

Mental Health Policies & Procedures

A Manager's Toolkit

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Mental Health Policies & Procedures: A Manager's Toolkit

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Introduction to the Toolkit

To learn about some of the best practices and strategies to implement a policies & procedures manual, specific to mental health/addictions and settlement staff, you can review:

- 21 research papers
- 100+ documents
- 100+ websites
- And conduct 10+ interviews with experts in the field

Or, you can find a simplified, practical version of all these resources in this Toolkit.

This resource, ***Mental Health Policies & Procedures: A Manager's Toolkit***, has been designed to assist managers of settlement programs. Although many of the resources in this Toolkit can be applied across the not-for-profit spectrum, it was created within a framework of frontline settlement workers serving clients with mental health and/or addiction concerns and the managers who want to better help their staff.

Purpose of the Toolkit

The purpose of this Toolkit is to assist service providers and other key stakeholders to work collaboratively to meet the mental health needs of ethnocultural populations. At the forefront, the Toolkit is for managers to better assist their frontline staff, who often say “I don’t know what to do” or “I don’t know where to refer” when assisting clients with mental health and/or addiction concerns.

Some see a policies & procedures manual as a dust-collecting resource; but it doesn’t have to be. Managers armed with clear, written guidelines are better able to make consistent, unemotional decisions that will hold up if challenged later. In addition, managers can use a policies & procedures manual to:

- minimize legal liability
- clarify expectations regarding the role and boundaries of settlement staff when working with clients with mental health and/or addiction concerns
- reduce the time spent addressing recurring situations and questions
- communicate information that organizations are legally obligated to provide
- empower their staff to know what to do in a variety of situations
- avoid mixed messages to staff while providing continuity and consistency in decision making
- orient new staff as well as provide refresher training to existing staff
- indicate to stakeholders the organization is taking a proactive approach to important issues
- and much more

History of the Project

The creation and development of the ***Mental Health Policies & Procedures: A Manager's Toolkit*** is funded by Citizenship & Immigration Canada, as part of a local initiative to enhance the capacity of the settlement sector in Peel to support newcomers who are coping with mental health issues. The “Mental Health of Newcomers in Peel” initiative was created and has been co-managed through a partnership of three organizations:

- Catholic Crosscultural Services
- Catholic Family Services Peel Dufferin
- COSTI Immigrant Services

The partnership has been working together since early 2010 to achieve three main outcomes:

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1. Increase awareness among frontline workers in settlement agencies and other organizations serving newcomers in Peel Region of the available services and resources on mental health related issues.
2. Identify and articulate the training needs of Settlement Workers on mental health issues and develop a set of new training modules to meet these needs.
3. Develop a policy framework that settlement agencies can use to develop internal service delivery protocols related to clients with mental health and addiction issues.

The activities implemented through the "Mental Health of Newcomers in Peel" initiative include:

- The creation of a comprehensive, "Settlement Worker friendly" inventory of mental health services in Peel Region.
- The completion of a report that identifies the challenges and training needs of Settlement Workers in working with newcomers with mental health related issues.
- The development, testing and evaluation of a set of new training modules for Settlement Workers on how to better screen and provide intervention for mental health related issues among newcomers.
- The production of a Manager's Toolkit to support managers of settlement agencies in developing related policies and best practices.

Important Information about the Toolkit

- The information in this Toolkit is provided for educational use only. It is not legal advice. Always consult a lawyer if you have a legal problem or question.
- The majority of information in this Toolkit is a compilation of resources posted online, by reputable sources and experts in the field of mental health and addictions and settlement issues. Local, national and international resources were used to ensure a variety of perspectives.

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