



Standards & Beliefs

Principles on which the Standards are based:

The concept of care and treatment is based on certain beliefs and principles governing the provision of services to children, youth, adults and their families. It is these beliefs and principles that then influence the services we provide and the manner in which we relate to each other as members of an association and within the professional community. These beliefs and principles provide the foundation for the development of OARTY's Standards of Care.

We Believe:

- 1. That every activity of the agency must be therapeutic, from counseling to food service, from group living to maintenance.**

At its best, the provision of treatment services incorporates a holistic blend of all programs and activities in the course of daily care. It is, then, a comprehensive approach to addressing a client's diverse needs. Toward that end, we make the following commitments:

- a. To make every contact an opportunity for positive influence and growth.
- b. To place the needs of the people we serve at the forefront of everything we do.
- c. To actively involve clients in all aspects of their care.
- d. To provide services which are appropriate for the client and family.

BEST PRACTICE: Engage in annual reviews ensuring that your agency's service activities are consistent with service descriptions, policies and procedures, and that current service delivery is adequately meeting the needs of clients and reflects OARTY standards. For example, your agency could ensure that there is a systematic process for evaluating client satisfaction related to providing an array of services and supports to increase positive, adaptive behaviour.

- 2. That those who provide direct care are our most precious resource. The manner in which we treat all current, prospective and past care providers reflects the strength of our belief in a person's value.**

The quality of our programs can only be as good as the employees, staff and care providers who work directly with our clients. The value we place on each person and the need to treat each person with respect and dignity extends to our staff, employees, care providers as well as our clients. All human resources practices, from recruitment, to staff development and training should reflect a desire to support care providers in the best way possible, so that they in turn may serve the needs of the children, youth and adults and families in our care. A well-trained staff team committed to ongoing learning results in the continuous improvement of our services. Towards that end we make the following commitments:

- a. To create a positive work atmosphere aimed at meeting employee needs.
- b. To treat all care providers as professional colleagues and as integral members of the treatment team.
- c. To plan staffing with the objective of providing services which meet the highest therapeutic standards.

- d. To provide effective programs for staff orientation, training and professional development.
- e. To provide staff with ongoing support, guidance and supervision that balances the needs of the person with the tasks to be performed.
- f. To include staff input when developing programs and policies.

BEST PRACTICE: Regularly held team meeting, individual supervision meetings and staff training can be an effective forum to provide guidance and support, and can offer an opportunity for recognition and acceptance.

3. That healthy, honest and open communication among all persons at all levels is essential to the quality of the service we provide personnel and clientele.

Communication is key to any positive healthy and respectful relationship. We value an atmosphere that is receptive to the concerns and opinion of others. Toward that end we make the following commitments:

- a. To ensure that formal lines of authority, accountability, communication and decision making are clear.
- b. To maintain professional standards of communication and confidentiality.
- c. To welcome all persons to share their thoughts, feelings and beliefs regardless of position.
- d. To provide a process whereby relevant and necessary information is accessible to care providers, children, youth, adults and their families.

BEST PRACTICE: The use of recording such as daily logs, assessment reports and plan of care report, combined with regular team meetings, "house" meetings and staff supervision will support effective communication, and can model integrity and respect between client and care provider.

4. That spirituality, as each of us understands it, helps us become whole and gives us the power and the hope to change our lives for the better.

We recognize that our service addresses the whole person and focuses on becoming healthy and balanced individuals. OARTY and its members recognize that the spiritual dimension is integral to human life and helps us become whole. Towards that end we make the following commitments:

- a. To use respectful and affirming language.
- b. To be open and respectful.
- c. To treat all people as unique individuals.
- d. To promote religious and cultural understanding and acceptance among our clients and staff.
- e. To provide programs that are sensitive to the diverse physical, emotional, religious and cultural needs of those we serve.

BEST PRACTICE: Foster parents might provide opportunities for spiritual growth and development through meaningful reflection. For example, house parents could model an appreciation for:

- *The food we are provided with*
- *The hope we have and in which we have faith*
- *The friendly smile or work of encouragement we receive*

5. That all resources, financial, human, property, etc. available to us are at the service of our agencies to enrich the quality of care of the children, youth, adults and their families.

OARTY and its members recognize the responsibility entrusted to us, that while practicing a prudent distribution of resources, we will not compromise the quality of care. Towards that end we make the following commitments:

- a. To ensure the needs of our clients guide our budget process.
- b. To involve staff at all levels within the agencies, in the budget process as is appropriate.
- c. To pursue and practice justice in providing fair and competitive wages and benefits to staff.
- d. To prudently invest in resources for long-term fulfillment of best practices.
- e. To involve staff in the assessment of how resources are utilized.
- f. To make the retention and training of staff a top priority.

BEST PRACTICE: In response to a youth who may complain about her allowance, the care provider could explain that as the agency pays for all of the youth's basic needs, including food, clothing, recreation costs, etc, the allowance amount is appropriate.

Care providers might utilize human resources by enlisting the help of additional staff if warranted by extenuating circumstances.

6. That any environment to which we expose our children, youth, adults and their families will reflect generous and nurturing care as it is essential to their growth, safety and security.

Each factor in the environment has an important effect on the individual. The environment should be shaped to enhance the individual's personal qualities, self-esteem and happiness. Towards that end we make the following commitments:

- a. To reflect the quality of care in all aspects of our physical residence and all other environments to which we expose our children.
- b. To respect the place where our clients reside as their home and create a safe, accepting, caring, guiding and nurturing environment.
- c. To accept diversity, in culture, physical and emotional development, and family history, but not limiting our acceptance to those.
- d. To encourage clients and caregivers to take responsibility and ownership for their shared environment.
- e. To keep our facilities and furnishings clean and in a good repair and create a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere.

BEST PRACTICE: Ensure your agency's physical surroundings are appropriate to the treatment provided. The agency's grounds, buildings, furnishings and equipment should ensure a safe and healthy environment and repairs should be completed in a timely manner. Where appropriate, clients can be involved in developing and decorating shared or personal space.

7. That in an atmosphere of respect and integrity, we can support each other, while making every effort to promote and maintain the highest ethical standards of this profession.

OARTY members share a common mission. We will strive for the provisions of the highest standards in a spirit of mutual concern and support. Towards that end we make the following commitments:

- a. To collaborate in our efforts to advocate for quality services and adequate resources on behalf of those we serve.
- b. To develop a network for sharing information, concerns, solutions and resources.
- c. To support each member's endeavors to uphold and maintain the standards of our Association.
- d. To be professional in our representation and promotion of OARTY.

BEST PRACTICE: Become active in Association activities, i.e., committees, regional meetings, general membership meetings, annual conference, etc. In addition, care providers should have access to training that would enhance client care.

8. That we are partners with our community.

An effective community based program establishes supportive working relationships in order to enrich the lives of those we serve. This includes our relationship with our local schools, hospitals, recreation centers, neighbours and any other community organization whose services impact our clients. It is equally important that we are contributing members of our own communities by being supportive, accountable, and aware of its needs and concerns. Toward that end we make the following commitments:

- a. To be familiar with neighbourhood organizations and other relevant community resources.
- b. To enhance our treatment and support services by integrating available and appropriate community resources.
- c. To maintain complimentary and collaborative relationships with our communities.
- d. To interpret our programs and services to the community and represent OARTY's mission in a professional, and positive manner.
- e. To be responsive to community concerns.

BEST PRACTICE: A staff member of your agency could be assigned to the role of community liaison/outreach. This staff person might source volunteer/part time work needs within your community. In addition, this staff person might research what your community has to offer your particular clients and develop contacts with those services, agencies, etc. As well, this staff person might organize interactive community activities, such as car washes, bake sales, charity events, etc.