

The Child, Youth and Family Services Coalition (CYFS Coalition) of Simcoe County is a countywide alliance of organizations providing services to children, youth and their families in Simcoe County. Our mission is to maximize the capacity, effectiveness and cultural uniqueness of the child, youth and family services system through collective efforts.

CYFS Coalition Anti-Oppression Commitment Statement

The CYFS Coalition is committed to the use of anti-oppression through an intersectional framework. This commitment will direct our thinking, practices and approach to our collaborative work.

The CYFS Coalition is made up of and serves many communities who are experiencing different forms of oppression which often intersects within the context of colonialism. The Coalition includes Indigenous organizations and recognizes that Indigenous communities have distinct and specific histories, needs, legal rights, treaty rights, and constitutionally-protected rights, which will shape their practices.

What is Oppression?

Oppression occurs when one socially defined group exerts power and dominance over another group so that it benefits the former and oppresses the latter. Repeated acts of oppression can eventually become institutionalized or systemic, thus becoming hidden and seemingly 'normal'.

Systemic oppression happens when system-wide laws, policies, procedures and practices cause the unequal treatment of individuals and groups of people. These inequalities and their oppressive consequences constitute systemic oppression whether the individuals within these social institutions (ie: mental health, child welfare, policing, healthcare, education, etc) behave in oppressive ways or not regardless of intention or awareness of impact.

The CYFS Coalition acknowledges that systemic oppression exists in all institutions resulting in disparity and disproportionality among those experiencing oppression and is committed to addressing all forms of oppression.

What is Anti-Oppression?

Anti-oppression is the work that seeks to understand and dismantle oppressive systems and structures that perpetuate the oppression of those belonging to intersectional non-dominant groups. Anti-oppression guides our day-to-day practice, our interactions with others, and how we live our lives. A commitment to anti-oppression requires the on-going development of anti-oppression practices that work towards achieving greater social justice and equality.

The CYFS Coalition acknowledges we are embarking on a collective journey towards the ongoing development of anti-oppression practices.

What is Intersectionality?

Intersectionality is a way of understanding how different identities connect to form a whole person. People's lives and the organization of power in society are shaped by many axes of social division that influence each other, such as race, class, gender, sexuality, age, disability, mental health, and language.

The CYFS Coalition acknowledges the intersectional lived experience, expertise, empowerment, and self-advocacy of the communities we serve, and works to ensure representation in leadership structures from those communities facing oppression. We examine and use what intersectional power and privilege we do have in serving the communities in ways that respect, support, and advocate for their best interests.

We are committed to:

- **Educate:** We develop among our members an understanding of how systemic and structural oppression impacts children, youth and families and the communities they/we belong to.
- **Reflect:** We critically reflect on/integrate the power we have as individuals and organizations and use them to shift power to oppressed groups through anti-oppressive practices. We create a culture where oppression is consistently challenged and addressed.
- **Act:** We take action to develop anti-oppression practices to confront, disrupt and dismantle oppressive ways of knowing, being, and acting and we develop and implement anti-oppressive processes, practices, and policies.
- **Advocate:** We listen to, amplify, advocate for, and incorporate the voices of oppressed communities in our decision making and storytelling. We endeavor to strengthen our capacity to challenge unequal power dynamics that lead to oppression.
- **Support:** We support access for people experiencing oppression and the mitigation of barriers to that access.
- **Review:** Intersectional, anti-oppression practice is lifelong work that requires ongoing commitment from individuals and institutions. Therefore, this is a living document that will be reviewed and revised annually.

Adopted by the Members, [Date]

Contact:

Chair, Child Youth and Family Services Coalition of Simcoe County

Glossary

Dominant Group: The dominant group refers to a group of individuals who share certain characteristics that as a result of these characteristics are afforded specific forms of power and privileges, which are at the expense of the oppression of other groups of individuals. Characteristics of the dominant group include

being White, male, middle to upper class, heterosexual, able-bodied, 18 to 65 years of age, Christian, English-speaking, university educated, and living within an urban community.

References

Galabuzi, G.E. (2006). *Canada's Economic Apartheid: The Social Exclusion of Racialized Groups in the New Century*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc.

The Children's Aid Society of Toronto (2005). "Anti-Oppression/Anti-Racism Policy".

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Vision

All children, youth and families thriving in a strong, nurturing community.

Mission

To maximize the capacity, effectiveness and cultural uniqueness of the child, youth and family service system through collective efforts.

Values

Integrity
Respect
Innovation
Collaboration

CYFS Member Agencies

- Barrie Area Native Advisory Circle
- Barrie Police Service
- Barrie Public Library
- Canadian Mental Health Association-Simcoe Branch
- Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County
- Catulpa Community Support Services
- Child Advocacy Centre Simcoe/Muskoka
- Children's Treatment Network of Simcoe York
- Community Connection/211 Central East Ontario
- Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir
- Conseil scolaire Viamonde
- County of Simcoe
- CSC Chigamik CHC
- Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services
- E3 Community Services
- EarlyON– Simcoe North
- Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County
- Empower Simcoe
- Georgian College
- Gilbert Centre
- Gilda's Club of Simcoe Muskoka
- John Howard Society
- Kerry's Place
- Kinark Child and Family Services
- La Clé d'la Baie en Huronie
- Mackenzie Health
- New Path Foundation
- New Path Youth and Family Services
- NSM LHIN
- Orillia Public Library
- Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre
- Seasons Centre for Grieving Children
- Simcoe County District School Board
- Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board
- Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
- Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions
- United Way Simcoe Muskoka
- Waypoint Centre for Mental Health
- YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka
- Youth Haven