



Basis of Unity

Welcome to our Basis of Unity. Our Basis of Unity is a set of guiding principles for both **our words** and **our actions** at the organization.

These guiding principles lay out **shared ways of thinking and shared ways of acting** that guide how we can work together well.

The Basis of Unity is a living document that is continually evolving.

The Air We Breathe

- We acknowledge the historical forces that have shaped our institutions and social structures to produce ongoing inequality and discrimination. These historical and present systemic forces include racism, gender inequality, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, and colonization.
- We recognize that poverty is rooted in systemic inequality.
- We recognize the harm and trauma caused by our historical residential school system, and systemic inequities in our current health care, criminal justice, family law, child apprehension, and social assistance systems.
- We acknowledge and foreground that families experience systemic discrimination and resulting socioeconomic inequality based on their social identities in our unequal society.
- We recognize that identity characteristics such as racialized identity, Indigeneity, gender identity, trans identity, sexual orientation, health and mental health status, class, marital status, religion, ability, age, newcomer and refugee status, citizenship, and other characteristics compound to create systemic marginalization and socioeconomic inequality for many families.
- We acknowledge and recognize the diversity of what we bring to our various roles at the organization, whether staff, members or volunteers, based on our life experiences and identities within our unequal society.
- We believe that poverty must be addressed through upholding human rights and public policy solutions to create an equal and just world where we no longer need charitable help and stop-gap measures where human rights are denied.

The Context We Are In

- We commit to a decolonizing process.

The Basis of Unity is shaped by the *Seven Sacred Teachings*. This development is based on input and guidance from Indigenous members. The Centre for Family Equity (CFE) is a truly diverse organization. We value and respect the diversity of world views, religions, belief systems, and cultural perspectives - while foregrounding the historical and present-day reality and impacts of colonialism in Canada and BC.

Whether a newcomer just arrived or if your family has been here for several generations, all are invited to join in the decolonizing process within which our work in justice and human rights in BC and Canada is firmly rooted.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider the *Seven Sacred Teachings* and how you can apply them in your involvement with the CFE. For a summary of the Seven Sacred Teachings please click [here](#).

The Centre for Family Equity carries out our activities on the stolen lands of BC.

Our network consists of members living in all the Indigenous lands and territories falling within the BC provincial border.

On Vancouver Island, the traditional and unceded territory of the ləkʷəŋən speaking peoples, today known as the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, Malahat, Pacheedaht, Scia'new, T'Sou-ke, W̱SÁNEĆ (Pauquachin, Tsartlip, Tsawout, Tseycum) peoples, the K'ómoks First Nation, including Sathlout, Sasitla, leeksun, Puledge, Cha'chae, and Tat'poos Peoples, Snuneymuxw, Snaw-naw-as, Quw'utsun, and Tla'amin First Nations.

In the Lower Mainland, the traditional and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), sə́lilwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh), QayQayt First Nation, Kwantlen, q̓ícəy̓ (Katzie), Semiahmoo, Tsawwassen First Nations, kʷikʷəłəm (Kwikwetlem), and Stó:lō Nation.

In the Cariboo region, the traditional and unceded territory of the T'exelcəmc and Tsq'escenəmc.

In the Thompson-Okanagan region, the traditional and unceded territory of the Nlaka'pamux People, Syilx Peoples, Secwepemc Nation, Simpcw territory St'at'imc Nation territory that includes Nxwisten, Ts'kw'aylacw, Sekw'el'was, Lil'wat, Chalath, T'it'q'et, Xaxl'ip, N'quatqua, Xa'xtsa, Skatin, and Samahquam.

In the Kootenay region, the traditional and unceded territory of the Ktunaxa, the Kinbasket (Secwepemc), Syilx, and Sinixt Peoples.

In Northern B.C., the traditional and unceded territory of the Lheidli T'enneh, Haida, Tsimshian, Nisga'a, Haisla, Gitksan, Wet'suwet'en, Tahltan peoples, and on Treaty 8 territory, lands of the Sicannie, Slavey, Dene and Dane-Zaa, Cree, Saulteaux, and Métis.

- We remain aware that we are all caught up in systems of power and privilege.
- We strive to practice awareness of world views and knowledge that have historically been marginalized.
- We listen to and consider the complexities of the lives of those impacted by systemic discrimination and marginalization.
- We have zero tolerance for discriminatory hate speech against anyone based on any aspect of their identity or for any other reason.
- We commit to creating safe space.

We strive to hold safe space through a trauma-informed approach. How we hold space matters and applies to all Centre for Family Equity activities. It also applies to all involved with the organization, whether volunteers, members, guest members of the public, staff, contract workers, partners, allies, or network members in various formal or informal roles with the organization.

- We commit to a trauma-informed approach to all we do.
- We strive to create culturally appropriate space to ensure safe space for Indigenous community participants.

The presence of Elders is an important aspect of creating safe space for Indigenous community members. The presence of Elders provides safety and creates an atmosphere of respect.

- We value the presence of Elders and their importance for Indigenous community participants and appreciate their wisdom and impact on everyone.

We invite Elders to support CFE events and activities to increase cultural safety – determined by input and requests from Indigenous Network members.

We welcome and invite Indigenous cultural practices to open and shape our activities and events.

- We drive social change through the value of our connections and connectedness.
- We listen to the diversity of experiences at the CFE with openness and respect.
- We aim to be highly collaborative in our work.
- We drive social change through the collective power of working together.

We employ a tool for how to think about the layers of our identities, how they relate to each other, and the systems within which we live. This tool is called *intersectional awareness*.

A Black feminist scholar named Kimberley Crenshaw invented the notion of 'intersectionality' in 1989. Crenshaw published an article titled *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics* in the University of Chicago Legal Forum which impacts work on discrimination and organizing in social justice to this day.

Please view this explanation of the notion of intersectionality by Crenshaw in her own words in the context of Black Lives Matter and her original concept at a recent TED talk : [The urgency of intersectionality | Kimberlé Crenshaw](#)

- We practice awareness of our identities in relation to each other and we strive to not compete or compare.
- We aim to continually learn and experience growth in our perspectives and understanding of the diversity of other members' lived experiences.
- We strive to offer mutual support rather than to fix or help each other.

We recognize and celebrate gender diversity and the freedom to change and evolve as human beings as we explore our identities throughout our lives. Gender is a social construct, and our gender may evolve and vary over our lifetimes. Informed by our understanding of the fluidity of gender identities, we practice sharing our pronouns in all contexts. This practice informs others of how we identify at any given point in time and works against making assumptions about gender identity based on appearance.

We use the term gender diverse to refer to the spectrum of gender identities both fixed and evolving. We use 2SLGBTQIA+ to refer to the following sexual identities: Two-Spirit, (the Indigenous term for fluidity in holding both male and female identities) Lesbian, Gay, Trans, Queer, Intersex and A-sexual identifying individuals. The '+' (plus) is inclusive of those who do not feel the seven terms listed accurately represent them and those who do not wish to label themselves.

- We take proactive measures and steps to make sure all voices are heard.
- We keep the truths and stories we hear from each other safe in confidence.

As members, we will hear much personal information about other members through our projects, events, and engagement activities. We respect and value what people are willing to share to impact change by not sharing or repeating what we hear and always respecting privacy and confidentiality.

- We employ a restorative justice process rooted in our decolonizing approach that engages the community and those most impacted when conflict or harm occurs.
- We believe in each other and our capacity to impact change.
- We value all efforts to impact change whether on a small or a larger scale.

We believe strongly that all our members and participants are skilled leaders and come to the organization to impact change while further building their capacity to do so. As an organization, we are committed to facilitating access to tools for impacting change, capacity building, and building collective power as we carry out our work to skill-up movers and shakers everywhere in BC.

- We advocate for a world without poverty for all and whole community thriving while focusing on the unique needs of socioeconomic disadvantaged equity-seeking families.
- We celebrate our work, each other, our families, our children and our inspiration towards justice and change.

Thank you for applying the Basis of Unity to your involvement with the Centre for Family Equity.