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Halton Equity & Diversity Roundtable (HEDR)

Dear Halton Community Organizations and Partners:

The Halton Equity and Diversity Roundtable (HEDR) is pleased to offer an Organizational Self-Assessment Tool for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for organizations, groups and businesses in Halton to increase the capacity to be inclusive and equitable in all forms of human diversity, as well as to enhance practices, policies and services.

Purpose

In our collective workplaces and organizations, we often state the fundamental principles of respect and equality for all. Core values of any organization usually list 'diversity', 'respect' and 'inclusion' within statements of mission and purpose. However, values are much more than words, and to truly embed these values into the structure and life of any organization requires honest examination and evaluation.

To assist an organization, and the individuals within an organization, in the progressive journey towards diversity and inclusivity, this self-assessment tool is meant to facilitate reflective conversations around "how we are doing" and "what we could be doing". It is meant to springboard assessment conversations toward meaningful and continuous action. It is meant to inspire mindfulness and responsiveness. It is not meant to feel competitive, in that high scores are the only objective. Additionally, a high score does not mean that equity and inclusion work is finished. This tool is not an exhaustive checklist and it will constantly evolve and change as the field of equity, diversity and inclusion develops over time and our learning journeys progress.

Framework

The terms *equity*, *diversity* and *inclusion* can mean very different things to different people. An individual's framework or a collective organizational framework around these terms determines how change happens, or how and when solutions are implemented. HEDR uses an inclusion lens/framework and intersectional anti-oppression practices to define our work and how we create equitable outcomes in organizations. For more information about our inclusion framework, core values, and guiding principles, please view our website – or the pages following this letter.

The journey to becoming truly inclusive is continuous. It is never finished.
Let's work effectively together and enrich our experiences together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ameena Amin".

Ameena Amin
Coordinator

On behalf of the Resources Work Group of the Halton Equity & Diversity Roundtable (HEDR)

To join HEDR as a collaborative member and take part in HEDR's training program and various helpful tools and resources, please contact the HEDR Coordinator at info@hedroundtable.com or 905-339-3525 ext. 298.



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Halton Equity and Diversity Roundtable's Inclusion Framework

Core Values

Diversity means valuing, not simply acknowledging or tolerating, different ideas, perspectives and identities, including but not limited to race, socio-economic status, age, language, sexual orientation, gender, physical or mental abilities. Diversity is viewed as a value and strength of the community that needs to be fostered.

Equity is about the quality and process of being fair and impartial. It goes beyond just equitable access to opportunities. It is about ensuring equitable outcomes. Equity is about recognizing that people do not always start from the same spot and therefore, have different needs and might need to be treated differently to have positive outcomes and ensure fairness. Equity contributes to equality.

Inclusion is about developing a welcoming community where diverse individuals are supported and empowered to realize their full potential.

HEDR believes that equity, diversity and inclusion are important values that should be clearly embedded within an organization's policies, practices and services, but they also need to be a separate strategic priority that is explicitly stated and measured. Unless something has a specific outcome and measure, it is often forgotten.

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.



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HEDR membership agreed to use an Inclusion Lens or what can be called an Integrated Anti-Oppression Framework in its work:

- Anti-Oppression is a way of seeing and naming oppression that happens against certain populations based on their identities. It does not blame individuals for their own marginalization and oppression, as is seen in a deficit framework.
- Anti-Oppression looks at how everyone (including people who experience oppression and privilege) can work together to end oppression (both personal and systemic).
- It is about rebuilding existing systems so that everyone shares the benefits and opportunities of the system, not simply trying to include diverse communities into the dominant culture, which is often not analyzed and considered the norm or standard.
- Integrated anti-oppression looks at all the ways people can experience oppression and marginalization, and how those social locations intersect and interact on multiple, simultaneous and inter-locking levels that cannot be examined in isolation from one another.

(An Integrated Anti-Oppression Framework for Reviewing and Developing Policy: A Toolkit for Community Service Organizations, Springtide Resources, 2008)