



Rooted in Practice: Anti-Oppressive Discussion Guide

A companion resource for **Administrative and Operational Staff** to accompany the *Rooted in Practice: Reimagining Healing through Anti-Oppression and Embodied Practice Guidebook*



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How to Use This Discussion Guide

This discussion guide is a companion resource to *Rooted in Practice: Reimagining Healing through Anti-Oppression and Embodied Practice*. The Guidebook explores how sexual and gender-based violence is connected to broader systems of oppression, power, and control, and what it can mean to bring anti-oppressive practice into service delivery, organizational culture, advocacy, relationship-building, and systems change.

This guide is intended for administrative and operational staff whose work may not involve direct service delivery, but who play an important role in shaping how an organization functions. This may include people working in administration, finance, human resources, information technology, communications, knowledge mobilization, evaluation, data, facilities, intake coordination, scheduling, reception, office management, or other internal support roles.

Anti-oppressive practice is often discussed in relation to front-line work with survivors. However, an organization's ability to provide accessible, culturally safe, and responsive services is also shaped by the systems and processes that are often behind the scenes. A survivor's experience seeking support can be affected by many organizational practices, including how appointments are scheduled, how forms are designed, how information is collected, how privacy is protected, how invoices or reimbursements are processed, how interpretation is resourced, how hiring decisions are made, how reports are written, or how technology systems are set up.

For this reason, anti-oppression is not only a frontline practice or a leadership responsibility. It is also an operational responsibility. Administrative and operational staff help create the conditions that make anti-oppressive practice possible.

This guide uses scenarios to explore how oppression can be reproduced through everyday systems, procedures, communication practices, documentation

requirements, data systems, financial processes, and internal workflows. It also invites participants to consider what they shift within their own roles and areas of responsibility.

The purpose of this discussion guide is to support reflection, conversation, and practical action. Many operational decisions are shaped by limited resources, funder requirements, software constraints, legal obligations, organizational policies, and long-standing ways of working. Anti-oppressive practice does not mean being able to fix everything at once. It means asking better questions, noticing who may be affected by current processes, reducing harm where possible, and identifying what needs to change at the individual, team, organizational, or systems level.

Addressing anti-oppression collectively

In anti-gender-based violence work, there is often an understandable focus on direct support to survivors. Frontline workers may be the most visible part of an organization's response, but they are not the only people shaping survivors' experiences. Administrative and operational systems can either support anti-oppressive practice or make it harder to carry out.

This guide supports a shift from thinking about anti-oppression as something that happens only in direct interactions with clients to understanding it as something that is embedded across the whole organization. It invites administrative and operational staff to reflect on the power they hold within systems, processes, tools, and everyday decisions, and to consider how those areas of work can better align with anti-oppressive commitments.

Who this guide is intended for

This discussion guide is publicly accessible and is intended for administrative, operational, and organizational staff working in the anti-violence and non-profit sectors.

It may be useful for people working in roles such as:

- Administration and office coordination
- Reception, scheduling, and intake coordination
- Finance, accounting, and payroll
- Human resources and recruitment
- Information technology and database management
- Communications and knowledge mobilization
- Evaluation, research, data, and knowledge translation
- Facilities, operations, and organizational logistics
- Program support or internal coordination roles

This guide can be used in formal or informal learning spaces, including staff meetings, operational team meetings, communities of practice, staff training, reflective practice sessions, internal planning meetings, or cross-functional team discussions.

Facilitators are encouraged to adapt the guide to their context while maintaining the spirit of the resource. This may include selecting only the scenarios most relevant to the group, adjusting the pacing, adding local examples, or pairing the discussion with organizational policies, procedures, forms, data systems, communications materials, or workflows.

Creating a Reflective Discussion Space

Before using this guide, participants are encouraged to review **Section III: Anti-Oppression, specifically “What is anti-oppressive practice?”**, and **Section IV: Next Steps, specifically “How can you implement anti-oppressive practice?”**, of the Guidebook. These sections offer important grounding for thinking about what anti-oppressive practice can look like.

The Guidebook addresses topics such as sexual and gender-based violence, oppression, trauma, racism, colonialism, state violence, patriarchy, cisheterosexism, and other forms of harm. Discussions may bring up discomfort, grief, defensiveness, uncertainty, or strong emotions. Before beginning, facilitators are encouraged to create a clear and supportive environment and establish shared expectations for discussion.

This can include starting by naming the purpose of the conversation and reminding participants that the goal is not to reach perfect agreement, but to engage honestly, reflectively, and respectfully. It may also be helpful to acknowledge that administrative and operational staff may not always have decision-making authority over the systems they work within. Part of the discussion may involve naming what is within participants’ control, what requires leadership support, what requires resources, and what may need to be raised at an organizational level.

Facilitators may wish to establish a few shared agreements with the group, such as listening with care, speaking from one’s own experience, making space for different levels of familiarity with anti-oppressive language and concepts, noticing defensiveness, avoiding debate about people’s lived experiences, and staying open to being challenged.

Facilitators can also support participation by offering multiple ways to engage.

Participants may be invited to reflect quietly before speaking, write down thoughts before sharing, discuss in pairs or small groups, or pass on a question if they need more time. This can help avoid putting people on the spot, especially when the discussion touches on identity, power, harm, or personal experience.

At the same time, creating a supportive space does not mean avoiding discomfort. Anti-oppressive learning often involves noticing assumptions, sitting with tension, and being willing to examine how harm can be reproduced even when intentions are good. Facilitators can help hold this balance by acknowledging that discomfort may arise, while bringing the group back to reflection, accountability, and practice.

Facilitator Note

Shared agreements might include:

- Speak from your own experience rather than speaking on behalf of a whole community.
- Listen to understand, not to prepare a response.
- Make space for different levels of familiarity with anti-oppressive language and concepts.
- Notice defensiveness, urgency, or the desire to “move on” when discomfort arises.
- Do not debate or minimize people’s lived experiences.
- Use de-identified examples when discussing clients, colleagues, organizations, or community members.
- Expect that not every question will be resolved today; the goal is reflection, learning, and accountability.

A grounding or check-in question could be as simple as:

- What is one word that describes how you are arriving today?
- What is one hope you have for this conversation, and one thing you may need in order to participate thoughtfully?

Key Concepts from the Guidebook

The following concepts are included to support shared grounding before participants move into the scenarios. These are not intended to replace the fuller discussion in the Guidebook.

What is Oppression?

Oppression refers to systemic patterns of mistreatment and unequal power that restrict people's access to safety, dignity, rights, resources, opportunities, and belonging. Oppression is not only expressed through individual prejudice or harmful behaviour. It is also embedded in policies, institutions, professional norms, service systems, cultural narratives, and everyday practices.

In anti-violence work, this means that survivors' experiences of violence and support are shaped not only by the actions of the person who harmed them, but also by broader systems such as racism, colonialism, patriarchy, cisheterosexism, ableism, classism, and state violence, which can manifest through immigration systems, policing, child welfare, housing systems, and health care.

What is Anti-oppression?

Anti-oppression is an active approach to recognizing, challenging, and transforming the systems, assumptions, practices, and power dynamics that reproduce harm. It requires more than being inclusive or respectful at the interpersonal level. It also involves examining how organizations, institutions, and broader systems may create barriers, reinforce unequal power, or define safety in ways that do not work for all survivors.

In administrative and operational practice, anti-oppression may involve asking different questions about how systems are designed, what information is collected, how privacy is protected, whose needs are anticipated, how resources are allocated, how people are represented, who can access information, and where organizational processes may

unintentionally create barriers or reproduce harm.

Other concepts from the Guidebook, including power and control, intersectionality, and structural and state violence, may also be helpful when working through the scenarios. Brief definitions of these terms are included in **Appendix A**.

How Administrative and Operational Roles Shape Anti-Oppressive Practice

Administrative and operational staff may not always interact directly with survivors, but their work shapes the conditions under which services are delivered. These roles help determine how easy or difficult it is for people to access services, how safe information is, how respectful communications feel, how equitably staff are hired and supported, and how organizational priorities are resourced.

Anti-oppressive practice can show up in many operational areas, including:

- How forms, intake tools, databases, and reporting templates are designed
- How names, pronouns, languages, identities, and accessibility needs are recorded
- How privacy, confidentiality, and consent are protected
- How appointments, interpretation, transportation, childcare, or accessibility supports are coordinated
- How job postings, hiring processes, interviews, onboarding, and promotion pathways are structured
- How invoices, reimbursements, honoraria, and compensation are processed
- How communications materials represent survivors, communities, and services
- How data is collected, interpreted, reported, and shared
- How physical and virtual spaces are designed for accessibility, safety, and dignity
- How operational decisions are communicated to staff, survivors, partners, and communities

This means that administrative and operational staff are integral to the infrastructure that enables anti-oppressive practice.

Learning from Practice Examples

The following scenarios offer examples of how anti-oppressive practice can show up in administrative and operational roles. They are not meant to be perfect examples or step-by-step instructions. Instead, they are meant to help you notice the practical choices staff made in everyday work.

As you read each scenario, think about:

- What change did staff make?
- What made the process safer, clearer, or more accessible?
- What could we try in our own roles or organization?

After each scenario, you will be invited to reflect on what was implemented and how similar changes could be explored in your own role, team, or organization.

Scenario 1: Intake Forms, Databases, and Gender Diversity

This scenario explores how administrative systems and data tools can shape dignity, recognition, privacy, and access for trans, Two-Spirit, non-binary, and gender-diverse people. It invites participants to consider how forms and databases can either affirm people's identities or force them into categories that do not reflect their lives.

Practice Example

An organization uses an intake database that was implemented several years ago. Staff have noticed that the system does not consistently support respectful and accurate recording of chosen names, pronouns, gender identity, or privacy-related information. In some cases, this has led to staff using legal names when clients have asked to be called something else, or making assumptions about gender based on referral information.

Administrative staff bring this issue to their manager and identify the specific areas where confusion occurs: intake calls, appointment schedules, printed documents, internal reports, and staff communication. The team reviews the intake workflow and develops an interim process while exploring longer-term database changes.

The team creates internal guidance for staff. Staff are instructed to ask all clients what name they would like the organization to use, what pronouns they use, and whether there are any situations where a different name must be used for legal, safety, or privacy reasons. The chosen name is entered in the most visible field available, so it appears on appointment schedules. Legal names are only used when required. Staff are also reminded not to make assumptions about gender based on voice, appearance, documentation, or referral information.

The organization also contacts the database provider to ask about adding fields for chosen name, pronouns, gender identity, and privacy-related alerts. Leadership agrees to include this issue in a broader review of forms, templates, and data collection practices. Staff are asked to document where the current system creates barriers so the organization can better understand what needs to change.

The goal is to ensure that people are addressed respectfully, that information is collected only when needed, that privacy is protected, and that the organization's systems reflect its commitments to dignity, safety, and inclusion.

Discussion Questions

- What anti-oppressive practices were implemented in this scenario?
- What barriers did the team identify in the existing system?
- What changes were made immediately, even before the database could be fully updated?
- What made this change possible?
- Where might similar issues exist in your own forms, databases, schedules, templates, or workflows?

Applying This to Your Role

- Are there systems or tools in your work that force people into categories that may not reflect their identities or experiences?
- Are there places where staff rely on informal workarounds because the official process does not meet people's needs?
- What is one small change that could reduce harm or improve dignity in the short term?
- What would need a longer-term organizational or systems change?
- Who would need to be involved to move this forward?

Implementing Anti-Oppressive Practices

Individual practice shifts: Administrative and operational staff can avoid making assumptions about names, pronouns, gender, family relationships, language, disability, or identity based on appearance, voice, documentation, or referral information. They can ask respectful questions when information is needed and notice where existing tools force people into inaccurate or harmful categories.

Organizational practice shifts: Organizations can review intake forms, databases, appointment systems, templates, and reporting tools to identify where they may be reproducing harm. They can create clear guidance for recording names, pronouns,

gender identity, language needs, accessibility needs, and privacy concerns.

Systems and sector-level shifts: This scenario points to the need for funders, software vendors, and service systems to design tools that reflect the realities of the people organizations serve. Anti-oppressive data systems should support dignity, self-identification, privacy, and meaningful service access.

Scenario 2: Finance, Reimbursements, and Participation Barriers

This scenario explores how financial processes can affect access, participation, and dignity for survivors, community advisors, peer workers, volunteers, staff, and people with lived experience. It invites participants to consider how standard reimbursement and payment practices may unintentionally exclude people with limited income, precarious employment, disability-related expenses, caregiving responsibilities, or limited access to banking.

Practice Example

An organization invites survivors and community members to participate in an advisory group. Participants are offered an honorarium and reimbursement for transportation, parking, and childcare. The organization is committed to valuing lived experience and wants to make participation accessible.

Before the group begins, program and finance staff meet to review whether the payment and reimbursement process supports meaningful participation. They identify several potential barriers: upfront costs, delayed reimbursement, complicated forms, limited payment options, privacy concerns, and the requirement to use legal names or banking information. Finance staff explain which requirements are connected to accounting rules and which are internal practices that could be changed.

The team develops a more accessible process. Participants are offered transit fare or rideshare support in advance when possible. Childcare support is arranged directly rather than reimbursed afterward. Honoraria are processed within a shorter timeline. Participants are given clear information about payment options, what information is required, why it is required, how it will be stored, and who will have access to it. Where possible, the organization offers alternatives such as e-transfer, gift cards, cheques, or direct deposit.

Staff also change how they interpret attendance. If someone misses a meeting, staff do not assume disinterest. They check whether there were barriers related to payment, transportation, caregiving, timing, safety, technology, or communication. The organization recognizes that valuing lived experience requires more than offering an honorarium. It requires designing financial and administrative processes that make participation possible, safe, and respectful.

Discussion Questions

- What anti-oppressive practices were implemented in this scenario?
- What assumptions about payment, participation, and access were questioned?
- What barriers did finance and program staff identify before the group began?
- How did the organization balance financial accountability with accessibility?
- How did staff change the way they interpreted missed attendance?
- What made this change possible?
- What similar payment, reimbursement, or participation barriers may exist in your organization?

Applying This to Your Role

- Are there processes in your work that require people to pay upfront, wait for reimbursement, complete complex forms, or disclose sensitive information?
- Who might be excluded by those processes?
- What is one change that could make participation more accessible?
- Who would need to be involved to review the process?

Implementing Anti-Oppressive Practices

Individual practice shifts: Finance and administrative staff can notice when standard processes create barriers for people with limited income, unstable housing, safety concerns, caregiving responsibilities, disabilities, or limited access to banking. They can ask whether payment timelines, forms, receipt requirements, or reimbursement processes are creating unintended exclusions.

Organizational practice shifts: Organizations can review honorarium, reimbursement, procurement, and payment processes through an access and equity lens. They can create clear timelines, offer multiple payment options where possible, reduce unnecessary paperwork, communicate requirements transparently, and ensure that people are not expected to subsidize organizational participation with their own money.

Systems and sector-level shifts: This scenario points to broader questions about how non-profit accountability systems, funder rules, audit requirements, and financial policies can unintentionally create barriers to participation. Organizations may need to advocate for more flexible funding and reporting processes that allow them to compensate people in ways that are timely, accessible, safe, and dignified.

Scenario 3: Recruitment, Hiring, and “Fit”

This scenario explores how human resources processes can reproduce inequities through job requirements, screening practices, interview norms, and informal ideas about “fit.” It invites participants to consider how anti-oppressive commitments can be reflected in recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and advancement.

Practice Example

An organization is hiring for a program coordinator role. Before posting the position, HR staff and the hiring manager review the job description through an anti-oppressive lens. They ask which qualifications are essential, which can be learned on the job, and which requirements may create unnecessary barriers.

They remove the requirement for Canadian work experience and replace it with “experience coordinating programs, projects, services, or community initiatives in paid, volunteer, informal, or lived-experience contexts.” They clarify which writing skills are actually needed and avoid using vague language such as “excellent communication skills” without explaining what the role requires. They include salary information, accessibility information, and details about the hiring process.

The screening rubric is revised so that community knowledge, lived expertise, multilingual skills, relationship-building, and experience navigating systems are not treated as secondary to formal credentials. Interview questions are shared in advance where possible. Candidates are invited to request accommodations, and interviewers are reminded that confidence, eye contact, speed of response, and familiarity with professional interview norms are not the same as competence.

When the hiring panel discusses candidates, HR staff help the group avoid vague language such as “fit.” Instead, they ask: What specific skill, experience, or concern are

we naming? Is this connected to the role? Are we applying the same standard to all candidates? Are we interpreting communication style, employment gaps, accent, credentials, or self-advocacy through biased assumptions?

The organization recognizes that anti-oppressive hiring is not only about attracting diverse candidates. It is about changing the process so that different forms of knowledge, experience, and leadership can be recognized and valued.

Discussion Questions

- What anti-oppressive practices were implemented in this scenario?
- What assumptions about qualifications, professionalism, and fit were questioned?
- What changed before the job was posted?
- How did the screening and interview process shift?
- How did HR staff support the hiring panel to name concerns more clearly?
- What made this change possible?
- What hiring practices might need to be reviewed in your organization?

Applying This to Your Role

- Who is centered in your organization's communications? Who may be missing?
- Are materials available in the languages, formats, and places that communities actually use?
- What information do people need in order to decide whether it is safe to reach out?
- What is one communication product or process that could be reviewed through an anti-oppressive lens?
- Who should be involved in that review?

Implementing Anti-Oppressive Practices

Individual practice shifts: Communications and knowledge mobilization staff can question who is represented, who is missing, what assumptions are embedded in language and images, and whether information is understandable and accessible. They can also ask whether materials explain what people need to know in order to make informed choices about safety and service access.

Organizational practice shifts: Organizations can develop communications review processes that include accessibility, plain language, translation, community relevance, and anti-oppressive representation. They can create style guidance for language related to gender-based violence, race, disability, gender identity, immigration status, poverty, criminalization, and systems involvement. They can also build in time and resources for community review.

Systems and sector-level shifts: This scenario points to the need for communications practices that do not rely on narrow or stereotypical images of survivors, safety, family, violence, or healing. It also raises broader questions about who has access to public information, whose languages and communication styles are prioritized, and how organizations can share knowledge in ways that are accessible, accountable, and community-informed.

Scenario 5: Evaluation, Data, and Whose Knowledge Counts

This scenario explores how data collection, evaluation, reporting, and knowledge mobilization can shape what organizations understand, prioritize, and communicate. It invites participants to consider how anti-oppression can inform not only what data is collected, but how it is interpreted, contextualized, and used.

Practice Example

An organization is preparing its annual report. The evaluation and data team summarizes service numbers, demographic information, waitlist data, client satisfaction surveys, and program outcomes. They notice that the available data does not fully reflect the experiences of people who faced barriers to access, needed interpretation, left before receiving services, or did not feel safe providing feedback.

Rather than presenting the overall satisfaction score as a complete picture, the team contextualizes the findings. They clearly state who responded, who may be underrepresented, and what limitations need to be considered.

The team also brings in other sources of knowledge, including staff observations, community partner feedback, complaints or concerns, waitlist patterns, access barriers, and informal feedback shared through service navigation. They identify areas where the organization needs better feedback pathways, especially for communities whose experiences are not well captured through current tools.

In the annual report, the organization still shares positive findings, but it also names what remains unknown. It identifies next steps, such as translating feedback tools, offering non-digital feedback options, reviewing who is not reaching services, and developing safer ways for survivors to share concerns without fear of consequences.

The organization recognizes that anti-oppressive evaluation is about asking whose knowledge counts, who is missing, how power shapes feedback, and how data can be used to improve accountability rather than simply demonstrate success.

Discussion Questions

- What anti-oppressive practices were implemented in this scenario?
- How were experiences treated as missing or underrepresented, rather than invisible?

- What other forms of knowledge were brought into the interpretation?
- What made this change possible?
- What data or feedback gaps might exist in your organization?
- How can we ensure the data we collect makes marginalized or underrepresented groups visible?

Applying This to Your Role

- Who is most visible in your organization's data? Who may be missing?
- Do your feedback tools work for people with different languages, literacy levels, digital access, disabilities, or safety concerns?
- Where might your organization be making broad claims from partial information?
- What is one way to improve how feedback is collected, interpreted, or reported?
- Who should be involved in deciding what counts as meaningful evidence?

Practice Shifts

Individual practice shifts: Evaluation, data, and knowledge mobilization staff can ask who is missing from the data, what barriers may affect participation, and whether findings are being interpreted beyond what the evidence can support. They can also pay attention to how data categories, survey methods, and reporting choices may shape what becomes visible or invisible.

Organizational practice shifts: Organizations can review feedback tools, survey methods, demographic questions, complaint processes, reporting templates, and evaluation plans through an anti-oppressive lens. They can create multiple ways for people to provide feedback, explain how information will be used, and build processes for acting on what is learned.

Systems and sector-level shifts: This scenario points to broader questions about funder reporting, performance measurement, and the pressure to demonstrate success without fully naming complexity. Anti-oppressive evaluation requires systems that make room for learning, uncertainty, community knowledge, and honest reflection about who is being reached and who is not.

Scenario 6: Scheduling, Reception, and First Points of Contact

This scenario explores how administrative processes can shape first impressions of safety, dignity, and access. It invites participants to consider how reception, scheduling, phone calls, voicemails, email communication, and appointment logistics can support or undermine anti-oppressive practice.

Practice Example

An organization reviews its first-contact procedures after staff notice that some survivors do not return calls or complete intake after leaving an initial voicemail. The team realizes that the existing voicemail and call-back process may assume that phone messages are always safe, private, and accessible.

The organization updates its voicemail, phone scripts, and scheduling practices. The outgoing voicemail message no longer asks callers to leave detailed information. It says that callers can share only what feels safe and that staff will ask about safe contact before leaving detailed messages. When staff return calls, they use a neutral message unless the person has given permission to identify the organization or service.

During the first conversation, administrative staff ask whether it is safe to speak, whether there is a safe way to contact the person, whether messages can be left, and whether there are language, accessibility, technology, or scheduling needs. They explain

the next steps clearly, including waitlist timelines, crisis options, and what to expect.

When someone is told there is a waitlist, staff avoid making the person feel dismissed. They acknowledge that waiting can be difficult and provide information on available options, including whether groups, referrals, check-ins, or other supports may be available sooner.

Discussion Questions

- What anti-oppressive practices were implemented in this scenario?
- What assumptions about phone, voicemail, privacy, and safety were questioned?
- How did staff reduce risk through small changes in communication?
- What information was important to ask early?
- How did the organization communicate limits without dismissing the survivor?
- What made this change possible?
- What first-contact procedures in your organization could be reviewed?

Applying This to Your Role

- How do people first experience your organization?
- Are there standard messages, scripts, or procedures that could create privacy or safety risks?
- Are safe contact, language access, accessibility needs, and technology barriers identified early enough?
- What is one small change that could make first contact safer or more accessible?

Implementing Anti-Oppressive Practices

Individual Practice Shifts: Administrative staff can ask about safe contact, language access, accessibility needs, technology barriers, and scheduling constraints before assuming that standard communication methods are safe or accessible. They can communicate limits clearly while still offering choice, and care.

Organizational Practice Shifts: Organizations can review voicemail messages, phone scripts, email templates, intake forms, waitlist communication, scheduling systems, and first-contact procedures. They can train administrative staff on safe contact practices, confidentiality, boundaries, and how to respond when someone shares urgent safety concerns.

Systems and Sector-Level Shifts: This scenario points to the need for service systems that understand access as more than eligibility. Access includes privacy, communication, timing, technology, language, transportation, disability, caregiving, and trust. Administrative processes must be resourced and recognized as part of survivor-centred and anti-oppressive service delivery.

Final Reflection Activity: Connecting Anti-Oppression to Your Own Role

The previous scenarios explored how anti-oppressive practice can show up in administrative and operational areas such as databases, finance, hiring, communications, evaluation, and first-contact procedures. This final activity invites you to apply the same reflection to your own role and work environment. You may complete this activity individually, in pairs, or as a group.

Step 1: Choose One Area of Your Work

Choose one process, task, tool, document, workflow, communication, or decision that you are involved in.

Examples might include:

- A form, template, or database field
- A payment, reimbursement, or procurement process
- A hiring, onboarding, or supervision process
- A communication material, website page, or social media post

- A report, dashboard, survey, or evaluation tool
- A scheduling, reception, intake, or referral process
- A privacy, consent, or information-sharing procedure
- A physical or virtual space
- A staff-facing process or internal workflow

Selected area of work: _____

Step 2: Reflect on Access, Power, and Assumptions

Use the following questions to reflect on the selected area:

1. Who is this process, tool, or workflow designed for?
2. Who benefits from the way it currently works?
3. Who might experience barriers, confusion, exclusion, or harm?
4. What assumptions are built into the process?
5. What information is being collected, and why?
6. Who has access to the information?
7. How are privacy, safety, dignity, and consent considered?
8. What have staff, survivors, community members, or partners already told us about this process?

Step 3: Identify One Change

Choose one change that could make this process more aligned with anti-oppressive practice.

This change could involve:

- Removing an unnecessary requirement
- Adding clearer information
- Creating a safer communication process

- Offering more than one way to participate
- Changing a form, script, template, or workflow
- Making language more accessible
- Reviewing who is represented or excluded
- Changing what information is collected or how it is used
- Creating guidance for staff
- Bringing an issue forward to leadership
- Asking for resources, training, or policy clarification

One change we could make: _____

Step 4: Plan the Next Three Months

Use the table below to identify a concrete next step.

Planning Question	Response
What is the change we want to make?	
Why does this matter for anti-oppressive practice?	
Who would benefit from this change?	
What is within our control?	
What requires approval, resources, or support?	
Who needs to be involved or consulted?	
What is the first step?	
Who will take responsibility for moving it forward?	
What could get in the way?	
How will we know whether progress has been made?	
What will progress look like in one month?	
What will progress look like in three months?	

Step 5: Closing Reflection

Anti-oppressive practice is not only about what happens in direct service interactions. It is also shaped by the systems, tools, decisions, communications, and everyday processes that make organizational work possible.

Administrative and operational staff hold important knowledge about how organizations actually function. They often see where processes break down, where people face barriers, where systems are outdated, and where small changes could make a meaningful difference.

Moving toward anti-oppressive practice requires organizations to take this knowledge seriously. It requires asking not only what values the organization names, but how those values show up in forms, databases, budgets, hiring processes, reports, communications, schedules, and workflows.

What is one part of your role or work environment that you are willing to look at differently because of this conversation?

Appendix A

Power and Control

Power and control are central to sexual and gender-based violence, but they do not only operate within individual relationships. Power and control can also show up in service systems, documentation practices, eligibility criteria, risk assessment tools, mandatory reporting processes, shelter policies, funding requirements, and assumptions about what survivors “should” do.

An anti-oppressive approach asks staff to consider both how a person causing harm may be using power and control, and how systems may unintentionally reproduce control over

	people's choices, stories, bodies, families, identities, and pathways to safety.
Intersectionality	Intersectionality helps us understand how different systems of oppression overlap and shape people's experiences in specific ways. A survivor's experience of violence and service access may be shaped by gender, race, Indigeneity, immigration status, disability, poverty, sexuality, gender identity, language, age, criminalization, housing status, or past experiences with state systems. An intersectional approach does not treat one part of a person's identity as the "main" issue while ignoring the others. Instead, it asks how multiple systems are operating together and how support can respond to the whole context of a person's life.
Structural and State Violence	Structural violence refers to the ways social, political, and economic systems create harm by limiting access to resources, safety, health, housing, legal protection, and other conditions needed to live with dignity. State violence refers to harm caused or reinforced by state systems, including policing, immigration enforcement, child welfare, prisons, courts, involuntary mental health systems, and other institutions with the power to surveil, punish, remove, detain, or control people. In anti-violence work, these systems may sometimes be sources of protection, but they may also be sources of fear, harm, punishment, exclusion, or control. Administrative and operational systems can either reinforce these harms or help reduce them by supporting privacy, access, dignity, informed choice, and accountability.

Organizational Infrastructure

Organizational infrastructure refers to the systems, roles, tools, policies, workflows, and resources that make day-to-day work possible. This includes finance, administration, human resources, information technology, communications, data, evaluation, facilities, scheduling, reception, and other internal processes.

Anti-oppressive organizational infrastructure asks whether these systems are designed in ways that reduce barriers, shift power, protect dignity, and support equitable access. It also asks whether the people responsible for these systems have the guidance, authority, time, and resources they need to make meaningful change.