

## **Halton Equity and Diversity Roundtable (HEDR) Terms of Reference**

### **1. Mission**

To develop the capacity of organizations, groups and businesses in Halton to be inclusive and equitable of all forms of human diversity in their practices, policies and services.

### **2. Vision**

A community where individuals are valued, respected and empowered to realize their full potential. Individuals are people who represent all aspects of diversity including but not limited to race, culture, socio-economic status, ethnicity, nationality, age, language, sexual orientation, skin colour, gender, physical or mental abilities.

### **3. Objectives**

The purpose of the Halton Equity and Diversity Roundtable is to provide the leadership and structure to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To provide and coordinate training and resources about equity and diversity to the Halton community.
- ii. To identify and highlight examples of excellence in diversity and equity related practices in Halton.
- iii. To promote public awareness and education strategies to address equity and diversity issues in our community.
- iv. To create a website with a space for people to access promising practices and articles.
- v. To collect information on promising practices and activities in other communities and customize them for use and implementation in Halton.
- vi. To advocate for inclusive practices throughout Halton.

In all the Roundtable's activities we will be collaborative and inclusive in all of our efforts.

### **4. Core Values**

- Diversity
- Equity
- Inclusion

## 5. Guiding Principles

We believe in promoting diversity and equal access to achieve equity for marginalized groups as a key human right within Halton.

We believe in using intersectional anti-oppression practices to promote social inclusion and meaningful engagement to achieve equity.

We believe in working towards health and social equity and challenging any inequities, which are based in social constructs that are unfair, unjust and avoidable.

## 6. Membership

The membership will consist of people and organizations who wish to move the agenda of equity for all in Halton forward.

Membership will be represented as two types:

- Individual membership – Individuals with experience and passion for equity initiatives, and who work or reside in Halton
- Organizational membership – Organizations (including networks, agencies, unions, groups, and businesses) with designated representatives who are directly involved in currently existing equity initiatives within their organization and/or are interested in introducing equity initiatives in their organization
  - An organization may have multiple designated representatives, however, an organization is entitled to only one vote with the member organization defining the voting member

As we wish to represent the broadest (and most diverse) membership possible, the Roundtable will recruit members from:

- Community Services and Human Services providers
- Community Members
- Health services
- Government agencies
- Labour organizations
- Politicians
- Business

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities of Members

### i. Joining HEDR:

- In order to achieve its goals to be equitable and inclusive, HEDR welcomes all individuals and organizations who support the mission, vision and objectives of HEDR
- Individuals and organizations are encouraged to apply for membership by contacting HEDR and completing an orientation with HEDR staff
- Individuals and organizations are encouraged to sign a commitment agreement

### ii. Term:

- Minimum one year term, no maximum
- Terms may be renewed automatically as long as member is in good standing

### iii. Accountability:

- Accountable to all members of the Roundtable and to the Halton community
- Meeting minutes will be made available to HEDR members and the public

### iv. Duties:

Members are expected to demonstrate commitment through:

- Maintaining an atmosphere of respectful and inclusive discussion
- Respecting the confidentiality of all matters related to HEDR
- Attending and actively participating in no less than three meetings per year, and providing “regrets” when a conflict is unavoidable
- Contributing their expertise, resources, and individual experiences to actively provide direction and further the mission, vision, values, and goals of HEDR
- Participating in working groups and/or ad hoc committees
- Identifying other sources of funding to support the work of the Roundtable
- Attending and supporting HEDR events and initiatives
- Implementing learnings from HEDR to their own organizations and/or communities, and vice versa
- Sharing HEDR information with other networks and the community at large
- Sharing responsibilities for hosting meetings, providing refreshments, and contributing administrative and student support

### v. Meetings:

The Roundtable shall meet on a regular basis with a minimum of five meetings per year, however, it is up to the Roundtable to decide if additional meetings are required depending on the work to be done. The estimated time for a Roundtable meeting is three hours.

vi. Dismissal:

In the event that a member can no longer fulfill the commitment, the individual will no longer be considered a member in good standing and will lose their voting privileges. Their membership will not be automatically renewed, and may be transferred to an association with HEDR.

In the event that a member is actively working against the mission, vision and objectives of HEDR, the member can be dismissed with a minimum 60%+1 vote of all voting members at a meeting specifically called for this purpose.

## 9. Associations

Some individuals, organizations, agencies or businesses may want to hold an association with the Roundtable and its work. While these people may not actively work on behalf of the Roundtable, they understand and support the importance of the cause and the necessity for its visibility in the Halton community. An associate may not vote, but will still have access to minutes, newsletters, and Roundtable events.

## 10. Decision-Making Procedures

- i. It is important that quorum is met whenever a decision is made at a Roundtable meeting. A quorum is 35%+1 of voting members.
- ii. It shall be noted in the minutes that a quorum was met or not met
- iii. The Roundtable will, whenever possible, make decisions by consensus
- iv. Where consensus cannot be reached (i.e. the decision cannot be supported by all members), a formal vote will occur and be documented in minutes as “approved” or “defeated”
- v. Where voting becomes necessary, the following shall apply:
  - One vote per member
  - In the event that an Organizational Member’s listed Voting Representative is unable to attend a meeting, they may designate another representative from their organization to vote on their behalf
    - It is the responsibility of each Voting Representative to ensure the representative they designate as their “proxy” is informed and accountable to the Roundtable. Whenever possible, the item requiring a vote will be identified in the agenda that is sent out prior to the meeting.

- Proxy voting by email may be used when requested
- Open voting process, unless a secret ballot is requested
- Decisions are made by majority vote
- The rotating Chair presiding the meeting to cast the tie-breaking vote

## **11. Conflict of interest**

Members must recognize that the trust placed in them by the community requires that any conflict of interest, including a perceived conflict, between public duty and private interests, which does arise, is resolved as quickly as possible, and in favor of the public interest. Members are required to disclose the existence and nature of private interests, be they financial or non-financial in nature. The partnership may disqualify a member from participating on any matter in which said member has a private interest, and may take such other action as is deemed appropriate in the circumstances.

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The Terms of Reference is a living document and will be reviewed every 2 years to ensure its continued appropriateness.

### **See also:**

1. Appendix: Glossary
2. HEDR Organizational Chart and Working Group Descriptions
3. Membership Collaborative Agreement
4. Group Guidelines/ Operating Norms/ "Comfort Agreement"
5. Inclusion Policy
6. Terms of Reference – Coordinating Committee
7. Terms of Reference – Working Groups
8. Membership List

## Appendix: Glossary

**Anti-Oppression Framework:** An anti-oppression framework recognizes the connections and relationships between different forms of oppression and why it is important to work together to put an end to all oppression.

**Diversity:** the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation and socio-economic status (Government of Ontario - Ontario's equity and inclusive education strategy, 2009).

**Equal Access:** Recognizing that "one size does not fit all" in a diverse urban/rural communities, equal access to health programs and services for all individuals requires the removal of barriers associated with literacy levels, language, culture, geography, social factors, education, economic circumstance and mental and physical ability. (Ministry of Health and Long Term Care 1997, Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines).

**Equity:** Every person has a right to equitable treatment with respect to services, goods and facilities without discrimination. Equity does not mean treating people the same, without regard for individual differences.

**Health and Wellness Equity:** The idea that everyone should attain their full health potential and that no one should be disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of their social position or other socially determined circumstances (Whitehead and Dalgren, 2006).

**Inclusion:** Creating an environment where people have both the feeling and reality of belonging and are able to work to their full potential (Ontario Inclusion Learning Network).

**Intersectionality:** A theory that examines how various biological, social and cultural categories (e.g. gender, race, class, sexual orientation, etc.) interact on multiple, simultaneous, and inter-locking levels, contributing to systematic social inequality.

**Marginalized/Margins:** Groups that have a history of oppression or exploitation are pushed further and further from the centres of power that control the shape and destiny of the society. These are the margins of society, and this is the process of marginalization.

**Meaningful engagement:** When people are involved in experiences they consider to have purpose. Organizations that work successfully to promote inclusion understand this and agree that engagement must possess real meaning to both the organization and the individuals involved (Pereira, 2007).

**Oppression:** Is a pattern or system of inequality, which gives power and privileges to members of one group of people at the expense of another. (Source: Ontario Ministry Children and Youth Services) It exists when one social group exploits (knowingly or unconsciously) another social group for its own benefit. It results in privilege for the dominant group and disenfranchisement for the subordinated group. After a while, oppression does not require the conscious thought or effort of individual members of the dominant group and unequal treatment becomes institutionalized, systemic and looks “normal”.(Lopes and Thomas, (2006) Dancing on Live Embers).

The cycle of oppression is influenced by bias, stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination (McGibbon, Elizabeth A. (2012) Oppression as a Social Determinant of Health, Fernwood Publishing).

**Power:** Access to resources, positions, status, wealth or personal strength or character which gives a person or a group or a system the ability to influence others. Powers can be used to affect others positively or negatively (hrsb.ns.ca).

**Prejudice:** means having a negative opinion or attitude toward a person or group of people because they are different from you (Canadian Centre for Diversity Website).

**Privilege:** The experience of freedoms, rights, benefits, advantages access and/or opportunities afforded others of the dominant group in a society or in a given context, usually unrecognized and taken for granted by members of the majority group; while the same freedoms, rights, benefits, advantages and access and/or opportunities are denied to members of the minority or disadvantaged group (Canadian Race Relations Foundation – [www.crr.ca/diverse-files](http://www.crr.ca/diverse-files)).

**Social inclusion:** An inclusive community offers support, respect and opportunities to participate (Sudbury and District Health Unit “Let’s Start a Conversation” User Guide, 2007).

**Social Inequities in Health:** The avoidable differences in health between groups that are caused by our living conditions, jobs, schools, housing, neighborhoods, etc. (Sudbury and District Health Unit “Let’s Start a Conversation” User Guide, 2007).

**Social Justice:** Fairness and mutual obligation in society: that we are responsible for one another, and that we should ensure that all have equal chances to succeed in life (<http://www.thersa.org>).