

Atira Women's Resource Society

Code of Conduct and Ethics ("Code")

1. Introduction.

1.1 The Board of Directors of Atira Women's Resource Society (together with its affiliated societies and organizations, the "Society") has adopted this Code. The purpose of this Code is to define what constitutes acceptable and ethical behaviour, promote high standards, and guide day-to-day practice for all directors, officers, employees, volunteers, contractors and other community partners. The purpose of this Code is to:

- (a) promote integrity and honest and ethical conduct, including the ethical handling of actual or apparent conflicts of interest;
- (b) promote full, fair, accurate, timely and understandable disclosure in reports and documents that the Society files with, or submits to funders, donors, regulators and in other public communications made by the Society;
- (c) promote respect for the dignity and individuality of each person and their support network;
- (d) increase transparency and integrity in professional relationships;
- (e) confirm that in areas of business Atira is committed to fairness, honesty and ethical practices as outlined by the Better Business Bureau of British Columbia;
- (f) confirm that in areas of human resources Atira adheres to all applicable federal and provincial legislation;
- (g) promote the protection of Society assets, including funding opportunities and confidential information;
- (h) deter wrongdoing; and
- (i) ensure accountability for adherence to the Code.

The Society's policy is to promote high standards of integrity by conducting its affairs honestly and ethically. The purpose of the Code is to guide directors, officers, employees and volunteers on how to carry out their duties in an honest and ethical manner.

Dilemmas often arise when there is a conflict between the interests or needs of different parties. The following decision-making steps will assist members of the Atira support team who are confronted with an ethical dilemma:

- Identify the individuals and groups potentially affected by the decision.
- Identify the ethically troubling issues, considering the interests of persons who will be affected as *well* as the circumstances in which the dilemma arose.
- Consider how your personal biases, stresses or self-interest may influence your decision or course of action.
- Develop a list of possible solutions to the problem. Where necessary, consult with other resources, including your manager, other team members, or other professionals.
- Analyze the likely risks and benefits of each course of action on the persons likely to be affected and choose the most appropriate course of action. Conscientiously apply the Society's philosophical and ethical principles to ensure consistency.
- When time and/or the situation allows, share your proposed solution with your manager.
- Act, with commitment, to assume responsibility for the consequences of the action.
- Establish a *plan* to evaluate the results of your action, including taking responsibility for correcting any negative consequences.
- Take appropriate action to prevent future occurrences of the problem.

The Society shall ensure that each individual to whom the Code applies is provided with a copy of the Code and signs an acknowledgment of receipt and review.

1.2 All directors, officers, employees and volunteers are required to be familiar with the Code, comply with its provisions and report any suspected violations as described below in Section 11.

2. Guidelines

All directors, officers, employees, volunteers, and contractors of Atira shall comply with the Code and shall acknowledge, in writing, that they have an understanding of this expectation:

2.1 All directors, officers, employees, volunteers, and contractors of Atira will deliver services in accordance with the Society's values on programs, supported individuals support, family support, and supported individuals' access.

2.2 All directors, officers, employees, volunteers, and contractors will treat all stakeholders and their property in such a way as to preserve their dignity and communicate respect and fairness. This involves:

- providing information in a truthful, empathic, compassionate, understandable, and sensitive way;
- being aware of the individual's needs, gifts, strengths, potentials, interests, and values; and
- applying appropriate, unbiased, consistent, and equitable principles to the circumstances.

2.3 All directors, officers employees, volunteers, and contractors will protect the confidentiality of all information, records, and material acquired professionally or otherwise throughout the course of their working relationship with Atira by understanding and adhering to the Society's handbook, the *Personal Information Protection Act*, and any other government acts and regulations.

2.4 All directors, officers, employees, volunteers, and contractors are prohibited from behaving in ways that pose a real or perceived conflict of interest during their working relationship with Atira. This includes, but is not limited to, fundraising and the witnessing of documents.

2.5 All directors, officers, employees, volunteers, and contractors will provide services using an inclusive, collaborative approach with natural supports and community resources available and / or necessary to the supported individuals. This approach also recognizes that employees, volunteers, and contractors may have limitations in some areas and, when they do not possess the necessary expertise to address a particular issue, they will consult with or refer to an appropriate professional.

2.6 All directors, officers, employees, volunteers, and contractors will clearly understand and respect the differences between professional and personal relationships with supported individuals and will behave in ways appropriate to these differences.

2.7 All directors, officers, employees, volunteers, and contractors will decline to act on behalf of supported individuals outside of the service mandate and will be consistently aware of managing their personal boundaries in their interactions with supported individuals, stakeholders, and co-workers so as to avoid using undue or unhealthy influence, exert position, and / or inappropriate use of power. Employees, volunteers, and contractors will not accept gifts from or trade or barter with supported individuals.

- 2.8 All directors, officers, employees, volunteers, and contractors will promote and maintain continuous quality improvement approaches to upgrade their service-delivery methods and knowledge, skills, education, and training relevant to their area of practice.
- 2.9 All directors, officers, employees, volunteers, and contractors will be responsive and open to the needs and desires of the community which Atira serves through formal and informal means of input to program planning, service-delivery, and advocacy.
- 2.10 All directors, officers, employees, volunteers, and contractors will perform services in a manner that promotes integrity and ethical decision-making with the primary purpose being professional responsibility, not personal preference. When a conflict exists, priority is always given to the needs and rights of the supported individual.
- 2.11 All directors, officers, employees, volunteers, and contractors are willing to accept full and complete accountability for their own acts and omissions, exhibiting self-discipline and the pursuit of excellence in all activities.
- 2.12 All directors, officers, employees, volunteers, and contractors will participate and co-operate in expressing and resolving their own grievances.
- 2.13 All directors, officers, employees, volunteers, and contractors are prohibited from giving or receiving preferential treatment for the Society's services.
- 2.14 All directors, officers, employees, volunteers, and contractors will respect professional work or ideas created by others giving full credit and citations when reproduced in any form.
- 2.15 All directors, officers, employees, volunteers, and contractors will inclusively adhere to the Code of their respective professions and to this in all other areas.
- 2.16 All directors, officers, employees, volunteers, and contractors will familiarize themselves with and adhere to the Society's policies.
- 2.17 All contractual relationships will be in writing and signed by the Society's CEO or a member of the senior leadership team.

3. Conflicts of Interest.

3.1 Conflicts of interest should be avoided unless specifically authorized. A conflict of interest occurs when an individual's private interest (or the interest of a member of her/his/their family) interferes, or appears to interfere, with the interests of the Society as a whole. A conflict of interest can arise when a director, officer, employee or volunteer (or a member of their family):

- (a) takes actions or has interests that may make it difficult to perform their work for the Society objectively and effectively;
- (b) receives improper personal benefits as a result of their position in the Society; or
- (c) has [a/an] [material] interest in an agreement or transaction involving the Society.

3.2 Whether or not a conflict of interest exists or will exist can be unclear. Conflicts of interest should be avoided unless specifically authorized as described in Section 3.3.

3.3 Persons other than directors and executive officers who have questions about a potential conflict of interest or who become aware of an actual or potential conflict should discuss the matter with, and seek a determination and prior authorization or approval from, their manager or the CEO. A manager may not authorize or approve conflict of interest matters or make determinations as to whether a problematic conflict of interest exists without first providing the CEO with a written description of the activity and seeking the CEO's written approval. If the manager is involved in the potential or actual conflict, the matter should instead be discussed directly with the CEO.

Directors and executive officers must seek determinations and prior authorizations or approvals of potential conflicts of interest exclusively from the Board of Directors.

4. Compliance.

4.1 The Society and its directors, officers, employees and volunteers should comply, both in letter and spirit, with all applicable laws, rules and regulations in the jurisdictions in which the Society operates.

5. Disclosure.

5.1 The Society's periodic reports and other public documents, including all financial statements and other financial information, must comply with applicable laws and regulations.

6. Protection and Proper Use of Society Assets.

6.1 All directors, officers, employees and volunteers should protect the Society's assets and ensure their efficient use. Theft, carelessness and waste have a direct impact on the Society's profitability and are prohibited.

6.2 All Society assets should be used only for legitimate Society purpose. Any suspected incident of fraud or theft should be reported for investigation immediately.

6.3 All transactions undertaken on behalf of the Society must be authorized in accordance with Society policies and must be documented accurately. Directors, officers, employees and volunteers responsible for record-keeping and accounting must ensure that the Society's books and records are accurate, timely and fair in their description of the assets of the Society.

7. Corporate Opportunities.

All directors, officers, employees and volunteers owe a duty to the Society to advance its interests when the opportunity arises. Directors, officers, employees and volunteers are prohibited from taking for themselves personally (or for the benefit of friends or family members) opportunities that are discovered through the use of Society assets, property, information or position. Directors, officers, employees and volunteers may not use Society assets, property, information or position for personal gain (including gain of friends or family members). In addition, no director, officer or employee may compete with the Society.

8. Confidentiality

Directors, officers, employees and volunteers should maintain the confidentiality of information entrusted to them by the Society or by its customers, suppliers or partners, except when disclosure is expressly authorized or legally required. Confidential information includes all non-public information (regardless of its source) that might be of use to the Society's competitors or harmful to the Society or its customers, suppliers or partners if disclosed. The obligation to maintain the confidentiality of information remains even after the director, officer or employee ceases to be employed or hold office with the Society.

9. Fair Dealing

Each director, officer, employee and volunteer must deal fairly with the Society's security holders, customers, suppliers, competitors, employees and anyone else with whom she/he/they has contact in the course of performing her/his/their job. No director, officer, employee or volunteer may take unfair advantage of anyone through manipulation, concealment, abuse or privileged information, misrepresentation of facts or any other unfair dealing practice.

10. Human Rights in the Workplace

The Society is committed to providing a workplace free of harassment, violence and discrimination. Directors, officers, employees and volunteers are expected to foster a respectful work environment that adheres to the requirements of applicable human rights law and related workplace legislation. The Society will not tolerate acts of discrimination based on any other ground of discrimination prohibited by law.

10.1 All directors, officers, employees, volunteers, and contractors will interact with various Atira stakeholders in accordance with the BC *Human Rights Code* as it relates to the

individual's race, language, religion, marital status, gender, gender identity and expression, sex, sexual orientation, age, mental or physical disabilities, economic status, political affiliation, ethnic origin or national ancestry.

11. Reporting and Enforcement.

11.1 Reporting and Investigation of Violations.

- (a) Actions prohibited by this code involving directors, officers, employees and volunteers must be reported to the CEO or Board of Directors.
- (b) After receiving a report of an alleged prohibited action, the CEO or Board of Directors must promptly take all appropriate actions necessary to investigate.
- (c) All directors, officers, employees and volunteers are expected to cooperate in any internal investigation of misconduct.

11.2 Prohibition on Retaliation. The Society does not tolerate acts of retaliation, including demotion, discharge, discipline, discrimination, harassment, suspension or threats, against any director, officer or employee who makes a good faith report of known or suspected acts of misconduct or other violations of this Code.

Administration of This Code

The CEO is responsible for the administration of this Code. If directors, officers, employees and volunteers have any questions about the Code generally or any questions about reporting a suspected conflict of interest or other violation of the Code, they may contact the CEO.