

Community of Practice Framework



The Knowledge Hub

The Knowledge Hub is an initiative of the Centre for Research & Education on Violence against Women & Children at Western University.

The Knowledge Hub actively supports projects across Canada funded through the Public Health Agency of Canada that use trauma- and violence-informed approaches to promote the health and wellbeing related to preventing and addressing family violence. This support includes:

1. Facilitating a national community of practice (CoP) for members of projects funded through the investment to share and enhance learning regarding trauma- and violence-informed research and practice.
2. Coordinating knowledge mobilization activities for projects and the broader community through live events, written resources, and videos.

Trauma- and violence-informed approaches are at the heart of all work conducted by the Knowledge Hub and are central to each project brought together into the CoP. This includes the research methods, practices, intervention and prevention efforts carried out by the projects, the research methods and practices of the Knowledge Hub, and the activities of the CoP, including regular meetings and gatherings of CoP and Knowledge Hub team members.



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Community of Practice Framework

Situated at the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children, Western University, the Knowledge Hub is an initiative working to facilitate a community of practice among members of projects funded through the Public Health Agency's *Preventing and addressing Family Violence: The Public Health Perspective* investment. Through learning promotion, knowledge mobilization, and professional development strategies, the goal of the community of practice is to enhance the combined impact of these projects and further advance innovations in the growing field of trauma-informed health promotion.

Objective: To outline the characteristics and purpose of our Community of Practice and outline the policy elements required for our Community of Practice to safely and effectively operate.

Summary of what our Community of Practice is, its purpose, and the roles of key groups:

- **The Public Health Agency of Canada:**
 - PHAC supports persons and organizations involved in offering evidence-based and trauma-informed promotion programs and interventions concerning the prevention and addressing of family violence and its health impacts
 - The Community of Practice is a way to join these persons and organizations in sustained learning partnerships for the duration of their projects
- **The Knowledge Hub:**
 - The KH coordinates knowledge translation and mobilization activities of trauma- and violence-informed research and practice
 - The KH facilitates the Community of Practice which is a space to facilitate such efforts specific to the involved projects and the persons attached to them
- **The Members:**
 - Members of the Community of Practice (a minimum of two from each project) participate in the various activities presented by the KH, including relationship-building, co-construction of knowledge, learning opportunities, and knowledge mobilization
 - The Community of Practice is an opportunity to share the successes, challenges, and outcomes of various projects, form working groups, and co-produce knowledge exchange products

Summary of how the Framework will be trauma- and violence-informed:

- Maintaining a trauma- and violence-informed approach facilitates the promotion of health and well-being for those involved who have experienced trauma, violence, or abuse
- It proactively considers how to make the spaces (virtual and in-person) attentive to increasing feelings of safety, trust, support, collaboration, empowerment, understanding, and connections

Content of the Framework and the purpose of each subtheme:

- **Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Statement**
 - To outline how the Community of Practice understands these terms and its plans to represent and serve its communities based on that understanding
- **Communication Guidelines**
 - To name the ways the Community of Practice commits to working together
- **Conflict Resolution Guidelines**
 - To outline the preferred plan of action when there are disagreements within the Community of Practice
- **Knowledge Sharing in Practice Statement**
 - To outline how information will be shared within and beyond the Community of Practice and clarify the process for obtaining informed consent for such

Resources guiding the Framework:

- The creation of the first draft of the Framework—as a living document—involved great effort in securing input from a wide range of sources to encourage diverse representation from as many communities (e.g., Indigenous peoples, people of colour, 2SLGBTQ+) and perspectives (e.g., academia, governmental, advocacy organizations) as possible
- Overarching resources:
 - [The Anti-Oppression Network](#)
 - [The Human Rights Code](#) (Canadian Human Rights Commission)
 - [Safer Spaces](#)
 - [Creating a Trans-Inclusive Workplace](#) (Harvard Business Review)
 - [Safer Space Guidelines](#) (Mental Health Commission of Canada)
 - [Ethical Space](#) (Conservation Through Reconciliation Partnership)
- Specific resources for an Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Statement:
 - [Ontario Health's Equity, Inclusion, Diversity and Anti-Racism Framework](#)
 - [New Frontiers in Research Fund](#) (Canada Research Coordinating Committee)
 - [Volunteer Canada](#)

- Specific resources for Communication Guidelines:
 - Sawyer, J. & Brady, S.R. (2022). [A Critical Community Practice Theory for Forging Alliances across Difference](#). *Journal of Progressive Human Services*, 33(1), 75–95.
 - Du Toit, A. (2014). Internal Communication Guidelines and Norms. LinkedIn. Retrieved from: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140911080202-65643596-internal-communication-guidelines-norms>
 - [Western Libraries Inclusive Language Guide](#)
 - Stanton, C. (2017). [Guideline for team communication: Guideline first look](#). *AORN Journal*, 106(6), p. 12.
- Specific resources for Conflict Resolution Guidelines:
 - Lewitter, F., Bourne, P.E., & Attwood, T.K. (2019). [Ten simple rules for avoiding and resolving conflicts with your colleagues](#). *PLoS Computational Biology* 15(1): e1006708.
 - [Canadian Human Rights Commission](#) – A toolkit for developing community-based dispute resolution processes in First Nations communities
- Specific resources for a Knowledge Sharing in Practice Statement:
 - Liu, F., Lu, Y., & Wang, P. (2020). [Why knowledge sharing in scientific research teams is difficult to sustain: An interpretation from the interactive perspective of knowledge hiding behavior](#). *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11: 537833.
 - Bratianu, C. (2015). [Knowledge sharing and communities of practice](#). In C. Bratianu's *Organizational knowledge dynamics: Managing knowledge creation, acquisition, sharing, and transformation* (Chapter 11).
 - Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada (2021). Guidelines for obtaining meaningful consent. Retrieved from: https://www.priv.gc.ca/en/privacy-topics/collecting-personal-information/consent/gl_omc_201805/#_seven



The Framework

Safer Space Guidelines

Inequality and oppression are relevant to our work and exist everywhere.

Their effects must be effectively and continually managed by us all.

This is done through:

- a commitment to learning, unlearning, and allyship and accompliceship
- actively working towards calls for decolonization and reconciliation
- the protection of human rights and eliminating all forms of discrimination
- forming accountability to each other in how we share and distribute power

In our community of practice, we agree to

- create a safer space which acknowledges the relativity that accompanies individuals' feelings of safety within varying contexts
- create a space where all members are comfortable sharing their needs, asserting their boundaries, and developing their agency without fear of discrimination
- respect our own and others' physical and emotional boundaries, identities and backgrounds, pronouns and names, and right to privacy

Communication Guidelines

The point of communication is to bring people together.

Engaging and sustainable togetherness must be continually managed by us all.

This is done through:

- encouraging multiple forms of purposeful listening—listen first, listen to understand, and listen to learn
- committing to people-first language and self-identification
- celebrating 'speaking up' behaviour, where opportunities are created and maintained for input and collaboration through multiple means of choice (verbal, written, etc.)
- committing to ensure all communication is clear, easy to understand, and barrier-free

In our community of practice, we agree to

- always assume positive intent and be authentically present, to the best of our abilities, for all meetings and events
- recognize the internal validity of both lived experience and expert-based ways of knowing and making room for diverse approaches and styles in communicating knowledge
- create opportunities to break down cultures of distrust and silos of knowledge, acknowledging that sharing knowledge can help re-allocate power relations

- be accountable to each other in sharing the responsibility for maintaining these communication guidelines and maintaining a trauma- and violence-informed approach to all communication

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement

Principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion are paramount.

We must all work to ensure our research and programming, and our community of practice, support these principles and help us support the communities we serve.

This is done through:

- recognizing barriers to opportunities and providing differential treatment responses and solutions accordingly
- recognizing the complex visible and invisible characteristics that form one's identity and how these may intersect with broader systemic barriers or enablers, with particular attention to individuals from underrepresented groups identified by age, education, sexual orientation, gender expression and identity, parental status/responsibility, immigration status, Indigenous status, religion, disability, language, race, place of origin, ethnicity, culture, socio-economic status, and other attributes
- intentional and ongoing welcoming and making space for all experiences, opportunities, activities, and resources, particularly recognizing the barriers and hurdles faced in asking for accommodations

In our community of practice, we agree to

- be sensitive to, and informed by, the potential impact that identity factors have on individuals' experiences and approaches, with particular attention to the roles of sexism and patriarchy in our field of gender-based violence
- consider these principles in relation to community composition, representation at meetings and events, and regularly offering training and development opportunities
- commit to facilitating intentional and continual opportunities for feedback and reflection on how the community of practice is collaborating and represented

Knowledge Sharing in Practice Statement

Information is power, but it is also susceptible to power.

There needs to be an agreement on how knowledge is shared within and beyond the Community of Practice, and what knowledge is included in these opportunities.

This is done through:

- facilitating a supportive culture with high levels of internal trust and a sense of community
- being transparent and clear in advance about the types of information to be shared and the purposes of such sharing
- committing to a continual and informed consent process, respecting that consent can be withdrawn

In our community of practice, we agree to

- recognize the importance of sharing information and knowledge co-creation within the Community of Practice, including the role of the Knowledge Hub in transferring, mobilizing, and promoting this information, and support these goals
- protect the confidentiality of data and information shared across all forms (e.g., verbal, text, virtual) with all audiences (e.g., among Community of Practice members, the general public)
- allow the Knowledge Hub to distribute information resulting from collaborative discussions and events, providing that information is not explicitly linked to personal or confidential data, is presented thematically and/or aggregately, and members have been informed about pending sharing opportunities
- secure written consent for distributing any form of information outside the Community of Practice that is explicitly linked to its members' identities, research teams, or projects and services, prior to sharing

Conflict Resolution Guidelines

Disagreement is an inevitable experience in communities.

We must agree to abide by a community-based dispute resolution process to guide our practice.

This is done:

- in a calm, nonconfrontational manner, with an understanding that sometimes the outcome will be 'agreeing to disagree' while maintaining mutual respect
- through community input about the process, which must remain flexible to allow acceptance by everyone involved in a dispute at any given time
- through considering experiences, opinions, and facts, while recognizing decisions about disputes must be accompanied by reasons
- by practicing 'call-in' behaviour (rather than call-out) to take a curious perspective on disagreement and maintain a trauma- and violence-informed approach

In our community of practice, we agree that

- in the event of a conflict or dispute, impacted persons are invited to bring it to the attention of—written, verbal, or otherwise—their project's Implementation Coordinator, or alternatively, any other member of the Knowledge Hub team or member of the community of practice more broadly
- the Implementation Coordinator, or other person contacted, will arrange for the impacted persons to choose at least one member of the Community of Practice to meet with, where they can explain the event, propose types of solutions they desire, and agree on a process to work toward those solutions
- the persons involved will be contacted by the member [of the Knowledge Hub] who the impacted persons choose to meet with, to allow for opportunities for hearing different perspectives
- the conflict resolution process will proceed on a case-by-case basis, with the leadership of the impacted persons, who must agree with the outcomes
- we will be open about the process and outcomes of relevant cases to allow ongoing learning and reflection about these guidelines