

# **Indigenous Youth Services**

## **Manual and Policies & Procedures**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Purpose

The following Indigenous Youth Services Policies & Procedures are created to ensure the safety and well-being of our residents at Youth Group Homes Canada. The safety of our residents is our top priority, and this document will work as a guideline to effectively address the matters of physical and mental health and safety protocols and measures, staff qualification and training, emergency preparedness and risk management, behavioural management, ethical conduct, etc.

Canada has several laws and regulations related to youth services, including the Child and Youth Service Act, which serves to guide youth organizations in developing and implementing policies and procedures that meet their requirements. By adhering to these requirements and best practices, We can create a safe, supportive, and enriching environment for all young people involved.

Policies and procedures ensure our organization operates within these legal frameworks. On the basis of this, this Manual serves to promote quality programming and service delivery. Clear policies and procedures guide staff and volunteers in delivering programs and services in a consistent and effective manner, ensuring they meet the diverse needs of young people.

This Manual also serves the purpose of maintaining transparency and accountability, as our policies and procedures inform stakeholders, the youth that we work with, parents, staff, and funders about our values, expectations, and operational practices. Our aim is to foster trust and transparency. By outlining best practices and expectations, these Policies & Procedures serve as a framework for ongoing evaluation and improvement of programs and services, ensuring they remain relevant and effective.

## Scope

This Manual includes Admissions and Placements which define eligibility criteria, application processes, and placement decisions; Programming and Activities, which outline the organization's program offerings, expected conduct, and safety protocols; Confidentiality and Privacy, which set clear guidelines for protecting the personal information of youth and their families; Reporting and Complaints procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse, neglect, or other concerns; Staff and Volunteer management, which set guidelines for hiring procedures, training requirements, code of conduct, and supervision standards; and Emergency Preparedness and Response procedures for addressing unforeseen situations like fires, medical emergencies, or natural disasters.

These policies and procedures have been carefully designed to be applicable to all members of the Indigenous Youth Services team, including administrators, caregivers, support personnel, and volunteers. We emphasize the importance of each team member, and, in turn, they are asked to internalize, apply, and adhere to these guidelines in their daily interactions with residents and fellow staff members. By fostering a unified approach to care and service delivery, we are creating a harmonious and cohesive environment where everyone works together to uphold the principles of our organization.

## Objective

The Manual is hereby tailored to the unique needs of minors and adults, balancing uniform policies and distinct requirements. The document presents all the information relevant to everyone involved with Indigenous Youth Services programs, such as policies and procedures for our Youth Group Homes residents, their families, and the community we serve. The Manual will then be split into two core sections to fully address the unique minors' and adults' requirements, with the focus on explaining the highest standards of quality and safety, practices rooted in cultural competency and non-discrimination, and accountability for all parties, protocols and responsibilities related to their roles, full rights, and how to raise concerns.

The primary objective is to ensure compliance with the relevant standards, regulations, and legislations which outline specific requirements for youth services, including safety protocols, staff qualifications, and reporting procedures.

This document plays a crucial role in creating safe and supportive environments for youth participants by adhering to the requirements. Clear policies and procedures also serve to guide staff and volunteers on appropriate conduct, reporting concerns, managing challenging situations, and implementing risk-reduction strategies. This protects young people from potential harm, creates a trusting atmosphere where they can thrive, and helps us avoid potential legal implications.

In this manual, consistent standards for program design, implementation, and evaluation are established. This fosters quality service delivery by ensuring all programs align with Indigenous Youth Services' mission and values, meet the diverse needs of the youth participants, adhere to best practices and evidence-based approaches, and demonstrate consistent quality regardless of staff or program variations.

The Policies & Procedures are made available to our clients, stakeholders, and partners, and as such promote transparency by informing them about our operating principles, expectations, and procedures. Our objective is to allow stakeholders to understand how our organization functions and raise concerns about potential non-compliance.

The document also serves as a roadmap for ongoing evaluation and improvement of programs and services. Clear policies and procedures facilitate consistent data collection, performance assessment, and identification of areas for improvement. This allows us at Indigenous Youth Services to adapt and evolve to better serve the evolving needs of the youth enrolled in our programs.

### Applicability

By developing and implementing these comprehensive Indigenous Youth Services Policies & Procedures, we can ensure compliance, promote safety and quality, maintain transparency, and strive for continuous improvement in serving young people.

The Policies & Procedures are applicable to staff and Volunteers who are directly interacting with young participants and implementing programs. The document contains clear instructions on Safe and Appropriate Conduct, including adhering to codes of conduct, reporting concerns, and maintaining professional boundaries; Program Implementation, covering procedures for delivering specific programs, activities, and interventions effectively and consistently; Confidentiality and Privacy Procedures for collecting, storing, and sharing personal information about young people are crucial for data protection and ethical practice; and Emergency Preparedness and Response when handling emergencies like fires, medical situations, or natural disasters.

At Indigenous Youth Services, we are responsible for ensuring compliance with legal requirements and organizational policies. This document serves as a reference point for oversight and decision-making, providing a framework for making informed decisions regarding program development, staff practices, and risk management. It is also useful for establishing systems for monitoring adherence to policies and assessing the effectiveness of programs and services, and ensuring staff and volunteers receive appropriate training on policies and procedures relevant to their roles.

All the clients and residents will be made aware of these Policies & Procedures, as they serve as the foundation for a safe and respectful environment, outlining aspects of their safety, well-being, and rights. They will be expected to familiarize themselves with the document as it presents the standardized approaches that contribute to positive program experiences.

Families and communities entrust their children to our resident care and rely on us to create safe and nurturing environments. These Policies & Procedures serve to demonstrate the commitment of our organization to quality and accountability, providing assurance that we operate ethically as an organization, and adhere to protocols which serve the best interest of our residents in group homes. Sharing information about policies and procedures also allows families to understand how their children are being cared for. The document aims to establish designated channels for families to raise questions or concerns.

Additionally, at Indigenous Youth Services, we rely on funding and support from various stakeholders, so this document offers reassurance of compliance with funding requirements,



demonstrating adherence to specific conditions or standards set by funders. It is also useful for effective program management to showcase responsible use of resources and commitment to quality service delivery. The objective is to provide stakeholders with an understanding of how our organization functions and operates internally and externally.

By being applicable to a diverse range of individuals and groups, the Policies & Procedures play a crucial role in ensuring a safe, ethical, and high-quality environment for everyone involved with Indigenous Youth Services.

## Definition of Key Terms

*Policies:* A high-level statement of principles, values, or intended outcomes guiding an organization's actions. The policies set the overall direction and commitment to quality, and influence customer satisfaction, continuous improvement and risk management.

*Procedures:* A detailed set of steps outlining how to implement a policy, ensuring consistency and clarity on how to achieve the quality standards which guide daily operations and ensure consistency across different departments or teams.

*Standards:* A specific criteria or measure used to assess performance or compliance with a policy or a procedure.

*QUAM Compliance:* Compliance to frameworks organizations use to establish and maintain specific standards for their processes, procedures, and outcomes, involving adhering to defined requirements and best practices to ensure consistent quality in products or services.

*Guidelines:* Recommendations or best practices to support policy implementation which help streamline processes, reduce errors, and boost efficiency and productivity.

*Protocols:* Specific sets of standardized steps for sensitive or critical processes, demonstrating commitment to the established procedures, laws, and regulations.

*Confidentiality:* Keeping information private and ensuring unauthorized access is restricted.

*Non-discrimination:* Treating all individuals equally and fairly, regardless of identity or personal characteristics.

*Incident:* An event that deviates from normal operation, potentially causing harm or requiring investigation.

*Staff:* All individuals employed by Indigenous Youth Services.

*Resident:* An individual receiving care or services within the group home.

*Client:* An individual receiving professional services from our organization (for example, group home residents' families).

*Data Security:* Protecting sensitive information from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification, or destruction.

*Accessibility:* Equal access to resources, and in particular referring to a guarantee that individuals with disabilities can access information and services.

*Sustainability:* Responsibly allocating resources to meet all the current needs of a population (or a community) without compromising the capacity of future generations (or communities) to meet their own needs.

*Ethics:* Acting in accordance with moral principles and professional standards.

*Cultural Competency:* Knowledge, understanding, and respect for Indigenous cultures, beliefs, values, and practices.

*Intergenerational Trauma:* The cumulative emotional and psychological harm passed down through generations due to historical colonization and systemic discrimination.

*Trauma-informed Care:* An approach to providing care that acknowledges and addresses the impact of trauma on individuals.

*Therapeutic Interventions:* Evidence-based approaches to address specific mental health or behavioural needs.

*Traditional Healing Practices:* Culturally specific approaches to healing and well-being, often used alongside conventional medicine.

*Person-centred Care:* An approach to care, whereby each client's individual and unique needs, preferences, and goals are addressed and met.

*Individualized Support Plan:* A personalized plan outlining the specific needs and goals of each resident. Our care plans are thoughtfully tailored to cater to the distinct aspirations and challenges that each client faces, ensuring that they receive personalized attention and support on their journey of growth and self-discovery.

*Self-determination:* The right of Indigenous peoples to make decisions about their own lives and communities.

*Empowerment:* Supporting residents in developing their self-advocacy skills and decision-making capacity.

*Transition Planning:* Preparing residents for independent living or other appropriate placements.

*Community Integration:* Supporting residents in participating in community activities and building social connections.

*Culturally Safe Space:* An environment in which Indigenous youth feel accepted, respected, supported, and encouraged to express their culture and identity.

## Overview of Indigenous Youth Services

### *Mission*

Our organization is a transformative force dedicated to enhancing the lives of the people we serve. Our unwavering commitment to professional, individualized, and evidence-based support sets us apart as a leader in the field.

Our mission is to revolutionize the youth care system by offering a groundbreaking approach to care that transcends traditional institutional settings.

We are dedicated to providing non-institutionalized, high-quality, and evidence-based care to youth with complex behavioural needs. In doing so, we strive to provide a nurturing and empowering environment that fosters genuine positive change in the lives of our clients, paving the way for a brighter and more promising future.

### *Program Offerings*

At Indigenous Youth Services, we offer a variety of programs and services to support young people who are facing challenges or require a safe and structured environment. The program offerings are tailored - to the best of their abilities and the resources available - to the needs of the residents. We are continuously working to provide individualized support to each resident, based on their unique needs and goals. This support may include help with academic achievements, social skills development, emotional well-being, and life skills development.

Many programs also offer group therapy and counselling sessions to help residents address their emotional and social challenges. These sessions work by providing a safe space for young people to express themselves, learn coping mechanisms, and develop healthy relationships.

We also provide educational support to residents who are struggling with learning or applying themselves academically or adjusting to school settings. This support may include tutoring, homework help, and assistance with educational planning. Indigenous Youth Services programs

can be applied to teach residents important life skills, such as budgeting, cooking, cleaning, and personal hygiene. These skills can help residents become more independent and prepare for adulthood.

At Indigenous Youth Services, we strive to make Youth Group Homes places where cultural support to residents who identify with a particular culture or ethnicity can be provided. Such support may include traditional ceremonies, language classes, and/or connections with cultural leaders. We also offer a variety of recreational activities for our residents, including sports, games, arts and crafts, and field trips in order to help residents relax, socialize, and, in the process, work on developing lifelong adaptation and social skills.

Youth group homes offer specialized services, such as trauma-informed care, designed to meet the needs of young people who have experienced trauma. The focus of such programs is on creating a safe and supportive environment, as well as providing therapy and counselling to help residents heal. We also offer on-site mental health services, such as individual therapy and medication management or substance abuse treatment programs to help residents overcome addiction.

Other programs can help residents plan for their transition to adulthood. This may include finding a job, internship, trade, enrolling in college, securing independent housing, and engaging in extracurricular community activities.

### *Language Assistance Services Multilingual Staff*

Effective communication is paramount in providing quality care to our residents. To bridge language barriers, we employ a diverse team of multilingual staff members. These individuals are proficient in various languages commonly spoken by our residents. Having staff members who can communicate in their native languages fosters a deeper level of trust and understanding, allowing residents to express their needs, preferences, and concerns more comfortably.

Understanding the complexities of language diversity, we maintain access to professional interpretation services for languages beyond the proficiency of our staff. These services are

readily available during critical interactions, such as medical appointments, family meetings, and counselling sessions. By ensuring accurate and culturally sensitive communication, we ensure that our residents and their families are actively involved in the decision-making process.

Recognizing the importance of accessible information, we provide essential informational materials, brochures, and handouts in multiple languages commonly spoken by our residents. This ensures that vital information about our services, programs, and policies is easily accessible to all, irrespective of their language background.

### *Dedication to Maintaining High Standards*

As an organization that serves youth at our group homes, at Indigenous Youth Services, we are dedicated to maintaining high standards. Our Policies & Procedures cover all the crucial aspects of program delivery, staff conduct, risk management, and safety protocols. In order to achieve this, we have set clear and measurable standards for all aspects of service delivery, in particular in maintaining an integrated support network that enhances the potential for positive outcomes in the lives of our clients through mandatory staff training, program evaluation criteria, mental health support, thorough risk management and emergency preparedness, and incident reporting procedures.

We are committed to continuous improvement, and keeping a clear and updated process for regular review and update of the Manual and Policies & Procedures guidelines. This is asserted in our organization's commitment to quality, safety, and continuous improvement within our mission and vision statements, and the specific measures taken to achieve them.

Our Policies & Procedures are fully accessible to all our stakeholders, and everyone involved in our programs, including the youth, parents, staff, volunteers, the community, partners, and funders.

Additionally, we are committed to ensuring that all our staff training aligns with the policies and procedures outlined in these documents. We provide regular training and updates to staff on relevant policies, procedures, and best practices. Staff performance evaluations adhere to policies and procedures, promoting accountability and quality service delivery.

By incorporating these strategies, Policies & Procedures serve to effectively communicate a strong commitment to maintaining high standards and quality assurance, with the objective of fostering trust and confidence among stakeholders, and ensuring the best possible outcomes for the youth and communities we serve.

### *Commitment to Quality Assurance*

In this Manual, we are establishing the core principles that govern our services and programs at Youth Group Homes offered by our organization. The principles that apply to everyone are respect, safety, inclusion, and confidentiality as they provide a foundation for all policies and procedures.

Additionally, as we implement policies specific to different age groups within the organization, policies for minors focus on supervision, while policies for older youth focus on decision-making and independence. We have also developed procedures specific to different roles within our organization, including staff training procedures which differ from volunteer orientation procedures. Where appropriate, we are continuously working on incorporating flexibility within policies to accommodate individual needs and situations, while always adhering to the core principles of equity, respect, and inclusion.

We have implemented systems for collecting and analyzing data on program outcomes, service quality, and adherence to policies. We also conduct regular internal audits, reviews, and objective assessments of the organization's quality and effectiveness to identify areas for improvement and ensure compliance with standards.

Finally, through our full collaboration with stakeholders, funders, community organizations, and youth advisory boards, we always welcome feedback that can be applied to improve our quality assurance practices.

### *Accountability*

Transparency and accountability form the bedrock of our organizational ethos. This document establishes a clear framework of accountability, outlining roles, responsibilities, and protocols for all staff members. By maintaining transparency in our operations, we foster an atmosphere of trust and confidence among clients, families, and external partners. Regular audits, reviews, and incident reporting mechanisms further strengthen our commitment to transparency and ensure that we uphold the highest standards of quality and safety.

In the development process, and in drafting this Manual, we have engaged stakeholders, staff, adults, and community organizations we partner with, to ensure the Policies & Procedures reflect our residents' diverse needs and concerns. We guarantee that the manual complies with all the legal requirements and regulations.

Going forward, we hold ourselves accountable for regularly reviewing and updating the manual to reflect any changes in legislation, practices, and our organization's needs.

The establishment and implementation of these comprehensive Policies & Procedures embody the essence of our vision at Indigenous Youth Services. They reflect our unwavering commitment to providing exceptional care, safeguarding client rights, cultivating a culture of continuous improvement, enhancing accountability and transparency, nurturing collaborative partnerships, and empowering our clients for lifelong success.

We believe that by adhering to these guiding principles, we can transcend the conventional notions of care and truly become the transformative force that enriches the lives of our clients and leaves a positive and lasting impact on the communities we serve.



## 2. PROGRAM POLICIES

### Admission and Placement Protocols

Admission and placement procedures for residents into Youth Group Homes acknowledge specific considerations of Indigenous young people. For example, each program establishes specific eligibility criteria based on age, needs, and program focus. Certain programs might cater to youth facing specific challenges like mental health concerns or substance abuse.

Admission and placement procedures can vary across provinces due to individual regulations and funding models. For example, some Youth Group Homes cater to specific cultural backgrounds and incorporate cultural sensitivity into the admission and placement process. The process prioritizes cultural respect and understanding, often involving collaboration with Indigenous communities and cultural advisors. Some of our programs prioritize connecting youth with their traditional lands and territories as part of the healing and support process.

Young people and their families (when applicable) are involved in the process and provide informed consent before placement. Regular communication and collaboration between program staff, young people, families, and community partners are crucial throughout the placement period.

Referrals typically come from child protection services, schools, mental health professionals, or families. When age-appropriate, the young person's voice and preferences are central to the placement decision.

Upon receiving a referral, we undertake a comprehensive assessment to evaluate the young person's needs, strengths, challenges, and potential risks to determine suitability for the program and identify appropriate support. We then conduct an intake interview to gather initial information and assess basic needs. Notably, due to limited program spaces, waitlists are common, and placement priority is determined based on urgency and suitability.

Final placement decisions are made collaboratively by our team, who take into consideration the assessment findings, available program resources, and the best fit for the young person's needs. Assessments go beyond traditional clinical approaches and consider the young person's cultural identity, family connections, and community context. Upon admission, a transition plan is developed to ensure a smooth integration into the program and address future needs.

Our policy is for all information gathered during the admission and placement process to be treated with confidentiality, adhering to relevant privacy laws.

By adhering to these general principles and considering cultural specificities, our programs are created to ensure fair, transparent, and culturally sensitive admission and placement processes that prioritize the best interests and well-being of young people.

## Goals and Objectives of the Program

The goals and objectives of Indigenous Youth Services programs are to cover the needs of different age groups, specific needs (mental health, trauma, behavioural challenges), and cultural backgrounds. They depend on the type of funding - governmental, private, or non-profit - as they have different funding mandates and priorities.

Whether the programs offer general residential care, therapeutic intervention, life skills development, or cultural support, the common goals and objectives shared by many programs prioritize the safety and well-being of residents. Namely, we aim to ensure a safe and supportive environment where young people feel physically and emotionally secure. We also aim to provide personalized support based on each young person's unique challenges, strengths, and aspirations. The programs are created to help young people build healthy relationships, develop life skills, and achieve their full potential. We work to equip young people with the skills and resources needed to live independently in the future. The programs address issues that could lead to further challenges, such as substance abuse, criminal activity, or self-harm.

Other objectives include providing academic support and tutoring to help young people succeed in school, and teaching young people how to manage emotions, build healthy relationships, and

resolve conflicts constructively. The programs work by offering individual and group therapy, trauma-informed care, and access to mental health professionals.

For us at Indigenous Youth Services, fostering cultural connections, language revitalization, and traditional knowledge transmission. In this manner, the programs work by promoting healthy family relationships by integrating young people back into their communities whenever possible. Consequently, this is a way to prepare them for independent living and essential life skills, such as social skills, employment, and contribution to society in different ways.

Many programs adopt a holistic approach that addresses physical, emotional, social, and cultural needs simultaneously. We are continuously working on incorporating trauma-informed principles where necessary, in a way that acknowledges and supports young people in overcoming trauma.

At Indigenous Youth Services, we specifically tailor our programs and services to be culturally sensitive and respectful of diverse Indigenous identities. The effectiveness of our programs lies in continuous collaborations with families, community organizations, and other stakeholders to create a comprehensive support network for young people.

## Service Delivery and Intervention Models

Each young person receives a personalized plan based on their unique needs, strengths, and goals, developed collaboratively with staff, youth, and families (when applicable). Regular reviews and updates ensure the plan stays relevant and effective. Our staff also possess qualifications and training, including cultural competency to serve the specific needs of Indigenous youth.

### *Service Delivery Models*

Individualized Support delivers personalized interventions based on each young person's unique needs and goals outlined in their Individual Service Plan. It can involve addressing specific mental health concerns, trauma experiences, or emotional challenges through individual

sessions with qualified therapists or counsellors. It also means equipping young people with practical skills needed for independent living, such as budgeting, cooking, job searching, and navigating healthcare systems.

Our services work to foster healthy social interactions, emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and communication skills through structured workshops or group activities. At Indigenous Youth Services, we provide culturally specific programming like traditional arts workshops, language revitalization initiatives, or connections with elders and community knowledge holders.

We also offer group interventions, which work by engaging young people in group settings, providing peer support, sharing experiences, and promoting social interactions. Addressing specific challenges like substance abuse, trauma recovery, or anger management in a supportive group setting is led by qualified professionals. The aim is to help young people develop specific skills like communication, and social interaction, or maintain healthy relationships through workshops and activities facilitated by staff or trained peer mentors.

Engaging families and communities plays a crucial role in young people's well-being. At Indigenous Youth Services, we work with clients to address family dynamics, help them improve communication channels, and strengthen relationships through sessions with trained therapists or social workers. In some cases, providing psychoeducational workshops on topics like understanding youth behaviour, communication skills, and supporting mental health at home is adapted to Individual Service Plans. Most importantly, we are always working to create a safe space where families can come to connect, share experiences, and receive peer support from others in the community navigating similar challenges.

### *Intervention Models*

Building on young people's strengths and resilience can work to support their healing and growth. This also means respecting and incorporating cultural values and beliefs into the intervention approach. Trauma-Informed Care underpins many intervention models, recognizing the potential impact of past trauma on present behavior and emotional well-being. Trauma-Informed Care principles include creating a safe and supportive environment where young

people feel comfortable disclosing their experiences and seeking help, as well as engaging young people actively in their care decisions and respecting their autonomy.

Strengths-Based Approach focuses on young people's strengths, resources, and capabilities to identify and boost talents, skills, and positive qualities each young person possesses, as well as to increase self-confidence and encourage initiative and problem-solving skills. Our programs work to recognize and celebrate achievements to reinforce positive behaviours and progress.

Collaborative and person-centred approaches help young people explore their own motivations for change and identify goals for themselves, such as empathy and active listening by building rapport and understanding situations from young persons' perspectives.

The above service delivery and intervention models work in combination with and adapted to individual needs. Our teams continually work on re-evaluating program effectiveness, incorporating cultural considerations, and ensuring ongoing staff training, as we consider these to be crucial aspects of providing quality service delivery and interventions.

## Development of Individualized Service Plans

Ensuring the development of Individualized Service Plans is crucial for us at Indigenous Youth Services to effectively support young people's unique needs and goals. The systems work by applying strong core principles and acknowledging cultural nuances for Indigenous youth. By adhering to the core principles, at Indigenous Youth Services we strive to develop individualized service plans that empower young people, promote their well-being, and guide them towards achieving their full potential.

Our Individualized Service Plans follow Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) goals, established based on the assessment findings and aligned with the young person's unique aspirations. This works by having a comprehensive assessment process that we apply to gather information about the young person's individual strengths, challenges, cultural background, family situation, and future goals.

For Indigenous youth, cultural beliefs, values, and traditions are incorporated into the planning process, ensuring service delivery aligns with their cultural identity. They follow a specific intake process, whereby a thorough process upon admission is applied to gather information and initiate the development of the Service Plan. Our multidisciplinary teams, including youth workers, social workers, therapists, and educators, collaborate to design and tailor these plans. These plans are also reviewed and updated regularly to reflect progress and our clients' changing situations.

Notably, specific processes and requirements may vary across different provinces due to individual regulations and funding models.

Additionally, our assessments often utilize tools and approaches grounded in Indigenous traditions and knowledge systems. The Individualized Service Plans also aim to fully address the spiritual, emotional, physical, and cultural needs of the young person beyond academics or behavioural goals.

Residents are also encouraged, if possible, to actively participate in developing their plans, expressing their needs, preferences, and desired outcomes. We make sure to involve family members and other forms of community and cultural support whenever possible. It is part of our approach to take into account the young person's voice and right to choose their future. As such, their input is appreciated and taken into consideration in the planning process. In some cases, we may involve cultural advisors, school guidance counsellors, and Indigenous community members in order to best customize the planning and support process.

Our plans are flexible and adaptable to evolving needs and unforeseen circumstances. This works by monitoring progress towards goals and evaluating the plans regularly to ensure their effectiveness. In this context, we are increasingly incorporating trauma-informed practices to understand and address the potential impact of past trauma on the young person's needs and service plan development.

## Comprehensive Safety Protocols

At Indigenous Youth Services, we ensure that our procedures cater to the specific needs and circumstances of each client, and consider their physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual well-being. We recognize and address potential trauma experiences, as we believe this to be crucial to creating a safe and supportive environment.

Our procedures are developed with respect for and sensitivity to the cultural values and traditions of Indigenous youth. Namely, our interventions are created to be the least restrictive necessary to ensure safety and well-being. Our staff are trained to interact with youth in a respectful and supportive manner, fostering trust and open communication.

Our safety protocols also involve collaboration and consultation with Indigenous communities in their development and implementation. Support for traditional healing practices at our Youth Group Homes is fully taken into consideration when appropriate and desired by youth and families.

### *Physical Health and Safety*

Our policy is to ensure the physical safety of residents and staff. All staff will receive comprehensive training on safety when it comes to working with residents of different ages and their needs, de-escalation techniques, first aid, emergency procedures, and on reporting wrongful activities.

At Indigenous Youth Services, we promote a culture of safety by encouraging open communication and reporting of physical health and safety concerns from both staff and residents. Our aim is to create a safe space for residents to raise any issues they may feel uncomfortable discussing.

We also conduct regular risk assessments to identify potential hazards in our residences. For example, we ensure our facilities are well-maintained, clean, and free of hazards. We implement access control measures to prevent unauthorized entry and to keep all personal information about our clients confidential. Additionally, we screen new staff and volunteers, conducting reference checks, ensuring appropriate supervision of all ongoing activities at our residences.

In case of an emergency that threatens the physical health and safety of our staff or residents (fire, medical emergencies, violent incidents, etc.), we follow Evacuation or Shelter-In-Place Procedures.

Our staff are trained to recognize signs of mental distress in youth and know how to respond appropriately by following our developed referral pathways to mental health professionals. They are also trained to report suspected abuse or child neglect, in compliance with mandatory reporting requirements. The objective of Indigenous Youth Services is to provide support to youth who disclose abuse. At our youth group homes, we foster a supportive environment that encourages positive interactions and emotional expression. Our child and youth worker staff members act as role models, providing guidance and support in a non-judgmental manner. This atmosphere encourages youth to develop healthy relationships and build trust within the group home community.

### *Sport and Recreation*

Recognizing the importance of physical fitness for overall well-being, we offer youth-centric fitness programs suitable for all abilities and activity levels. These programs are tailored to the interests and preferences of our youth residents, promoting cardiovascular health, strength, and flexibility.

Keeping in mind the diverse interests of our youth residents, our activities are designed to promote socialization, enjoyment, and improved mood, enhancing their overall experience in the group home.

Emphasizing the benefits of spending time outdoors, we organize outdoor activities, nature walks, and excursions to local parks. These experiences provide our youth residents with opportunities to connect with nature, engage in physical activities, and experience the therapeutic benefits of the outdoors.

We conduct thorough risk assessments for all on- and off-site activities, obtain necessary permissions, and ensure proper supervision and emergency plans are in place during field trips and visits. In this context, we follow safety regulations for transporting youth, including ensuring



that all vehicles are well-maintained and that there is an appropriate number of supervisors with respect to the group size.

### *Nutrition and Dietary Support*

Nourishing our youth residents is essential, and we prioritize providing nutritious and age-appropriate meals. Our qualified dietitians, along with our child and youth worker staff members, collaborate to ensure that meals are well-balanced and cater to individual dietary needs and preferences.

We also consider food an integral part of culture and thus recognize the importance of providing culturally appropriate meals to our residents. We provide access to healthy snacks and drinks and have age-appropriate resources on healthy living available. Our staff takes great care to offer a wide range of dietary options that accommodate various cultural and religious practices. Whether it's preparing Halal, Kosher, vegetarian/vegan, or other culturally significant meals, we ensure that our residents' dietary needs are respected and offered.

Promoting independence in daily living, we also offer cooking and meal preparation classes. These interactive sessions serve to empower youth to plan and prepare nutritious meals, and in the process gain essential life skills that will serve them well beyond their time in the group home.

### *Medical Care and Medication Administration*

At Indigenous Youth Services, we recognize the importance of seamless medical care coordination. Our policies promote effective communication and collaboration with healthcare providers, ensuring that residents receive timely medical attention and have access to necessary services. This coordination extends to scheduled medical appointments, therapy sessions, and specialized treatments.

The administration of medications is a critical aspect of resident care. Our protocols for medication administration serve to ensure safety, accuracy, and adherence to healthcare

provider instructions. Proper documentation of medication administration is paramount to maintain clear records and promote seamless communication among our interdisciplinary team.

Moreover, preparedness for medical emergencies is ingrained in our organization's culture. We follow step-by-step procedures for handling medical emergencies by ensuring that staff members are well-trained and equipped to respond promptly and effectively. We conduct regular drills and training to reinforce emergency preparedness, fostering confidence in our staff's ability to provide timely assistance and support in times of crisis.

At Indigenous Youth Services, our commitment is unwavering when it comes to safeguarding the health and well-being of our residents, staff, and visitors. Our comprehensive infection control policies encompass guidelines set forth by health authorities, emphasizing preventive measures, proper sanitation, and hygiene practices. Regular monitoring and adherence to infection control protocols mitigate the risk of infectious diseases, promoting a healthy and hygienic living environment.

Infection prevention is a fundamental aspect of our health and safety measures. Our comprehensive infection control policies adhere to guidelines from health authorities and are continuously updated to reflect the latest best practices. These protocols encompass proper hand hygiene, surface disinfection, appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE), and adherence to isolation procedures when necessary. Our staff is trained to implement these protocols rigorously, mitigating the risk of infectious diseases and promoting a healthy living environment.

### *Emotional and Mental Well-being*

All our staff are trained to recognize and address the potential impact of trauma on the emotional well-being of our residents. We train them to understand trauma responses and create a safe, supportive environment at our residences.

As we build strong, trusting relationships with our clients based on open communication, empathy, and respect, we utilize strength-based approaches that focus on individual potential.

For example, we encourage youth participation in decision-making and goal-setting and foster autonomy and a sense of control over their lives.

At our residences, we highlight the importance of always being mindful of cultural differences and tailoring support to individual needs and values. We regularly evaluate and adapt our protocols based on best practices, emerging research, and feedback from youth and staff.

Our clients follow personalized plans developed for each individual in consideration of their unique needs, goals, and strengths. They always have access to individual and group counselling sessions with qualified mental health professionals who apply solutions appropriate for different ages and needs. Additionally, we offer activities that teach residents emotional regulation, communication skills, coping mechanisms, and healthy decision-making, in an effort to contribute to improving their emotional and mental well-being.

At our residences, we are constantly working to create opportunities for engagement in positive activities that promote comfort, acceptance, relaxation, self-expression, and enjoyment through recreational and social activities, art, music, and/or sports. Moreover, we encourage peer support and mentorship programs where youth can connect with each other, share experiences, and offer mutual encouragement.

Our staff are trained to respond to and identify crisis situations, including suicidal tendencies, emotional distress, and different forms of self-harm. They are tasked with following de-escalation techniques, and knowing when to contact appropriate emergency services. In this context, when appropriate, we involve families in the support process, with the objective of building supportive relationships and fostering collaboration.

We support youth with planning for their transition out of the residences, ensuring continuity of care and access to necessary resources and support systems.

### *Social and Cultural Well-being*

At Indigenous Youth Services, our staff are trained to be culturally competent and to always apply their understanding of diverse backgrounds, values, and experiences of youth in their practice. In this context, we are always mindful to avoid cultural bias and assumptions in interactions and program design for all our residents. As such, we foster a sense of belonging and inclusion for all youth, regardless of background, identity, or abilities. This is our way of creating opportunities for connection, collaboration, and acceptance. We encourage dialogue and understanding of diverse experiences.

We are constantly working on connecting youth with positive role models and mentors from their communities. We are partnered with local organizations and offer resources to support social integration and access to opportunities. We also offer opportunities for youth to build friendships and meaningful social connections with peers, mentors, and staff members through our group activities, social events, and peer support groups. Moreover, we encourage youth participation in civic activities and community service projects, fostering a sense of social responsibility and belonging.

We offer workshops and training on essential life skills, such as social communication, budgeting, healthy relationships, and cultural understanding. Our objective is to equip youth with the skills and resources necessary for transitioning back into their communities or to independent living, addressing social and cultural integration challenges.

We have also worked hard on creating safe spaces for youth to explore their identities, celebrate their cultural heritage, and express themselves authentically. In our group homes, everyone is asked to respect and accommodate different religious practices and beliefs and acknowledge the home for providing space and resources for individual needs. In this context, we also organize and celebrate cultural holidays, traditions, and events relevant to the clients served, and we encourage our residents to contribute to their planning and execution.

We provide access to technology and training to help youth navigate the digital world safely and responsibly, connecting with resources and opportunities online. At the same time, we highlight the importance of online safety practices and monitor internet access. We also regularly raise awareness amongst our staff and residents about cyberbullying, requiring all to follow safe internet communication protocols, and report and respond to incidents.

Our policies on discrimination are very strict, as we emphasize our stance on prohibiting all forms of discrimination based on any personal characteristic. We regularly remind our staff and youth about the importance of putting anti-discrimination principles into practice and upholding our values.

## Strategies for Crisis Prevention

Crisis prevention is an ongoing process. As such, we regularly review and update policies and procedures based on experience and best practices. We seek professional guidance and training as needed to ensure our staff and volunteers are equipped to manage crisis situations effectively and safely. This also means always prioritizing the safety and well-being of all our Youth Group Homes residents and clients in all situations.

By implementing general policies, procedures, and strategies, at Indigenous Youth Services, we are continuously working to create a safe and supportive environment in which we can prevent crises and promote the positive mental health and well-being of young people. Creating a safe and supportive environment for young people is paramount for Youth Group Homes, and as such, we are always working to implement proactive measures to prevent crises, while having clear procedures in place to respond effectively if they do occur.

Crisis prevention strategies also include risk assessment and screening, including conducting thorough risk assessments upon admission and regularly thereafter identifying potential risk factors for crisis situations. This may be done via individual interviews, standardized assessment tools, and consultations with mental health professionals.

At Indigenous Youth Services, our personalized safety plans outline specific actions to take in case of escalating emotions, self-harm risk, or other potential crisis situations. These plans are reviewed and updated regularly.

We have strict policies against substance use and substance possession on the premises. Our staff are trained to identify and deal with signs of substance abuse.

We have also equipped our staff and volunteers with comprehensive de-escalation training to help them manage challenging situations calmly and safely, avoiding verbal or physical confrontation. This includes fostering a culture of open communication and trust whereby we strive to make young people feel comfortable expressing their concerns and seeking help before a crisis escalates.

At the root, crisis prevention entails implementing cultural considerations when developing and implementing these strategies, ensuring they are respectful and relevant to the identities and experiences of all our residents. In this context, we have also established partnerships with mental health professionals, crisis support services, and cultural support services to ensure access to additional support when needed. Openly collaborating with young people to identify their individual triggers for emotional distress or crisis situations is beneficial for recognizing early warning signs.

At Indigenous Youth Services, we are mindful of implementing regular, informal check-ins with our residents throughout the day to help gauge their emotional well-being and proactively address any concerns before they escalate into a crisis. We train staff and volunteers to actively listen, and practice empathy, and non-judgmental communication to encourage open dialogue and early disclosure of difficulties. We are also always working on fostering a supportive peer environment where Youth Group Homes residents can feel comfortable expressing concerns and seeking help from each other, thus promoting a sense of belonging and shared understanding.

### *Proactive De-escalation Techniques*

We provide comprehensive de-escalation training for all staff and volunteers, equipping them with verbal and non-verbal strategies to manage heightened emotions calmly and safely. We teach our residents conflict resolution skills through workshops, role-playing activities, and individual support, to equip them with healthy coping mechanisms for disagreements or challenging situations.

Our team always makes sure that they are incorporating culturally appropriate de-escalation techniques that respect the values and traditions of Indigenous youth served.

At our Youth Group Homes, we have established consistent daily routines and expectations to provide a sense of predictability and stability, which serves to reduce anxiety and potential anxiety or trauma triggers.

Our teams actively acknowledge positive behaviours and choices to promote a climate of respect, cooperation, and emotional well-being.

Our spaces are designed to feel safe within the facility where the residents can retreat for quiet reflection, relaxation, or emotional regulation when needed.

### *Collaboration and Support Systems*

At Indigenous Youth Services, we are continuously working on building relationships with culturally competent mental health professionals who can provide individual or group therapy, crisis intervention, and ongoing support to young people in need. Throughout the resident-care process, we collaborate with families whenever possible, encouraging open communication and building partnerships to support young people holistically.

We have also developed strong and lasting partnerships with community organizations, cultural leaders, and Indigenous support services to access additional resources and expertise when needed.

We regularly review and update emergency response plans for crisis situations, ensuring clear roles and responsibilities for staff and volunteers.

### 3. STAFFING POLICIES

#### Hiring Strategies

Hiring qualified and dedicated staff is crucial for creating safe, supportive, and effective environments for young people in Youth Group Homes. Our strategy is to ensure full compliance with legislation, meaning that all hiring practices must comply with relevant federal, provincial, and territorial labour laws and human rights legislation.

Our hiring and recruitment strategies include adapting recruitment materials and outreach strategies to be culturally sensitive and respectful of diverse identities. At Indigenous Youth Services, we prioritize candidates who demonstrate alignment with the program's values, mission, and commitment to working with youth. Relevant skills for working with youth in these settings require our recruits to practice empathy, cultural competency, communication, conflict resolution, de-escalation techniques, and trauma-informed care.

It is also important for us at Indigenous Youth Services to implement strategies to retain qualified staff through competitive salaries, benefits packages, professional development opportunities, and supportive work environments. As such, we regularly review and update hiring policies and procedures to ensure they reflect best practices and address evolving needs.

By implementing these essential policies and procedures, we can serve our residents better by hiring qualified, dedicated, and culturally competent staff who can contribute to creating safe and supportive environments for young people.

#### *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion*

At Indigenous Youth Services, our mission and values are rooted in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion principles throughout the hiring process, which requires actively seeking to attract and recruit diverse candidates reflective of the communities served. For example, we prioritize implementing Indigenous hiring preference policies where applicable, actively seeking qualified



Indigenous candidates for staff positions. In doing so, we partner with Indigenous communities, and organizations in the recruitment process to ensure cultural understanding and attract qualified candidates from within the communities served. Our approach is to prioritize candidates who demonstrate cultural knowledge, understanding, and competency relevant to the specific Indigenous population served.

Our organizational values emphasize the importance of treating every resident with dignity, regardless of their identity or expression. We actively promote an inclusive environment where residents can freely express their identity without fear of judgment or discrimination.

Our commitment to inclusivity extends to our facilities as well. To accommodate diverse gender identities, we provide gender-neutral or all-gender bathrooms and facilities within our group homes. These spaces are thoughtfully designed to prioritize privacy, safety, and comfort for all residents. By offering gender-neutral facilities, we aim to eliminate potential discomfort or stigmatization that may arise from conventional gender-segregated spaces.

We are dedicated to providing tailored support to different religions and Indigenous cultures, as well as LGBTQI+, transgender and gender-diverse residents. Our staff receives specialized training to better understand the unique experiences and challenges faced by these individuals. We collaborate closely with residents and their families to ensure that their identity-affirming needs are met. Our group homes serve as a safe space for exploring one's identity, and we offer access to resources, medical care, and mental health support that specialize in identity-affirming care.

### *Background and Reference Checks*

Our HR team conducts thorough background checks, reference checks, and relevant qualifications verification for all candidates. We have a fair and transparent selection process in place, with defined criteria for evaluating candidates and making hiring decisions. Our process works by utilizing diverse recruitment channels to reach potential candidates from various backgrounds and communities, including Indigenous communities. This involves maintaining partnerships with educational institutions, community organizations, cultural centers, and other

youth agencies. We also continuously work on highlighting opportunities for professional development, mentorship, and ongoing training to attract and retain qualified staff.

### *Accreditation and Certification*

We actively pursue accreditation from esteemed industry bodies, underscoring our commitment to achieving and maintaining the highest standards of care. Accreditation helps validate and strengthen our dedication to quality improvement and adherence to best practices.

Our policies ensure that we meet all certification requirements mandated by regulatory agencies. We view accreditation requirements as baseline standards and continuously strive to surpass them through proactive quality improvement initiatives.

## Criteria for Staff Qualifications and Training

### *Staff Qualifications*

Ensuring competent and well-trained staff is crucial for effective and ethical support in Youth Group Homes. Our policies include conducting thorough qualification checks of candidates. By establishing minimum educational qualifications for different staff positions, typically including college degrees or applicable experience in relevant fields like social work or psychology, ensures that the staff are suitably qualified to take on the necessary duties and responsibilities. As such, we fully take into consideration our staff's experience working with youth in similar settings, and ways in which they can demonstrate essential skills like communication, de-escalation, and relationship building with our residents and the communities we serve.

At Indigenous Youth Services, we prioritize candidates with cultural knowledge and competency relevant to the specific Indigenous youth population served. This refers to their understanding and familiarity with Indigenous language skills, cultural traditions and values, and experience working with Indigenous communities.

## *Initial Training*

We implement mandatory training on certain essential topics, in particular: Child protection and mandatory reporting, which requires our staff to be familiar with their legal obligations and procedures for reporting abuse or neglect; Trauma-informed care, which equips our staff to understand the impact of trauma on young people's behaviour and respond effectively; De-escalation techniques, whereby we train our staff on safe and effective strategies for managing challenging situations; Cultural competency for providing services for Indigenous young people, which provides mandatory training on Indigenous history, cultural protocols, and best practices for working with Indigenous youth, and First aid and CPR, which ensures staff are prepared to handle medical emergencies.

## *Ongoing Training*

At Indigenous Youth Services, we prioritize the continuous growth and development of our staff members to ensure the highest standard of care for our youth and adult residents. To achieve this, we have developed the Training Platform - an innovative and comprehensive online learning system. This platform provides our staff with a university classroom environment, complete with readings, lectures, quizzes, and assignments. It serves as a centralized hub for staff training, ensuring that all team members have access to the latest information, best practices, and evidence-based approaches in youth and adult care.

By going beyond mandatory training, we offer ongoing professional development opportunities to enhance staff skills and knowledge in areas of mental health literacy, by training our staff to understand common mental health challenges faced by young people, as well as positive behaviour support, which applies positive reinforcement and evidence-based practices for managing challenging behaviours.

We also prioritize conflict resolution, which serves to equip staff with effective communication and de-escalation skills, and culturally-specific training for services for Indigenous youth, by offering our staff training on specific cultural practices, traditions, and knowledge systems relevant to the served population. On this note, we acknowledge that incorporating community

feedback, especially from Indigenous communities, helps shape our staff qualifications, and significantly enhances cultural competency and effectiveness in supporting our residents in achieving their goals.

## Supervision Guidelines

Effective supervision of staff at our Youth Group Homes plays a crucial role in supporting staff, ensuring the quality of care provided to our residents, and managing potential risks. To achieve this, we have clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and staff within the program. This includes outlining expectations for communication, documentation, reporting, and decision-making. We have established individual and group supervision schedules to provide ongoing support, feedback, and professional development opportunities for staff.

Providing ongoing supervision and support for our staff ensures that they feel competent and well-equipped to effectively fulfill their duties and responsibilities. This includes regularly evaluating staff performance and providing constructive feedback to promote professional development, address any needs, and stay on track to meet goals and targets.

We are taking care to ensure that all policies and procedures for staff qualifications, training, and supervision comply with relevant regulatory requirements and professional standards. For example, we maintain confidentiality of staff discussions and information during internal supervision sessions, while adhering to legal reporting requirements. We also make sure to provide constructive and timely feedback to staff, focusing on strengths, areas for improvement, and specific strategies for development.

Additionally, we conduct regular performance evaluations to assess staff competencies, identify training needs, and track progress toward professional goals. In this context, we implement procedures for supervisors to review casework, provide guidance on intervention strategies, and ensure adherence to Individualize Service Plans.

Our supervisors are trained to assess potential risks faced by staff and young people and develop strategies to mitigate these risks through training, support, and clear protocols. They

are required to know how to incorporate cultural considerations into supervision by involving Indigenous supervisors, acknowledging cultural values, and utilizing culturally appropriate communication styles. We take care to involve community members and elders in supervision practices to gain additional perspectives and strengthen cultural understanding.

At Indigenous Youth Services, we believe that supervision should be supportive and empowering, and thus foster a positive and open communication environment. In this context, we train our staff to feel comfortable seeking help and discussing challenges. In turn, our supervisors actively promote professional development opportunities for staff, encouraging them to attend training workshops, and conferences, and pursue further education.

We regularly review and update supervision policies and procedures to ensure they remain effective and address evolving needs and best practices.

## Performance Management Systems

Performance management systems in our organization incorporate cultural sensitivity and community values as we take a holistic approach to staff development. We integrate cultural values, traditions, and knowledge systems into the performance management process, respecting diverse Indigenous identities.

As we assess the programs' performance based on individual needs, strengths, contributions to the community, and alignment with the organization's mission and values, our approach is to involve staff in setting goals, providing feedback, and evaluating their performance through meaningful dialogue and shared decision-making. In this context, our focus is on building upon staff strengths and fostering growth, rather than solely emphasizing areas for improvement.

We view performance management as an ongoing learning and development process for our staff, as well as our organization as a whole. For example, we develop individual performance goals collaboratively with staff, aligning them with the organization's mission, cultural values, and individual aspirations. These goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and

Time-bound (SMART), and applied in a specific cultural context to youth groups and our programs.

We also implement regular feedback mechanisms through ongoing conversations, observations, and peer review practices, ensuring feedback is respectful, constructive, and culturally appropriate. By encouraging our staff to participate in self-assessment, they are reflecting on their strengths, challenges, and development goals. We also always try to align performance development plans with professional development opportunities, providing culturally relevant training and resources to enhance staff skills and knowledge.

Additionally, when appropriate, we use culturally-specific performance management tools and frameworks developed by or in collaboration with Indigenous communities. For example, we integrate community feedback into performance evaluations, involving elders, knowledge holders, and community members, upon their consent. Whenever possible, we take care to utilize resources and guidance from organizations with expertise in Indigenous-centered performance management practices. Our staff are trained to apply cultural understanding and sensitivity when handling confidential information, respecting customary communication protocols and privacy boundaries within Indigenous communities.

We offer mentorship and support programs to staff as a way to foster a culture of learning and growth within the organization. By recognizing and valuing the integration of traditional knowledge and practices into staff performance, we incorporate them in a manner that is appropriate and respectful. For example, we encourage our staff to find a balance between individual development and staff contributions to the collective well-being of the community.

Finally, we regularly review and update performance management policies and procedures to ensure they remain culturally relevant, effective, and aligned with best practices. In this manner, we maintain the confidentiality of all performance management information while adhering to transparency and accountability principles.

## Policies on Privacy and Confidentiality

Privacy and confidentiality are some of the basic principles of our organization, which we consider crucial for building trust and ensuring safe spaces for young people seeking support. Our privacy and confidentiality policies at Indigenous Youth Services are aligned with cultural values and perspectives on information sharing within Indigenous communities as we prioritize collective well-being while respecting individual rights.

In order to ensure that we clearly communicate privacy and confidentiality policies to young people, families, and communities in accessible formats and languages they understand, we are transparent about how we collect, share, and store confidential information. Namely, we minimize the collection of personal information to what is essential for service delivery, and we follow strict protocols for secure storage and access control.

We only share information on a need-to-know basis and with explicit consent. Any exceptions to confidentiality protocols are always justified, such as mandatory reporting of abuse or harm as we make sure to adhere to legal and ethical obligations.

Access to and sharing of information is subject to specific roles, responsibilities, and limitations of program managers and supervisors. Information sharing with external entities is only authorized if consent is given, and required for goal achievement under the program.

We implement secure and confidential record-keeping practices, adhering to relevant data protection regulations and Indigenous communities' data governance principles. We are also mindful of privacy and security risks associated with technology and online platforms used in service delivery. We implement robust security measures and ethical data practices aligned with Indigenous data ownership principles, and we train all our staff to follow the same strict guidelines to ensure secure information storage.

### *Handling Data Breaches and Confidentiality Violations*

Our procedures for responding to privacy breaches and confidentiality violations are in place to ensure transparency, accountability, and corrective actions. Responding effectively to potential breaches and violations is crucial to maintaining trust, minimizing harm, and complying with legal and ethical requirements. This requires us at Indigenous Youth Services to have clearly

established policies on data privacy, confidentiality, and information security for all staff, volunteers, and board members. In this context, we provide regular training for staff on privacy and confidentiality best practices, highlighting potential risks and appropriate handling of sensitive information.

Our IT team implements appropriate technical safeguards to protect data security, such as strong passwords, encryption, and access controls. Any staff aware of suspected privacy breaches and confidentiality violations is tasked with reporting it immediately, in a manner that will encourage timely communication and response.

Upon receiving a report, our policy is to promptly assess the nature and severity of the breach or violation. We then conduct a thorough investigation to gather evidence and determine the potential impact on individuals. We notify affected individuals and relevant authorities as required by law or organizational policies. Our approach is to ensure that the notifications are clear and timely and provide necessary information on the incident and steps being taken.

We also take immediate steps to contain the breach and mitigate further harm. This may involve isolating compromised data, revoking access, or updating security measures. We document all actions taken throughout the response process, including the nature of the incident, investigation findings, corrective actions, and communication efforts. If misconduct is involved, we take appropriate disciplinary action against responsible individuals based on established policies and procedures.

At Indigenous Youth Services, we make sure that the policies are aligned with relevant laws and regulations and consider cultural sensitivities. We have consulted with legal counsel to ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations during the response process.

While we remain flexible and willing to adapt policies and procedures based on specific cultural contexts and community protocols, when we partner with Indigenous communities in developing and implementing privacy and confidentiality policies, we take care to ensure cultural appropriateness and their adherence to, and commitment to these same policies on privacy and confidentiality.



We regularly train staff and update training on privacy and confidentiality principles, cultural sensitivity, and ethical information handling practices. We also regularly review and update privacy and confidentiality policies to reflect evolving legal requirements, technological advancements, and community feedback.

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