

## Community Connections Support Services

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### Cultural Diversity Plan 2015

This plan is developed to respond to the diversity of all stakeholders associated with the services provided by Community Connections Support Services. The Cultural Diversity Plan will address how agency employees are supported to work effectively cross culturally by understanding, appreciating and respecting differences and similarities in beliefs, values and practices within and between cultures.

Community Connections Support Services considers its largest asset in service delivery to be the values, philosophy and person-centered approach with which we conduct ourselves and our business. These values and philosophy inform how CCSS provides services to those requiring support as well as hiring practices for support workers employed by CCSS and contractual relationships held with Home Share Providers and the agency.

CCSS policy regarding Social Justice and Diversity clearly outlines our interest in providing supports and employment in a non-discriminatory manner:

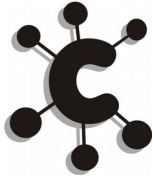
*“Community Connections Support Services is committed to social justice and diversity. Services are provided without regard to race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, same-sex partnership status, family status, socioeconomic status, language or disability.*

*To ensure our services are free of barriers, employee diversity is an integral part of the business practices. Individual differences are respected and valued. Fair and equitable treatment will apply to all aspects of employment. To ensure this, CCSS will actively remove barriers to ensure that each person has equal access to the benefits of employment.*

*Pro-active accommodation at work will be provided, where necessary and reasonably practical, to provide ways that support the employee’s dignity, worth and productivity, or to hire or retain qualified employees disabled through either injury or illness, or otherwise belonging to groups protected under the applicable Human Rights Code.”*

#### Past Practice

In keeping with our policy, Community Connections Support Services has not formally collected or analyzed demographics related to ethnicity. The rationale for this has been that we are an agency that will provide services to any person interested in receiving them regardless of ethnicity or cultural heritage. We do however, recognize that a failure to recognize ethnocultural issues may also put those we support, our employees and other stakeholders at a disadvantage if we fail to recognize or



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accommodate the unique interests and needs of those we are in relationship with. As a result, we seek information directly from those we support, employees and other stakeholders regarding ethnocultural interests and preferences and make all attempts to provide accommodation. We provide generic services with the focus being on further developing highly individualized, person-centered supports based on each individual's needs and preferences across all domains. We expect support workers and contractors to focus on embracing diversity and celebrating individuality in all aspects of the support they provide. As a result, individualized planning for people supported by the agency is to address and consider all needs, wishes, preferences and interests of those we support with a focus on facilitating opportunities for those we support to create and participate in experiences of their choice, including those experiences and practices related to cultural heritage, spirituality and ethnicity.

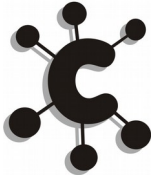
Personnel and contractors are paid by the agency to provide supports regardless of any cultural heritage, spiritual, and ethnic preferences they may have. We depend on employees to provide us with feedback related to any discrimination or marginalization they may face as a result of their personal choices and respond promptly to any discrimination within the workplace or community.

This year, we have decided to include ethnocultural information in planning documents for those we support. We are amending our current Individualized Service Plan template to ensure that we are asking questions related to any cultural issues, past, present and future that are important to those we serve. Our hope in including this information is to gain a much better understanding of those we support and their needs. We also believe that this information may expose any barriers to access in communities where cultural differences may play a role and inform our need to accommodate and advocate for the rights of those we support.

We continue to be an agency that is supportive of each individual's right to live and practice according to their own beliefs. As a result, our Home Share Provider screening process asks potential caregivers to identify and consider any conflicts that may arise between their established belief system and those of a person they may support in their home (ie sexual orientation, religion, language, etc). Should a conflict or prejudice exist, it informs parameters of placement within the home of the potential caregiver. Employees are reminded that they are free to live and practice according to their beliefs but are not to impose their personal beliefs on those they support and are to respect and support those we serve to practice their individual beliefs as a function of paid supports.

### **Commitment:**

Community Connections Support Services is committed to responding to demographic trends as it relates to cultural diversity on a case-by-case basis in an on-going way.



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### **Data:**

As part of our annual Consumer Satisfaction Survey, CCSS has included a section addressing the needs of those we serve in the area of Cultural Diversity. We specifically asked those we support: “Is there more we could do to support your cultural heritage? Is there anything that you would like to do or attend that meets these needs? (events or groups)”. We do not receive responses to this area and are reevaluating how we attempt to obtain this information.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Include a section in ISPs and 6 month summaries to address cultural heritage.
2. Request information regarding present and on-going accommodation related to ethnocultural diversity.
3. Make attempts to identify and practice sensitivity to any inherent barriers due to cultural differences, when they exist.

**Report Completed: March 2015**

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