

Respectful Engagement:

Practical guidance for delivering public services



OMBUDSPERSON
BRITISH COLUMBIA

As an independent officer of the legislature, the Ombudsperson investigates complaints of unfair or unreasonable treatment by provincial and local public organizations and provides general oversight of the administrative fairness of government processes under the *Ombudsperson Act*. The Ombudsperson conducts three types of investigations: investigations into individual complaints, investigations that are commenced on the Ombudsperson's own initiative, and investigations referred to the Ombudsperson by the Legislative Assembly or one of its committees.

Under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act* (PIDA) the Ombudsperson investigates allegations from current and former public sector employees of wrongdoing in or relating to a public organization covered by the Act as well as complaints of reprisal.

The Ombudsperson has a broad mandate to investigate allegations of wrongdoing or complaints of reprisal involving provincial ministries, provincial boards and commissions, Crown corporations, health authorities, schools and school boards, and colleges and universities. A full list of the public organizations covered by PIDA can be found on our office's website. The Office of the Ombudsperson also provides advice to those public organizations and their employees about the Act and the conduct of wrongdoing investigations.

The Office of the Ombudsperson also offers educational webinars, workshops, and individual consultation with public organizations to support fairness and continuous improvement across the broader provincial and local public sector.

For more information about the Office of the Ombudsperson and for copies of published reports, visit bcombudsperson.ca.

Our office is located on the traditional lands of the Lək'wəŋən (Lekwungen) People and ancestors and our work extends across the homelands of the First Nations Peoples within what we now call British Columbia. We honour the many territorial keepers of the lands and waters where we work.



Contents

Introduction: Why respectful engagement matters	2
Part 1: Foundations of respectful engagement	3
Managing expectations	4
Active listening	5
Trauma-informed practice	6
Cultural humility and cultural safety	8
Respectful engagement with Indigenous Peoples	10
Part 2: When interactions become difficult	12
Understanding complex behaviour	14
Using the DESC technique	15
Service restrictions	16
Supporting staff	19
Conclusion	20
Model policy:	21

Introduction: Why respectful engagement matters

Respectful engagement is an important part of fair and effective public service delivery. It helps people understand decisions, access services fairly, and build positive relationships between public organizations and the people they serve.

This guide provides practical strategies to help those delivering public services communicate clearly, build respectful relationships, and respond appropriately when relationships or interactions become difficult. It explores both the foundations of respectful engagement and practical approaches for responding when behaviour creates challenges for service delivery.

Respectful engagement may look different depending on the organization, the services provided, or the people they serve. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. However, treating people with fairness, dignity, and respect is a shared responsibility of both public organizations and the public.

How to engage respectfully

- Respond to questions and concerns as promptly as possible.
- Ask whether a person needs accommodations or supports.
- Treat people with dignity and respect.
- Demonstrate empathy.
- Listen actively and work to understand concerns.
- Focus on facts and issues rather than emotions.
- Be transparent.
- Offer an apology when appropriate.
- Explain decisions clearly and meaningfully, particularly when the outcome is unfavourable.
- Acknowledge how a person's unique identity such as their gender, age, race, or ethnicity could impact their experience.

Part 1: Foundations of respectful engagement

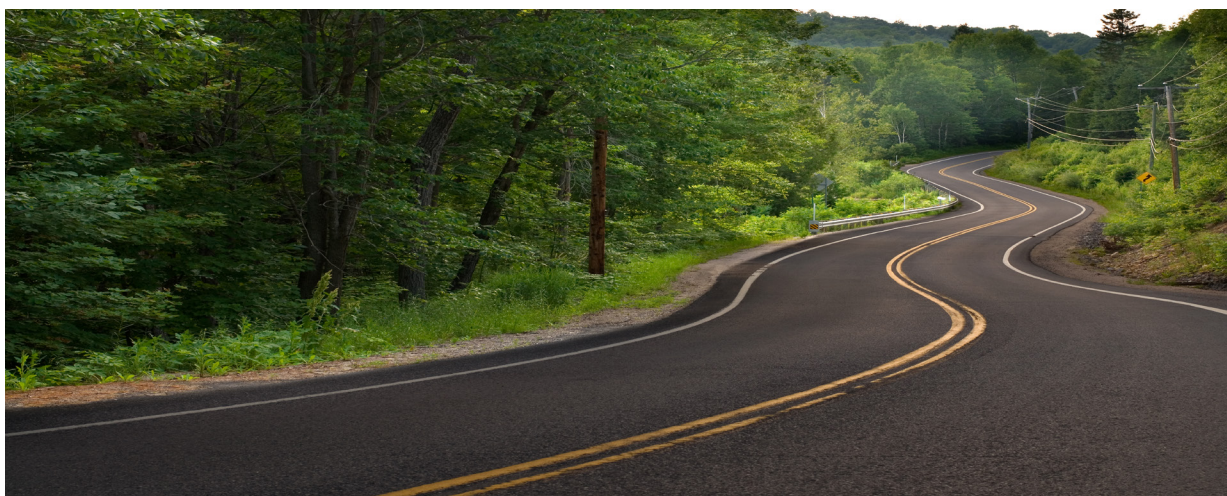
Managing expectations

Managing expectations helps support respectful engagement by encouraging clear communication between public organizations and the people they serve.

Setting expectations early can help prevent misunderstandings, reduce conflict, and support positive interactions. Whenever possible, begin managing expectations during a person's first interaction with your organization. This is an opportunity to understand what they hope to achieve while ensuring they understand your organization's role, what it can and cannot do, the process that will be followed, and what they can expect.

How to manage expectations

- Clarify the person's objective or goal.
- Clearly explain your organization's role and jurisdiction.
- Communicate what your organization can and cannot do.
- Provide information about what the person can expect, including the process that will be followed, timelines, eligibility criteria, and next steps. Where possible, make this information publicly available.
- Check that the person understands the information you have provided.
- Provide clear decisions, and the reasons for them, as soon as possible and in writing where appropriate.



Active listening

Active listening means listening to fully understand what another person is saying. It is a precursor to problem-solving because it demonstrates to the person who is speaking that their issue, request, or concern has been heard.

Active listening also helps to build trust, strengthen relationships, and create a better understanding of a person's concerns.

How to listen actively

- Give the speaker your full attention.
- Use positive body language.
- Avoid interrupting the speaker.
- Maintain appropriate eye contact.
- Listen without judgement.
- Encourage the speaker by nodding or using other positive verbal and non-verbal cues.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Paraphrase what you have heard to confirm your understanding.
- Acknowledge the person's feelings.

Note: Body language, tone, speech, facial expressions and eye contact can be interpreted differently depending on a person's identity, culture and neurological differences.

Demonstrating empathy is also an important part of respectful engagement. You can acknowledge the impact a situation has had on a person without agreeing with their position or compromising your impartiality. This helps people feel heard and respected.

Examples of empathetic responses include:

- "I understand this is very challenging."
- "I can see this has taken a toll on your well-being."
- "I appreciate how this has impacted you."

Trauma-informed practice

People who have experienced trauma may respond differently when accessing public services. Understanding the effects of trauma can help public organizations provide services in ways that support respectful engagement and avoid causing additional harm.

Trauma occurs when a person experiences an event or circumstance that has a lasting negative impact¹ on their mental, emotional, or physical well-being.² Trauma is highly individual, and what is traumatic for one person may not be traumatic for another.³

For those who live with unresolved trauma, common life stressors can be threatening and can trigger a cycle of reactivity that erodes well-being and capacity to function.⁴ As a result, some people may demonstrate behaviours that are more challenging to respond to.

Being trauma-informed helps create a positive relationship between public organizations and the people they serve by reducing the risk of retraumatizing, while at the same time promoting coping skills and resilience. It also helps organizations respond more effectively to people's needs and deliver services that are responsive to the people they serve.⁵

Being trauma-informed does not mean acting as a counsellor or asking people to disclose traumatic experiences. Rather, it means recognizing that trauma may influence a person's behaviour and responding in ways that promote safety, trust, and respect.

Indigenous Peoples might experience unique trauma when interacting with public organizations because of historical and present-day harms. For more on this, see the section on [Respectful engagement with Indigenous Peoples](#).

1 Nancy Poole, Christina Talbot, and Tasnim Nathoo, [Healing Families, Helping Systems: A Trauma-Informed Practice Guide for Working with Children, Youth and Families](#), January 2017: Ministry of Children and Family Development, 4.

2 Nancy Poole, Christina Talbot, and Tasnim Nathoo, [Healing Families, Helping Systems: A Trauma-Informed Practice Guide for Working with Children, Youth and Families](#), January 2017: Ministry of Children and Family Development, 8.

3 Jean Tweed Centre, Trauma matters: Guidelines for trauma-informed practices in women's substance use services, 2013: Toronto, ON quoted in [Healing Families, Helping Systems: A Trauma-Informed Practice Guide for Working with Children, Youth and Families](#), January 2017: Ministry of Children and Family Development, 4.

4 Wendy Wood, [Trauma Informed Mediation – Guidance for Mediators and Ombuds Working in Traumatized Communities](#), 2015.

5 Government of Canada, ["Trauma and violence-informed approaches to policy and practice,"](#) 2025.

The strategies below are informed by the Public Health Agency of Canada's guidance on trauma and violence-informed approaches to policy and practice.⁶ They provide a starting point for public organizations seeking to strengthen trauma-informed service delivery.

How to take a trauma-informed approach

Understand trauma and its impacts

- Consider how trauma and violence may influence a person's behaviour. Rather than asking, "What's wrong with this person?" consider asking, "What might this person have experienced?"

Create emotionally and physically safe environments

- Speak in a calm, neutral, and non-judgmental manner.
- Listen, believe, and validate (e.g., use phrases such as, "That sounds like a very difficult situation.>").
- Provide clear and consistent information.
- Do not ask people to disclose traumatic events or to retell the same events multiple times.
- Offer privacy but ask permission before closing a door to discuss a matter privately.
- Honour the preferences of the individual where possible, such as accommodating a request to meet with an individual who identifies similarly or has similar lived experience.

Foster opportunities for choice, collaboration, and connection

- Ask open-ended questions.
- Encourage people to bring a support person if they wish or to use other strategies they have developed.
- Check that you understand what the person is telling you (e.g., "Just to be sure I'm hearing you, I understand your concern is...").

Provide a strengths-based and capacity-building approach to support an individual's coping skills and resilience

- Build on a person's demonstrated strengths, skills or abilities.
- Recognize and support a person's existing coping strategies.
- Provide information in different formats, such as sending a follow-up email after a phone call and providing information in writing, ensuring plain and accessible language is used.

These principles provide a useful starting point. Public organizations seeking to strengthen trauma-informed practices may also benefit from additional training and guidance from qualified experts in trauma.

⁶ Government of Canada, "[Trauma and violence-informed approaches to policy and practice.](#)"

Cultural humility and cultural safety

Public organizations in British Columbia serve people from a wide range of cultures. Cultural humility and cultural safety are important to building respectful relationships across cultures and delivering fair, accessible services.

Cultural humility⁷

Cultural humility is an ongoing process of self-reflection and learning. It recognizes that no one can become fully knowledgeable about another person's culture and encourages service providers to approach every interaction with openness, curiosity, and respect.

How to practice cultural humility

- Reflect on your own perspectives, assumptions, and potential biases.
- Recognize and challenge systemic barriers that affect equity-deserving communities.
- Understand that your own culture is not universal or superior to others.
- Remain open to learning from the people and communities you serve.
- Build relationships across cultures based on mutual respect and trust.
- Recognize that many people experience marginalization because of their culture.

⁷ First Nations Health Authority, [Creating a Climate for Change](#).

Cultural safety

Cultural safety is the outcome of practising cultural humility. It exists when people feel respected, safe, and free from racism and discrimination while accessing public services.

Adapted from the BC First Nations Health Authority's definition of cultural safety:

“Cultural safety is an outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in [government service delivery]. It results in an environment free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe when receiving [government services].”⁸

Creating culturally safe services is a shared responsibility. Public organizations should work with the communities they serve to understand what cultural safety means in practice, recognizing that communities themselves determine what is culturally safe.



8 First Nations Health Authority, [Creating a Climate for Change](#), 5.

Respectful engagement with Indigenous Peoples

Respectful engagement with Indigenous Peoples is integral for all provincial and local public organizations.

Public organizations have a responsibility to learn about and understand the ongoing impacts of colonization, including the historical and present-day harms experienced by Indigenous Peoples and the role public institutions have played in those harms. They should take steps to ensure respectful engagement within that context. **In addition to supporting fair and effective service delivery, respectful engagement contributes meaningfully to reconciliation.**

Cultural agility and reconciliation

Cultural safety and cultural humility are particularly important as public organizations prioritize reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. This is because Indigenous Peoples have worldviews, beliefs, kinship systems, and cultural practices that are unique. To work effectively across cultures, public organizations must display cultural agility, or “the ability to work respectfully, knowledgeably, and effectively with Indigenous people.”⁹

How to practice cultural agility:

- Notice and accept cultural uniqueness to create a sense of safety for all.
- Be open to unfamiliar perspectives and ways of knowing.
- Examine your own worldview and culture, and notice both the commonalities and differences with Indigenous cultures and worldviews.
- Recognize that personal and professional values may align – or differ from – those of Indigenous Peoples.
- Be willing to learn, adapt, and consider different perspectives.

⁹ Government of British Columbia, Indigenous relations behavioural competencies, [Cultural Agility](#).

A distinctions-based approach

Respectful engagement with Indigenous Peoples in British Columbia also requires a distinctions-based approach. This means recognizing that a public organization's work with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit should acknowledge the specific rights, interests, priorities, and concerns of each, while respecting these are distinct Peoples that have unique cultures, histories, rights, laws, and governments.

There is a rich diversity of Indigenous Peoples in British Columbia. A distinctions-based approach recognizes that respectful engagement may require different approaches or actions depending on the community, organization, or circumstances, and may result in different outcomes.



Part 2:

When interactions become difficult

Even with respectful communications and strong relationships, some interactions with members of the public may become challenging.

Understanding the factors that contribute to complex behaviour can help public organizations respond fairly, consistently, and effectively while continuing to provide respectful service.

The following sections explore practical approaches for understanding complex behaviour, responding constructively, supporting staff, and, where necessary, considering service restrictions.

Understanding complex behaviour

Understanding factors that contribute to complex behaviour can help public organizations respond fairly, consistently, and respectfully.

Even when public organizations communicate clearly, listen actively, and approach interactions with empathy and respect, there may be times when a person's behaviour creates additional challenges in delivering public services.

Complex behaviour describes behaviour that creates additional challenges for public organizations in providing services. We use this term because it focuses on the behaviour itself rather than labelling or stigmatizing the person. It recognizes that people may demonstrate these behaviours in response to situations that are personally challenging or triggering, and that there is often a broader personal and societal context influencing how people respond.

Complex behaviour may include behaviours such as unreasonable persistence, repeated communications that do not provide new information, or refusing to accept a fair decision.

There are many reasons why a person may demonstrate complex behaviour, including:

- different cultural norms
- alternative communication styles
- limited familiarity with technology
- mental health concerns
- different learning needs
- previous negative experiences with, or distrust of, government
- frustration, anxiety, or distress about their circumstances
- lived experience of trauma, including intergenerational and historical trauma

Complex behaviour is often situational and may be temporary. Public organizations should avoid making assumptions about a person's circumstances, past conduct, or the nature of their request.

Having clear policies and procedures to respond to complex behaviour can help organizations respond consistently, fairly, and respectfully. These policies should clearly explain how to respond when complex behaviours arise. Where possible, these policies should also be publicly available (e.g., on a website, within written materials and other communications, or posted in an office environment).

See the [Model policy: Responding to complex behaviour](#) at the end of this guide.

Using the DESC technique

The DESC technique is a practical communication tool that can help public organizations respond to complex behaviour in a respectful, clear, and constructive way.¹⁰ It can be used during conversations or in written correspondence to address behaviours that are affecting service delivery.

How to use the DESC technique

- **Describe** the behaviour using objective language and appropriate detail. Specify the issue or the number of times a behaviour has occurred, without judgment.
- **Express** or explain the impact the behaviour is having on service delivery. Use “I” statements where appropriate and focus on the effects of the behaviour rather than the person.
- **Specify** or suggest how the behaviour could change. Make a specific and concrete request of what you would like the person to do.
- State the **consequences**, beginning with the positive outcome if the behaviour changes, followed by the consequences if it does not. Offer the person a choice about what they would like to do.

Here is an example of each step of the DESC technique:

Describe: “I have received 40 emails from you this week that did not contain any new information. These emails contain many attachments, and the attachments are not related to the program you have applied for.”

Express: “It is difficult for me to work on your concern because I must read and store each email and attachment you send. When you send large volumes of correspondence that I did not ask for, I am not able to make progress on your file.”

Specify: “I understand you feel that this information is important. However, I do not require it at this time. Please only send the information I request. If I need additional information, I will let you know.”

Consequences: “If you continue to send large volumes of emails, it will take longer for us to assess your application.”

¹⁰ Sharon Anthony Bower and Gordon H. Bower, *Asserting Yourself: A Practical Guide for Positive Change* (Balance, 2004), 87-95.

Service restrictions

There may be times when service restrictions are required to manage an individual's complex behaviour. A decision to restrict a person's access to public services should be considered a last resort and viewed as the exception rather than the rule. Wherever possible, public organizations should first consider alternative approaches that support respectful engagement while allowing services to continue.

How to select a restriction

Service restrictions should be proportionate to the behaviour being addressed and tailored to the individual's circumstances. Depending on the situation, an organization may choose to restrict:

- **who** the person may contact within the organization (e.g., limiting contact to a particular staff member such as a supervisor, manager, or someone who is familiar with the person or situation)
- **what** subject matter the organization will respond to (e.g., declining to revisit issues that have already been adequately addressed but the person refuses to accept the response)
- **when** the person may contact the organization (e.g., restricting them to contact the organization at a certain time of day or on specific days)
- **where** the person may interact with staff face-to-face, particularly if the person has demonstrated extremely aggressive or confrontational behaviour (e.g., by appointment with a manager rather than at a public service counter)
- **how** the person may continue to receive services or communicate with the organization (e.g., restricting them to written correspondence)

When implementing a service restriction, begin with the least restrictive option and only increase restrictions if necessary. This demonstrates that the person's actions will not be tolerated, but gives them an opportunity to modify their behaviour before being subject to further limitations.

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for a support person, advocate, friend, or family member to communicate with the organization on the person's behalf. If this approach is used, organizations should have a clear process in place and obtain the person's consent.

Proportionate and equitable service restrictions

Any restriction should be proportionate to the behaviour being addressed. For example, persistent behaviour that creates workload challenges should be handled differently than behaviour that can intimidate others.

Organizations should also consider the impact a service restriction may have on the person. For example, restrictions in a health care setting are likely to have a greater impact than restrictions related to recreational or leisure services.

Service restrictions should also take into account the person's circumstances, including their ability to understand and interact with the organization, literacy skills, access to different methods of communication, and whether they have support from an advocate or representative. For example, if a person does not have regular access to the internet, restricting them to communicate only by email is likely not appropriate.



How to impose service restrictions

When imposing a service restriction, organizations should:

- Provide notice to the person and clearly explain what the restriction means for them.
- Provide details such as dates and the format (i.e., written or verbal) of any earlier warnings issued about their conduct. In most cases, it is good practice to provide a warning before imposing a service restriction because this provides individuals with the opportunity to change their behaviour.
- Explain the reasons why the behaviour has led to a service restriction, with as much detail as possible.
- Clearly explain what is required of the person for the restriction to be removed or when the organization will review the restriction.

If a restriction must be renewed or escalated, the organization should provide a new notice that explains the information above for the new or modified restriction.

Reviewing service restrictions

Public organizations should commit to reviewing a person's service restrictions at regular intervals. The timing of the review will depend on the nature of the behaviour and the public services involved.

Documenting service restrictions

It is important for organizations to document the behaviour that led to the restriction, the restriction that was put in place, and the reasons for the decision. Clear documentation helps maintain institutional knowledge and demonstrates that a fair decision-making process was followed.

Supporting staff

Respectful engagement depends on supporting both the people accessing services and the staff who deliver them. Public servants should never be expected to tolerate harassing, violent, or unsafe behaviour.

How public organizations can support respectful engagement

- Maintain current and clear policies and procedures that address complex behaviour and demonstrate a commitment to respectful service delivery.
- Provide staff with training in communication techniques and skills such as active listening, trauma-informed practice, de-escalation, and cultural safety.

How public organizations can support staff who respond to complex behaviour

- Provide opportunities for staff to debrief or take time following a difficult interaction.
- Document difficult or challenging interactions.
- Encourage and support staff to develop healthy strategies for building resilience.
- Ensure staff know about and have access to available workplace-sponsored employee supports or counselling.
- Ensure managers and staff are trained in diversity, equity, and inclusion, such as on topics of accessibility and cultural safety, etc.

Employers also have responsibilities under WorkSafeBC legislation, policies, and standards to provide a safe workplace for their employees.

Additional considerations

Under the BC Human Rights Code,¹¹ public organizations have a legal duty to accommodate the Code-related needs of people accessing their services. This includes ensuring their processes are built or adapted to meet the needs of people living with mental conditions or illnesses.¹²

11 Human Rights Code, R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 210.

12 British Columbia, Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, [Responsibilities under the Code as a service provider](#).

Conclusion

Respectful engagement is an important part of fair and effective public service delivery. It helps build trust, supports positive relationships, and contributes to better outcomes for both public organizations and the people they serve.

The approaches outlined in this guide are intended to help public organizations communicate clearly, respond respectfully, and navigate challenging interactions in a fair and consistent manner. While there will be times when complex behaviour requires additional strategies or service restrictions, these situations should remain the exception rather than the rule.

By approaching every interaction with fairness, respect, and empathy, public organizations can foster stronger relationships with the people they serve while supporting positive outcomes for everyone involved.

Model policy:

Responding to complex behaviour

This model policy is intended to help public organizations develop their own policies for responding to complex behaviour. It provides suggested policy language but is not intended to be comprehensive.

Organizations should adapt this model policy to reflect their own services and approach to respectful engagement. It is important to ensure that the approach, or policy, is publicly accessible. Organizations should also ensure their policy meets applicable legal and other requirements, including WorkSafeBC requirements and the BC Human Rights Code.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish fair, effective, equitable, and transparent procedures for <Name of Agency> to respond to complex behaviour demonstrated by individuals in a way that is fair, effective, equitable, and transparent to staff and those accessing our services.

Definitions

Respectful engagement – state how your organization defines “respectful engagement.” See example below.

- Respectful engagement is the way in which our organization engages with and works with those who access our services.
- **Include a description here of what respectful engagement may mean in practice for your organization** (e.g., *responding to questions and concerns promptly, demonstrating empathy, being transparent, etc.*)
- **List the types of behaviours here that are expected of individuals who are engaging with your organization and where this information is publicly accessible** (e.g., on the organization's website)

Complex behaviour – state how your organization defines “complex behaviour” and distinguish it from other types of behaviour. See example below.

- Complex behaviour is any conduct by a service user that is inconsistent with the expectations set out in service standards and that creates challenges, such as health, safety, resource, or equity issues, in providing fair service to that person or others.
- Challenging behaviours are those that may make employees uncomfortable and are more difficult and time consuming to respond to but do not meet the definition of complex behaviour.
- Unsafe behaviour is any conduct by an individual that creates a risk of, or actual, physical or psychological harm to an employee, including threats, violence, and discriminatory, harassing, or abusive conduct, as perceived by the employee.

While it is important to define unsafe and challenging behaviours in a policy that addresses complex behaviour, we suggest ensuring that your organization has separate and specific policies and procedures for responding to unsafe behaviours and general safety issues.

Guiding principles

<Name of Agency> is committed to respectful engagement when providing services to the public. We value interactions with the public and the well-being of individuals who use our services and our staff. Our expectations for the respectful engagement between the public and our staff are guided by the following principles:

- **Inclusive** – We recognize that individuals have different needs, and each person has their own unique history that they bring to interactions with our organization. We commit to being an organization that is **trauma-informed** and **culturally safe**.
- **Fair** – We are committed to administrative fairness and will approach respectful engagement in a manner that is impartial, fair, equitable, and transparent.
- **Collaborative** – We are committed to working with individuals to address complex behaviour. If complex behaviour concerns arise, our staff will follow the least disruptive and most collaborative process possible.
- **Mutual respect** – We are committed to treating people with dignity and respect. We expect that staff and those engaging with our organization will respect each other and act in good faith at all times.
- **Accessible** – We are committed to being an organization that is accessible in all ways and to identifying and addressing individual, systemic, and structural barriers that may negatively affect an individual’s ability to access and communicate with our organization.

Confidentiality

All staff at <Name of Agency> are required to maintain confidentiality and protect the privacy of individuals in accordance with BC's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. We will only collect and disclose information to those staff who are involved in addressing complex behaviour demonstrated by individuals.

Addressing complex behaviour

In situations where respectful engagement is not possible and complex behaviour is demonstrated, <Managers/Quality Assurance Staff> can decide to implement service restrictions to limit the interactions an individual may have with <Name of Agency> and <Frontline Staff/Managers/Quality Assurance Staff> while also <engaging with/receiving service/etc>.

In instances where complex behaviour arises and it creates health, safety, resource, or equity issues for <Frontline Staff/Managers/Quality Assurance Staff> at <Name of Agency>, we will take steps to address the behaviour and may limit access to our services as necessary.

The following steps can be taken when addressing complex behaviour and to restrict access to <service>:

Stage 1: Acknowledging and documenting complex behaviour

<Frontline Staff/Managers/Quality Assurance Staff> at <Name of Agency> will acknowledge and document all instances of complex behaviour. The <Frontline Staff/Managers/Quality Assurance Staff> will attempt to explain and resolve an instance of complex behaviour when it occurs by informing individuals who demonstrate complex behaviour of <Name of Agency>'s expectations for respectful engagement. Individuals will be notified that there may be a service restriction implemented if their complex behaviour does not cease.

<Frontline Staff/Managers/Quality Assurance Staff> will promptly inform their supervisor of significant or unresolved instances of complex behaviour.

Stage 2: Determining a service restriction is required

<Managers/Quality Assurance Staff> may determine that a service restriction is necessary due to the ongoing nature of the complex behaviour, the significance of the complex behaviour, or the impact the complex behaviour is having on <Frontline Staff> and/or <Name of Agency>. When considering whether to impose a service restriction, <Managers/Quality Assurance Staff> will also consider the unique circumstances and needs of the individual who demonstrates complex behaviour with <Name of Agency>.

Stage 3: Implementing service restrictions

The <Managers/Quality Assurance Staff> commit to only imposing a service restriction and associated timeframe that is fair, equitable, and proportionate to the complex behaviour demonstrated.

The following are restrictions that may be used to restrict access to <Name of Agency> and address an individual's complex behaviour:

- Who a person may contact within <Name of Agency>
- What type of request/enquiry/complaint the <Name of Agency> will respond to
- When a person may contact the <Name of Agency>
- Where a person can interact with the <Name of Agency>'s staff
- How a person can continue to receive services from or contact <Name of Agency>

When issuing a service restriction, the person must be notified (ideally in writing and verbally) of the following:

- The reason(s) for the restriction, including a description of the complex behaviour demonstrated and its impact
- Details of any earlier warnings issued about their complex behaviour
- How long (e.g., days/weeks/months) the restriction is in place for
- How the person can request a review of the restriction
- What is required for the restriction to be lifted

Stage 4: Reviewing and removing service restrictions

When the time parameters for the imposed service restriction have lapsed, the <Managers/Quality Assurance Staff> will remove the restriction and inform the individual in writing. <Name of Agency>'s expectations/requirements for respectful engagement when receiving <services> will be explained again to the individual. In circumstances where an individual continues to demonstrate complex behaviour, <Managers/Quality Assurance Staff> will address the behaviour at Stage 1 (see above).

If an individual requests that the service restriction they received be reviewed, this review will be undertaken by <Leadership> within <number of days/weeks>. The <Leadership> completing the review will impartially examine all <Name of Agency>'s documentation with respect to the individual's complex behaviour and provide the individual with an opportunity to be heard. Following this, they will decide and communicate to the individual:

- Whether and why the service restriction will remain in place
- If the type of restriction is appropriate and explain the reason for this
- If the length of the restriction should be varied and explain the reason why/why not

Addressing unsafe behaviour

When complex behaviour escalates into behaviour that is unsafe, such as violence, threats, or conduct that is discriminatory, harassing, or abusive, *<Name of Agency>* addresses such unsafe behaviour via *<XX Policy>*.

Complaints

Complaints or concerns raised by individuals about the *<services received/requested>* or staff conduct can be addressed through the *<XX Policy>*.

Appeal and Review Options

If an individual has complained or raised concerns via *<XX Policy>* and continues to feel as though they were treated unfairly by *<Name of Agency>*'s decision to impose service restrictions, they may raise their concerns with the Office of the Ombudsperson. The Ombudsperson is an independent Officer of the B.C. Legislature who impartially investigates complaints from the public to ensure people are treated fairly in the delivery of government services.

Supporting staff

<Name of Agency> is committed to supporting staff in their work, including when handling or being the recipient of complex behaviour. After an incident involving complex behaviour, staff can access support through:

<List all supports available to staff>

Examples of supports available to staff:

- Their supervisor, manager, etc.
- Employee family assistance program



OMBUDSPERSON

BRITISH COLUMBIA