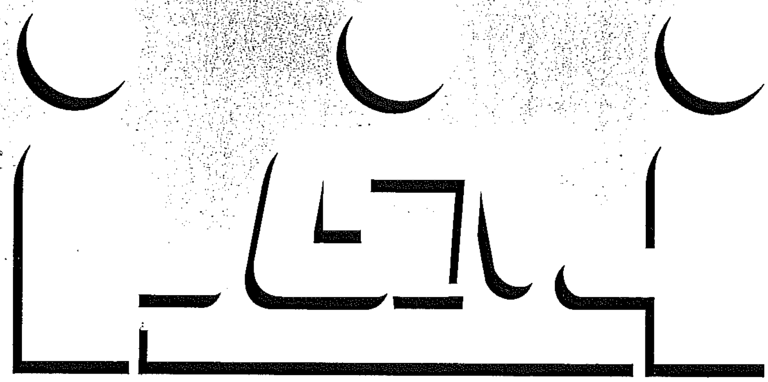
Ontario Community Support Association
Association ontarienne de soutien communautaire

# Developing Your Policies & Procedures Manual:

## The Basics



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# Acknowledgements

The manual is based on the experiences and expertise of individuals from Community Support Agencies who attended eight policies and procedures workshops sponsored by the Ontario Community Support Association (OCSA). Suggestions from OCSA members who tested the draft manual and the participants at two subsequent OCSA policies and procedures workshops were incorporated into the final manual.

The manual could not have been possible without the insights and the sharing of information by the participants at the workshops and the OCSA members who tested the draft workbook.

Thanks are also extended to Mary Davies, Project Consultant who facilitated the ten workshops and wrote the manual; Sue Davidson, Director of Training for her creative suggestions; and Jenny Barretto, Manager of Policy and Government Relations for her final reviewing of the document.

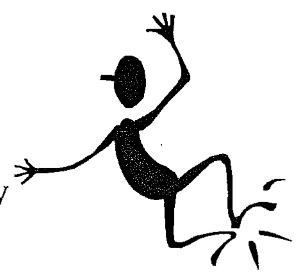
We hope that this manual will assist agencies in developing and revising their policies and procedures.

# Table of Contents

# Section 1. Introduction

| ***Learning Objectives*** |
|---|
| • *To identify why you need policies and procedures*<br>• *To distinguish between a policy and a procedure*<br>• *To explore how continuous quality improvement relates to your policies and procedures* |

## Welcome



Welcome to *Developing Your Policies and Procedures Manual: The Basics*. We have set up the manual in an easy to read format which allows you to readily go to any topic of interest to you. You can go through the manual by yourself or with a group of people. Please remember that developing policies and procedures does not need to be an arduous and boring task. Have fun with it!!

## Need for the Manual

The Ontario Community Support Association (OCSA) develops workshops according to the needs of its members. One such need was for Policies and Procedures Workshops. As a result of eight OCSA policies and procedures workshops held throughout the province in 1997-1998, we realized that OCSA members:

- had developed policies and procedures to varying degrees
- possessed many of the skills and had much of the information required to develop the policies and procedures but some required assistance to organize them
- had valuable information that they could share with each other
- needed information that was relevant to them

The manual builds upon the value of sharing. It incorporates the ideas expressed by participants during the 1997-1998 OCSA workshops and the suggestions from the evaluation of the participants' own policies and procedures. The ideas can be identified throughout the manual by words such as, "your peers stated".

## Why do You Need Policies and Procedures?

The common reasons given by your peers as to why policies and procedures are needed, include that they:

- reflect the values of your organization
- are a mirror of your agency
- give direction
- provide guiding principles
- clear up grey areas
- clarify responsibility
- provide accountability
- ensure consistency of approach by staff and volunteers
- ensure continuity and decrease chaos when key people in the organization leave
- help with risk management (set boundaries)
- help promote quality services
- are required for legal purposes
- are a communication tool
- are a teaching tool
- are a requirement of funders
- are needed by some agencies for accreditation purposes
- save time in the long run
- are a resource for new services

## What is a Policy?

☞ Policies state **what** must be done in your agency.

## What is a Procedure?

☞ Procedures outline **the steps** required to carry out a policy or **how** to meet a specific policy.

## How Does Continuous Quality Improvement Relate to Your Policies and Procedures?

Policies and procedures are written to help ensure you provide a quality service to your clients and that you have a well-run organization.

Key quality concepts which apply as you develop and maintain your policies and procedures manual include:

- being client focused
- involving those who will carry out the policies/procedures in their development as the people have valuable insights
- involving teams
- training team members in the skills required (e.g. writing, communication, working as a team member)
- using quality tools such as mapping/flowcharting
- looking at new ways of doing things (i.e. don't assume old policies and procedures are the best)
- realizing time and commitment are required
- continuously improving your policies and procedures

### An Important Message

As your peers discovered at the end of their two day workshops, you are not starting from "scratch." You probably have many policies and procedures in some existing format (e.g. verbal, in memos, in Board minutes and in orientation and training manuals). You just need to organize them and get the essential policies in writing!

There are also many different styles and formats for policies and procedures. There is no right or wrong way of doing it. But there are ways to make your policies and procedures more user friendly. The important thing is to START!

## The Set Up of the Manual

The sections of this manual follow the suggested framework for developing your policies and procedures manual(s):

- identifying your learning needs
- identifying the strengths and areas for improvement in your existing policies and procedures manual(s)
- considering key items before you begin
- establishing your Table of Contents
- identifying your priority policies
- determining your numbering system
- establishing a format for your pages
- determining your writing style
- developing your plan of action
- creating a user friendly manual
- implementing your policies and procedures

The framework is shown on the next page.

## How to Use the Manual

We suggest you:

- read the learning objectives for each section and go to the headers where you require further information
- try completing the exercises
- consider the comments of your peers
- examine the keys to success closely

**There are many different ways to develop your policies and procedures. This manual presents one simple approach.** The manual is also based on the work of others including: Cryderman, P. *Policies and Procedures: Producing Manuals that Work* and Hubbartt, W. *Personnel Policy Handbook: How to Develop a Manual that Works.* For additional information and other perspectives, we suggest you read their publications and the others listed in the Bibliography.

# A Framework for Developing Your Policies and Procedures Manual

**Identify Your Learning Needs**

↓

**Identify Strengths and Areas for Improvement in Your Existing Policies and Procedures Manuals**

↓

**Consider Key Items Before You Begin**

↓

**Establish Table of Contents**

↓

**Identify Priority Policies**

↓

**Determine Numbering System**

↓

**Establish Page Format**

↓

**Determine Writing Style**

↓

**Develop Action Plan**

↓

**Create User Friendly Manual**

↓

**Implement Your Policies and Procedures**

# Section 2. Determining Your Learning Needs

| ***Learning Objectives*** |
|---|
| • *To identify your learning needs for developing policies and procedures* |

## What are Your Learning Needs?

Your learning needs are the gaps in knowledge between what you know now and what you need to know in order to develop your policies and procedures[1].

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ***Your Current Knowledge in Developing Policies and Procedures*** | → **Your Learning Needs** → | ***What You Need to Know to Develop Your Policies and Procedures*** |

The exercise on the next page should assist you in determining your learning needs.

[1] Based on the work of Knowles, M.; Holton, E.; and Swanson, R. *The Adult Learner.* Houston: Gulf Publishing Co., 1998.

## Exercise #1

*Instructions:Check off the appropriate boxes to help you determine your specific learning needs. The words in italics will tell you where to go in the manual to find the required information.*

1. What I know about policies and procedures is:

Nothing/pathetic ❑ Limited/so-so ❑ A lot/I'm an expert ❑

*If your response is "nothing" or "limited," we suggest you read all the sections of the manual and complete the exercises.*

2. When I think I might have to develop policies and procedures, I:

Panic❑ Am concerned ❑ Get Enthusiastic ❑

*If your response is "panic" or "am concerned," we suggest you read all the sections of the manual and complete the exercises.*

2. My knowledge and understanding of the following is limited to non existent:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| i. | Why you need policies and procedures | ❑ | *Go to Section 1* |
| ii. | The difference between a policy and procedure | ❑ | *Go to Section 1* |
| iii. | The strengths and weakness of your agency's current policies and procedures | ❑ | *Go to Section 3* |
| iv. | Key items to consider before developing your policies and procedures manual | ❑ | *Go to Section 4* |
| v. | Establishing your Table of Contents | ❑ | *Go to Section 5* |
| vi. | Identifying your priority policies | ❑ | *Go to Section 6* |
| vii. | Determining your numbering system | ❑ | *Go to Section 7* |
| viii. | Establishing the format for your pages | ❑ | *Go to Section 8* |
| ix. | Determining the writing style for your manual | ❑ | *Go to Section 9* |
| x. | Developing your plan of action | ❑ | *Go to Section 10* |
| xi. | Making your manual user friendly | ❑ | *Go to Section 11* |
| xii. | Implementing your policies and procedures | ❑ | *Go to Section 12* |

## Exercise #2

*Instructions:Based on your responses to the previous questions, fill in your current knowledge and your specific learning needs in the chart below.*

| **Current Knowledge** | **Learning Needs** |
|---|---|
| e.g. do not know the difference between a policy and a procedure | e.g. the difference between a policy and a procedure |
| ______________________ | ______________________ |
| ______________________ | ______________________ |
| ______________________ | ______________________ |
| ______________________ | ______________________ |
| ______________________ | ______________________ |
| ______________________ | ______________________ |
| ______________________ | ______________________ |
| ______________________ | ______________________ |
| ______________________ | ______________________ |
| ______________________ | ______________________ |
| ______________________ | ______________________ |

### *Keys to Success*

#1 **Before you write your policies and procedures, you need to identify what you don't know (i.e. your learning needs).**

# Section 3. Identifying the Strengths and Areas for Improvement in Your Agency's Policies and Procedures

| *Learning Objectives* |
| --- |
| • *To identify and describe the strengths and areas for improvement in your agency's policies and procedures* |

## How is Your Agency Doing?

By completing the exercise below, you can determine your agency's strengths and areas for improvement in relation to its policies and procedures. You should build upon your agency's strengths as you implement the improvements.

## Exercise # 3

*Instructions: Check off the appropriate boxes and write in your responses to the following questions.*

A. Does your agency have written policies and procedures:

A lot ❐ Some ❐ None ❐

B. If "a lot" or "some," what do you like about them?

____________________________________________

____________________________________________

____________________________________________

____________________________________________

____________________________________________

C. Does your policies and procedures manual contain:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| i. | A Table of Contents | Yes | ❐ | No | ❐ |
| ii. | Policies and procedures which are priority ones for your agency | Yes | ❐ | No | ❐ |
| iii. | An easy to follow numbering system for the policies and procedures | Yes | ❐ | No | ❐ |
| iv. | Consistent formatting on each page | Yes | ❐ | No | ❐ |
| v. | An easy to read writing style | Yes | ❐ | No | ❐ |
| vi. | Easy to find information | Yes | ❐ | No | ❐ |

D. Who was involved in the development of your policies and procedures?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Board | ❐ | Paid Staff | ❐ |
| Executive Director | ❐ | Volunteers | ❐ |
| Coordinators | ❐ | Consultants | ❐ |
| Other ________________ | ❐ | | |

E. How accessible are the manuals? *Please circle the appropriate number.*

*Everyone knows where they are located* — *No one knows where they are located*

5 4 3 2 1

*Anyone can read them at anytime* — *They are not available at all times*

5 4 3 2 1

F. Do all new paid staff and volunteers receive orientation on your agency's policies and procedures?

Yes, all ❐ Yes, some ❐ No ❐

G. Do all paid staff and volunteers have ongoing inservice education and discussions on the policies and procedures which are relevant to them and the service they provide?
Yes, all ❐ Yes, some ❐ No ❐

H. Do all paid staff and volunteers have a mechanism to provide feedback on areas for improvement for the policies and procedures?
Yes, all ❐ Yes, some ❐ No ❐

I. Does your agency have an established process for regular or ongoing review of your policies and procedures?
Yes ❐ No ❐

J. What do you think needs to be improved in your policies and procedures manual(s)?

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

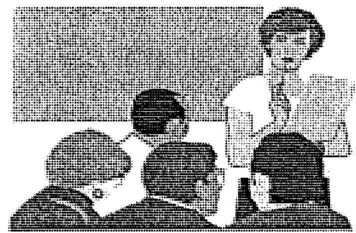
____________________________________________________

## Exercise #4

*Instructions:Based on your responses to exercise # 3, fill in the chart below to identify your agency's strengths and areas for improvement.*

| Strengths | Areas for Improvement |
|---|---|
| | |

## Your Peers' Responses



*If you are interested in the responses of some of your peers to the questions, please read below.*

The vast majority of your peers have written policies and procedures - some have very extensive ones while a few have none.

Your peers identified the following strengths of their policies and procedures manuals. They:

- were written
- were user friendly
- clarified information
- contained basic information
- had a standardized format
- were well organized
- were easy to read
- were a good resource
- were client focused
- helped to reduce risk
- were consistent with government regulations, acts and directions
- were written with their agencies' mission statements in mind
- used a team approach in their development
- covered all important issues
- addressed standards

Their manuals could be improved by being:

- accessible (Some were not available in satellite offices or different service areas. One was in the Executive Director's office and not available when the Executive Director was in meetings or out of her office.)
- consistent (e.g. not having different policies and procedures for similar issues in each program/service)
- better organized, less "ponderous" to find information
- simplified (e.g. avoid being wordy; legalistic; using language open to misinterpretation; and, using acronyms)

- consistent with current government directions and legislation
- streamlined to reduce duplications
- complete
- specific (i.e. not too general)
- reviewed and updated

We repeatedly heard from some of your peers that their agencies' policies and procedures manuals were not being used effectively. For example, paid staff and volunteers:

- did not feel a sense of ownership with the policies and procedures as they were not involved in their development
- could not access the manual
- could not understand some of the information
- found the manual(s) too large and overwhelming

### *Keys to Success*

#2 **For consistency of action by your paid staff and volunteers, your policies and procedures must be written.**

#3 **For policies and procedures to be followed, the paid staff and volunteers must know them.**

#4 **For policies and procedures to be followed, they must be realistic and enforceable.**

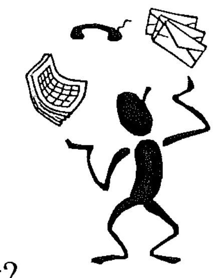
#5 **For your policies and procedures manual to be used, it must be user friendly.**

#6 **For policies and procedures to be followed, the manuals must be accessible.**

# Section 4. Where Do You Begin?

| *Learning Objectives* |
| --- |
| • *To determine key items to consider before developing your policies and procedures manual* |

## Ready?



Before you begin developing your policies and procedures manual, consider the following key items:

- ❑ **Purpose of the Manual:** Why do you need to write it?
- ❑ **Audience:** Who is going to or should read it?
- ❑ **Developer:** Who should develop the manual: one person, a working group? How will you obtain paid staff's and volunteers' input?
- ❑ **Time frame:** How long will it take to develop? How much paid staff/volunteer time is required?
- ❑ **Cost:** What will be the initial and ongoing cost in terms of staff time, photocopying, binders etc.?
- ❑ **Foundations:** What forms the foundation or basis for the manual?
- ❑ **Other Relevant Documents:** What other information has already been developed?

## Consider the Following Responses

### 1. What is the purpose of your manual?

☞ The primary purpose must be to inform the paid staff and volunteers of your agency's policies and procedures so that they are understood and carried out.

### 2. Who is your audience?

☞ You need to identify who must follow the policies and procedures. That is your primary audience!

### 3. Who develops the manual?

☞ The short answer is everyone who is going to use the manual!

☞ If you want to increase the likelihood that everyone will actually use the manual, everyone must be involved in its development.

☞ You can involve everyone (including Board members, management, front line staff and volunteers) in a variety of ways, by:
- having paid staff/volunteers as members of working groups develop certain sections of the manual(s)
- asking paid staff/volunteers where there is a need to develop/revise policies and procedures
- asking for feedback on the draft manual(s).

☞ One person or team should be delegated as having overall responsibility for its development but it should be a team effort. Remember the English proverb: *Two heads are better than one.*

☞ The process your agency will use to identify, write, review and approve policies and procedures must be clearly stated and known to all your paid staff and volunteers.

### 4. How much time is needed?

Unfortunately there is no universal answer to this question. It depends upon many factors including:

- whether you have already developed your mission statement and values
- how many policies and procedures have already been developed by your agency
- the time made available for individual(s) to develop the policies and procedures
- whether other agencies are willing to share their policies and procedures with you

### 5. What will it cost?

You need to determine the cost of:

- paid staff's time
- production e.g. binders, photocopying, tabs
- consultant to facilitate the process (optional)

### 6. What are the foundations for your policies?

☞ Your agency's mission and values form the basis for your policies.

☞ Your policies must be consistent with the current legislation and regulations (e.g. Long Term Care Act, Occupational Health and Safety Act).

### 7. What are other relevant documents?

Assemble other relevant documents to make your writing easier, such as:

- your mission statement
- your values
- other documents produced by your agency (e.g. minutes of the Board, memos to paid staff /volunteers which state policy, orientation and

training manuals)

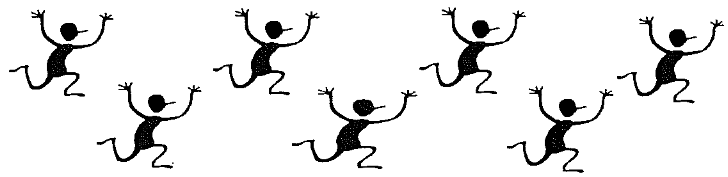
- applicable Ministry regulations, legislation and policy manuals
- funders' documents (e.g. contract requirements, service plans)
- other agencies' policies and procedures

***Keys to Success***

#7 **The policies and procedures must be specific to your agency**. You can use other agencies' policies and procedures as a guide but they will need to be adapted to your specific circumstances. If you decide to use a consultant, it is preferable that the consultant facilitates the process with your paid staff and volunteers versus writes the policies and procedures. By having the individuals who know more about your agency write the policies and procedures, it increases the applicability and accuracy of the content. It also increases ownership with the final product and thus the likelihood that the policies and procedures will be understood and followed.

# Section 5. Establishing Your Table of Contents

| *Learning Objectives* |
| --- |
| • *To explore and apply the steps described in this section to establish your Table of Contents* |



## The Seven Step Approach

Your Table of Contents is similar to the skeleton of your body. It holds everything together in an organized manner. We suggest the following seven step approach to the development of your Table of Contents. Each step is based on the decisions you make in the previous step(s).

1. Decide on how much information you are going to include in your manuals
2. Determine the number of manuals you need
3. Decide on your policy titles
4. Establish your sections and subsections
5. Select a numbering system
6. Establish a format for your Table of Contents page
7. Finalize your Table of Contents

### Step 1. Decide on The Amount of Information

You need to decide how much information you are going to include in your policies and procedures manual.

For example, will it include:

- ❑ only policies and procedures?
- ❑ definitions?
- ❑ forms (e.g. confidentiality form)?
- ❑ educational information (e.g. how to deal with a difficult client)?

Your peers said to keep it simple. Many suggested having separate manuals for forms and educational material which could be cross referenced in your policies and procedures manual.

Remember that there is no right or wrong answer. Design a manual which best meets the needs of your agency. Just ensure that it is user friendly.

## Step 2. Determine the Number of Manuals

You will need to decide how many manuals you are going to have. Will you group specific topics or have separate manuals per topic. Topics to be considered include:

i) Governance (e.g. Strategic Planning, Code of Ethics)
ii) Administration (e.g. Human Resources, Finance, Record Keeping)
iii) Client Services (e.g. Adult Day Service, Meals on Wheels, Friendly Visiting)

The following are some questions to help you decide the number of manuals you might develop:

i) How much information is going to be included? (Your response to step 1 will help in the decision.)
ii) How many services does your agency provide?
iii) Are the service providers in your agency located in different offices off site?
iv) How large will your manual be if all the policies and procedures are in one manual?
v) Is it preferable in your agency to separate governance and administration from the client services?

**Answer:** What makes it easier for the reader?

You should consider more than one manual if:

- one manual is too large and cumbersome to handle - you should be able to easily carry it
- there are different workers according to services provided (e.g. Meals on Wheels and Adult Day Service)

If you decide to have a different manual for each service you might consider having a common generic section or manual which outlines policies common to all services (e.g confidentiality, client rights).

## Step 3. Decide on Your Policy Titles

Once you determine the number of manuals, you need to decide the policy titles to be included. We suggest you use a combination of methods including:

- brainstorming with paid staff and volunteers
- finding out what other agencies similar to yours have written
- determining priority policies (see Section 6)
- other (e.g. searching the Internet)

This will be your first attempt in identifying required policies. Other policies will be identified throughout the writing process.

An example of policy titles identified by OCSA's Volunteer Management Policies and Procedures Working Group is on the next page. These were identified by brainstorming, examining what others had developed and reviewing the OCSA Standards.

## Step 4. Establish Your Sections and Subsections

If there are a lot of policies, it is often helpful to the reader if you group them in a logical order according to common themes or sections. For example, page 25 shows how the Volunteer Management policies were grouped into sections.

If your sections have already been determined (e.g. your service manual has sections such as Transportation, Meals, Adult Day Service), you can determine if any subsections would be helpful for grouping policies with common themes. This should only be done if there is a large number of policies which can be grouped.

## Step 5. Select Your Numbering System

Your numbering system helps you to:

- find a policy easily
- ensure a logical sequence for your policies

For more information on establishing your numbering system see Section 7.

# Example of Policies Identified by OCSA's Volunteer Management Policies and Procedures Working Group

- Designated Manager of Volunteers
- Confidentiality of Information
- Representing the Agency
- Acceptance of Gifts
- Handling of Funds
- Multicultural/Anti-racism
- Harassment
- Conflict of Interest
- Alcohol and Drugs
- Smoking
- Provision of References
- Recruitment
- Dress Code and Conduct
- Fraud and Theft
- Screening
- Exclusion of Applicants
- Insurance for Driving
- Probation
- Mandatory Volunteers/Special Case
- Volunteers
- Orientation and Ongoing Education/Training
- Retention of Volunteers
- Support, Supervision and Performance Review
- Discipline/Dismissal
- Recognition of Volunteers
- Resignation
- Appeal Process
- Vacation/Leave of Absence
- Reimbursement
- Evaluation of Volunteer Programs

## Example of A Table of Contents for Volunteer Management Which Organizes Policies According to Sections



Source: Table of Contents from Ontario Community Support Association's *Managing Volunteer Resources: Policies & Procedures for Community Agencies.*

## Step 6. Establish the Format for the Table of Contents Page

We suggest the Table of Contents page include:

- the name of the agency (e.g. ABC Community Support Agency)
- title of the Table of Contents (e.g. Table of Contents for Services)
- section headers if required (e.g. Generic for All Services)
- subsections if required (e.g. Intake, Assessment)
- titles of policies
- numbering for section, subsection and each policy (see Section 7 for more detail)

There are many different formats you can use for your Table of Contents. Two samples are shown on pages 27 and 28. You can also check the Tables of Contents developed by others to determine your preference (e.g. other agencies' manuals, the Internet).

## Step 7. Finalize Your Table of Contents

The six steps outlined above should assist you in developing your **initial** Table of Contents. As you start to write your policies and procedures and finalize your manuals, do not be surprised if you need to add, revise and change items (e.g. titles for policies, sections or subsections, numbering, and/or number of manuals) in your Table of Contents.

Some agencies include policy titles that need to be developed in their final Table of Contents. We suggest you only include the titles for policies that are actually contained in your manual. Otherwise, it becomes very confusing for your readers.

***Keys to Success***

#8 **Develop your draft Table of Contents first before you write your policies and procedures.** It provides a framework which will help clarify what needs to be included and will assist with the development of the groupings and the numbering system.

## ABC Community Support Agency
# Table of Contents for Services

**ABC Community Support Agency**

# Table of Contents for Administration/Governance

## Exercise # 5.

*Instructions:* *Improve the following Table of Contents*

### *Policies and Procedures*
### Table of Contents



See the next page for suggested improvements.

## Suggestions for Improvement for Exercise #5

1. Include:
   - name of Agency (e.g. ABC Community Support Agency)
   - type of Manual (e.g. Policies and Procedures for Services)

2. Do not use:
   - underlining
   - dots.....
   - page numbers (see Section 7 for further information)

3. Use an easy to understand numbering system (see Section 7)

*Example*

ABC Community Support Agency

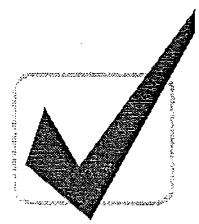
***Policies and Procedures for Services***
**Table of Contents**

# Section 6. Identifying Your Priority Policies

| *Learning Objectives* |
| --- |
| • *To identify and describe your priority policies* |

## Why do You Need to Identify Your Priority Policies?

It will be difficult for you to write all your policies and procedures at once. You need to start somewhere. It should be with your priority policies. These are the policies which your paid staff and volunteers must know in order to provide a safe and quality service and promote a strong functioning organization.



## How do You Identify Your Agency's Priority Policies?

Try using a systematic approach to identify your agency's priority policies. Three possible approaches are provided below:

1. Develop a checklist chart based on the standards developed by an organization (e.g. OCSA, Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation). Identify where you need to develop a policy and decide its priority level (e.g. high, medium, low). An example of a checklist for OCSA's standards is included on page 33.

2. Try the QUIRK tool developed for the OCSA Workshops. It should help you identify policies which address quality, consistency of approach, risk management, and areas of confusion with staff and volunteers (see page 34/.

3. Try a combination of the two listed above. Use the checklist and then use QUIRK to identify additional priority policies.

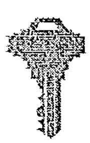
If you have funding requirements and/or contracts (e.g. with the Community Care Access Centre [CCAC] in your area to provide specific services), you will need to ensure that the above approaches include the policies the funders require you to have in place. For example the Ministry of Health's document, *Community Care*

*Access Centre RFP Template*, July 1997 includes:

- The operational policies and procedures of the service provider must be consistent with the Bill of Right of persons receiving Community Services as specified in the Long-Term Care Act, Part III.
- The service provider has developed and follows policies to protect the confidentiality of client, employee and operational information; these policies address issues of access, disclosure, handling and storage, and the retention and destruction of records.
- The service provider has policies and procedures for staff recruitment, staff orientation and ongoing commitment to training and development programs.
- The service provider has policies for evaluating staff performance on an ongoing basis and for dealing with any performance issues identified.
- The service providers' policies for staff management reflect a teamwork approach.
- The service provider has policies and procedures for promoting employee health and well-being including occupational health and safety and to assist staff to manage a crisis in the home or other service sites.

Remember developing policies and procedures is an ongoing process. As you and your paid staff and volunteers identify the need for new priority policies - develop them - do not wait.

***Keys for Success***



#9. **Do not overwhelm your paid staff and volunteers with large numbers of policies and procedures. Focus on the priority ones.**

## Example of A Policies and Procedures Checklist Using OCSA Standards

| 1. Generic Standards | | | Need to Create | Need to Update | Completed | Priority H M L | Need to Also Include for Policies and Procedures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1 Intake | 1.1.1 | The service is accessible to persons who meet the eligibility criteria for the service according to the Long Term Care Act Regulations | ❑ | ❑ | ❑ | | |
| | 1.1.2 | The agency recognizes that it is part of an integrated system of services. | ❑ | ❑ | ❑ | | |
| 1.2 Assessment | 1.2.1 | An individualized assessment appropriate for the specific service is completed to determine the client's needs. | ❑ | ❑ | ❑ | | |
| 1.3 Development of A Plan of Service | 1.3.1 | A plan of service which is developed in collaboration with each client[2] is based on the assessment of his/her needs and the type of service being provided.[3] | ❑ | ❑ | ❑ | | |
| | 1.3.2 | Each client's rights are respected and promoted by the paid staff and volunteers. | ❑ | ❑ | ❑ | | |
| | 1.3.3 | There is a process for supporting each client in making informed decisions concerning his/her plan of service. | ❑ | ❑ | ❑ | | |

[2] Client and/or appropriate substitute decision maker.

[3] The extent of the detail for the plan of service varies with the specific service.

# Using QUIRK to Identify Your Priority Policies and Procedures

| | | **Question** | **Possible Sources** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Q** | **Quality** | Where do you need policies to ensure quality? | Board values; client, paid staff and volunteer feedback; quality dimensions[4]; audit using standards (e.g. OCSA). |
| **U** | **Universality** | Where do you need policies to ensure consistency of approach? | Number of serious concerns raised about the different ways paid staff/volunteers are doing things. |
| **I** | **Individuality** | Do the policies reflect the individuality and uniqueness of your agency? | Agency's mission; vision; values; types of services provided; types of clients; type of community. |
| **R** | **Risk** | Where do you need policies to prevent/eliminate/reduce risk? | Incident reports; feedback from paid staff/volunteers and clients; categories of risk to consider: abuse, personal injury, medical, environmental, property damage, financial loss, loss of reputation/goodwill and other.[5] |
| **K** | **Konfusion** | Where could policies eliminate current confusion? | High number of specific tasks being performed incorrectly. Similar questions being asked a lot. |

---

[4] See Glossary of Terms

[5] Personal injury, bodily harm, property damage, reputation/goodwill and financial loss are common categories of risk listed in the literature e.g. Street, L. *The Screening Handbook: Protecting Clients, Staff and the Community*. Ottawa: Canadian Association of Volunteer Bureaux and Centres, 1996. Abuse, medical and environmental were added by the Working Group which developed OCSA's *Managing Risk: Policies and Procedures for Community Agencies.*

## Exercise #6

*Instructions:* *Complete the following chart by identifying examples of priority topic areas for policies.*

| | | **Priority Topic Areas for Policies** |
|---|---|---|
| **Q** | **Quality** | **1.**<br>**2.** |
| **U** | **Universality** | **1.**<br>**2.** |
| **I** | **Individuality** | **Remember!** |
| **R** | **Risk** | **1.**<br>**2.** |
| **K** | **Konfusion** | **1.**<br>**2.** |

Your peers came up with the following examples of priority topic areas for policies using QUIRK:

| | | **Examples of Priority Topic Areas for Policies** |
|---|---|---|
| **Q** | **Quality** | • Confidentiality of paid staff and volunteers<br>• Training of paid staff and volunteers<br>• Client choice<br>• Accessibility<br>• Individual service plans |
| **U** | **Universality** | • Appeals process<br>• Hiring practices<br>• Orientation<br>• Hours of work<br>• Recruitment of paid staff and volunteers |
| **I** | **Individuality** | **Remember!** |
| **R** | **Risk** | • Screening of paid staff and volunteers<br>• Dealing with emergencies<br>• Handling medications<br>• Documentation<br>• Universal precautions |
| **K** | **Konfusion** | • Mileage reimbursement<br>• Overtime<br>• Lines of communication<br>• Part time/full time<br>• Filling out of forms for volunteer hours<br>• Complaint process |

**Note:** While it is recognized that some of the policies could fit under any of the QUIRK categories, many of your peers found it was a helpful tool for identifying priority policies.

# Section 7. Determining Your Numbering System

| *Learning Objectives* |
|---|
| • *To determine how to develop your numbering system* |

## How do You Establish Your Numbering System? ① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Consider "SUE" when you set up your numbering system. Your numbering system needs to be:

- ❑ Structured
- ❑ User friendly
- ❑ Expandable[6]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **S** | **Structured** | The flow is organized (e.g. it follows the structure of the organization/ service). |
| **U** | **User friendly** | The numbering system is easy to understand, making information easy to find. |
| **E** | **Expandable** | It provides room to add other information later. You can use different modes of numbering (e.g. alphabetical, roman numeral, arabic numbers and letters of the topic), for example:<br>A.10<br>II-ADS-10<br>2-10<br>HR-10-10 |

[6] Adapted from the work of Cyderman, P. *Policies and Procedures: Producing Manuals that Work.* Ottawa: Canadian Hospital Association Press, 1994.

**Structured and User Friendly**

There should be a logical sequence to the numbering - it should not confuse the reader by jumping all over the place. An example of a confusing numbering system is shown below:

I. ADULT DAY SERVICES
I.A.1. Specific Policy Title
I.A.2 Specific Policy Title
I.C.1 Specific Policy Title
I.E.1 Specific Policy Title
I.F.1 Specific Policy Title
I.L.1 Specific Policy Title

The above numbering may have the reader wondering why there are two policies with I.A and then the numbering jumps in the alphabet to I.C and then to I.E., I.F and then to I.L. This could be improved a number of different ways including:

**I. Adult Day Services**
Specific Policy Title I-10
Specific Policy Title I-20
Specific Policy Title I-30
Specific Policy Title I-40
Specific Policy Title I-50
Specific Policy Title I-60

**Expandable**

Your numbering system needs to be expandable to allow for additional policies to be inserted in their logical place at a later date. That is why it is helpful to go by 10s. Cryderman suggests if a policy needs to be inserted between numbers, it should be numbered to allow for additional policies immediately before and after.[7] As an example, the number for a new policy inserted between A.10 and A.20 would be A.15. This still leaves room for an additional four policies to be inserted before A.15 and four policies after A.15.

[7] Cyderman, P. *Policies and Procedures: Producing Manuals that Work.* Ottawa: Canadian Hospital Association Press, 1994, p.277.

This system can also be applied to the numbering for sections and subsections, if you need to allow for additional sections or subsections to be inserted in their logical place at a later date.

We suggest you not use the .01 method of numbering (i.e. .01, .02, .03). It makes it very confusing if you need to insert an additional policy (e.g. .01, .02, **.021**, .03) or you insert the policy at the end (e.g. .01, .02, .03, **.04**) where it does not logically fit.

## How Long Should Your Numbering Go?

You should always make sure that your numbering system does not become too long and thus confusing to your reader. As an example, the policy number IV.10.10.10.10 is too long and is not user friendly. If you find your numbering system becomes cumbersome - go back to your draft Table of Contents and develop some additional sections so your numbering system is shortened or add another manual.

**Example:**

IV. Services
IV.10 Meal Services
IV.10.10 Meals on Wheels
IV. 10.10.10 Food Safety
Temperature of Food IV.10.10.10.10

This could be shortened in several ways e.g.

1. Have generic policies for meal services:

    IV. Services
    IV.GM Generic Policies for Meal Services
    IV.GM.10 Food Safety
    Temperature of Food IV. GM.10.10

2. Have a separate manual just for Services and remove the Food Safety Subsection if there are not a lot of policies under Meals on Wheels, then:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I. | Meal Services | |
| I.MOW | Meals on Wheels | |
| | Temperature of Food | I.MOW.10 |

3. Have a separate manual just for Meals, then:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| MOW | Meals on Wheels | |
| | Temperature of Food | MOW.10 |

## Should You Number Your Pages?

Do not number your pages. Otherwise, you will have to redo your manual every time you insert a new policy. For example, if you sequentially number your pages and you have a policy on page 6 and the next one on page 7 - how do you number the page of the new policy you need to insert which logically follows the policy on page 6?

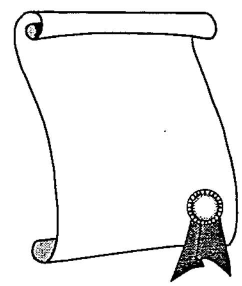
***Keys to Success***

**#10: Use SUE when developing your numbering system. Make it S(tructured), U(ser friendly) and E(xpandable).**

# Section 8. Establishing a Format for Your Policies and Procedures Pages

| ***Learning Objectives*** |
|---|
| • *To identify consistent items to have on your policies and procedures pages*<br>• *To select the page format for your policies and procedures* |

## What Consistent Items do You Need on Your Policies and Procedures Pages?



If you examine other organizations' policies and procedures pages, you will probably notice a variety of items. So what are the essential items? Items suggested by your peers were:

- name of agency
- name of manual
- section title
- section number
- policy title
- policy number
- page number for specific policy (e.g. page 1 of 2)
- policy statement
- purpose
- procedures
- date of approval
- review dates
- date of last revision

With funders requiring proof that specific requirements are met, some also suggested the following be added:

- standards that the policy addresses
- quality dimensions that the policy addresses (see Glossary of Terms)

Other suggestions included:

- job title of contact person
- cross-manual reference

- monitoring tools
- relevant forms

The page on which the items for a policy and its procedures are located will vary depending upon the number of pages for each policy and its procedures.

## How Should You Format the Consistent Items on Your Pages?

The type of formatting for the consistent items used by various organizations also varies. Different things to consider include the use of:

- headers and footers
- agency logo
- boxes
- lines
- bullets
- different font types (e.g. Times New Roman, Arial)
- different font sizes (e.g. 8, 10, 12, 14)
- different font styles (e.g. regular, bold, italics, underline)
- spacing (e.g. single, double)
- space (e.g. amount of white space on the page)

One possible page format for a policy and its procedures is shown on page 44.

## Exercise #7

*Instructions:* *Develop in the box below a format for a page in your policies and procedures manual incorporating the essential items required.*

Logo and Name of the Organization

# Policies and Procedures Manual for Services

Page 1 of 1

| | |
|---|---|
| **Section Title:** Meals on Wheels | **Section Number:** MOW |
| **Policy Title:** | **Policy Number:** MOW-10 |

| |
|---|
| **Policy Statement:** |

**Purpose:**

**Procedures:**

***Responsibility*** ***Action***

**Contact Person: (job title)**
**Quality Dimension:**
**OCSA Standard:**
**Cross-Manual Reference:**
**Monitoring Tool(s):**
**Relevant Forms:**
**Board Approval Date:**
**Review Dates:**
**Revised Date:**

## Formatting the Top of Pages After the First Page of a Policy

There are a number of options for formatting the top of the following pages for a policy, including:

1. The same format as the first page as shown below.

Logo and Name of the Organization

**Policies and Procedures Manual for Services**

Page 2 of 2

| | |
|---|---|
| **Section Title:** Meals on Wheels | **Section Number:** MOW |
| **Policy Title:** | **Policy Number:** MOW-10 |

**Procedures (cont.):**

***Responsibility*** ***Action***

2. A different format from the first page, containing the basic required information An example is shown below.

Logo and Name of the Organization

**Policies and Procedures Manual for Services**

Page 2 of 2
Policy Title and Number

**Procedures (cont.):**

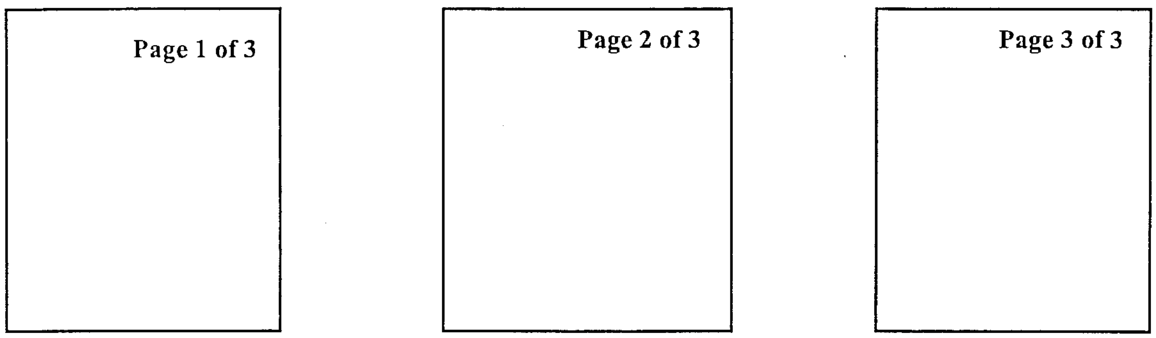
***Responsibility*** ***Action***

## More About the Number of Pages for a Specific Policy

It is important that the reader knows how many pages there are for each policy. For example, if a staff member picked up your policies and procedures manual to determine what to do in an emergency situation, it is essential that the person knows there are three pages to read not one or that a page is missing.

Therefore, either at the top or the bottom of the page, you need to indicate how many pages there are for the policy and its procedures and which page the person is currently reading. An example for a policy and its procedures which requires three pages is shown below.

| | |
|---|---|
| Page 1 should have written on it: | Page 1 of 3 |
| Page 2 should have written on it: | Page 2 of 3 |
| Page 3 should have written on it: | Page 3 of 3 |




### *Keys for Success*

**# 11. You must have a consistent format for your pages in all your policies and procedures manuals.**

**# 12. You must indicate how many pages there are for each policy and its procedures.**

# Section 9. Determining The Writing Style for Your Manual

| *Learning Objectives* |
|---|
| • *To examine how to write in a user friendly manner* |

## What Writing Style Should You Use?

It is critical that your writing style is user friendly. Otherwise, your paid staff and volunteers will not read your policies and procedures or they will have trouble understanding them.

Consider CCAAT when writing your policies and procedures[8]:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **C:** | **Clear** | Not open to misinterpretation, use of commonly used and understood words |
| **C:** | **Concise** | Simple writing, not wordy |
| **A:** | **Accurate** | Correct punctuation, proper grammar and spelling |
| **A:** | **Authoritative** | Firm, directive verbs for policies |
| **T:** | **Tense** | Present tense for procedures. |

[8] Based on the work of others including Cyderman, P. *Policies and Procedures: Producing Manuals that Work.* Ottawa: Canadian Hospital Association Press, 1994; Hubbartt, W. *Personnel Policy Handbook: How to Develop a Manual that Works*. Toronto: McGraw Hill Inc., 1993; and, Taylor, K.; Avery, H.; and, Strath, L. *Clear, Correct and Creative: A Handbook for Writers of Academic Prose.*Peterborough: Academic Skills Centre, Trent University, 1991.

## Clear

1. Try to use commonly used words, for example:
   write *versus* correspond
   talk *versus* dialogue

2. Write words out in full (i.e. do not use acronyms such as LTC, CCAC, RFP).

3. Use words that are not open to different interpretations such as regular, immediately, as soon as possible.

## Concise

Use as few words as possible. Get right to the point and avoid the use of "flowery" language. The use of bullets, point form and short sentences helps to shorten the text.

## Accurate

Poor sentence structure, poor grammar, poor punctuation and spelling errors tend to distract the reader from the intent of the policy and its procedures. Refer to grammar books and use the spell check and grammar check on your word processing software.

## Authoritative and Flexible Verbs

Remember that policies state what needs to be done. Since there is no room for flexibility use strong authoritative verbs[9] such as:

- must
- shall

*or state*

[9] Based on information in Ontario Ministry of Health. *Community Care Access Centre RFP Template*, July 1997, p.3.

It is the policy of ABC Community Support Agency to...

*or*
It is mandatory to ....

When you write guidelines which allow for flexibility, you can use verbs such as:

- may
- can
- should

For example, if it is your intention to make sure that all client incidents are reported write:

Paid staff and volunteers **must** report all client incidents.

*not*

Paid staff and volunteers **should** report all client incidents.

## Verb Tense for Procedures

The present tense is preferred for procedures as it outlines what is to happen now.

| *Responsibility* | *Action* |
|---|---|
| Executive Director | Designates spokespersons for the agency. |

## Do You Use the Active or Passive Voice?

It is preferable to use the active voice when you want to make it very clear who is responsible for doing a specific action.

☞ The active voice states who/what is doing the action (i.e. the subject of the sentence is doing the action).

☞ The passive voice has the action being done by someone/something. The subject of the sentence is the one being "acted upon."

☞ The passive voice tends to include the verb "to be" and the word "by."

☞ A sentence with the passive voice requires more words than the active voice.

An example of the active voice: *The volunteer gave the meal to the client.* (8 words)

An example of the passive voice: *The client was given the meal by the volunteer.* (9 words)

## Exercise # 8 The Voice Exercise

*Instructions:* *Use the following words to write sentences in the active and passive voice. You can alter the tense of the verbs and add additional words to formulate the sentences.*

1. Words: dog, walk

   Passive Voice:

   Active Voice:

2. Words: write, story

   Passive Voice:

   Active Voice:

3. Words: report, incident

   Passive Voice:

Active Voice:

See the end of the section (page 56) for possible answers.

It is not possible in this manual to review all the aspects of correct and effective writing. We suggest you review grammar texts and read the relevant sections in the books by Cyderman and Hubbartt for more details.

## Exercise # 9 Testing What You Have Learned

*Instructions:* *Using the information you have learned, improve the following policies.*

**Policy 1.** All people who are working for and/or volunteering for ABC Community Support Agency should make sure that he/she does not smoke while they are working during office hours.

**Your Suggested Rewording:**

**Policy 2.** Employees who work for ABC Community Support Agency and are eligible will receive all their pay during short-term absences due to illness, those who have long-term absences due to illness have to go to their doctor and bring in a doctor's note stating why they are absent.

**Your Suggested Rewording:**

**Policy 3.** All unusual incidents which have to do with any clients, paid staff and volunteers of the ABC Community Support Agency should be noted by paid staff and volunteers and reported.

**Your Suggested Rewording:**

See the end of the section (page 56) for possible answers.

## Writing Policies

- ☞ Policies state what must be done.
- ☞ Policies can be specific or generic. For example, a generic policy on client rights can cover all services, while a specific policy on paid staff-client ratios applies to the Adult Day Service.
- ☞ While policies can be on a separate page from procedures or in a separate manual, your peers preferred having them together on the same page.
- ☞ It is helpful if you determine the purpose of your policy first. This will assist you in focusing in on the intent of your policy.
- ☞ If you want your policies to be read, keep them concise.

## Zero Tolerance Policies

Be careful with zero tolerance policies. For example, "No alcohol is allowed on agency property." If this is the policy, what do you do if a client or a staff person gives someone a bottle of wine as a gift on agency property?

**One Suggestion**: The policy can remain as zero tolerance and the procedures provide for some flexibility, for example one of the steps in the procedures could state, "the Executive Directors reviews the severity of each infraction to determine the appropriate action (e.g. explanation of the policy; warning; suspension)."

## Writing Procedures

Procedures outline the steps for meeting the policy. We suggest you use flowcharting (also referred to as mapping) to help you write your procedures. Flowcharting is a graphic method which helps you determine the steps required. Specifically, it shows in a logical order the essential steps which must occur and by whom.

## An Example of Flowcharting the Procedures:

***Policy:*** Paid staff and volunteers must report all unusual incidents.

***Procedures:***

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | **Start:** | The unusual incident occurs | |
| | | *Responsibility* | *Action* |
| □ ↓ | **Step 1:** | Paid staff/volunteer | notifies the coordinator of the details of the unusual incident right after it occurs. |
| □ ↓ | **Step 2:** | Coordinator | directs the paid staff/volunteer as to the appropriate action to take (e.g. call the client's emergency contact person). |
| □ ↓ | **Step 3:** | Paid staff/volunteer | takes appropriate action as outlined by the coordinator. |
| □ ↓ | **Step 4:** | Paid staff/volunteer | submits within one day a completed Incident Report Form to the coordinator. |
| □ ↓ | **Step 5:** | Coordinator | reviews Incident Report Form and completes any required follow-up (e.g. notify funder). |
| □ ↓ | **Step 6:** | Coordinator | keeps all completed Incident Report Forms in the client's file (if appropriate) and the paid staff/volunteer's file. |
| ○ | **Stop:** | All steps have been completed | |

Some agencies use the above process as an initial step but in the final write up group actions by responsibility (i.e. all actions for the coordinator are grouped together).

An example of a completed policy and its procedures from OCSA's *Managing Risk: Policies & Procedures for Community Agencies* is on the next page.

## Exercise #10

*Background:* *Your 18 year old son likes to party and come home late. As a parent/guardian you are worried about your son's safety.*

*Instructions: Write a policy and its procedures using flowcharting which address your above safety concerns.*

| **Sample Policy:** |
| --- |
| |

**Sample Procedures:**

| *Responsibility* | *Action* |
| --- | --- |

See the end of the section (page 57) for examples of policies and procedures written by your peers.

Logo and Name of the Agency

## Title of the Manual

Page 1 of 1

| | |
|---|---|
| **Section Heading:** Risk Management | **Section Number:** RM |
| **Policy Title:** Informing Clients/Caregivers and Funders of Service Limitations | **Policy Number:** RM-100 |

**Policy Statement:**
The agency must inform all clients and/or caregivers and funders of their service limitations.

**Purpose:** To enable clients and/or caregivers to make informed decisions about the level of risk they are prepared to accept.

| *Responsibility* | *Action* |
|---|---|
| Manager/Supervisor | Informs clients of the limits of the service, prior to initiation of service.<br>Develops with client/caregiver a plan of service including for example, what the agency can and can not do, signed written agreements.<br>Retains information in client's file.<br>Gives copy of the information to the client. |

Contact Person: (job title)
Quality Dimension: Safety
OCSA Standard:
Cross-Manual Reference:
Monitoring Tool(s):
Relevant Forms:
Board Approval Date:
Review Dates:
Revised Date:

**Examples of Answers to Exercise #8**

1. Active Voice: *The boy walked the dog.*

   Passive Voice: *The dog was walked by the boy.*

2. Active Voice: *The man wrote the story.*

   Passive Voice: *The story was written by the man.*

3. Active Voice: *Paid staff and volunteers must report all client incidents.*

   Passive Voice: *All client incidents must be reported by paid staff and volunteers.*

**Examples of Rewording for Exercise #9**

Some of your peers suggested the following:

1. No smoking in the workplace.

2. Employees with medical absences over one week, must provide a doctor's certificate with written explanation.

   *A second policy could also be written.* The agency must give eligible employees full pay for short term absences due to illness.

3. Volunteers and paid staff must document and report all unusual incidents.

## Suggestions for Exercise #10

*Some of your peers wrote a generic policy which applies to everyone within the family, for example:*

**Generic Policy:** All members of this family must communicate their where abouts after 12 o'clock midnight.

**Procedures:**

| *Responsibility* | *Action* |
|---|---|
| Family member who is out | Lets family know where he/she is going to be, the contact person and the phone number. |
| | Lets family know how and when he/she will get home. |
| | Calls home if unable to get a ride or if he/she needs help. |

*Others wrote policies specific for the son, for example:*

**Policy Specific for the Son:** The son must come home at the assigned time or inform his parents of any unusual circumstances.

**Procedures:**

| *Responsibility* | *Action* |
|---|---|
| The son | Negotiates the time of return with his parents. |
| The son and parents | Determine the process of contacting the parents if he is going to be late. |
| The parents | Discuss the consequences of being late. |
| | Discuss the courtesy issues. |

*An even more specific policy for the son:*

**Policy:** All children must arrive home at the agreed upon time.

**Procedure:**

| *Responsibility* | *Action* |
|---|---|
| The parents and son | Identify the time it takes to travel home and allow for contingencies. |
| Son | Leaves at estimated departure time. |
| | Calls home and/or leave a message if not able to leave at the designated time. |
| | Follows emergency procedures as per situation if unable to call home. |
| The parents | If late, subtract from the next outing's arrival time the amount of time the son was late. |

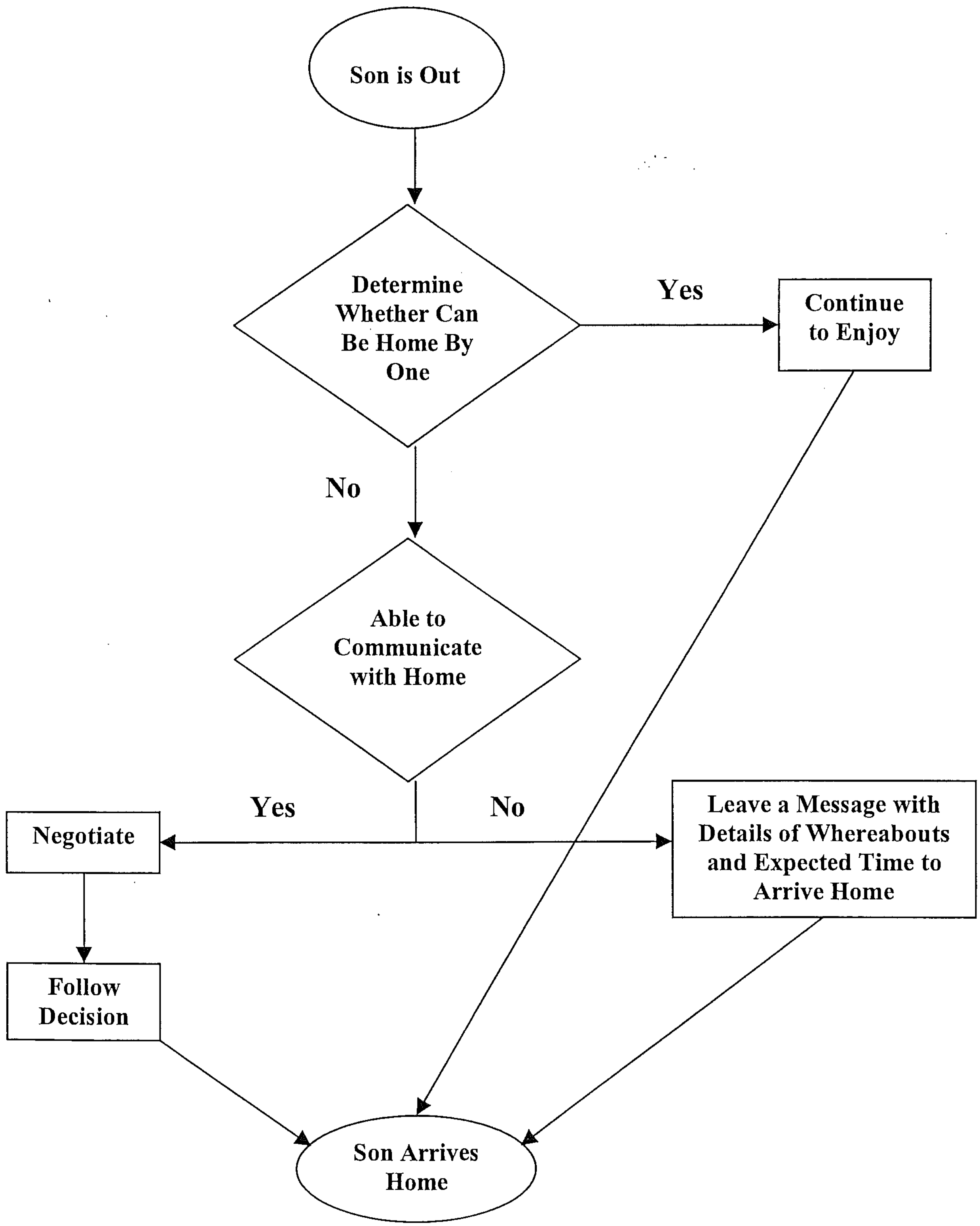
An example of one group's flowcharting is shown on the next page.

The above examples demonstrate that a variety of policies can be written to cover a specific area of concern.

***Keys to Success***

**# 13 If you want your reader to read and understand your policies and procedures, write them in concise, simple and easy to understand language.**

## Example of Flowcharting Developed By Some of Your Peers



# Section 10: Developing Your Plan of Action

| *Learning Objectives* |
|---|
| • *To prepare the plan of action for writing your agency's policies and procedures* |

## Information You Require Prior to Developing Your Plan of Action

Based on your work in the previous sections, you will have:

1. Identified the strengths in your existing policies and procedures upon which you should build (Section 3)
2. Identified areas for improvement in your existing policies and procedures (Section 3)
3. Decided on:
   - purpose of your manual
   - who should read it
   - who is going to develop it (e.g. individuals, working groups)
   - the time frame
   - the estimated costs (Section 4)
4. Collected relevant documents [e.g. your mission statement, values, applicable agency documents, applicable Ministry regulations and legislation, funders requirements, other agencies' policies and procedures] (Section 4)
5. Determined the number of manuals and the extent of information you are going to include in them (Section 5)
6. Identified your priority policies and procedures (Section 6)
7. Selected your numbering system (Section 7)
8. Established the format for your policies and procedures pages (Section 8)
9. Confirmed your writing style (Section 9)
10. Created your draft Table of Contents (Section 5)

You are now ready to develop your action plan.

## Your Action Plan

Your action plan should include:

- the policies to be developed
- the individual(s)/working group(s) responsible for developing the initial draft policies and procedures
- the individuals responsible for reviewing and revising the initial draft policies and procedures
- the expected time frame for beginning and completing the draft policies and procedures.
- resources required

A sample chart is included on the next page.

Section 12 suggests methods for successfully implementing your policies and procedures including: pilot testing; legal scrutiny and the approval process.

## Example of An Action Plan for Developing Your Agency's Policies and Procedures

| Policy Title | Individual(s) Responsible for Development | Start Date | Completion Date | Individual(s)/ Group(s) Responsible for Reviewing First Draft | Completion Date | Resources Required |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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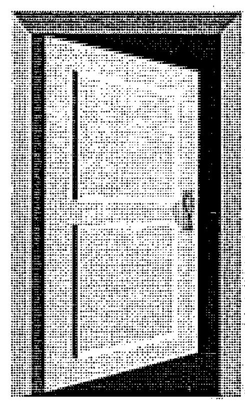
# Section 11: Making Your Manual User Friendly

| *Learning Objectives* |
|---|
| • *To recognize key items which make your manual user friendly* |

## How Do You Make Your Manual User Friendly?

Once you have developed your Table of Contents and written your policies and procedures, you need to place them in a manual which is user friendly. It is especially important that the readers can quickly find the policies and procedures they need. Suggestions from your peers are listed below. Some repeat key points from previous sections of the manual.

### A. Finding Information



- instructions at the beginning of the manual
- a Table of Contents
- logical sequence/groupings
- a numbering system
- tabs
- an index
- colour coding
- cross referencing of material (i.e. reference made to where to find additional information)
- separate section for definitions

### B. Reading Information

- easy to understand language/terminology (culturally appropriate)
- evenly spaced (not cluttered) pages
- consistency in format
- clear bold headings
- easy to read layout of the page (e.g. double spaced, large and clear print)
- quick to view - point form, bullets, short paragraphs
- single sided so sections can be removed
- use of diagrams, decision trees, flowcharting
- binder easy to stay open and add pages to (e.g. 3 ring binder)

- separate manuals for each language (i.e. one for English and one for French)
- use of both computerized and hard copies

## Do You Need an Index?

☞ The larger the number of policies, the greater the need for an index.

☞ An index makes it easier for you to find the information. For example, if you use a cookbook, you probably use the index to find a recipe. The same applies for policies.

☞ Word processing software can now develop the index for you. Just check the index of your software manual.

***Keys to Success***

**# 14 Use a variety of different techniques to make it easier for your reader to find the required information in your manual.**

# Section 12. Implementing Your Policies and Procedures

| *Learning Objectives* |
| --- |
| • *To explore methods for successfully implementing your policies and procedures* |

## Pilot Testing

It is important for you to pilot test your policies and procedures before they are finalized. Examples include having:

- the draft manual in use and asking individuals reading it to add suggestions on a comment sheet which is placed at the beginning of the manual
- individuals in your agency not involved in developing the policies and procedures read the manual and make suggestions
- individuals from another agency similar to yours read the manual and make suggestions

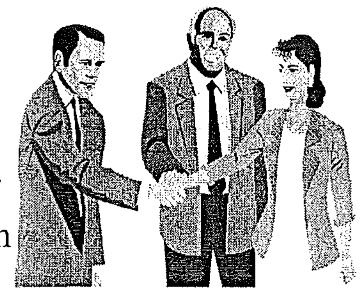
## Legal Scrutiny

It is always a good idea to have your manual read by a lawyer to ensure that you are not suggesting anything illegal (e.g. not following the Human Rights Code) or a particular action which could put your agency at risk for being sued.

## Approval Process

Ultimately the Board of Directors is responsible for approving the policies and procedures. Although this varies depending upon the type of board model and the culture of your organization, the process does need to be clearly defined. See John Carver's book listed in the Bibliography for a model adapted by a number of OCSA member agencies.

## How to Implement Your Policies and Procedures



The goal for implementing your policies and procedures is to ensure that all paid staff and volunteers are aware of and know how to apply the policies and procedures which are relevant to the services they provide. Some examples provided by your peers are listed below:

☞ Accessibility:

- have sufficient copies of the manual (e.g. one for each team/office)
- make readily available (e.g. on a shelf where people can get it - not in the Executive Director's office)
- provide key policies and procedures to each paid staff/volunteer (e.g. laminated pocket sized card with the policies and procedures on what to do in an emergency situation or the policies and procedures on the back of the volunteer hours reporting form)

☞ Awareness:

- discuss at orientation and in-service education sessions
- review policy and procedure issues and suggestions at each paid staff/volunteer meeting

## Updating Your Policies and Procedures

It is important that you continuously update your policies and procedures and not leave it for a once every two year exercise. Suggestions provided by your peers include:

- having a discussion at each paid staff/volunteer meeting about areas for improvement
- placing a sheet of paper at the beginning of the manual where the reader writes the date, the policy read and suggestions for improvement

In addition, you might consider developing a monthly time schedule which outlines what items in your agency have to be reviewed and/or developed including policies and procedures.

A few of your peers mentioned that they had a checklist incorporated into their Table of Contents for inserting the date a policy had been reviewed. We do not suggest this method as it tends to make the Table of Contents page very confusing.

Keep your outdated policies and procedures for future reference. An example was given of the tainted blood scandal and how agencies needed to indicate what their policies and procedures were concerning the testing of blood a number of years earlier.

### *Keys to Success*

#15 **You need to have an implementation process for your policies and procedures which ensures that your paid staff and volunteers are continuously informed of your policies and procedures and have ongoing mechanisms for suggesting improvements.**

## *Keys to Success*

1. Before you write your policies and procedures, you need to identify what you don't know (i.e. your learning needs).

2. For consistency of action by your paid staff and volunteers, your policies and procedures must be written.

3. For policies and procedures to be followed, the paid staff and volunteers must know them.

4. For policies and procedures to be followed, they must be realistic and enforceable.

5. For your policies and procedures manual to be used, it must be user friendly.

6. For policies and procedures to be followed, the manuals must be accessible.

7. The policies and procedures must be specific to your agency. You can use other agencies' policies and procedures as a guide but they will need to be adapted to your specific circumstances. If you decide to use a consultant, it is preferable that the consultant facilitate the process with your paid staff and volunteers versus write the policies and procedures. By having the individuals who know the most about your agency write the policies and procedures, it increases the applicability and accuracy of content. It also increases ownership with the final product and thus the likelihood that the policies and procedures will be understood and followed.

8. Develop your draft Table of Contents first before you write your policies and procedures. It provides a framework which will help clarify what needs to be included and will assist with the development of the groupings and the numbering system.

9. Do not overwhelm your paid staff and volunteers with large numbers of policies and procedures. Focus on priority ones.
10. Use SUE when developing your numbering system. Make it S(tructured),

U(ser friendly) and E(xpandable).

11. You must have a consistent format for your pages in all your policies and procedures manuals.

12. You must indicate how many pages there are for each policy and its procedures.

13. If you want your reader to read and understand your policies and procedures, write them in concise, simple and easy to understand language.

14. Use a variety of different techniques to make it easier for your reader to find the required information in your manual.

15. You need to have an implementation process for your policies and procedures which ensures that your paid staff and volunteers are continuously informed of your policies and procedures and have ongoing mechanisms for suggesting improvements.

# Glossary of Terms/

**Policy** Policies state what must be done in your agency.

**Procedures** Procedures outline the steps you need to take to carry out a policy.

**Quality Dimension** An aspect of the service which should be considered in order to determine if the agency is providing a "quality service". Although quality itself cannot be measured, components of quality, i.e. the quality dimensions can. The common quality dimensions are: accessibility, appropriateness, continuity, effectiveness, efficiency, client perspective, safety, timeliness. [10]

**Accessibility:** The degree to which clients obtain the service that is responsive to their needs.

**Appropriateness:** The degree to which the appropriate service is provided, given the current accepted knowledge and/or standards of practice.

**Continuity:** The degree to which the service needed by clients is coordinated among other providers and organizations and time to provide continuity and consistency.

**Effectiveness:** The degree to which service is provided in the correct manner.

**Efficiency:** The degree to which the service received has the desired effect with a minimum of effort, expense and/or duplication.

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[10] These are listed in the Ministry of Health's *Provincial Requirements for the Request for Proposal Process for The Provision of In-Home Services, Supplies and Equipment,* May 1996 which sources Donabedian, A. *The role of outcomes in quality assessment and assurance.* Quality Review Bulletin 1992; 18(ii), 356-60 and Macdonald, M. and Boulianne, R. *Governance for quality: getting to the heart of it.* Healthcare Management Forum 1995, 8(iii), 46.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Client Perspective:** | The degree to which clients and their families are involved in the decision-making process in matters pertaining to their health, and the degree to which they are satisfied with their service. |
| **Safety:** | The degree to which potential risks are avoided or minimized and are explained to the client and family. |
| **Timeliness:** | The degree to which service is provided to clients when needed. |

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