



Shelter Standards



PATHS

Provincial Association of Transition
Houses and Services of Saskatchewan

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

WHO WE ARE

PATHS membership is comprised of shelters for women who have experienced violence, and their children, second stage housing, and counselling and support services whose primary mandate is to provide support to women who have experienced violence. PATHS is a provincial organization started in 1984 with the purpose of connecting shelters across the province and providing public education on violence against women issues. The mission of PATHS is to provide integrated, collaborative support for PATHS members who work with individuals directly or indirectly exposed to violence, and to provide research, program development, public awareness and education on personal and family violence in Saskatchewan.

These standards have been developed in the spirit of using our provincial network and resources to assist our members in reflecting on the service they provide with an intention of enhancing programming, shelter support, and governance. It is the aim of all our member agencies to provide the most effective and respectful service to women who stay in our shelters. It is important to note that there has always been a desire amongst our membership to maintain each shelter's unique response to the needs of women in their community. We are committed as well to providing these services within a culture of excellence, respect, and the sharing of ideas amongst our membership.

METHODOLOGY

In 2004 PATHS conducted research which resulted in some preliminary recommendations for provincial standards. In 2007, PATHS, at the request of the provincial government, undertook an analysis of our human resources patterns across the province. This research resulted in recommendations for staffing models, compensation rates, and staff education requirements. In 2010 we received funding from the federal government to formally develop provincial standards. This funding came as a result of a proposal submitted to Status of Women Canada which indicated our desire to have a level of consistent quality of service across the province. The Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice also contributed funding and support to the development of the standards.

In developing these standards we have involved our member organizations executive directors as well as staff advisory committee members from the beginning. A shelter standards committee was formed to fine tune the document which was then presented to the executive directors and the advisory committee members for approval by consensus. It is important to note that this is an aspirational document. Shelters will work towards achieving the standards as listed but adherence to the standards is not mandatory or enforced.

PATHS BELIEF STATEMENT

- ⤴ **Women have the right to live in a non-violent society. The right to live without violence is a basic human right.**
- ⤴ **We believe that violence exists because of power differentials, socio-economic systems, and patriarchal attitudes and is perpetuated by the society in which we live. Violence against women is a societal problem, not a private matter. It transcends all class, cultural and ethnic boundaries. Therefore, all levels of government and society must share the responsibility to eliminate violence against women.**
- ⤴ **We believe that the cycle of violence is inter-generational. We support the need for services for all members of the family. Children's lives are traumatized by exposure to abusive environments. Their witnessing and normalizing of violence perpetuates the cycle of abuse. Their needs are specific and distinct from the needs of their parents.**
- ⤴ **We believe that victims of domestic violence have a right to be protected and that society and government have a responsibility to ensure their protection by means of government programs, policies, legislation and funds.**
- ⤴ **We believe that laws must recognize the seriousness of violence against women.**
- ⤴ **We believe that women have a right to be free from harassment and violence from present and former partners.**
- ⤴ **We believe that women and their children should have access to services, protection, and counselling within their own communities.**
- ⤴ **We believe that government has the primary responsibility for the adequate funding of services.**
- ⤴ **We believe that a woman has the right to the support and resources necessary to enable her to implement her decisions and take control of her life.**
- ⤴ **We believe that education is a necessary means of prevention. We support research and education directed towards the public including professionals, community groups, and government. We will work towards increasing PATHS members' own skills and knowledge.**

SECTION 2: SERVICE STANDARDS

Guiding Principle - All the clients we serve will be safe and empowered through respectful support and services.

SERVICE MANAGEMENT

Intake

Criteria for admission to the shelter will not discriminate based on race, religion, socio-economic status, language, ethnic origin or sexual orientation. Admission to the shelter will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Crisis calls must be answered directly and immediately.

Priority may be given to women in danger who have children, then to women in danger, then all others. If entry to the shelter is prioritized it should be documented. Safety of the staff and other clients will be taken into account when determining eligibility for admission. Clients will not be turned away based on the number of previous stays providing there is licensed space available. Should it be determined that the woman seeking service is inappropriate for admission due to the threat of harm to others or other unmanageable behaviour, staff will endeavour to find alternate accommodation or services for the client.

Each shelter will have an intake form which will be administered in a timely fashion after admission of the client. All clients will receive an orientation to the shelter and be acquainted with the *Residents' Code of Conduct*. (See Appendix A.)

Notification of any interruptions to service, including a temporary closure of the shelter, will be given to community and government agencies that work with our client group. Other shelters in the city or shelters in neighbouring communities will be notified.

Age Restrictions

Shelter licenses stipulate that unaccompanied clients must be age 18 and up. In order to admit unaccompanied 16 and 17 year old females, an amendment to the shelter's license by the Ministry of Justice and the Attorney General is required. There are no stipulations on the maximum age for dependent children regardless of gender. Each case will be assessed individually. Staff should take into consideration the degree of dependency between the mother and her son or daughter as well as the safety and well-being of other clients in the house.

Accommodating Clients with Disabilities

Shelters are committed to providing safe and secure housing to women with disabilities. Shelter staff will assess potential clients to determine if their needs can be adequately met in the shelter. In order to be admitted to the shelter, however, women must be able to provide all aspects of personal care such as the ability to look after their hygiene and dressing themselves. Women must have behaviour that is appropriate for communal and cooperative living. In addition they must be able to look after any children accompanying them. Women

who face challenges in this regard will be expected to have a support person to assist them at the shelter in order to secure admission. Female caregivers of disabled clients will be allowed to stay in the shelter should they be needed to assist with the client's personal care and daily routine. Women will not be denied admission due to an inability to participate with housekeeping responsibilities.

Gender Diversity

Shelters shall make every effort to accommodate and support individuals who self-identify as female. Every shelter shall review and develop their own policies regarding the inclusion of gender diverse clients and consider how they can make their agency a safe space. Every shelter will provide staff training, when needed, to ensure that their shelter is a safe space. Staff are directed to Appendix B, *Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation and Shelter Services*, for direction in providing assistance to transgendered and transsexual individuals.

Occupancy

Shelter occupancy will not exceed the number of beds for which the shelter is licensed at any given time.

Length of Stay

Each shelter is responsible for determining the length of stay. It is recommended, however, that clients not be required to leave the shelter before 6 weeks. Extended stays should be considered if the client is not able to leave after 6 weeks and her safety is in jeopardy. In these circumstances it is preferable for the client to have her stay extended rather than be moved to another shelter.

Eviction from the Shelter

In the unfortunate situation where a woman is asked to leave the shelter, every attempt will be made to make a safety plan with her and to arrange for alternate accommodation.

Telephone and Email Response

Each shelter will have 24 hour, personalized and respectful telephone response. All calls to the shelter must be answered directly by a staff person. Staff will provide information and support to each caller regardless of the potential for admission to the shelter. Staff will respond to all requests for information via email keeping in mind the safety of the client at all times. When replying to client email, staff will provide instructions on how to 'hide tracks'. Email will not be used for the purposes of counseling. Rather the counselor will provide the telephone number of the shelter and suggest that the client phone the shelter in order to have a confidential conversation.

Data collection

All shelters will keep non-identifying data as required by their funders. This data will be accessible to the PATHS office. A record will be kept of all client related calls to the shelter.

Client Files

Each client will have a file which will be kept current from the point of intake to termination of services. All case notes will be signed and dated by the author and written in a professional manner. (See Appendix C *Guidelines for Writing Case Notes*.) Each client file will contain a *Client Services Checklist*. (see Appendix N) which will keep track of the services which have

been provided to the client. Client files will be kept for a minimum of 5 years and will be disposed of by shredding.

The client file will consist of but is not limited to:

- Intake Form
- Relevant Medical Information
- Signed Informed Consent Forms
- Case Notes
- Records of Referrals
- Critical Incident Reports
- Client Services Checklist

Confidentiality

Information about any shelter client will not be shared with any person or organization, including other shelters, without the written consent of the client or client's parent or guardian unless required to do so by legislation, judicial order, or medical crisis. Staff and Board will sign an *Oath of Confidentiality*. (See Appendix N.)

Limits to Confidentiality

Confidentiality can be breached in the following circumstances:

- the client presents an imminent danger to herself or others;
- the client is being sought by law enforcement officials;
- a child is in need of protection.

Staff Personal Relationships with Clients

Shelters will have a policy which provides guidance on personal relationships between the staff and shelter clients. The policy will provide direction on how to maintain professional boundaries with clients who are known on a personal level to staff before they enter the shelter as well as limits to forming personal relationships after the client leaves the shelter. It is the expectation that the staff will work professionally with all the clients that enter the shelter, however, accommodation may be made in extenuating circumstances. New personal relationships with clients should not be undertaken until one year after the professional relationship ends.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Compliance with Legislation, Regulations, and Codes

All organizations will have documentation that indicates compliance with municipal, provincial and federal requirements including but not limited to fire regulations, building codes, food handling regulations, health inspections and occupational health and safety requirements. Specifically, shelters must comply with the Residential Services Act which requires an annual public health inspection and fire inspection report and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Additional specific health and safety requirements include:

- Hallways and stairs must be well lit. Alternate lighting must be readily available and the whereabouts must be known to all occupants in case of electrical power failure.

- Driveways, walkways and exterior steps from all entrances and exits must be kept free of ice and snow.
- The facility will be kept free of insects and rodents.
- Hazardous or poisonous substances will be kept in a locked cabinet or room not accessible to clients without assistance from staff.
- There will be routine inspections using a check list to ensure compliance with these requirements
- Each shelter will have an Internal Responsibility System. All stakeholders in the organization are responsible and accountable for health and safety.
- Readily accessible first aid kits will be maintained. Residential and direct service staff will hold current First Aid and CPR certificates.
- Medication must be locked and accessible only by shelter staff. A locked box in the fridge or a separate secure refrigerator must be available for the storage of medicine that requires refrigeration.
- Alcohol and illegal drugs are not permitted in the shelter.

Emergency Plan

Each shelter will have a written emergency plan that looks at specific situations such as for example, fire, power outages, a lack of heat or water, and pandemic influenza. The emergency plan will specify evacuation details which identify a place to go, if necessary. The plan will be kept in a place accessible by all staff.

Smoking

Smoking rules will follow the provincial legislation. Smoking will be allowed in the shelter only if an exemption from the Tobacco Act has been granted by the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General. Shelters will take steps to minimize the exposure to smoke near doorways and ventilation intake areas.

Shelter Security

Controlled access to the shelter must be ensured. All shelters will have a security system for the protection of employees and clients which can be monitored by shelter staff. Security systems will have regular maintenance. Outer doors are to be locked at all times. An intercom system is recommended for screening those wishing to enter the shelter. All windows should be secured in such a manner as to prevent entry to the shelter.

Before giving out the shelter address to any parties, staff will take into consideration any possible risk to client safety.

Security cameras inside the shelter are not recommended. If the shelter decides to have cameras inside the shelter, shelter administration must be able to demonstrate that:

- 1) The surveillance cameras and recording system were necessary to meet a specific need.
- 2) The cameras are effective in meeting the need.
- 3) The loss of privacy is proportional to the benefit gained.
- 4) There was not a less privacy-invasive way of achieving the same end.
- 5) All applicable legislation is being followed (See Appendix D)
- 6) There is a policy in place to monitor use of the cameras (See for example Appendix D, page 9)

Provision of Necessities

Shelters will have food available to ensure that clients are able to eat according to *Canada's Food Guide*. (See Appendix E.) Food will be of good quality. Clients' access to food will not be restricted to mealtimes. Shelter staff will support clients with meal preparation when necessary. Food for restricted diets or food appropriate to a woman's cultural background will be made available. School aged children will be provided with lunches. A pleasant setting for meals will be provided.

Shelter clients will be provided with towels and bed linen, soap and toiletries.

Response to Contagious Diseases

Shelters will follow Universal Precautions at all times. (See Appendix H *A Sample Safety Protocol*.) Shelters will not refuse to admit clients to shelter for reasons of having a communicable disease, such as Hepatitis C or HIV/AIDS, which does not put other residents at risk. All efforts should be made to accommodate a woman with an infectious disease, without risking the health of staff or other clients, in order to facilitate her ability to stay in the shelter. If a family has a member with a highly contagious disease entry will be postponed. If the illness occurs once the family is in shelter, isolation, as much as possible, will be encouraged. Quarantining of clients is not possible.

If other clients cannot be adequately protected from contracting the illness, the woman may be asked to find alternate accommodation. Shelter staff will assist the client in finding alternate accommodation as necessary.

Shelter staff will advise other clients of the presence of a contagious condition such as lice, measles, chicken pox or scabies.

Reporting a Missing Client

Clients who are absent without notification, will be reported to local police immediately if it is determined that the safety of the client is in jeopardy. If the safety of the client is not deemed to be in jeopardy, the absence will be reported to the police within six (6) hours from the time she was expected to return. Staff will be prepared to answer questions regarding the missing women including what she was wearing when she left the shelter, stated destination, and expected time of return. Staff will have called the woman's emergency contact(s) prior to calling police.

Services for Women with Disabilities

At least one shelter in each community will be wheelchair accessible. Shelters which are designated as wheelchair accessible will comply with the requirements of the Saskatchewan Building Standards Code. Shelter staff will not be required to lift clients beyond their physical abilities. Shelters will provide support for hearing and visually impaired clients. See Appendix F, *Suggested Physical Enhancements to Assist Women with Disabilities*, for a check list of various physical enhancements to the shelter which will aid in making the shelter accessible to clients with a disability. Shelters will strive to provide these enhancements.

Building Maintenance and Standards

Shelter staff are responsible for the cleanliness and upkeep of the shelter although clients may be enlisted to assist with chores at the discretion of the shelter. Shelter staff will assist

clients in these tasks as necessary. Staff will take precautions when cleaning to avoid injury. Biohazard kits must be provided and used. Shelters will have and maintain CMDs (Carbon Monoxide Detectors). Personal protective equipment will be used by staff such as puncture proof rubber gloves and goggles.

Environmental Standards

Shelters use and disposal of resources will be done in a way that has the least amount of environmental impact as possible. Some suggested procedures to minimize negative environmental impact are the following:

- Recycling of all office paper (shredded where necessary),
- Use of reusable kitchen dishes and utensils,
- No use of pesticides on shelter property,
- Recycling of all plastics, glass and cardboard in communities where there are facilities to take these items,
- Car pooling or using public transit to attend meetings and events where possible,
- Use of cloth diapers,
- Implementation of energy efficiency measures (See Appendix G.),
- Where possible use of green cleaning products.

Shelters will be proactive in identifying ways to reduce the impact on the environment. Shelter clients will be apprised of any environmental practices so that they may fully participate in contributing to an environmentally friendly shelter.

Occupational Health and Safety

Each shelter will have an occupational health and safety committee. Adequate training and information will be provided to staff so that they can identify and avoid potential risk situations. All shelters will have a safety protocol in place. Training in the safety protocol will be provided to all staff. A *Sample Safety Protocol* is provided in Appendix H.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Obligations to Clients

Support for women and children staying in the shelter is provided directly by the shelter support workers. Their interactions with the client group has several components that are key to ensuring that we deliver services which are consistent with the principles, mission and goals of our organizations. Generally, clients can expect in terms of service:

- a safe environment,
- empathy, support and respect,
- a non-judgemental attitude,
- communication and professional relationships with staff,
- active listening from staff,
- cooperation with other agencies and personnel members,
- referral to services and advocacy where appropriate,
- an understanding about family violence, mental health, addictions, children and parenting, and community resources,

- an attempt to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

Each client will be provided with services to meet her individual needs and plans which may include but are not limited to the areas listed above.

Case Management

Each shelter will have a case management system in place that ensures that clients are assessed as to their needs, are receiving the necessary support in the shelter, and are being given appropriate referrals.

Counselling

Each shelter will have counselling available 24 hours a day seven days a week. Shelters and services will provide support which addresses clients' needs in a holistic manner. Counselling will be of a short term supportive nature. Shelter staff will not enter into a clinical therapeutic relationship with clients.

Strangulation Protocol

Staff will know the signs of strangulation, assess clients for indications of strangulation and will assist victims of strangulation in obtaining immediate medical assistance. (See Appendix Q.)

Risk Assessment

Shelters will use the ODARA Risk Assessment Tool to assess the risk of each client. (See Appendix I.)

The ODARA is a 13-item risk assessment instrument. This tool should be used with clients to assess their risk upon intake and also upon discharge. Results of the assessment will be noted in client files and communicated to the police and other agencies as requested by the client or when there is an imminent risk to others. Results of the risk assessment will be communicated to the client with a focus on emotional support and planning for client safety. Particular attention must be paid to any risk posed to children with the appropriate referral to child protection services being made in these situations.

All member agency staff are required to complete the ODARA 101 training program, which is available to PATHS member agencies online or on DVD. (See Appendix I for instructions.) Agencies are to keep a copy of staff members' certificate of completion of ODARA 101 and are to provide PATHS with an up-to-date list of staff who have completed the training every 6 months.

Safety Plan

A safety plan will be developed with all women staying in the shelter who are escaping violent partners.

Abuse Education Materials

Women will be given or directed to abuse education materials. Written materials will be available at appropriate reading levels.

Referrals

Staff will make referrals to other community services as necessary and will have up-to-date information available to clients. A listing of services and supports will be given to women as they leave the shelter.

Follow-up Services

Given that women face loneliness, isolation and other ongoing issues when they leave the shelter to live on their own, shelters will offer follow-up support services. This support may be provided by way of a designated staff person or may be incorporated into the work of the Shelter Support Worker. Women shall be informed that they may call the shelter for support after they leave.

Aboriginal Client Services

Many of our shelters provide programming to a high number of Aboriginal women and children. Recognizing that Aboriginal women have a unique cultural identity, history, and political status in Canada, all shelter workers will have documented training using the *PATHS Training Manual 'Sharing Our Knowledge'*. (See Appendix J.) Shelters will provide programming with cultural components in order to better serve Aboriginal clients.

Cultural Understanding

Women at our shelters come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Shelter staff will acquaint themselves with any cultural practices or beliefs that may affect the circumstances of the particular clients residing at the shelter.

Support for Women with Disabilities

Shelter workers will ask clients with disabilities what supports they require based on the questions outlined in Appendix K, *Questions to Support Women with Disabilities*. Each client with a disability will be regarded as an individual with specific needs. Shelters will have on hand and available for shelter staff and client use the 'Living in Harmony' booklet and the 'Directory of Programs and Services for People with Disabilities'. Shelter workers will have a list of local support services available for disabled clients. Shelters will endeavour to locate and provide these supports where at all possible. Local or provincial organizations such as Voice of People with Disabilities can be used as a resource for locating appropriate supports. Clients will not be required to do chores should a disability restrict their capacity in this regard.

Addictions and Mental Health Issues

Community mental health and addictions workers should be encouraged to come to the shelter to visit clients whenever possible in order to support clients and to provide advice to shelter staff. At times there are waiting lists for community agencies therefore shelter staff must have some knowledge and understanding of how to address these issues. Addictions and mental health issues should be discussed during intake.

Interpretation and Translation

Resources permitting, shelters will endeavour to locate interpretation and/or translation services where communication with a client is hampered by the lack of staff facility in the first language of the client.

Privacy

Bedroom doors will be equipped with locks. Staff will have access to all bedrooms but should only enter client rooms when there are health or safety concerns, or concerns regarding

damaged or missing property. Staff will not enter a client's bedroom without being accompanied by at least one other staff. Washrooms will be lockable but will be able to be opened from the outside in case of emergency. Clients will be informed about the need to respect the privacy of other shelter clients and that information about shelter clients must not be shared outside the shelter.

Release of Information

Before communicating with any other agencies, staff will have a signed *Release of Information* form indicating that the client gives permission for the shelter staff to communicate about that client with the other agency. (See Appendix N.) The name of the agency must be documented. No release of information is needed to contact child protection services when there is a concern for a child's safety or when the client is a danger to herself or others. See also the section on Limits to Confidentiality.

Telephones

Shelter clients will have access to a telephone at the shelter. Clients may also be offered a cell phone with a limited amount of prepaid minutes for their personal use for safety purposes and for assistance in planning their transition from the shelter. Decisions for usage of cell phones will be based on client autonomy and respect for others. Restrictions on the use of cell phones should be made only in circumstances where inappropriate use of the cell phone has been demonstrated by that client.

Computer Access

Clients will have reasonable access to a computer particularly for purposes of employment and housing searches.

Animals

Pets will not be allowed at the shelter. Shelter staff will assist women with finding care for pets they may be leaving behind. In addition, shelter staff will discuss options for care of livestock that may be left unattended due to her residence at the shelter.

Transportation

Shelters are obligated to provide transportation of children to school. Clients will be provided with assistance with transportation, particularly to appointments, subject to the availability of staff and with regard to any safety concerns. Transportation assistance may mean provision of bus tickets or taxi vouchers.

Assistance with Locating Housing

Staff will assist clients with locating post-shelter housing.

Client Feedback

Complaints - Each shelter will have a client complaint procedure which is respectful to all parties. Clients are urged to address complaints directly with the party with whom they have the issue. Should they not feel comfortable doing this, it is incumbent on the shelter director or supervisor to assist in resolution of the conflict in a manner which addresses the client's concern and which is respectful to other parties involved. The Executive Director should:

- establish and follow a regular written procedure for hearing concerns of clients;
- explain to the clients the procedure for hearing their concerns;
- indicate that clients can express concerns without fear of retribution;

- **make the procedure accessible to the clients;**
- **inform staff of written procedures for addressing concerns of clients on initial hiring and at regular staff meetings;**
- **record the concerns made by the clients;**
- **investigate concerns from clients;**
- **record the outcome of the investigation.**

Client Evaluation Process

Each client will be given an evaluation form to complete before leaving the shelter, ensuring, wherever possible that the client has sufficient time to complete the form. The evaluation will be submitted in a sealed envelope to be delivered to the Executive Director. The Executive Director and/or designated administrative staff will be the only individuals allowed to see the original document. Evaluation results will be inputted into one comprehensive evaluation document on a yearly basis for comparison and review purposes. When distributing the evaluation forms ensure that you let clients know that you want to hear about any concerns. Offer the option of mailing the evaluation form or dropping it off later. The client can be given the evaluation form during her stay so that she can fill it out while she is at the shelter. Each shelter can design its own questionnaire, however 3 common questions must be included in each questionnaire. Client responses to these 3 questions will be shared with the provincial evaluator.

When filling out the shelter evaluation, clients will be asked if they would like to provide feedback by filling out an additional client evaluation survey. This survey is based on the shelter standards and completed surveys will be shared with the provincial evaluator for purposes of gauging the effectiveness of the standards. Shelters should attempt to have a minimum of 12 surveys completed over the course of a year.

See Appendix R - Client Evaluation Materials which includes the Mandatory Questions, the Client Evaluation Survey, and a Sample Questionnaire,

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

Meeting the needs of the children who stay at the shelter and supporting women in their care and parenting of children is of the utmost priority. It is recognized that children's needs are varied and therefore it will be necessary to provide a range of services for children. The goal of interventions with children will be to help them develop a sense of safety and comfort while at the shelter, offer crisis support, and provide a safe and supportive environment where children can learn and practice skills to alleviate stress and anxiety. To this end each shelter will provide the following services for children:

- A formal plan for programming will be in place which may include any of the following elements – counseling, play, sports, recreation, crafts, and group activities. Support counselling and education for children on abuse issues can only be performed by an employee with appropriate documented specialized training in working with children.
- Staff will provide support to mothers in their parenting role and referrals to existing social, recreational, educational, health and financial services.
- All efforts will be made to provide respite and day care services for children to support women in the care of their children while they are in crisis and transition. Child care will be provided or facilitated for any follow-up programming that a woman may attend after she leaves shelter.

- All shelters will have indoor and outdoor play areas as well as supplies and equipment for children's activities. For Federal laws and regulations concerning cribs, cradles and playpens, refer to the Hazardous Products Act (L.R., 1985. c. H-3). <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/H-3/index.html>. Shelter equipment for children will be in compliance with these laws and regulations.
- As professional human service providers all shelter staff are obligated to report any suspicion of child abuse to child protection services. Abuse of children includes neglect and witnessing violence.
- Children will not be subjected to any physical punishment in the shelter. Shelter staff will be familiar with constructive discipline techniques.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public Education

Shelters are encouraged to engage the community in discussion and education about violence and abuse in order to establish a presence in the community and to impart our expertise in this area. PATHS will develop and provide information that is standardized and current for use by members in public education activities.

Collaboration with Police

In order to ensure an appropriate response by the police to the needs of shelters users, shelters are encouraged to proactively develop a positive relationship with their police departments or detachments. If possible each shelter should have a designated police liaison officer in their police department or detachment who is responsible for domestic violence cases.

Communication

Shelters will strive for open communication and a positive working rapport between shelter staff and other agencies and service providers. Good communication will ensure that women receive appropriate and timely service.

SECTION 3: GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Guiding Principle - Policies, procedures, and ethical standards provide guidance to the boards, staff and volunteers of PATHS member organizations ultimately resulting in quality services to women and children.

PURPOSE OF POLICIES PROCEDURES AND STANDARDS

Development and implementation of policies and procedures serves to assist those involved with the organization by:

- ensuring clear roles and expectations,
- guiding actions,
- defining boundaries,
- giving confidence because employees of the organization know what is expected of them,
- contributing to consistency,
- allowing for unity because employees and volunteers feel like they are all working toward a common goal,
- providing continuity,
- adding stability and structure to the organization,
- allowing for smooth ongoing change, transition, and succession,
- providing a history so that we can measure change over time,
- enhancing our credibility with the larger community.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The **Boards of Directors** of PATHS member organizations are responsible for the oversight and governance of the organization. Their responsibilities include:

- ultimate responsibility and accountability for the efficient and effective management of the facility,
- providing direction to the executive director to ensure the proper functioning of the organization,
- ensuring adherence to written policies that include, but are not limited to administration, personnel, physical environment, security and programming and services,
- achievement of the objectives and goals of the organization,
- strategic planning,
- hiring of an Executive Director who is delegated the authority to manage and direct the business affairs of the organization,
- monitoring the performance of the executive director,
- financial matters, including the approval of the annual budget, budget revisions, contracts and legal agreements,
- monitoring and evaluation of board performance,

- adherence to the confidentiality policy of the organization,
- following regulations which govern not-for-profit organizations.

The **Executive Director** is responsible for managing all aspects of the operation of the organization. The executive director's responsibilities include:

- reporting to the Board of Directors,
- managing and oversight of finances, services, human resources, and facility management,
- acting as a liaison between staff and Board.

The **Paid Employees** of the organization are responsible for carrying out the activities involved in the day to day operation of the shelter. Their responsibilities include:

- providing direct services and programming to clients,
- making community referrals,
- adhering to the relevant job description,
- providing support to management activities of the organization.

The **Volunteers** of the organization work towards fulfilling the mandate of the organization without remuneration. Their responsibilities include:

- abiding by the principles of the organization,
- following ethical standards,
- providing supports to staff and clients according to the needs of the organization in a broad range of areas including activities such as child care and board membership as examples.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The shelter will be managed in accordance with written policies and procedures. Written policies and procedures enable staff to carry out the operations of the shelter in a safe and consistent manner. The organization will ensure that:

- managers and staff are aware of the policies,
- policies and procedures are documented, and communicated and accessible to the staff;
- policies and procedures are reviewed at regular intervals,
- job descriptions are current and up-to-date and provide detailed employee job responsibilities. In addition, job descriptions will include a description of the physical demands of the job and the scope of responsibility plus the inherent risks associated with the work.
- Human resources policy and practices will comply with the Saskatchewan labour laws and with Saskatchewan Human Rights Code.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Key Positions

As documented in the *Human Resources Plan* (Appendix L) it is recommended that each shelter will have the following five key positions:

- Executive Director or Shelter Director
- Administrative Support
- Outreach/Follow-Up Worker
- Shelter Support Worker
- Children's Support Worker or Counsellor

Pay Rates and Benefits

In collaboration with members, PATHS will maintain a current *Human Resources Plan* (Appendix L) which will outline recommended minimum pay rates, benefits and required education competencies. The *Human Resources Plan* will be reviewed by the PATHS' members on a regular basis.

Professional Development

All paid and unpaid employees will have opportunities for training and education that addresses the professional needs consistent with meeting the job expectations of shelter staff. Staff will have documented training using the PATHS *Sharing our Knowledge Training Manual*.

Skills Required for Counselling Staff

Counselling staff will be able to:

- respond appropriately to client behaviour,
- work with groups,
- observe, record and present information on clients,
- develop and maintain good public relations in the community,
- show genuine interest in and concern for people,
- demonstrate an awareness of their own limitations and strengths,
- provide support to clients,
- maintain appropriate boundaries with clients.

Shelters will endeavour to have a staff compliment which reflects the cultural diversity of the client group. All new employees will be subject to a Criminal Record Check before employment is confirmed.

Employee Records

Each paid employee will have a personnel file which contains but is not limited to the following information:

- identifying information (for example, name, address, date of birth, social insurance number)
- documentation of qualifications and/or a verification of current registration, including, valid standard Emergency First Aid and Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation Certificates
- results of Criminal Record Check

- orientation checklist
- performance appraisals
- staff commendations
- copy of driver's license and insurance coverage if driving for work
- acknowledgement of completion of professional development and training
- disciplinary actions
- employment history
- letter of employment
- orientation checklist
- signed oath of confidentiality

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Organizations will adhere to the financial accountability mechanisms outlined in their service agreements and in compliance with the Non-Profit Corporations Act, including providing an audit or review as required. Organizations will follow *Imagine Canada's Ethical Fundraising and Financial Accountability Code*. (See Appendix M.)

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Insurance

The organization should carry insurance to cover property damage. The Board of Directors must have proof of an insurance policy covering:

- a minimum \$2,000,000 liability to cover all accidents/incidents on the premises,
- a minimum of \$1,000,000 third party liability coverage on vehicles owned or leased by the organization,
- a minimum of \$1,000,000 third party liability coverage in the insurance policies of paid and unpaid employees who must use their own vehicle to transport clients,
- Management Liability Insurance.

Legislation

Organizations must comply with Federal, Provincial and Municipal laws, codes and regulations that apply to the facilities they operate. These laws, codes and regulations include, but are not limited to those listed in Appendix O.

Organizations will:

- reviews and signs all government service agreements and reports to funders,
- have a process to designate signing officers by the board of directors which is reviewed annually,
- provide reports at the Annual General Membership Meeting.

SECTION 4: ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

Guiding Principle - a thorough and objective evaluation of measurable goals and objectives is done by a variety of different avenues.

REVIEW AND REVISION OF STANDARDS

The Shelter Standards will be reviewed by PATHS members every three years and revised as necessary.

MONITORING APPLICATION OF THE STANDARDS

Every 3 years member organizations will be reviewed for the purpose of monitoring compliance with the standards using the Provincial Standards Evaluation Instrument (See Appendix P.) The intention of the review is to provide consultative support to the member organizations so that they can enhance their services and policies and procedures as necessary. The expectation is that each member organization will move towards compliance and the implementation of best practices. All reviews will be conducted in the same year in order to enable a comparative analysis. Pending available funding, the review will be coordinated through the provincial office. A team of 2 qualified evaluators, hired by the PATHS office but not connected to PATHS or any member organization, will conduct the review.

A detailed result of the reviews will be provided to that organization and the PATHS office. Each organization will be given a rating that indicates their level of compliance with the standards. This rating will be shared with the provincial government funders.