



PACIFICA HOUSING

*Affordable homes. Better lives.*

# PACIFICA HOUSING VALUES

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**Handbook**

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# PACIFICA HOUSING VALUES

Having clear, shared values and guiding principles gives us direction for our daily work and helps us work better together, so we ultimately also feel better about what we do.



## 01. Authenticity

Finding congruence inside and outside Pacifica through open and honest speech and action.



## 02. Leadership

Courageously creating opportunities through collaboration where there were none before.



## 03. Respect

Showing that everyone has value by treating people with dignity, compassion, and unconditional kindness.



## 04. Social Justice

Challenging an unjust status quo so that everyone can enjoy fair and equitable access to their economic, political, and social rights.

# AUTHENTICITY



Finding congruence inside and outside Pacifica through open and honest speech and action.

## Guiding Principles

- Gather and share relevant facts to support the difficult conversations that build mutual trust. We require trust to achieve consensus and honour our vision.
- Be consistent and transparent in your words and actions regardless of the stakeholder. Do not change the details of a story or the rationale of decisions for convenience, or to suit a specific situation.
- Show up as a true expression of yourself by being genuine and treat everyone with unconditional positive regard.
- Explore your options from multiple viewpoints, engaging in constructive dialogue, before choosing a path forward. The right thing to do is often not 'black or white' or easy, so look for creative solutions that work best, even if they're challenging.

# EMERGENCY RESPONSE WORKSHOP

In April 2021, staff from various departments came together in a workshop to share lessons learned in their work with community emergency housing response projects. The workshop gave staff a safe space to provide open and honest feedback about the immense challenges they faced, along with great successes, both in the opening of the Nikao project in Nanaimo and the COVID-19 motel outreach project in Victoria. Participants included frontline staff and managers from both projects.

**"It took courage and vulnerability for staff to stay true to how they felt."**

These initiatives involved the urgent relocation of many people from encampments to transitional sites that were unprepared to handle the high needs of the clientele. The pressure and uncertainty involved in providing emergency support took a heavy toll on all of those involved.

Sharing these stories and experiences was often difficult. It took courage and vulnerability for staff to stay true to how they felt and talk about what worked and what didn't, all while respecting the opinions of others. By the end of the workshop, participants had identified key lessons learned and a set of recommendations to guide Pacifica's planning and future decision-making around emergency responses and the types of longer-term projects the organization takes on.

We learned that to operate supportive housing effectively, we must have purpose-built buildings, non-communal washrooms, good relationships with the broader community, and undertake broader community engagement. Bold statements were made, which included the recognition that adequate resources must be accessible because harm reduction without adequate resources equals harm acceptance.

Recommendations included: integrating lessons learned when assessing opportunities, ensuring alignment with our mission so that true housing security

outcomes remain the ultimate goal, saying no to contracts that pose unnecessary risk, and beginning projects by setting a foundation of mutual respect with stakeholders.

Staff showed authenticity by taking a hard look at what our future decisions should look like if we are to pursue our mission and achieve our vision—even if it meant challenging past approaches, having difficult conversations with funders, and proposing recommendations that may offer short-term pain in order to truly advocate for achieving long-term housing security.



# LEADERSHIP



Courageously creating opportunities through collaboration where there were none before.

## Guiding Principles

- Be a leader in your role. Leadership is a shared responsibility. Sometimes we step up and take the lead, and sometimes we defer.
- Be willing to step up to help and support each other and our community within the framework of our vision, mission, and values.
- Be willing to step outside of your own comfort zone. Seek advice and be willing to consider and accept different perspectives and experiences.
- Encourage and respect innovative, effective solutions to multifaceted issues by...
  - giving adequate time and information for collaborators to make thoughtful contributions and decisions;
  - practicing active listening, engagement, curiosity, and respectful communication;
  - leveraging the wealth of knowledge, experience, and expertise present inside and outside Pacifica; and,
  - providing a safe space for creativity to guide the search for solutions.

## Leadership in Action

# STREETS TO HOMES

Pacifica Housing demonstrates leadership in the community by pioneering innovative new approaches to affordable housing and delivery models for supportive services, all while creating opportunities for collaboration with community partners.

Pacifica has been at the forefront of the Greater Victoria Streets to Homes Program (S2H) for more than ten years. The program is a community collaboration that moves adults with a history of homelessness directly into private-market housing while providing customized support.

Through the S2H and Landlord Liaison programs, Pacifica is effectively able to bolster the capacity of other community service agencies to house their clients by providing access to private-market rental opportunities. We then contribute to their success by sharing our expertise and experience in navigating private-market landlord relationships. It also provides a model that demonstrates how we can advance independence of individuals through access to equitable housing and the supportive services needed for clients to thrive in the community.

"We try to provide a Housing First example that others can mirror... and demonstrate how it can be truly successful," says Darren, Senior Manager of Supportive Services.

**"We provide a Housing First example that others can mirror."**



## Leadership in Action

# RENT SUPPLEMENT REVIEW

Last year, Pacifica began restructuring its rent supplement program to promote long-term sustainability. The first step was to perform a review of all existing rent supplements, a challenging and complex process that involved supportive services and finance departments, as well as all private-market landlord partners.

Luckily, Accounting Coordinator, Emily, stepped up to smooth the way for supportive services with her accounting expertise and valuable coordination skills. Going far beyond the realm of her regular responsibilities, she was a key participant in a task force to drive the project forward and enable better communication across departments.

"I wanted to create a bridge between finance and support services so that

we can continue offering the important programs that we are known for in the community," says Emily.

Emily played an essential role by becoming the key point of contact for the project, creating all templates and forms, and establishing connections with landlords.

She created the opportunity to bypass some of the information barriers through collaboration and knowledge sharing. Her leadership provided the supportive services managers the support they needed to step outside of their own comfort zones and trust the importance of the finance department's unique perspective, while respecting the nuances of supportive services.

**"I wanted to create a bridge between finance and support services so that we can continue offering the important programs that we are known for in the community."**



# MOTEL OUTREACH

In spring 2020, the Pacifica outreach team supported the community with the emergency relocation of more than 200 people living in encampments to local motels.

Darren, who had recently stepped into his role as Manager of Outreach Services, was under serious pressure. He was leading Pacifica's crisis response effort with a critical shortage of staffing in the outreach department, while recruitment was taking place.

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much more."**

HR Manager, Rainbow, volunteered to perform staff check-ins to ensure the safety of outreach workers at the motels. On her own time, she called each outreach worker at the beginning and end of their shifts to verify that they had arrived and left work safely. These wellness checks and debriefs are essential to mental and physical wellbeing of staff involved in frontline work.

Rainbow also provided essential support to Darren and Team Lead, Brendan, in the creation of policies, staffing model and training, as well as scheduling and coordinating operations. "Rainbow's assistance was invaluable to me, she became my go-to on the project," says Darren.

Rainbow's willingness to go above and beyond her role to help the team, allowed them to achieve their goals. "Alone we wouldn't have succeeded in the project. With teamwork and collaboration, we could do so much more," Rainbow says.

# RESPECT



Showing that everyone has value by treating people with dignity, compassion, and unconditional kindness.

## Guiding Principles

- Treat everyone with respect, regardless of whether individuals are staff, tenants, clients, or other stakeholders. We do not distinguish between positions in our organization.
- Support individual decision making that is strength-based, person-centered, and goal-directed by recognizing that the individual is the expert in their own life, and believing that when provided with the necessary resources they are capable of building the best situation for their life.
- Recognize that personal and professional boundaries are the cornerstone for respectful relationships.
- Be present and open in the moment, without judgement, by focusing on the individuals you are with at the time, the topic at hand, and the message that is being conveyed.
- Get to know our community of staff, tenants, and clients well, so that you have good rapport and empathy with them and can help deal with situations as they arise in real time.

# SUPPORTIVE HOUSING MAINTENANCE

Nanaimo Maintenance Team Lead, Dennis, always goes above and beyond to build solid, trust-based relationships with Pacifica tenants. He is particularly successful in assisting Supportive Housing residents, who often struggle to keep their units in good condition.

In one instance, Dennis worked with a resident of Uplands Walk who had been experiencing psychosis and significantly damaged his unit, which resulted in a potential eviction. The wiring was stripped out, the light fixtures had been destroyed, and the walls were full of holes.

Together they patched and repainted, creating a place where the resident could feel at home and a sense of ownership for his space.

“Dennis is consistently advocating for the folks we serve with their dignity and rights in the forefront of his approach,” says Maggie, Supportive Housing Manager.

By not approaching situations from a place of judgement and simply meeting tenants where they're at, Dennis manages to convey the respect he has for residents and their belongings.

**"Dennis is consistently advocating for the folks we serve with their dignity and rights in the forefront of his approach."**

## Respect in Action

# NIKAO OVERDOSE RESPONSE

Sharon, Pacifica's Director of Supportive Services, was visiting Nikao when two serious overdoses occurred simultaneously. She was touched by the level of care and respect that staff were able to provide, all while expertly responding to an emergency. "It was a humbling and profound experience," Sharon says.

Four staff members supported the individuals and liaised with the paramedics. They carefully explained what was happening at every step of the way, making certain to honour the right of choice of the individuals and allowing them to give permission for medical treatment.

Throughout the process, staff frequently reached out to touch the hands or shoulders of the individuals, saying "I'm here." "They were clearly operating from a care-based place of compassion and respect," she says.

Staff demonstrated respect not only by observing basic rights, but clearly showing these individuals that they were the experts in their own lives and affording them the dignity of choice.



**"They were clearly operating from a care-based place of compassion and respect."**

# SOCIAL JUSTICE



Challenging an unjust status quo so that everyone can enjoy fair and equitable access to their economic, political, and social rights.

## Guiding Principles

- Help individuals find their voice. Walk beside them by creating meaningful opportunities for them to access services and to share their lived and living experience so you can find the best solutions for their circumstances.
- Take the time each day to understand barriers individuals face, and advocate for change by highlighting them and indicating where and how improvements can be made.
- Empower those you serve to become a part of the community by providing meaningful connections to resources.
- Challenge assumptions and processes that serve as barriers to equal access to rights.
- Name entrenched power dynamics by recognizing different levels of privilege. Seek ways to respectfully mitigate those dynamics, while acknowledging the responsibilities that come with our own privilege.

# FOOD: THE GREAT EQUALIZER

"Food is the great equalizer. It really is a basic necessity for everyone. Without food we can't do anything," says Sharon, Director of Supportive Services.

Access to food is a human right and a social determinant of health. Unfortunately, it is not available equally to all, in fact food insecurity is a barrier commonly faced by many Pacifica residents and outreach clients.

The life of a supportive housing resident was changed when he moved from a building with no food programming to Nikao, which serves two full meals a day. The resident had never had the chance to develop cooking skills and there was no room for meals in his tight budget. He was obviously underweight; his skin was grey and pale and he was frequently confused.

When he moved to Nikao and began to eat regularly, his physical and cognitive health improved immensely.

**"Food is the great equalizer. It really is a basic necessity for everyone. Without food, we can't do anything."**

"He became more alert and aware of his surroundings. Even his skin drastically changed colour. He actually had pink in his cheeks," says Kayla, Senior Manager of Supportive Services.

In situations like this Pacifica is able to break down barriers to health and wellness by providing fair and equitable access to services that meet the basic needs and rights of our residents, enabling them to thrive in the community.