

# Shelter Pulse

## Human Rights Policy Primer

The guidelines and checklists below provide indicators of best/promising practices from research and serve as recommendations and benchmarks for ongoing policy evaluation and evolution

### *Policy Primer*

Rooted in respect for international human rights law, a human rights-based approach recognizes the inequality and marginalization that deny people their human rights and keep them in poverty (Government of Canada, 2017). The human rights-based approach to violence against survivors offers a promising framework for redressing individual incidents, regardless of grounds such as race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender orientation or expression. A human rights approach emphasizes rights to personal security, life, and dignity. It also includes survivor's right to substantive equality (Government of Canada, 2017). HRA reinforces a feminist approach, as human rights are foundational for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

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## Policy Checklist (Adapted from: Poole et al., 2013):

The following criteria may be considered in assessing or evolving policy using a HRA approach:

- Policies empower people, specifically those who are marginalized, by developing their capacity to know, exercise, claim, and seek redress for their rights.
- Policies develop the capacity of the organization to recognize, respect, protect and fulfill their legal human rights obligations.
- Policies address equality and non-discrimination: All individuals are equal as human beings and entitled to human rights, without discrimination of any kind. Policies consider harm reduction practices, or support partnership with harm reduction organizations to support people who use drugs or engage in sex work, recognizing that abstinence-based policies present barriers to many who are escaping violence. Supervised Consumption Services, safe needle/syringe supply, naloxone kits, opioid substitution therapy, and provision of a safe place for people to store/manage their supplies are examples of harm reduction services that may benefit shelter seekers (Canada HIV/AIDS Legal Network, 2020).
- Policies address participation and inclusion: The voices and interests of affected individuals are taken into account on issues that concern them.
- Policies address transparency and accountability: Individuals have access to information on policies and decisions, and are empowered to hold accountable those who have a duty to act.
- Policies recognize and address root causes of poverty and violent conflict, which can include: discrimination; repression; lack of access to political participation; lack of access to basic resources and services, such as education, justice or health.

### References:

- Government of Canada. (2017, May 26). Human Right-Based Approach. [https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues\\_development-enjeux\\_developpement/priorities-priorites/human\\_rights-droits\\_personne.aspx?lang=eng](https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/priorities-priorites/human_rights-droits_personne.aspx?lang=eng)
- Poole, N., Urquhart, C., Jasiura, F., & Simile, D. (2013). Trauma Informed Practice Guide. Centre for Excellence for Women's Health. <http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.5116.9122>