

Equity Team

POLICY NAME: Equity Team	Date Approved: March 27, 2019
	Review date:
Purpose: To provide the terms of reference for the Equity Team.	

Purpose

We are called to prayerfully discern and respect the wide range of diversities within our Region including, but not limited to, sexual orientation, gender identity, life experience, differing abilities, ethnicity, race, generational differences, age, geographic location and economic circumstances.

The Equity Team exists to support the work of providing an accessible, equitable environment at all East Central Ontario Regional Council events and meetings.

Membership

The Equity Team will consist of up to twelve (12) members who reflect the intercultural church:

- one (1) member of the Assembly of Elders;
- three (3) members of the East Central Ontario Regional Council appointed annually; and
- members at large recruited by the Equity Team.

The Equity Team will include an Affirming Forum (see the Interim Action Plan).

Terms of Appointment

All members will serve terms of three years. There is a possibility of reappointment for a second term.

Meetings

The Equity Team will meet three to four times a year, primarily by videoconference call. As needed, and possible, the Equity Team may meet in person.

Duties

- 1) Advise the Assembly of Elders and the Executive Minister on all matters concerning equity, privilege and accessibility;
- 2) be a resource to the East Central Ontario Regional Council to follow our priorities below and call the East Central Ontario Regional Council into account if we fail to live up to our commitment;
- 3) celebrate the participation of diverse individuals and communities in our life and work;
- 4) seek justice for all who are marginalized. Identify and dismantle barriers with regard to full participation of marginalized individuals and groups in Christ's ministry;
- 5) name and address ableist, heterosexist and white supremacist comments, attitudes and actions, recognizing how these undergird and perpetuate ableism, racism, homophobia and transphobia;
- 6) improve and provide resources for communication among Regional groups, and Communities of Faith, including digital communication;
- 7) live into being an Affirming Ministry that seeks to create safe and welcoming space for all;
- 8) provide opportunities for educational and training initiatives;
- 9) continue our journey of healing, reconciliation and embracing relationships with First Nations communities;
- 10) practice radical hospitality as church and in conversation with other faith communities;
- 11) be a resource for any regional meetings/events;

- 12) support the volunteer Equity Monitors; and
- 13) receive concerns about and suggestions to revise the Equity Monitor checklist.

Terms:

EQUALITY

Treating all people the same, regardless of individual differences. Equal treatment is not necessarily fair treatment, because it overlooks the fact that differences in opportunities and resources exist to begin with. Equality of treatment does not necessarily produce equality of result, and does not necessarily allow all people to succeed equally.

For example, equality of treatment would mean giving everyone the exact same support, such as giving everyone the same amount of time to complete an exam regardless of learning disabilities or specialized learning needs.

EQUITY

Giving fair treatment to all people based on their individual or group needs, even when that treatment is not the same as what others receive. Equity seeks to consider a person's or group's specific circumstances, past and present, and act accordingly to ensure success. Equity takes into account the needs of individuals and groups that have experienced and continue to experience systemic obstacles or challenges, in order to ensure the achievement of equal status in society for all.

For example, equity of treatment would mean providing all people and groups with the resources that they individually need to succeed, such as taking into account an individual's abilities at exam time, so that a student with a learning disability or visual impairment would receive more time if needed.

PRIVILEGE

Privilege is an advantage that only one person or group of people has, usually because of their position or because they are rich. Privilege is also the special right that some people in authority have that allows them to do or say things that other people are not allowed to. We first need to acknowledge that privilege does exist (even in the church).

ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility is about creating communities that enable everyone to participate fully without barriers. First thoughts are for those with differing abilities but this also includes sexual orientation, gender identity, life experience, ethnicity, race, generational differences, age, geographic location and economic circumstances.

Equity Monitors will:

Work with the planning team of the event/meeting and work through the Equity checklist (see attachment). The Equity checklist is to be used as a guide to strive towards, recognizing that we might not be able to meet all of the points. It is helpful to name what is available on the meeting invite. The Equity Monitor(s) are introduced at the beginning of the event/meeting with a brief description of their role. Equity monitors are to be open and approachable to work through a solution for any additional concerns that may arise during a meeting/event. We have found comfort increase in recent years for people to bring forward their concerns.

Areas of equity concerns that have been identified are:

- meetings held in accessible locations;

- visual loss accommodations (materials sent out 48 hours in advance);
- scent-free/nut-free environments;
- assistive listening or amplification of speakers;
- speakers self-identifying;
- concern for dietary needs;
- sensitivities for chemicals/scents/food;
- materials printed for those without access to computers/printers;
- when printed items provided also include some large print;
- gender neutral washrooms (can be identified temporarily for that meeting);
- accessible washrooms;
- respect for pronoun use and identity (use nametags with pronouns, introductions to include pronouns);
- inclusive language (also sensitivity to language complexity);
- American Sign Language interpretation (note: meetings/events need to provide preparation material for interpreters, such as outlines, hymn lyrics and other outlines as required); and
- accommodations for persons with various mental health concerns (quiet spaces available);

Template Equity Checklist Planning and Hosting Events

Name of Community of Faith: _____

This equity checklist is designed to be multi-functional to help us be pro-active hosts who offer radical hospitality to welcome all at our table.

Pre-Planning For An Event

- All groups and event organizers are asked to decide what is needed on promotional material, social media and invitations to help facilitate equity.
- Try to host only in accessible venues. If only partially accessible ensure that it is stated
- If accessibility support is needed (operator for lift, key for elevator) is pre-arranged for availability with a named person and contact (avoid vague assurances someone should be there).
- Ensure all invitations have a contact cell number for someone at event so a person has a contact if needed when arriving to event (directions, parking issues, entrance locked)
- Provide contact name for those who may need transportation to an event, arranging for volunteer drivers as part of pre-event planning
- If persons with disabilities are known to be attending, contact the individuals before the event to ask them about their needs and how to best plan for their inclusion (if Communion, how would they like to receive)

- If anyone has a service animal, pre-arrange with person prior to event requesting service animal expectations be shared when the handler is doing introductions (if introductions not feasible for size of group, invite the service handler to provide information during sharing of housekeeping)
- Include all appropriate symbols that identify features of the location on invitations, announcements and promotions e.g. (affirming, accessible, gender neutral washroom, hearing assists available, scent free, nut free)
- Anticipate diversity of participants and plan with full participation as a goal (consider complexity of language, attention spans, movement, interactive, learning styles, able to speak in groups, stand, move, hear or see)
- Be adaptive and creative
- Include acknowledgement of lands as part of opening of event.
- Name an equity monitor for the event, introduce at beginning and explain role so all participants have a safe “go to” person and review norms or holy manners, confidentiality expectations for gathering

Presentation

- Projection - font size minimum 40 clear easy to read font (Aerial or similar), strong visual contrast, reduce clutter/ busyness, limit content per slide, use colour contrasts for speaker and large group (white presenter/yellow all, or similar), inclusive wording, attention to complexity of language, add pictures or symbols to clarify such as praying hands to show a time of prayer, use multi-racial images for inclusivity
- distribute 48 hours in advance, documents, handouts, agendas and PowerPoints to allow for additional processing time and accessibility, participants understand there could be some last minute adjustments
- Have large print copies and leader copy of detailed presentation available
- Use existent microphone system consistently (be mindful of placement for lip readers)
- If a person uses a wheelchair, sit when possible to converse so all are face to face,
- Say name when speaking, some may not see, some may forget names or come in late
- Provide clear, large font name tags and ensure people wear name tags and/or use table name plates (indicate pronouns on nametags)
- use alt tag labels for graphics and images, use closed captioning and described video features
- get permission for use of photos, video, quotes or other specific needs, to be used on social media, websites and future related events
- use a feedback or evaluation form that combines paper and on-line option, include request about equity (consider using survey monkey so non-anecdotal can be summarized by survey monkey)

Building Facility

- Offer accessible parking places and clear signage for directions to key rooms (if especially complex, consider making a brief video to give participants a preview tour of building and what to expect) that is posted on social media or website
- Check if site has any directions regarding best place to relieve service animal and directions, if there is an outside waste receptacle.
- Include in invitations special instructions for accessible access if needed, ensure door is unlocked and that signage is available from that entry point
- Accessible, gender neutral and family friendly washrooms with clear routes to washrooms, and if needed designating a temporarily labelled gender neutral washroom for event if not pre-existing
- Arrange seating to optimize all hearing, seeing screen, movement in the space, interaction and participation for all (ensure tables and arrangements allow space for those who use wheelchairs or other assists)
- Ensure passageways in room, to washrooms, quiet space, food and exits are accessible and kept clear
- Clarify procedures and comfort to avoid centering out, such as requesting if people will want to be served Communion at their seats or come up and individual preference, in planning, talk to individuals anticipate what will be most inclusive and accommodating for all to take part
- If family friendly, ensure spaces and activities are appropriate for all
- Ensure greeters have sense of inclusive design of building to best recommend seating but respect requests of individuals and do not move mobility assists to back or side of a venue, stranding the person
- Declare a quiet room space, with directions and sign on room
- Donated and catered food needs labels (gluten free, dairy free, vegetarian, vegan,) ingredient list, recipe as appropriate, placed by dishes for self-serve, on wall or clearly communicated to servers, determining if/when separate serving tables might be needed for special diet items
- Have water available, include which beverages are decaffeinated, sugar -free or other dietary identifiers
- Remind those bringing their own food to observe dietary needs

Last updated March 26, 2019 – working document, share/adapt for use.
Contact sharon.ballantyne@gmail.com 705 875-8837 with suggestions.