

Statement of Principles

Scarborough Women's Centre (SWC) wants everyone involved in its programs and services to be treated in a manner that is positive, fair and non-discriminatory. We have developed a Complaints Policy and Procedure to ensure that all members of our community, including employees, volunteers, students, participants, and Board members, are aware of how to express any concerns they have about treatment received at the Centre.

SWC has developed clear and fair procedures for investigating and resolving complaints as quickly and effectively as possible. We welcome feedback and will use what we learn through the complaints process to continually improve our policies and services.

SWC recognizes that in a majority of situations, complaints can be resolved informally. Our goal in these situations is to support the person making the complaint (the Complainant) with the tools and advice to resolve the complaint herself. We will also follow up to determine if the Complainant is satisfied with the outcome.

07/05

Scarborough Women's Centre Programs & Services

Case Management:

Offers goal clarification, planning and support for women who want assistance in overcoming barriers to economic and emotional independence.

Economic Self Sufficiency Program

In an intensive program, women who have left abusive situations are assisted in the move to economic and emotional independence.

Educational Workshops:

Courses and workshops on topics of concern to women presented in small groups (15-20) with a trained facilitator. Topics include: Assertiveness, Self-esteem, Anger management, Legal Issues and Women's Health.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

Board and Committee Members:

Responsible for the overall direction of the agency and ensuring adequate resources are available.

Resource Information Volunteer:

Provide referrals in our anonymous, confidential phone service.

One-to-One Mentoring Program:

Trained mentors/tutors provide mentoring and support in a non-judgmental way to an individual woman going through a transition in her life.



**Scarborough
Women's
Centre**

SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURES

2100 Ellesmere Rd. Suite 245
Scarborough, Ontario M1H 3B7

Tel: 416-439-7111

Fax: 416-439-6999

Email: ed@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca
www.scarboroughwomenscentre.ca

Mission Statement:

Scarborough Women's Centre facilitates the empowerment of any woman who wants to leave an abusive or isolating situation, so that she can make long-term positive changes with confidence.

Summary of Complaints Policy

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with the service or treatment an individual has received at SWC. A complaint may be made by a participant, Board or staff member, student, volunteer or service user.

An individual may have grounds for a complaint if she is unhappy about an issue related, for example, to:

- a SWC program, service or decision
- treatment from other participants, staff or Board members, service providers, students and volunteers
- having her personal information shared in a way that is contrary to SWC's confidentiality Policy and Provincial privacy legislation
- the violation of professional ethics or boundaries under SWC's Boundaries Policy
- hate activity or discrimination and harassment as forbidden by both legislation and SWC's Access policy
- anything that intimidates, threatens or makes someone feel unwelcome at SWC.

Complaints Procedures

1- Making an Informal Complaint

Most complaints can be resolved informally. If you feel you have grounds for a complaint,

telephone or write to the SWC program supervisor or Executive Director. She will respond to your complaint as soon as possible. She will first try to get more information, to find out what outcome you are seeking and to help you reach an informal resolution, where appropriate. If it appears that your complaint relates to behavior that seriously violates SWC policy or indicates discrimination or harassment, you will be advised of your right to make a formal complaint.

2- Making a Formal Complaint

If you decide to make a formal complaint, you will be helped in filling out either the General complaint form or the Discrimination and Harassment complaint form. This form will go to the SWC Executive Director or Board President.

3- Dealing with a Formal Complaint

Within 5 (five) working days of having received your formal complaint, the Executive Director will inform you that she has received it. She will also let you know when you can expect a complete response to your complaint, normally within 20 working days. SWC will then conduct an investigation, and interview others who may have witnessed or been part of the situation. Our goal will be to get all relevant facts, so that we can make a complete and fair assessment and respond. After completing its investigation, SWC will meet with you to discuss your com-

If the "Respondent" (the person against whom your complaint is made) is a member of the SWC Board or staff, she will also be informed of the outcome.

4- Lodging an Appeal

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your complaint, you may appeal to the SWC Board of Directors within 28 days, either in person, in writing, or by conference call.

The President of the SWC Board will inform you of the outcome of your appeal, in writing, within one (1) week of the Board's decision.

General Principles

- **Confidentiality:**
SWC is committed to treating all information received during the complaints process as confidentially as possible. We respect your right not to have your identity revealed; however, in a formal investigation involving allegations of illegal or unethical behavior, some information may sometimes have to be shared with others.
- **Procedural Fairness:**
SWC is committed to observing principles of procedural fairness throughout the complaints process. When the respondent is a member of the Board or staff, procedural fairness will usually involve informing the person of the allegations made against her and giving her the opportunity to respond.