Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Policy

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The Canadian Association of Midwives' (CAM) work is guided by its values- equity, respect, responsibility, and integrity. CAM advocates for community-responsive midwifery and contributes to progressive health policy in Canada, and internationally.

This policy serves as a foundation and framework to guide CAM's approach on gender equity and social inclusion (GESI), and represents CAM's principles, values, and organizational commitment to GESI at all levels of the organization - both internal (procedures and operations) and external (programming, projects, and initiatives).

This policy is complementary to other CAM policies including the Employee Handbook and Policy Manual and Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policy. The GESI policy is subject to periodic review and update by CAM's Executive Director and Board of Directors every three (3) years, or more often as required.

At CAM, we recognize:

CAM is rooted in the intersectional feminist movement and is committed to social justice within the Canadian and Global healthcare context. We are focused on ensuring that CAM centres the inclusion of all voices and types of knowledge in all aspects of our work. This recognition will be operationalized through dialogue, concrete actions, and development and implementation of best practices as part of an intentional process of organizational learning and change.

At CAM, we believe:

- A rights-based, trauma-informed approach is essential to achieving gender equity and social inclusion.
- Our capacity as an organization is strengthened by challenging unequal power relations and biases that lead to oppression.
- A diverse representation of members will facilitate achieving gender equity and social inclusion.
- GESI principles and practices related to hiring, employment, partnerships, and programming are also interconnected with the ability to achieve health equity and gender equity and social inclusion.
- CAM's Board, management, staff, consultants, volunteers, interns, subcontractors, and partners' work must be grounded in the knowledge of GESI principles and practices to foster our commitment to human rights and social justice.
- As a membership-based organization, all member associations must respect and embrace human dignity, diversity, and equity in every facet of their work with clients and colleagues.

As such, CAM commits to the following:

Workplace Approach

CAM is committed to providing a hiring process and workplace that reflects the values of the organization, equity, respect, integrity, and responsibility. All individuals working with or for CAM have the right to a safe, inclusive, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive space. This means an environment which recognizes and respects each person based on, but not exclusive to, race, ethnicity, ancestry, place of origin, age, marital status, economic status, class, educational background, ability (physical and mental), geographic location, language, religion, reproductive and parenting decisions, gender identity and expression, and sexual orientation.

Inherent in gender analysis is the need to recognize the power differentials between men, women, trans and nonbinary people. We acknowledge there is a gender spectrum and are committed to including trans, genderqueer, intersex, and all marginalized communities in our gender analysis.

For additional information, see CAM's Recruitment and Selection Procedure and CAM's Employee Handbook and Policy Manual.

Programs and Projects Approach

CAM will play a leadership role in promoting the adoption of a GESI approach through its engagement with relevant stakeholders, establishment of strategic partnerships, as well as advocating that all CAM policy documents systematically promote GESI at all levels and across the midwifery profession nationally and globally.

During the planning stage of projects and programs, the following should be considered:

- Ensure the proposed program or project will not cause harm to vulnerable, marginalized, or excluded communities, and instead will strengthen their voices and work towards systemic change and changing inequitable social and discriminatory norms.
- Project indicators will be required to include reference to gender and social inclusion. Additionally, as part of the monitoring and evaluation process, GESI analysis will be undertaken to determine if progress is being made on advancing gender and social inclusion within each project. Where necessary and possible, logic frameworks and performance management frameworks will be revised to include disaggregated data by socio-economic status, location, gender, race, and relevant GESI responsive information, including project specific indicators.
- Mid-term and final evaluations of projects and programs will ensure GESI considerations have been effectively integrated. At the programming level, additional indicators which incorporate gender and social inclusion will be developed, and GESI analysis will form part of the midterm review and the final evaluation process. For all evaluations, develop a response plan that includes actions to address GESI-related findings and recommendations.
- Reports should include best practices, challenges, lessons learned and suggestions from a GESI perspective.

Partnerships Approach

Strengthening CAM's capacity on GESI is critical to ensuring a shared vision across all programs and projects, as well as increased knowledge and capacity among CAM's Board, management, staff, partners, and external stakeholders about how and why the integration of GESI considerations is critical to the success of any program. Facilitating knowledge management and fostering a learning culture is critical to gathering best practices and lessons learned which contribute to improving approaches to mainstreaming GESI considerations as well as to identify specific gender and social inclusion gaps that require targeted interventions.

In our efforts for strengthening internal and partner capacity on GESI, the following measures will be undertaken:

- Orientation and training activities to strengthen skills and competencies of CAM board, management, staff, membership, consultants, volunteers, external stakeholders, and project partners.
- Identifying GESI work responsibilities at different levels and review periodically to assess what has worked, what has not, and the reason. Through participatory process, identify the GESI responsibilities that existing CAM board, management and staff can effectively implement.
- Determine which new skills and approaches are needed within our partnerships and program or project activities and ensure existing CAM policies are GESI responsive with supportive provisions and processes.

Accountability

CAM's Management team, and ultimately the Executive Director, hold accountability for CAM's GESI policy and its implementation. CAM's management team must ensure that all CAM staff, consultants and partners and external stakeholders understand and comply with this policy. The Management team is also responsible for ensuring a robust recruitment, onboarding, and training and performance management with their teams to ensure an understanding of CAM's approach to gender equity and social inclusion and its organizational commitment at all levels.

All CAM board members, management, staff, consultants, volunteers, external stakeholders, and partners are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the framework outlined in this policy and report any concerns to their direct supervisor.

For further information on how to file a complaint or handling of complaints or concerns, please see the CAM's Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policy for further information.

Definitions

Anti-Oppression: is the work of actively challenging and removing oppression perpetuated by power inequalities in society, both systemic oppression and individual expressions of oppression.

Anti-Racism: the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life.

Gender: Refers to the socially constructed characteristics typically attributed to women, men, girls, and boys including the norms, roles, behaviours, activities, attributes, and relationships that exist between them but can also include more expansive definitions that do not rely on a binary. These attributes are socially constructed and can be learned and reinforced through socialization processes. Gender identity is not confined to a binary (girl/woman, boy/man) nor is it static; it exists along a spectrum and can change over time.

Gender Analysis: Critical examination of how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities, rights, and entitlements affect all people in each policy area, situation, or context.

Gender Binary: The disproven concept that there are only two genders, male and female, and that everyone must be one or the other. Also often misused to assert that gender is biologically determined. This concept also reinforces the idea that men and women are opposites and have different roles in society.

Gender Equity: Is a rights-based approach that refers to equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for all, regardless of gender identity or expression.

Gender Equity: Provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between genders.

Gender Expression: People's manifestation of their gender identity and the one that is perceived by others.

Gender Identity: Each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech, and mannerisms.

Gender Spectrum: The concept that gender exists beyond a simple man/woman binary model (see Gender Binary), but instead exists on a continuum. Some individuals fall towards more masculine or feminine aspects, some individuals move fluidly along the spectrum, and some exist off the spectrum entirely.

Health Equity: Eliminating disparities in health that adversely affect groups facing socio-economic inequalities.

Diversity: Differences in the values, attitudes, cultural perspective, beliefs, racial, ethnic, cultural backgrounds, sexual orientation, gender identity, skills, knowledge, and life experiences of each individual in any group of people.

Inclusion: Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities and decision or policy making in a way that shares power.

Intersectionality: Addresses the interconnected nature of gender, race, ethnicity, class, income, education, occupation, disability, caste, clan, and other status which create overlapping and interdependent systems of disempowerment, discrimination, oppression, domination, and inequity that give rise to exclusion and subordination.

Social Inclusion: Is the process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society and improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged and disempowered based on their identity.

Trauma-Informed Approach: Refers to understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma. Realizing the widespread impact of trauma and understanding the potential paths for recovery while recognizing the signs and symptoms of trauma and responding by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices.

Trauma: a physical, psychological, or emotional wound from a one-time or series of life events.