communication and Confidentiality

It is a good practice to keep the following checklist of effective communications in mind when working with other agencies:[6]

- The drop-in ensures that other agencies know who it is and what it does, and are kept informed of changes and developments in their service;
- The drop-in is aware of other agencies' responsibilities and constraints;
- The drop-in is actively engaged with relevant local forums (e.g. on homelessness, health, personal and community safety, etc.);
- The drop-in shares its expertise, and educates other organizations about homelessness (e.g. through training for statutory services, like police and health providers, or through open houses, or through public speaking engagements at local community groups, like churches and Rotary clubs);
- The drop-in is prepared to learn from others' expertise and knowledge, asking the other organizations how they do things;
- Joint working protocols are developed with services working regularly with drop-in centre service users, and these are periodically reviewed;
- The drop-in has a written policy and procedure on referring service users to other organizations or internal services, which has been discussed with other organizations and internally reviewed;
- Referrals and referral responses are tracked wherever possible;
- Staff have up-to-date information on the services offered by other agencies and their referral procedures;
- Complaints procedures are used when external organizations don't fulfill their obligations; and
- Information is transferred in compliance with confidentiality, risk management, and data protection policies.

Sharing sensitive information about clients is a necessary and important part of working with other organizations. However, **confidentiality is key**, and staff should be aware of each agency's protocols protecting personal information and any relevant legislation (see **Appendix 7C.3** for a list). For example: If you have clients who have spent time in

[5] *Ibid*., page 11.4.
[6] *Ibid*., page 11.1.

mental health facilities, you may only view their records if the client signs a Consent to Disclosure, Transmittal or Examination of a Clinical Record form.[7]

Some basic points to keep in mind when sharing information between agencies are:

- Is the participant aware of how their information will be used and who will see it (i.e. other organizations)?
- Has the participant given informed consent for you to share their information with other agencies?
- Will the other organization share that information with third parties? How does the other organization plan to store the information you provide? (For example, will it be password-protected on the computer?)

For further discussion of privacy policies and confidentiality forms as they relate to drop-in staff, volunteers, and participants, please see Subsection 2O: Confidentiality. For further discussion of protecting the personal information of donors, see Subsection 8B: Ethical Considerations.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Appendix 7C.1 – Memorandum of Understanding and Service Delivery Plan Guidelines**
- **Appendix 7C.2 – Sample Partnership Agreement**
- **Appendix 7C.3 – List of Protection of Privacy Legislation**

[7] Form 14 is available for download from the Ontario Medical Association website at: www.oma.org/Practice/Tools/forms/FORM%2014%20-%20Mental%20Health%20Act.pdf.

Appendix 7C.1 Memorandum of Understanding and Service Delivery Plan Guidelines

Source: Adapted from United Way of Greater Toronto, "Developing a Memorandum of Understanding," *Suburban Strategy Multi-Agency Partnership Project (MAPP) Partnership Workbook*, prepared by Community Consultant Rob Howarth, April 2002.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN GUIDELINES

I. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

1. Partnership Description

A) Who are the Members of the Partnership and what are their key roles (e.g. service provider, project coordination, referral source)?

B) What are the Core Values that partners agree are central to the partnership's work?

- Values statements should be about project principles that are non-negotiable and therefore will not be compromised under any circumstances. These value statements may include:
  - ✓ Commitments to how the services will be carried out (statements about service conditions and principles, for example: providing a safe and accessible environment; involving program participants and community members in decision-making; and upholding principles of equity, access, anti-racism and inclusion).
  - ✓ Commitments to how the partnership organizations will work with each other (statements about transparency, trust, integrity, equity, respect, accountability, clear communication).
  - ✓ Statements about the importance of empowering and supporting the community or target group(s).

C) What are the objectives and intended outcomes of the partnership?

- Briefly summarize the service-delivery goals of the partnership.
- What are the intended impacts of the services on the lives of the program participants (and the broader community, if applicable)?
- What are the objectives for the partnership itself (for example "building capacity of community organizations to work collaboratively on issues of shared concern")?

D) What neighbourhood will the partnership operate in?

- Identify the geographic neighbourhood and location(s) where the project will be delivered (including population and languages spoken).

E) How was the need for services identified?

- Which population(s) do you expect to provide services to?
- Briefly explain why you chose this population(s) and what their service needs are.

- How do you know that these are the needs of the target group(s)? Please reference any relevant socio-demographic research.

2. Responsibilities

A) What are the common responsibilities shared by each partner?

Examples may be:

- Upholding the shared values of the project.
- Maintaining open and ongoing communication (attending meetings, timely response to voice or e-mail).
- Notifying partners of issues or concerns in a timely manner.
- Expectations about how each partner will be represented, how representatives will have capacity to enter into decision-making on behalf of their agencies, and how partners will replace representatives in the event of staff turnover or agency re-organization.
- Expectations about representatives making sure that all levels of their organizations (board members, management, program staff, and relevant volunteers) are regularly informed about their partnership commitments, achievements and responsibilities.
- Expectation that each partner organization will confirm their initial and ongoing participation in the project by obtaining ratification from their Boards on an annual basis.

B) What is the process for partners to withdraw from the partnership?

- For example, how much notice must be given to other partners? How will a withdrawing partner resolve any financial obligations?

C) What is the process to admit new members who may be interested in joining the partnership?

3) Project Management and Decision Making

A) How will partners direct the project to ensure it meets its objectives?

- Will there be any "Executive" or "Steering Committee" or other group directing the project?
- Who will participate in this group? (Identify positions from each organization, not individuals.)

B) What are the terms of reference for the partners directing the partnership?

- For example, will all members be involved in day-to-day decisions about the operation of the project, or just key aspects like hiring and program design?
- Will all members be supervising staff directly?
- Will all members be empowered to determine the project budget and make changes when needed?
- Who will have responsibilities for chairing and developing agendas (rotating between partners or not)?

C) How will this partnership make decisions?

- State general decision-making procedure. For example: "The group will strive for consensus in all its decisions. In instances where consensus is not possible, any member can request an issue be put to a vote where each partner is entitled to one vote and a simple majority will decide".
- Describe meeting notification and attendance procedure. For example: "All participants are provided with ample notice for meetings. Each organization will strive to send a representative who can accurately represent the agency. In the event that no representative is available, the agency position may be relayed to the meeting by fax, telephone, etc. However, the partners agree that decisions may be made without all agencies present".
- What steps will be taken to make decisions between meetings if they are required? For example: "In the event that decisions cannot be delayed until the next meeting, an emergency meeting can be arranged or e-mails, faxes or telephone calls may be made to members of the committee or workgroup".

D) Will there be any additional "program committees" directing the day-to-day operations of the project?

- If so, who will participate in these committees? (Identify positions from each organization, not individuals.)
- How will this committee be linked with the partnership (for example joint meetings, representatives going to both groups)?
- What are this committee's key responsibilities?

E) How will associated groups and institutions have a voice in program planning and direction?

F) How will community members or program participants participate in program planning and direction?

- For example, will there be a forum for broader community input and information sharing about the project, such an advisory committee, or a series of community forums?

4) Inter-Agency Communication

A) What will be the frequency of meetings for the partnership's committees (e.g. steering committee or program committee)?

- *What notice needs to be given before meetings are called?*

B) How will partners communicate between meetings – at both service-delivery and project management levels?

- For example, are all members on e-mail systems? Can conference calls be arranged?

C) How will representatives maintain consistent communication within their organizations so that their board members, management, program staff, and relevant volunteers are clear about the project objectives and responsibilities?

D) How will communication between front-line staff providing services, project supervisors, and those responsible for directing the project be maintained?

5) Conflict Resolution and Complaints

A) What steps will be taken to resolve differences if the group's regular decision-making or communications processes break down?

- Outline steps in the process and specify who has responsibilities for problem identification, discussion, resolution and documentation.
- Include expectations regarding confidentiality.
- Make sure the process builds on and does not conflict with any existing practices at each partner organization (including agency policies, collective agreements, professional Codes of Conduct and statutes/Legislation which will take precedence over the conflict resolution mechanisms outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding).

B) Who has the responsibility for initiating problem-solving efforts if a partner or partners are not fulfilling their responsibilities?

- This responsibility should be shared by all partners, but some groups also find it helpful to designate a lead group or staff position that will pay close attention to group process and initiate problem-solving and conflict resolution in a timely matter.

C) What is the process to have previous decisions re-opened for discussion?

- For example, "If a decision needs to be re-opened then it will be discussed in the committee or workgroup where the decision was made. The issue should be raised as an agenda item. The Chair should be notified in advance of this addition to the agenda".

6) Staff Hiring, Supervision and Training

A) If there is a staff-person assisting with project coordination, specify their major responsibilities and how they will be supervised.

B) Who has responsibility for hiring staff that may be shared or seconded to work for the partnership?

C) Who has responsibility for the supervision, direction and evaluation of staff?

- How do those responsible for staff supervision link with the project's steering committee?
- Which partner's personnel policies will apply to the staff positions?
- Who has responsibility for administering contracts with staff?
- How will staff pay scales be determined?

D) How will new staff be trained? Will training and professional development opportunities be made available to existing staff seconded to work on the project?

7) Planning and Evaluation

A) How will the partners evaluate the partnership activities and revise their project model or services?

- Timing for the planning cycle, for example, "yearly each September"?

B) Who should participate in evaluating the work, and how will they be involved?

C) Who has responsibility for collecting, tabulating and analysing data on program activity and outcomes?

D) How will the partners evaluate their satisfaction with the partnership and ensure partners' needs are being met?

8) Finances and Administration

A) Who is responsible for setting and changing the project budget?

B) Who is authorized to make spending decisions once the budget is set?

C) If funds are centralized, what is the procedure for accessing the funds?

- For example, how will supplies be purchased, how will staff be paid, who signs rental contracts for space or equipment?

D) If funds are de-centralized, what are partners' responsibilities regarding documentation?

- For example, "each partner is responsible for keeping accurate records of any project, and will remit those records to the partner agency in a timely manner".

E) Who will have responsibility for providing accounting services to the project?

- What are the expectations regarding the frequency of financial statements?
- How will the project funds be audited?

F) How will administrative support for the partnership be provided?

- List partnership administrative needs and whether costs will be provided by project dollars or from in-kind contributions.

9) Additional Policies

A) Confidentiality

- For example, "Representatives on the Steering Committee and other partnership work groups shall not divulge personal or confidential information revealed to them by reason of their participation on those committees."

B) Anti-discrimination

- Adapted from and consistent with existing polices of partner organizations.

C) *Access and Equity*

- Adapted from and consistent with existing policies of partner organizations.

D) *Media and Public Relations*

- The partners may want to develop specific guidelines for representing the partnership in public/media settings or when publishing information about the partnership.

II. SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN

The Service Delivery Plan is a document appended to the Memorandum of Understanding that includes:

- Detailed description of the services and how they will be delivered (service delivery model), including the different responsibilities of each partner.
- Phases of implementation, timelines, and member's responsibilities with regard to each component of the service delivery.
- Objectives and anticipated outcomes for delivery of services, and indicators of success.
- Detailed project budget, which includes in-kind or financial contributions of all partners, and how funds will be dispersed to each of the partners.
- Evaluation plan for the program activities.
- How program statistics will be maintained and used.

Appendix 7C.2 Sample Partnership Agreement

Source: Adapted from East Scarborough Storefront, "East Scarborough Storefront Agreement," *Welcome Package for Agencies*, 2001, pages 12-13.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Full Agency Name:

Contact Person(s) Name(s):

Agency Address:
Phone:
Fax:
Email:

The Partner Agency of [Your Agency Name] agrees to contribute to [Your Agency Name] by regularly attending group meetings and by (check at least one):

- ❑ Providing regular direct service at [Your Agency Name]
- ❑ Hosting workshops or information sessions at least _____ times per year
- ❑ Working on committees or task groups
- ❑ Providing [Your Agency Name] with volunteers on an ongoing basis and actively participating in training volunteers
- ❑ Regularly performing outreach activities for the [Your Agency Name]
- ❑ Providing regular assistance with [Your Agency Name] facilities and substantial gifts in kind to the [Your Agency Name]
- ❑ Providing community development resources and organizational support on an ongoing and regular basis
- ❑ Specify _____
  _____

Core Values of the Partnership:

Objectives and Outcomes:

Responsibilities and Contributions of [Your Agency Name]:

I, _____ (name), on behalf of

_____ (Partner Agency), verify that

_____ (Partner Agency):

- Meets all licensing and legislative requirements to provide the service(s) outlined above and ensure that a qualified person(s) will carry out those service(s);
- Has attached a current certificate of insurance naming [Your Agency Name] as a location for the service(s) outlined above;
- Takes full responsibility for the activities its staff and volunteers facilitate at [Your Agency Name] and will provide [Your Agency Name] with statistical information about those activities;
- Will send all staff who provide direct service at [Your Agency Name] to a [Your Agency Name] orientation session; and
- Will send appropriate person to participate in quarterly [Your Agency Name] Meetings.

The Partnership will be reviewed in: *Six months* ☐ *One year* ☐

on _____ (DD/MM/YYYY).

Signature (Partner Agency): _____

Date: _____

Signature [Your Agency]: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 7C.3 List of Protection of Privacy Legislation

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY LEGISLATION

There are several federal, provincial, and municipal laws that govern individuals' right to privacy and protect personal information. Not all of these laws will apply to every drop-in.

When developing your own confidentiality policy, you should consult these laws to see which ones apply to your drop-in. Even if your drop-in does not strictly fall under the jurisdiction of these laws, you should still consult them to get a sense of what the basic rules and good practices are for protecting personal information.

1. **Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) (1990)**

www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/90m56_e.htm

2. **Provincial Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPOP) (1990)**

www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/90f31_e.htm

3. **Federal Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) (2000)**

http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/p-8.6/93196.html

4. **Provincial Personal Health Information and Protection Act (PHIPA) (2004)**

www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/04p03_e.htm

SECTION 8
Funding

This Section describes the sources of funding available to Toronto drop-ins in a generic way and discusses some of the good practices to be followed to access ongoing funding:

- **8A SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR DROP-INS**
  - Government Grants
  - United Way
  - Other Charitable Organizations
  - Faith-Based Support
  - Fundraising
  - Agency Partnerships
  - Attachment
    - 8A.1 – List of Possible Funding Sources

- **8B ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**
  - Gaps in Funding
  - Funding with Strings Attached
  - Rights of Donors
  - Accountability
  - Attachments
    - Appendix 8B.1 – Sample Gift Acceptance Policy
    - Appendix 8B.2 – Sample Donor Privacy Policy

- **8C FUNDRAISING**
  - Approaches to Fundraising
  - Registered Charities and the Legal Aspects of Fundraising
  - Applications and Proposals
  - Attachments
    - Appendix 8C.1 – Analyzing the Effectiveness of Different Approaches to Fundraising
    - Appendix 8C.2 – A Guide to Issuing Charitable Tax Receipts
    - Appendix 8C.3 – Funding Proposal Guidelines

SUBSECTION 8A
Sources of Funding for Drop-Ins

Drop-ins, like all other organizations that are trying to meet the complex and diverse needs of people marginalized by poverty and homelessness, face an ongoing struggle to access funding. A July 2006 report by the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto and the Family Service Association describes the impact on these services of **chronic under-funding**, including deteriorating working conditions and the difficulties of providing quality service to program participants.[1]

Workers may regularly face the threat of layoffs; one in five workers reports having more than one part-time job to make ends meet. Organizations committed to social justice find themselves unable to provide job security to their own staff.

Instead of regular sustaining funding from government, designed to ensure high quality community service and meet core expenses such as rent and administrative salaries, drop-ins often depend on time-limited program funding from a number of sources, often involving annual applications and uncertainty.

About 70 per cent of the funding for the non-profit sector comes from the government, but drop-ins must increasingly rely on charitable fundraising, involving many hours of precious staff time on tasks not related to direct service, client support, or day-to-day operations.

Toronto drop-ins currently access a wide range of sources for funding to operate their programs. Due to the changing nature of funding programs, information on specific funding programs is not included. Sources of information about available funding are identified in **Appendix 8A.1**.

Government Grants

Grants from the three orders of government are the most prevalent and consistent source of funding. Almost all drop-ins receive some portion of their funding from government. There are exceptions, however. At least one faith-based drop-in does not seek funding from the government, relying entirely on faith-based fundraising. Another faith-based organization has a policy that no more than 25% of its funding can be from the government, because it sees such funding as precarious and unreliable.

Municipal funding. The City of Toronto provides funding specifically for drop-ins, from the City's own budget. In some cases, drop-ins are housed in buildings owned by the City and charged only a nominal fee for their use; this is a significant contribution. In addition

[1] Community Social Planning Council of Toronto and Family Service Association of Toronto, *On the Front Lines of Toronto's Community Service Sector: Improving Working Conditions and Ensuring Quality Services*, a report of the On the Front Lines Project, Toronto, July 2006. Available at: www.fsatoronto.com/programs/social/FrontLinesCommunitySector2006.pdf.

to municipal grants, the City also administers funds provided by the provincial and federal levels of government. Grants from all levels of government are provided for specific needs, programs, and activities.[2] In 2006, some drop-in providers have accessed funds from the City of Toronto in the following areas:

- AIDS prevention
- Freedom from Violence
- Food Safety
- Drug prevention
- Homeless Initiatives
- Streets to Homes
- Housing help
- Mental Health
- Drop-in Hunger/Food
- Health and Safety

Provincial funding. Similarly, some drop-ins have accessed funding from the Province of Ontario for specific programs and activities and particular populations, from a number of government departments and agencies, including:

- Ontario AIDS Bureau
- Ministry of Health Mental Health
- Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (this Ministry funds a small number of drop-ins who serve an older population)
- Homeless Initiatives Fund (administered by the City)
- Ontario Women's Directorate

Federal funding. Finally, federal government funds are accessed from two areas:

- Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) provides funds through the City to address homelessness
- Service Canada (formerly called HRDC) provides funding related to employment

Much of the funding from government programs tends to be short-term, project-related funding. The programs change from year to year. Drop-ins need to continually monitor the programs that are available to identify opportunities that may arise. The Toronto Drop-In Network can be a useful way of sharing information about emerging programs.

In recent years some government funders have adopted a policy that they will not fund new agencies, restricting funding to agencies that have already established a funding relationship with the government. The provincial government refers to these funded agencies as "transfer payment agencies." This policy requires that agencies that are not currently receiving funding from a particular government source enter into partnership arrangements with a currently funded agency.

[2] See the City of Toronto's Grants Directory for a complete listing: www.toronto.ca/grants/grants_directory.htm.

United Way

The United Way is a significant source of funding for some drop-ins.[3] There are two primary ways to access United Way funding:

1. **United Way member agencies** are agencies that have established a funding relationship with the United Way and receive funding every year based on an approved budget and priorities;
2. Non-member agencies can submit proposals to the United Way for **time-limited project funding**.

The United Way is often interested in assisting agencies to do **organizational capacity building**; one drop-in, for example, received funding to review and rewrite all of its policies.

Other Charitable Organizations

Some drop-ins have been successful in accessing funds from foundations and other funding bodies by demonstrating congruence between the activities of the drop-in and the priorities of the foundation. Examples of funds that have been accessed in this way include the Trillium Foundation, the Toronto Enterprise Fund, the Lesbian and Gay Community Appeal, the Wellesley Institute, and the Rotary Club.

Lists of grant-giving foundations and descriptions of their priorities are available from a number of sources; for example, Charity Village.[4]

Faith-Based Support

Several Toronto drop-ins are operated by faith-based organizations and receive financial support and volunteer support from the faith community. In one case, the drop-in is operated by an order of nuns who are supported by their congregation to be able to dedicate their time to the work of the order, including the drop-in, a visiting program, a therapeutic art studio, pastoral ministry, and spiritual outreach.

Fundraising

Regardless of other sources of funding that they access, many drop-ins have to carry out direct fundraising to support their work. Some have regular community fundraising events – for example, one drop-in has an annual barbeque and beer tent. Some larger organizations have a fundraising person or department that organizes various fundraising activities, either as part of a larger, organization-wide campaign or specifically for the drop-in itself.

Other drop-ins have sponsors that are prepared to raise funds on their behalf, organizing special events such as golf tournaments, dinners, and gala balls**.** Some drop-ins have established funding partnerships with business groups and companies that provide funds or goods for use or auction.[5]

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[3] Visit www.unitedwaytoronto.com/agency_support/grants_and_funding.html for further details.
[4] Visit www.charityvillage.ca for further details.
[5] See Subsection 8C for further discussion of fundraising.

Agency Partnerships

In addition to accessing funding resources, some drop-ins have entered into partnerships with agencies or businesses that **provide needed goods**. Several, for example, receive part or all of their food from the Daily Bread Food Bank or Second Harvest. However, relying on donations can have drawbacks in the drop-in's ability to plan meals and ensure a healthy, well-balanced diet for participants.

Other drop-ins have agreements with other agencies that **provide staff resources and specific programs** for the benefit of participants. In some cases this involves extending services currently provided in the community into the drop-in, while in other cases, funding has been provided specifically for the agency to offer the service to participants in the drop-in (see Subsection 7: Organizational Linkages and Partnerships for further discussion).

ATTACHMENT:

- **Appendix 8A.1 – List of Possible Funding Sources**

Appendix 8A.1 List of Possible Funding Sources

LIST OF POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

1. **City of Toronto Grants Directory**

www.toronto.ca/grants/grants_directory.htm

2. **Imagine Canada**

www.imaginecanada.ca

From this site, you may also access the Canadian Directory to Foundations and Corporations, which connects you to thousands of detailed records on groups that support community service organizations:
www.imaginecanada.ca/page.asp?foundation_directory

3. **Charity Village**

www.charityvillage.ca

4. **United Way of Greater Toronto**

www.unitedwaytoronto.com/agency_support/grants_and_funding.html

SUBSECTION 8B
Ethical Considerations

Drop-ins need to be conscious of the ethical issues related to fundraising and applying for funding. On one hand there is the question of who the drop-in will accept money from, and on the other hand there are issues related to the activity of fundraising itself.

Gaps in Funding

Some drop-ins have policies that they **will not accept contributions from donors or corporations whose activities include practices which are inconsistent with the organizational mandate of the agency**. Examples of this include tobacco companies, pharmaceutical companies, and manufacturers of instruments of war. Some faith-based groups (including the United Church of Canada) are reluctant to accept donations from the Trillium Foundation because its revenues are derived from gambling.

While adopting such an ethical position is very important, it can also be very challenging and will force the drop-in to make some very hard decisions. Drop-ins are chronically under-funded and often must scramble to meet their basic operating costs. This raises the question for drop-in operators of the congruence of their commitment to social and economic justice and the impact of under-funding on the people that work in drop-ins. At the heart of the issue is the move away from core funding for organizations to project/program funding, as a recent report on funding of community services in Toronto explains: [6]

> While core funding allows for organizational development, provides the basis for better salaries and benefits to staff, and better infrastructure for client services, project funding tends to be short-term and tied to delivery of a specific program, which may or may not meet the needs of the community. It usually requires extensive reporting to funders, which takes away time from other functions, like staff development and client service. It is destabilizing for both staff and clients.

Drop-ins need the flexibility to determine their priorities and direct their resources to the areas of need. This flexibility can be undermined if donors restrict the use of their gifts to specific areas or programs. While there may be a desire to refuse restricted gifts, most drop-ins will only do so if the restriction requires the funds to be used for a purpose which is not consistent with the policies and mandate of the drop-in. A sample Gift Acceptance Policy is attached as **Appendix 8B.1**.

Many drop-ins have identified the difficulty they encounter in getting money for programs that don't "count," such as music, art, or flower arranging, which can make a tremendous difference in the quality of life of people and help them to overcome social isolation, but which do not fit the framework of funders' programs.

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[6] Community Social Planning Council of Toronto and Family Service Association of Toronto, *On the Front Lines of Toronto's Community Service Sector: Improving Working Conditions and Ensuring Quality Services*, a report of the On the Front Lines Project, Toronto, July 2006, page 2. Available at: www.fsatoronto.com/programs/social/FrontLinesCommunitySector2006.pdf.

Funding with Strings Attached

Due to their heavy dependence on funding from government and foundations, **drop-ins are sometimes pressured to compromise their programs to fit the priorities of the funder**. In some cases this is the result of inadequate funding, meaning that the drop-in is unable to provide the level of service that is needed unless it complies. For example, a government program may be prepared to pay for computers to be used for job search or resume preparation, but not for use for typing tutorials or video games. For people who are very socially isolated, the computer room may be an excellent alternative to sitting alone in their room; however, the drop-in may be required to say that the computers are reserved for "more productive" pursuits.

In other cases, **the availability of funding for certain activities requires drop-ins to adopt approaches that are alien to their philosophy, or to avoid activities which they fear are alien to their funders' philosophy**. Examples include an agency which accepted Ministry of Health funding for case management even though they do not support a medical interventionist model. Other agencies have stopped using words like "feminism" and "advocacy" in applications because they were afraid of alienating funders.

The mismatch between the needs of participants and the parameters of funding programs may lead drop-ins to ethical dilemmas. Should you be open and honest with funders about your priorities and risk losing your funding, or should you shift your programs to fit the funder's priorities?

Rights of Donors

Imagine Canada has developed an **Ethical Fundraising and Financial Accountability Code**, which sets out the rights of donors, practices that will be followed (e.g. truthfulness, disclosure, respect for dignity of clients), practices that will not be used (e.g. commissions to fundraisers, selling donor lists) and provisions for financial accountability.[7]

One aspect of the rights of donors is their right to confidentiality, including the assurance that their personal information will only be used for purposes consistent with the gift. A sample donor privacy policy is attached as **Appendix 8B.2**.

Accountability

Major institutional funders such as government and charitable foundations will have rigorous reporting requirements involving establishing specific goals and deliverables and periodic reporting of achievements compared to these goals and deliverables. The periodic reports will also include financial accounting.

While other sources of funding, including charitable donors, will not necessarily have stringent reporting requirements, it is good practice to report periodically to all funders. While all reporting is time-consuming, assuring funders that their contributions are

[7] The Code can be accessed at: www.imaginecanada.ca/Files/ethicalcode/ethical_code.pdf.

achieving the objectives for which they were provided is essential to future fundraising success.

Where the funder has a standard reporting format, it is good practice to look at the reporting requirements at the time you apply for funding. This will enable you to structure your funding proposal including goals and deliverables in such a way that achievements can be measured and reported. If your funder does not have a reporting requirement, look to the reporting requirements of other funders to develop your own template for reporting.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Appendix 8B.1 – Sample Gift Acceptance Policy**
- **Appendix 8B.2 – Sample Donor Privacy Policy**

Appendix 8B.1 Sample Gift Acceptance Policy

Source: Adapted from documents collected from TDIN drop-ins during the Good Practices Toolkit consultations, May-July 2006.

SAMPLE GIFT ACCEPTANCE POLICY

Purpose

The Drop-in solicits current and deferred gifts from individuals, corporations and foundations to secure the continued and future operation of the organization.

- These policies and guidelines govern the acceptance of gifts by the organization and guide the fundraising activities of staff and volunteers.
- The intent is to reduce risk of liability against the Drop-in and its Board of Directors and to ensure consistency in the agency's approach to fund development.
- Critical issues associated with specific gifts are outlined and the agency will ensure that all gifts fit the needs, values and philosophy of the organization.
- The focus is on donors, ensuring that they understand clearly these policies and procedures that govern fund development in the agency.
- Policies and procedures outlined are guided by Imagine Canada's ethical guidelines and Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) stipulations.

Policy and Procedures

Use of Legal Counsel. The Drop-in shall seek the advice of legal counsel in matters relating to the acceptance of gifts, when appropriate. Review by counsel is recommended for:

- Suspected fraud or other illegal activity
- Contesting or reneging of a donation/gift
- Significant conflict of interest
- At any other time deemed necessary

To avoid difficulties, donors will be encouraged to seek legal and/or tax counsel before making a planned gift (e.g. bequest).

Types of gifts. This policy does not cover donations of food, used items and tickets for recreational activities. The Drop-in accepts gifts of any amount in the form of cash, stock, personal property or other assets, including gifts through trusts and estates.

We solicit and receive gifts from multiple sources, including individuals, foundations, corporations, churches and faith groups, various levels of government, direct response campaigns and involvement in special events.

The Drop-in shall not be involved in any coercive actions.[8]

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[8] The Canada Revenue Agency's (CRA) definition of a charitable donation (CSP-V01) is as follows: "At law, a gift is a voluntary transfer of property without consideration. In order for a donation to qualify as a

Restrictions on Gifts. The Drop-in will accept unrestricted gifts and gifts for specific programs and services, provided that such gifts are consistent with the agency's stated mission.

The Drop-in has the right to not accept gifts that are deemed restrictive. Gifts that are too restrictive are those that are not consistent with our mission.

Sources of Donation. Decisions regarding who to solicit and/or accept gifts from will be made by staff in consultation with the Executive Director. The Executive Director or his/her designate is encouraged, where possible, to inform the Board of Directors about corporations and foundations it will be soliciting.

1. **Corporate Donations**
   The Drop-in will not accept financial contributions (donations and sponsorships) directly from corporations whose operations include practices that the Drop-in Board of Directors deems, at our sole discretion, to undermine or offend the credibility or commitment to the mission of the Drop-in.

2. **In-kind Donations**
   The Drop-in accepts donations of non-monetary items.

   All in-kind donations will be recorded (contact information of donor, fair market value of donation, etc.).

   Receipts for in-kind donations will be issued upon request, provided that the item is not a service, a gift certificate (as per CRA requirements), and has a fair market value. For items over $1,000, an appraisal is required and will be kept on file.

   The Drop-in reserves the right to refuse any in-kind gift, at its discretion, that appears to be inconsistent with its mission.

   The Drop-in reserves the right to postpone the acceptance of a gift until it is deemed appropriate (e.g. through value or environmental assessments). In some cases it may be recommended that the donor sell the item and donate the proceeds of the sale to the Drop-in.

3. **Events, Raffles and Auctions**
   The Drop-in shall follow all required administrative procedures relating to these fundraising activities as required by the City of Toronto and CRA. For raffles, the agency will adhere to all Lottery and Gaming Commission guidelines. For events, appropriate insurance and licences will be obtained.

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gift, a donor must freely dispose of property. Any legal (e.g. contractual) obligation on a favour to make a donation would cause the donation to lose its status as a gift."

Records will be kept of all ticket sales (where names and addresses need to be collected for receipting purposes or to facilitate draws). The Drop-in's privacy policy will be included, where required.

Fundraising events where alcohol is served are required to have liquor licenses and all appropriate rules and regulations will be followed.

4. Planned Giving Donations

The Drop-in accepts a variety of testamentary or bequest donations including residual value as defined by testator, percentage value, specific defined amount, personal property and securities.

The Drop-in will accept a donation of real estate. However, the agency reserves the right to have a full assessment of the property carried out (such as environmental, value, liens, and structural) before accepting the gift. It is expected that the donor will cover the expenses associated with the assessment.

In the case of a bequest involving life insurance or gift annuities, the agency shall request assistance from allied professionals in order to determine the best way to administer the gift.

In all instances, donors shall be advised to use professional advisors independent of the Drop-in. The Drop-in shall retain professional counsel when needed.

The Drop-in will not accept gifts from estates that are intended for other organizations. This is to avoid the risk of becoming a conduit for gifts to other registered charities or non-qualified recipients, a practice that contravenes CRA guidelines.

Appendix 8B.2 – Sample Donor Privacy Policy

Source: United Way of Calgary and Area, *Our Privacy Policy: A Commitment to Our Donors*, n.d. Available at: www.calgaryunitedway.org/pdfs/Our%20Commitment%20to%20Protecting%20Your%20Privacy_Aug2004.pdf.

OUR PRIVACY POLICY: A COMMITMENT TO OUR DONORS

United Way of Calgary and Area is committed to protecting the privacy of its donors, volunteers, employees and other individuals. We value the trust of those we deal with and of the public and we recognize that maintaining this trust requires us to be transparent and accountable in maintaining the confidentiality of the personal information donors share with us.

United Way of Calgary and Area embraces the principles of the Canadian Standards Association Model Code for the Protection of Personal Information. We are committed to ensuring that all personal information is properly collected, used only for the purposes for which it is collected, and is disposed of in a safe and timely manner when no longer required.

United Way of Calgary and Area builds stronger communities by providing people a network of care when and where they need it. Through building partnerships and investing in proven strategies, United Way addresses immediate needs and finds long-term solutions to pressing social issues. As a non profit organization, we rely on the support of generous contributors, and achieve our fundraising objectives by engaging and understanding donors. We recognize that we deal with individuals and information about individuals and that it is essential that we protect the privacy of that information.

The Federal Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) and the Province of Alberta's Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) do not apply to most United Way activities; however United Way strives to embrace best practices. Therefore United Way is committed to follow the principles of the CSA Model Code for the Protection of Personal Information upon which PIPEDA/PIPA are based.

DEFINITIONS

Personal Information – Information that is recorded in any form, both fact and opinion and that can be used to distinguish, identify or contact a specific individual. It does not include business contact information and certain publicly available information such as names, addresses, and telephone numbers as published in telephone directories.

Donor – Any individual or organization that contributes funds to United Way of Calgary and Area.

Employee – Both paid and volunteer workers for United Way.

THE PRIVACY PRINCIPLES

An important aspect of fund raising is cultivating strong donor relationships and knowing the donors. Personal information is precious and we recognize that our donors trust us to treat their personal information appropriately. We are committed to protecting donor confidentiality. The following principles reflect our pledge to safeguard donors' personal information:

1. We are accountable for donors' personal information

We are responsible for all personal information in our possession. While senior management is ultimately accountable for the protection of personal information, United Way has appointed a designated privacy officer to monitor practices and procedures to ensure compliance with the principles set out in this policy.

We take every precaution to ensure the confidentiality of donors' personal information. The data that an individual or an employer provides is used to assist in our campaign, process and receipt donations, and respond to requests for information. All employees, agents and authorized service providers of United Way of Calgary and Area are required to protect the confidentiality of each individual donor's personal information.

Where we choose to have certain services, such as data processing, delivered by third party providers, we select the service providers very carefully. We take all reasonable precautions to ensure that the service provider protects personal information. These service providers enter into confidentiality agreements and do not keep any personal information on file.

2. We collect, use and disclose personal information only for certain purposes that we identify to donors

We collect, use or disclose personal information concerning our donors solely for the following purposes:

- Establish a relationship and to communicate
- Understand donors' identity and identify how we may improve our services to meet donors' preferences and expectations
- Reach our fundraising goals
- Process and receipt donations
- Provide donors with information about United Way
- Respond to donors' requests for information
- With donor's consent, publicly recognize individual donations
- Share donor information with another charity at the donor's request

We collect, use and disclose personal information concerning our employees and/or volunteers to:

- Recruit, train, recognize and retain highly qualified and motivated individuals
- Establish and maintain harmonious employer-employee relations
- Administer United Way policies and procedures
- Manage and promote the philanthropic activities of United Way
- Administer compensation and benefits

We obtain personal information about donors lawfully and fairly. Personal information collected will be limited to that required for the purposes identified by us.

United Way of Calgary and Area hosts a variety of special events designed to build public awareness and raise additional dollars. Some of these events require the gathering of personal information. We will inform donors of the purpose for which the information is being requested. We use this information only for the purposes related to this event and destroy it as soon as it is no longer required.

3. We will obtain donors' consent
We collect, use and disclose personal information only with donor permission.

The way we seek consent may vary depending on the sensitivity of the information and the reasonable expectations of the individual. Donor permission may be expressed in writing or it may be implied and may be given to us verbally or electronically.

A donor may withdraw their permission to collect, use and disclose their personal information at any time, subject to legal and contractual restrictions and reasonable notice. We will obtain individual donor consent before making information available to third parties.

Examples:

- **Designations –** when a portion of a donor's gift is directed to another charity, we will not provide the amount of the donation, the donor's name and the name of their employer to the recipient unless specifically requested by the donor.
- **Leadership Donors –** leadership donors may be publicly recognized by United Way.

Donors who prefer to remain anonymous should indicate this when making their pledge.

4. We keep donors' personal information accurate and up-to-date
We maintain appropriate procedures to ensure that personal information in our possession is accurate and up-to-date. Donors are entitled to seek a correction of their personal information if they believe that the information in our possession is not correct.

If a donor believes any of the information we have collected about them is incorrect or incomplete, the donor has the right to ask us to change it or delete it.

If a donor's personal information is inaccurate or incomplete, we will make the necessary changes.

5. We do not sell donors' personal information
We do not sell personal information to other organizations or individuals. We never share personal information with other non-profit organizations, without a donor's express consent for us to do so.

6. We will limit how long we keep information
We will keep donors' personal information only as long as it is necessary to satisfy the purposes for which it was obtained, or as required by law.

Personal information which has been used to make a decision about an individual will be retained long enough to allow the individual access to the information after the decision has been made. In the event of an access request or challenge, it will be held long enough to exhaust any recourse the individual may have under the law.

When we destroy personal information, we will use safeguards to prevent unauthorized parties from gaining access to that information during the process.

7. We safeguard donors' personal information
United Way of Calgary and Area will protect donors' personal information by safeguards that are appropriate to the sensitivity of that information.

Access to donors' personal information is restricted to United Way of Calgary and Area employees, volunteers, agents and authorized service providers who need it to do their jobs.

We maintain appropriate technical and organizational safeguards to protect donors' personal information against loss, theft, unauthorized access, disclosure, copying, use or modification.

We have developed security procedures to safeguard and protect personal information against loss, theft, unauthorized use or modification. We will maintain appropriate safeguards and security procedures that reflect the types of documents, including electronic or paper records, organizational measures including security clearances and limiting access on a "need-to-know" basis, and technological measures such as the use of passwords and encryption.

We collect only the domain name (e.g. Sympatico, Hotmail etc.) not the email address of visitors to our website. Donors on the site are linked to an industry standard secure payment service for credit card transactions. Our site uses "cookies" – small files containing information that track a visit to a website – in a session limited way. These temporary files follow the flow through the site to improve service to visitors.
These files do not remain on a visitor's computer at the end of the visit, and cannot be used to obtain any personally identifiable details.

Computer browsers may be set to notify the visitor before receipt of a cookie, so the visitor may decide whether or not to accept it. The visitor can also set their browser to turn off cookies, but some areas of our site may not function properly.

UnitedWay@work, our online campaign tool, uses a secure server to allow donors to make donations or access their account information. The server encrypts personal information. For credit card transactions, United Way of Calgary and Area uses an

industry-standard secure service. More details about this program are found on the actual system.

8. We will be open about our privacy practices
In response to an inquiry, United Way of Calgary and Area will make readily available specific information about our policies and practices relating to the management of personal information.

9. We allow donors to access their personal information
Donors may ask whether we hold any personal information about them. Donors may ask to see that information as provided by law and to ensure that it is accurate.

Donors also have the right to know:

- How we collect personal information and
- How we use personal information.

Upon written request, we will inform a donor of the existence, use and disclosure of their personal information and we will provide access to that personal information. We will respond to donor requests within a reasonable time (generally within 30 days). We will assist in preparing a request. We may require a donor to provide sufficient information to permit us to provide an account.

While our response will typically be provided at no cost, depending on the nature of the request and the amount of information involved, we reserve the right to impose a cost. In this circumstance, we will inform the individual of the approximate cost to provide the response and request direction as to whether to proceed.

In certain situations, we may not be able to provide access to all the personal information we hold about an individual. Exceptions will be limited and specific as permitted or required by law. Where permitted, the reasons for denying access will be provided to the individual upon request.

10. Donors may register a complaint
Donors may register a privacy-related complaint by contacting United Way of Calgary and Area's Privacy Officer. We will explain our procedure and provide information about other complaint procedures available. We will investigate all complaints. If an objection is justified, we will take all appropriate steps to repair the situation, including changing our policies and practices if necessary. Personal information relating to volunteers, job applicants and employees are subject to similar protocols.

For More Information
For more information, please contact United Way's Privacy Officer at [Telephone Number] or by email at [Email Address].

SUBSECTION 8C
Fundraising Techniques

Like every non-profit organization, it is important for drop-ins to learn the techniques and skills of fundraising. Workshops are sometimes available from the United Way and other foundations. There are numerous books and articles on the subject.[9] There are also a number of fundraising consultants that will help you to develop and launch a fundraising strategy.

The Canadian Centre for Philanthropy and the Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations recently combined to form an organization called Imagine Canada which serves as a fundraising resource for non-profit charitable organizations. Imagine Canada produces the **Canadian Directory to Foundations and Corporations**, which provides access to thousands of detailed records on foundations and corporations that support community service organizations. The Online Directory consists of both foundation information and corporate information.

While the directory is available on a subscription basis starting at $275 per year, charities or non profit organizations with annual revenue under $100,000 are eligible to use the Directory Starter Kit free of charge. The starter kit lets you receive up to five full foundation or corporate records, plus a complete guide to fundraising – *Building Foundation Partnerships*.

Approaches to Fundraising

Fundraising consultant Ken Wyman describes four different approaches to fundraising:[10]

1. **Institutional grantors**, including government, foundations, small and large businesses, service clubs and unions;
2. **Direct marketing**, including telemarketing, door-to-door and direct mail;
3. **Special events and product sales**, including golf tournaments, dinners and auctions; and
4. **Major individual donors**.

Wyman analyzes each approach according to seven measures to determine which approach is most effective within particular constraints of time and resources:

1. Speed of results
2. Return on investment per hour worked
3. Return on investment per dollar spent
4. Where to spend most of your effort
5. How to increase income
6. Hidden benefits
7. Hidden curses

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[9] See, for example, the list of resources available at: www.charityvillage.com/cv/research/rfundraising.asp.
[10] Ken Wyman and Associates, *Fundraising Ideas That Work For Grassroots Groups*, Ottawa: Voluntary Action Program, Department of Canadian Heritage, 1995. Full text available for download at: www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/pc-cp/pubs/e/pdfdocs/Fr4grass.pdf.

Wyman's analysis and helpful suggestions for making each approach to fundraising as effective as possible are attached in **Appendix 8C.1**.

Registered Charities and the Legal Aspects of Fundraising

Charitable organizations are required to comply with the rules and regulations established by the Government of Canada and administered by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). For detailed answers to a range of policy questions, visit the CRA website at: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tax/charities/policy/policy-e.html. You may also call the CRA's Charities Client Assistance telephone line at: 1-800-267-2384.

To access advice on operating a charity and filing annual information returns in compliance with the Income Tax Act, visit the CRA's Charities Directorate at: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tax/charities/menu-e.html.

If your drop-in is not officially a charity, but would like to register as one, the forms are available on the CRA website.[11]

Tax receipts. If your drop-in is a registered charity, you may issue tax receipts for financial and in-kind donations.

As a general rule, the types of donations which may be granted a tax receipt in accordance with CRA stipulations are those wherein:[12]

- Some property, either in the form of cash or a gift-in-kind, is transferred by a donor to the registered charity;
- The property is given voluntarily. The donor must not be obliged to part with the property, for instance as the result of a larger contract or a court order; and
- The donor is transferring the property to the charity without expecting anything in return. No benefit of any kind may be provided to the donor or to anyone designated by the donor as a result of a gift.

This general rule is a good guide, but there are several exceptions and ambiguous cases. **Appendix 8C.2** provides a detailed list of particular types of donations and fundraising events that warrant and do not warrant the issuing of a tax receipt.

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[11] Form T2050, *Application to Register a Charity Under the Income Tax Act*, is available at: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pbg/tf/t2050/t2050-01e.pdf; last updated March 13, 2002. The guide to completing Form T2050, *Registering a Charity for Income Tax Purposes*, is available at: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/t4063/t4063-01e.pdf; last updated November 16, 2001.

[12] Craig Stevenson, "Issuing Tax Receipts," Charity Village feature article, n.d. Available at: www.charityvillage.com/CV/research/rfrm18.html.

Applications and Proposals

While every institutional funder will have their own unique process for applying for funding, often including a specific set of questions to be addressed, it is a good practice for drop-ins to develop generic material that can be included in funding applications, with modifications as needed to fit the specific funder. This will enable the drop-in to respond quickly when funding opportunities arise.

Some of the kinds of questions that can be anticipated in a funding application are illustrated in **Appendix 8C.3** Sample Funding Proposal.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Appendix 8C.1 – Analyzing the Effectiveness of Different Approaches to Fundraising**
- **Appendix 8C.2 – A Guide to Issuing Charitable Tax Receipts**
- **Appendix 8C.3 – Funding Proposal Guidelines**

Appendix 8C.1 Analyzing the Effectiveness of Different Approaches to Fundraising

Source: Excerpted from Ken Wyman and Associates, *Fundraising Ideas That Work For Grassroots Groups*, Ottawa (ON): Voluntary Action Program, Department of Canadian Heritage, 1995, pages 32-35. Full text available for download at: www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/pc-cp/pubs/e/pdfdocs/Fr4grass.pdf.

THE FOUR TYPES OF FUNDRAISING

No model is perfect and there are substantial differences between individual items in these four categories. But the similarities are enough to justify the grouping:

1. Institutional Grantors

This category includes:

- federal ministries
- provincial ministries
- municipal, regional and county, including boards of education, public health, parks and recreation
- small and large businesses
- foundations
- service clubs
- United Ways (as regular funders or for special grants)
- religious groups
- unions
- employee funds
- professional groups (such as Business Women's Association)
- other non-profits

These groups are rational and organized in the way they give away their money, and they expect you to be equally organized in the way you ask. Present briefs, plans, budgets and annual reports. Work with influential people to open doors.

The hardest part is deciding which grantors are best to apply to. It will take a few people a lot of hard, behind-the-scenes work, but if it pays off it can provide large sums of money.

Speed of results: Six months or more may elapse from initial contact to actual donation. This is a bureaucratic system.

Return On Investment (ROI) for dollars per hour worked: high. Not a lot of labour is required, but it must be of high quality. Staff usually write the grant proposals, though volunteers could do more.

ROI dollars per dollar spent: high. Little cash investment is required.

Spend 80% of the effort on: behind-the-scenes research. The hardest part is deciding which funders are most worth the effort, and what would excite them.

Increase income by: having volunteers with contacts inside funding groups. Friends, employees, club members and other personal connections lift you from the slush pile. Personal presentations by volunteers help, even if they have no contacts.

Hidden benefit: gain credibility. Other funders are impressed by groups that have already received grants.

Hidden curse: short-term grants are most common. Funding seldom lasts more than three to five years. Frequently, it is only enough for a few months to build a demonstration project. Rarely can you count on ongoing core funding.

2. Special Events and Product Sales

Special events and product sales include thousands of different ideas. They all boil down to "give donors something for their money." There are more similarities than differences between selling tickets to events and selling cookbooks, buttons, calendars or chocolate bars.

Speed of results: at least three to six months of advance planning are required to have "an overnight success." Results improve with each repetition. It is very similar to starting a business. Would you open a restaurant for one night? Jump into the show-biz world of concert promotion for one night? Profits can be slim.

ROI dollars per hour worked: low. This is labour-intensive. Many hours of volunteer time are needed. Too often staff find themselves drawn in as well.

ROI dollars per dollar: low to medium. Profits can be slim. Groups lose money, despite countless hours of hard work by many volunteers. Special events and product sales also tend to require a lot of money upfront. Events typically cost 50% of the money raised — unless the expenses are covered by sponsors and in-kind donations.

Increase income by: holding fantasy auctions, and by charging high prices for "Gold" and "Platinum" admission tickets. Some of your supporters may be prepared to spend far more than you would imagine, if you make it exciting.

Spend 80% of the effort on: ticket sales. It doesn't matter how good the event is, if no one comes. Focus on events where you don't have to put on a show (a "stay-at-home") or someone else puts on the show (a preview).

Hidden benefit: Events can educate people, gain you publicity, and find you new supporters. In addition, people who are uncomfortable asking for donations often find it easier to sell something.

Hidden curse: The net returns after hard work can be very discouraging. Another problem is that donors in this setting often put on their "careful consumer" hats. If you asked for $25 as an outright gift they might give it, but offer a dinner worth $10 for $15 and they may counter that they could get a hamburger for $2.50.

3. Direct Marketing

Direct marketing includes:

- direct mail
- telephone campaigns (telemarketing)
- paid advertising
- free public service announcements (PSAs) in newspapers, magazines, radio, TV
- telethons and other television direct response
- door-to-door

All of these are ways to reach large numbers of people and ask for relatively small donations from each.

Speed of results: One to two years or more may be required to build up a significant donor base. Acquiring a donor list is the first step. After that you can build results from the house list of proven donors. Any mailing takes eight to ten weeks to get out, and another three months before all the income is in.'

ROI dollars per hour worked: high. A week's work is enough to get a campaign rolling. Staff or consultants look after the mechanics. Volunteers can personalize letters to friends and handle receipts and thank-you letters.

ROI dollars per dollar: low at first, growing to medium. Direct marketing can be very expensive to start up, but can return larger sums of money year after year. Costs are always a significant proportion of income.

Increase income by: telephoning current and past donors. Reply rates can be five times better than mail, and average donations two or three times higher.

Spend 80% of the effort on: choosing the right lists. The right package going to the wrong person is a waste.

Hidden benefit: donors who will be "upgraded" to larger amounts in the future. Monthly donors, gift clubs, and major gifts come from people who start with a $15 or $25 donation.

Hidden curse: 25% of donors disappear because they move. To replace each one who lapses, you need to ask 50 to 100 new prospects.

4. Major Individual Donors

This category includes:

- one-on-one meetings with individuals
- planned giving — wills and bequests
- some small groups

This is possibly the most efficient way to raise money at low cost. It is also one of the scariest. People need training before they're sent out to do this. The old saying is "80% of your money should come from 20% of your donors." This is the way to get those important larger donations from special friends. The biggest gifts come from personal, face-to-face discussions, not through letters or phone calls.

Speed of results: very fast. Although careful preparation and research are advisable, the first requests can be done almost immediately.

ROI dollars per hour worked: very high. This is possibly the most efficient way to raise money at low cost. Little staff time is required.

ROI dollars per dollar: very high. Almost no expenditure is required. Printed material is not essential.

Increase income by: concentrating on people who know the work you do very well and could give large amounts. Old friends may surprise you with generous gifts if they are asked. New friends take longer to win over.

Spend 80% of the effort on: role-playing. Practice how you will talk with donors before going to them.

Hidden benefit: People you never imagined could give large gifts will overwhelm you with generosity. They will be very happy to finally have a chance to give more. Eventually they may leave large amounts in their wills.

Hidden curse: Untrained volunteers may not believe it works.

Appendix 8C.2 A Guide to Issuing Charitable Tax Receipts

Source: Craig Stevenson, "Issuing Tax Receipts," n.d. Available at: www.charityvillage.com/CV/research/rfrm18.html. This table was developed by Stevenson based on the following Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) publications: Interpretation Bulletin IT-110R3 (Gifts and Official Donation Receipts); Interpretation Bulletin IT-297R2 (Gifts in Kind to Charity and Others); Tax Guide RC4108 (Registered Charities and the Income Tax Act – Draft); and Registered Charities Newsletter, Winter 1992-1993, No. 3.

ISSUING TAX RECEIPTS

Type of Event	What the Charity Receives	Receipt	Comments	Reference
Dinner	**Price of admission**	**Yes**	For the amount paid in excess of the value (not cost) of any food, entertainment and other services or consumable goods included in the price of admission.	IT-110R3, para. 5
Dinner coupled with an auction	**Price of admission that includes dinner and auction**	**No**		IT-110R3, para. 5
Dinner coupled with a lottery or draw	**Price of admission that includes dinner and draw**	**No**	Exception: Where the prizes or awards have only nominal value.	IT-110R3, para. 8
Concert or Show	**Price of admission**	**Yes**	For the amount paid in excess of the value (not cost) of any food, entertainment and other services or consumable goods included in the price of admission.	IT-110R3, para. 5
Concert or Show coupled with a lottery or draw	**Price of admission that includes concert or show and draw**	**No**	Exception: Where the prizes or awards have only nominal value.	IT-110R3, para. 8
Golf Tournament	**Price of admission**	**Yes**	For the amount paid in excess of the value (not cost) of any food, entertainment and other services or consumable goods included in the price of admission.	IT-110R3, para. 5

Type of Event	What the Charity Receives	Receipt	Comments	Reference
Golf tournament coupled with a lottery or draw	**Price of admission that includes golf tournament and draw**	**No**	Exception: Where the prizes or awards have only nominal value.	IT-110R3, para. 8
Auction	**Price of admission**	**No**		IT-110R3, para. 5
Any Event	**Donated services**	**No**	There is nothing to prohibit a charity from paying for services and later accepting the return of all or part of the payment provided it is returned voluntarily. However, since the donor must also account for the taxable income that would be realized as remuneration, there is no real tax benefit to the donor and one must question the donor's motives for requesting a receipt.	IT-110R3, para. 15(c)
Any Event	**Low value items**	**No**	Examples: Hobby crafts or home baking.	Newsletter No. 3
Any Event	**Selling price of goods or services at fair market value**	**No**		IT-110R3, para. 15(e)
Any Event	**Selling price of goods or services in excess of fair market value**	**No**	Exception: An official receipt may be issued if the goods or services have only nominal value.	IT-110R3, para. 15(e)
Any Event	**Payments or gifts of merchandise or supplies from a business whereby the business receives a material advantage**	**No**	A material advantage may include, but is not limited to, promotion or advertising in return for the gift.	RC4108 and Newsletter No. 3

Type of Event	What the Charity Receives	Receipt	Comments	Reference
Any Event	**Business inventory**	**No**	Gifts of business inventory are allowable gifts in kind. However, if the business claims a deduction for the donation it must also claim the same amount as income. Since a donation receipt provides no real tax benefit to the business, one must question the donor's motives for requesting a receipt. For taxation purposes, the business automatically receives a deduction from income through its cost of goods sold.	Newsletter No. 3
Any Event	**Gifts in kind**	**Yes**	For purposes of issuing an official donation receipt, the fair market value of a gift in kind is determined as at the date of the donation. If the gift is likely to be valued at $1,000 or less, the Charity may prefer to have one of its qualified staff or volunteer members evaluate the gift. For higher value items, an independent appraiser should be consulted. *Caution:* Be wary of in-kind gifts that have been arbitrarily assigned a value of $1,000. This is a common feature of art flip schemes, for example, whereby the "donor" purchases artwork in bulk quantities for under $400 a piece and donates them individually with an appraised value of $1,000 a piece.	IT-297R2, para. 6 and Newsletter No. 3

Appendix 8C.3 Funding Proposal Guidelines

Note: This funding proposal is designed to illustrate the kind of questions that drop-ins can expect to be asked by major institutional funders such as foundations and governments.

FUNDING PROPOSAL

1. Project Title/Organization Name

If the drop-in is sponsored by an existing organization, be prepared to provide detailed information about the sponsoring organization. This may include:

- Brief history,
- Board of directors,
- Mission statement,
- Description of programs and activities,
- Major accomplishments,
- Budget for overall organization for current year,
- Most recent audited financial statements,
- Description of where the drop-in fits into the organizational structure and mission, and
- Charitable registration number, if applicable.

2. Project Description/Background

A. Main purpose/goal of the project in one sentence

This should describe the mission or mandate of the drop-in.

B. Brief description of project

Provide a brief background to the drop-in and to the specific aspect for which you are applying for funding. Why is the drop-in important and why is the specific project or need that you are applying for important?

3. Funds Requested/Timelines

- Prepare a budget and a work plan.
- Identify all sources of funding and all expenses.
- Be sure to define the extent of volunteer contributions.
- Show specifically how the funding will be used; funders don't like to see their money "thrown into the pot."

4. Key Benchmarks of Success/Outcomes

A. Ultimate outcomes

- What will be achieved in the long term because of the funding and the activities that it supports?
- Funders want to know that their support will make difference.

B. Short-term indicators of success

- How will you measure that you have made a difference?

- Be careful to avoid focusing on activities; focus instead on outcomes (i.e. it's not about how many people use the service, it's about what the service does for them).
- Funders want to see measurable achievements.

5. Sustainability of the project

- Be prepared to say what will happen when the funding ends if the funding is only temporary.
- Describe how the work of the drop-in is sustained by organizational support, other donors and supporters.

6. Staffing

Who will be responsible for the funded programs?

If staff are in place for the program, describe their skills and qualifications and their experience with this kind of program. If staff are not yet hired, describe the skills that will be required.

7. References

Be prepared to include names of people in established organizations that can speak in support of you proposal, including the need for the project and your ability to carry it out. Speak to the references about your proposal and provide a copy to them.

SECTION 9
List of Resources

This Section is intended to help you with any further research you may want to do into topics covered by the Good Practices Toolkit. The references cited throughout the Toolkit are listed here by Section; there are also additional books, articles, and websites listed here that may help you explore the topics in more depth. Please keep in mind, though, that most of the recommended good practices in this Toolkit come from consultations with Toronto drop-ins, and if you are struggling with a particular problem or policy, it may be most helpful to you to ask your fellow drop-in workers for their advice.

GENERAL

The two sources listed below – Homeless Link's *Day centres handbook* and the Drop-In Skills Training Certificate Program Manuals – are excellent general resources that cover many of the topics discussed in the Toolkit.

Homeless Link

Homeless Link. 2004. *Day centres handbook: A good practice guide*. Written and edited by Tara Bradley, Abigail Cooper, and Rebecca Sycamore, with original research and material by Sarah James. London (UK): Homeless Link.

For copies of this resource (and other publications by this organization), contact Homeless Link at:
Website: www.homeless.org.uk
Telephone: 020-7960-3010
Address: 10-13 Rushworth Street, London, England, SE1 0RB

Drop-In Services Skills Training Certificate (DISSTC) Program

Mitchell, Evelyn. 2005. *Building and Maintaining Successful Groups: Workshop Facilitator's Manual*; *Information, Referral, and Individual Advocacy and Negotiation: Workshop Facilitator's Manual*; *Drop-In 101: Workshop Facilitator's Manual*; *Drop-In 201: Workshop Facilitator's Manual*; and *Training Preparation: Questions, Interviews, Responses, and Summaries*. Toronto (ON): Toronto Hostels Training Centre and the Toronto Drop-In Network.

These print resources are adapted by the author as needed during her interactive training sessions. To learn more or sign on for her course, contact the Toronto Hostels Training Centre at:
Website: www.thtcentre.com
Telephone: 416-469-0007
Address: 935 Queen Street East, Toronto, Ontario, M4M 1J6
Registration inquiries: inquiries@thtcentre.com

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