

CLIENTS, MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION PROTOCOL

SECTION 6 – COMPLAINTS

THIS POLICY/DOCUMENT APPLIES TO: All YWCA Hamilton Clients, Members & Community Members

Description: YWCA Hamilton values and encourages the feedback of clients, members and community members about the programs, services and practices of the organization. Complaints and feedback can provide important opportunities for improving service. A complaint can be made by a client, member or community member individually or with the support of an individual acting on behalf of the client, member or community member if necessary. The complaint can relate to any aspect of the organization’s programs, services and practices.

YWCA Hamilton maintains a high standard with respect to the operation of the organization and its associated programs and services. Strict compliance is expected for all employees, volunteers and contractors of the YWCA Hamilton with respect to its established policies and procedures.

Protocol: Clients, members and community members have the right to respectful, non-judgmental treatment. YWCA Hamilton is committed to ensuring that it is a safe place, free from discrimination, violence and harassment. Racism, homophobia, sexism, classism, ableism, ageism or any other form of oppression will not be tolerated by employees, volunteers, students, clients or members.

If clients or community members feel they have experienced harassment or discrimination at YWCA Hamilton, they have the right to voice their concerns by using this complaints process. YWCA Hamilton maintains a strict compliance expectation with respect to its policies and procedures surrounding incidents of violence and harassment.

Harassment is any behaviour that demeans, humiliates, or embarrasses a person, and that a reasonable person should have known would be unwelcome. It includes actions, comments, or displays. It may be a single incident or continue over time.

Procedure:

Complaints Procedure

YWCA Hamilton is committed to listening to clients, members and community member complaints and/or feedback while responding in a fair, timely and respectful manner. All complaints made



against the organization are taken seriously, and will be given due consideration without reprisal or discrimination. YWCA Hamilton will attempt to resolve all complaints to the mutual satisfaction of both parties. No client or member will risk having her/his services and/or supports negatively impacted or withdrawn as a result of submitting a complaint to the organization.

YWCA Hamilton actively informs clients, members and community members of their right to register complaints and provide feedback in seeking resolution or organizational improvements. All aspects of complaint or feedback submission will be handled in accordance with the YWCA Hamilton Confidentiality Policy. However, if the complaint may involve alleged, suspected or witnessed illegal criminal or unethical behaviour, information may need to be shared with external authorities. In circumstances where external authorities are required, YWCA Hamilton will only initiate its own internal investigation of a complaint after external authorities have completed their investigation.

Where a conflict of interest may arise as a result of individuals involved throughout the complaint investigation process, YWCA Hamilton reserves the right to designate other individuals involved in the complaint investigation to avoid such a conflict of interest and maintain a fair and equitable practice throughout the investigation.

All complaints and/or feedback are thoroughly documented throughout the investigation process and kept in a secure location.

YWCA Hamilton is not expected to attempt to resolve complaints that it may determine to be frivolous or vexatious.

In the event that a complaint in Developmental Services escalates to a Serious Occurrence, mechanisms for summoning Police and reporting to MCSS must be adhered to in accordance with the Developmental Services, Abuse and Serious Occurrence Reporting Procedures policies.

Step 1 - Informal Resolution Process

Speak directly to the person with whom you have the complaint. If you do not feel safe to speak with the person whom you have the complaint, please ask to speak directly to their supervisor at least within 10 working days of an incident or concern.



Step 2 - Formal Process

1. You may provide a written complaint and leave it for a YWCA Hamilton employee / volunteer /Supervisor whom you have the complaint with or their Supervisor. You may also request a meeting in which you may write down and/or provide specific details of your concern. You must do this as soon as possible but at least within 10 working days of the incident. A person acting on behalf of an individual providing a complaint may be involved in the complaint process at any time.
2. Within 10 working days, unless an extension is needed, of receiving a complaint the employee or management staff will arrange a meeting in person to hear the complaint in person or by phone, as you so choose. A resolution of the complaint may also include a meeting between the parties involved that should take place within 10 working days, unless an extension is needed, of the initial meeting to hear the complaint.
3. If you are not satisfied with the response of the employee or their Supervisor you can contact their Manager within 10 working days from the day you received the response.
4. If you are not satisfied with the response of the Manager you can contact the Director of the Department within 10 working days from the day you received the response.
5. If you are not satisfied with the response of the Director of the Department you can contact the CEO within 10 working days from the day you received the response. The CEO may assign a designate to respond to hear the complaint and provide a response on her behalf.
6. The CEO brings complaints deemed a risk to the organization forward to the board of directors within 10 working days. The board of directors will review complaints related to the violation of board governance policies within 10 working days following receipt of the complaint.

Depending on the complaint, the appropriate reporting body (including government funders as required) will be contacted by the CEO or her designate, and the proper complaint reporting procedure initiated.

Frivolous, Vexatious Complaints: Any client, member or community member who makes a frivolous, vexation, false or bad faith complaint will be deemed to have engaged in harassment and YWCA Hamilton will address this accordingly.





Related Policies/Procedures/Documents:

- YWCA Hamilton Workplace Violence Prevention Policy (OPM002-5)
- YWCA Hamilton Employment Principles Policy (OPM002-2)
- YWCA Hamilton Personal Information Protection Policy (OPM002-3)
- YWCA Hamilton Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression Policy (OPM003-1)
- YWCA Hamilton Professional Boundaries Policy (OPM004-2)
- YWCA Hamilton Conflict of Interest Policy (OPM004-3)
- YWCA Hamilton Confidentiality Policy (OPM004-4)
- YWCA Hamilton, Developmental Services (Abuse Policy)
- YWCA Hamilton, Developmental Services (MCSS Serious Occurrence Reporting Procedures Policy)

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