

CMRC Statement on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (Sept. 14, 2020)

(Replaces CMRC Position Statement on Gender Inclusive Language and the CMRC Statement on Diversity)

Purpose

The purpose of this statement is to:

- articulate the commitment of the Canadian Midwifery Regulators Council (CMRC) to promote equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) within the regulated profession of midwifery through its programs, policies and governance
- encourage CMRC members to promote equity, diversity and inclusion in their regulatory policies and practices and in their workplaces
- recognize, acknowledge and denounce anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism, which is a direct public health crisis
- continually uphold anti-racist practices and behaviors while centering on Indigenous, Black and People of Colour (IBPOC) and people from other equity seeking groups

Background

Historically, midwifery has been associated with women's work. As such, it has fought to position itself as a health profession with a unique philosophy and approach to providing woman-centred care during pregnancy, birth and post-partum. Midwifery is rooted in the feminist struggle for women's rights and their control over their own bodies and health care. Fundamentally, midwifery is about equity for women in the health care system.

Our evolving understanding of the unique needs and perspectives of diverse populations in the context of midwifery care includes a new appreciation of the importance of culturally safe and relevant care, and the fact that pregnancy and birth are experiences not necessarily limited to those who identify as women.

Building on the history of midwifery as a profession on the cutting edge of reproductive rights and social justice, and as our understanding of the needs of people seeking midwifery services grows, the CMRC is committed to supporting midwifery regulators whose registrants work to meet the needs of diverse populations.

Terminology as it relates to midwifery

Diversity: Midwifery clients in Canada are truly diverse. They comprise of persons from various ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds, socioeconomic classes, range of abilities, sexual orientations, and gender identities and expressions. Serving the health care needs of this vast range of

clients requires the midwifery profession to embrace diversity, understand unique health needs and provide care that is tailored to each individual or family.

Equity: Equity in health is the absence of avoidable systematic disparities in health between groups with different levels of social (dis)advantages. A prerequisite for equity in healthcare is that everyone should be able to access comprehensive, safe and culturally relevant health care services and that no one should be disadvantaged from achieving this human right. Without access, there is no equity. Access to midwifery care remains variable, particularly for populations facing socioeconomic disadvantages. It is important to recognize the value of midwifery care in promoting equitable health care and reducing the societal and financial burden of poor health outcomes. As regulators, equity involves the removal of systemic barriers to accessing programs, standards and employment.

Inclusion: The aim of inclusion is to achieve equity. This means involving all people, regardless of their race, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, ability, education, socio-economic standing, health or other need. In the context of health care, it is about providing access and opportunities, and eliminating systemic discrimination and intolerance within the regulatory processes. Inclusion and access to regulated health care have a direct impact on the overall health of individuals or groups

Position

The Canadian Midwifery Regulators Council (CMRC) is committed to the values of equity, diversity and inclusion in its work as a coordinating body for midwifery regulators, in its governance and as an employer. We support and promote these values through the following:

- Partnering in solidarity in the fight against racism and violence against Indigenous, Black and People of Colour (IBPOC).
- Recognizing, acknowledging and denouncing anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism, as this is a direct public health crisis
- Upholding anti-racist practices and behaviors while centering on Indigenous, Black and People of Colour (IBPOC) and marginalized people
- Applying an EDI lens to all CMRC activities to identify and remove barriers.
- Ensuring that all CMRC communications and documents, including the *Canadian Competencies for Midwives* and the Canadian Midwifery Registration Exam, reflect and respect the needs, experiences and perspectives of diverse populations.
- Fostering diversity within the profession of midwifery, with the ultimate goal of building a profession that reflects the populations it serves through the use of inclusive language,



inclusive midwifery competencies, encouraging internationally educated midwives to seek training and registration in Canada, and other evolving EDI initiatives.

- Encouraging regulators to support and promote access to safe and supportive midwifery services for clients who may not identify as women, including an environment that is welcoming and respectful of all people.
- Supporting and promoting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada within the context of midwifery regulation and practice.
- Striving for diverse leadership and participation within the CMRC Board, officers, staff, committees and working groups and supporting midwifery regulators to do the same.
- Encouraging public and private sector policy that promotes equity, diversity and inclusion.

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