

# Anti-Racism, Diversity, & Equity Policy

## Board Policy

Date created / last approved:	September 10, 2019	Approved by: The Board of Directors
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### Statement of Principle:

Epilepsy Toronto recognizes that the city of Toronto is composed of a vast and rich diversity of communities. In accordance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, Epilepsy Toronto believes in treating all people with respect and dignity, and is committed to ensuring that its mission and operations are inclusive and accessible to all. Under this ADE Policy, every person has a right to equitable treatment regardless of race, ethnicity, ancestry, place of origin, citizenship or immigration status, age, ability, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic status, religion, marital status, or values. We recognize how our population is impacted by the social determinants of health and are dedicated to removing any barriers to accessing health services to those we serve. Epilepsy Toronto values diversity, promotes inclusion, and opposes discrimination in any form.

### Objectives:

It is Epilepsy Toronto's objective to:

- Promote membership amongst its clients, staff, volunteers and Board members that reflects the diversity of the broader community
- Promote equitable and inclusive practices in the community by strengthening partnerships with diverse communities

### Definitions:

**Diversity:** A multidimensional concept that recognizes similarities and differences, both visible and invisible, among people and groups. These include differences such as race, ethnicity, ancestry, place of origin, citizenship or immigration status, age, ability, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic status, religion, marital status, and values.

**Racism:** “is a set of societal, cultural, and institutional beliefs and practices that, regardless of intention, subordinate and oppress one group for the benefit of another. Racism refers to the use of individual and institutional power to deny or grant people and groups of people rights, respect, representation, and resources based on their skin colour” (Regional Diversity Roundtable, 2008 in Health Equity Council, 2011).

**Anti-Racism:** An active and consistent process of change to eliminate individual, institutional and systemic racism involving the practice of identifying, challenging and changing the values, structures, policies and practices that perpetuate racism (adapted from excerpts by Health Equity Council, 2011).

**Equity:** An outcome that requires different responses “according to different needs in order to reduce or compensate for unequal barriers, risk, vulnerability, resources, etc. to support the attainment of equal outcomes among different population groups” (Health Equity Council, 2011).

**Inclusion:** An approach that accepts, respects and embraces our global community so every person feels welcomed, valued and a sense of belonging.

**Social Determinants of Health:** Social determinants of health are conditions and circumstances that contribute to health outcomes. On a structural level, these determinants include ideology, governance, policies and institutions. Intermediate determinants resulting from these structures include social inclusion, access to shelter, education, income and employment, food security and nutrition, and stable eco-systems.

## **POLICY**

- Epilepsy Toronto will:
  - actively work toward ensuring that staff, volunteers, and members of the Board reflect the Diversity of Toronto providing them with appropriate training and education in Anti-Racism and Equity.
  - support Diversity, Equity and Inclusion by focusing on 3 key strategic areas:
    - identify and address the barriers clients face in accessing services to manage their epilepsy;
    - create an equitable and inclusive work environment for staff; and
    - build community connections and partnering to ensure clients and families have access to required resources and seamless transitions across different care settings.
  - provide program and services that are client-centred, sensitive and relevant to Diversity.
  - provide communications that focus on presenting culturally appropriate, positive and balanced portrayals of Diversity.

- embrace the social determinants of health approach whereby programs and processes address systemic issues and reduce inequities in accessing services.
- create an environment that is supportive, accessible, welcoming, safe and free of stigma, harassment and discrimination for all stakeholders.
- cultivate a community of the agency (i.e., members, supporters and volunteers) that is reflective of Diversity and the community at large.
- promote fairness, transparency and equity in employment at all levels of the organization.

Epilepsy Toronto will not tolerate discriminatory or racist behaviour and, wherever possible, must eliminate systemic barriers to full participation, ensure equitable opportunities, and promote positive attitudinal change.

### **Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors:

- will strive to ensure that its composition reflects the Diversity of the community it serves, directing recruitment efforts accordingly.
- will take a leadership role in upholding the principles contained in the policy and remaining informed on issues as they relate to anti-racism and equity.
- will be accountable to its stakeholders for upholding the intent, spirit and purpose of this policy through annual reports and other appropriate forums.
- will review Epilepsy Toronto's vision, mission and core values to ensure consistency with the ADE policy.

### **Staff**

Epilepsy Staff will:

- Monitor services to ensure they are equitable, inclusive, respectful and culturally appropriate, reexamining current approaches, and responding to the changing needs of diverse communities.
- Facilitate outreach and service provision to persons with epilepsy in diverse ethno-racial communities.

- Actively solicit input from diverse viewpoints within Epilepsy Toronto and in communities we serve and seek to serve.
- Build staff resources and expertise toward the delivery of culturally appropriate services to diverse groups of community members.
- Recommend and conduct appropriate training and education for staff, volunteers, Board members and clients.
- Develop evaluation tools that measure the effectiveness of culturally responsive services provided to diverse groups.
- Develop specific annual Diversity plans and activities that can be integrated into existing program plans and will support sustainable change.
- Establish partnerships and routinely consult with community leaders amongst diverse groups to identify and create new opportunities for accessibility and inclusion.
- Work closely with the City of Toronto to address the needs of clients for example, Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs)
- Actively share knowledge, skills and resources with other organizations as part of an ongoing learning process to promote Diversity and improve equity-based initiatives.
- Develop internal and external communications that are inclusive and reflective of Diversity.
- Engage other staff, volunteer and clients from diverse racial, cultural and linguistic communities to review communications targeted to diverse communities .

Employees will be provided with ongoing Diversity education.

***This policy will be posted on the Epilepsy Toronto website. Copies will be available to those who do not have web access.***