



ANTI-OPPRESSIVE PRACTICE (AOP) COMMITTEE PUBLIC REPORT

[HEARTWOODCENTRE.CA/](https://heartwoodcentre.ca/)

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CONTENTS

03

AOP COMMITTEE MEMBERS
2022-2023

04

LAND HONOURING

05

WHO WE ARE

06

OUR APPROACH

07

ANTI-OPPRESSIVE PRACTICE
FRAMEWORK

09

2022-2023 ACTIONS

11

2021-2022 ACTIONS

13

2020-2021 ACTIONS



AOP COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2022-2023



STAFF

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BOARD

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STUDENTS

IVANA YELLOWBACK

LAND HONOURING

With gratitude, humility, and respect, we recognize and honour that Heartwood Healing Centre is located on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg (Ojibwe), Anishinabewaki (Oji-Cree), Dené, Michif Piyii (Métis), Nehinawak & Nihithawak (Cree), and Očhéthi Sakowin (Dakota). We recognize the historical and ongoing violence of colonization, respect the original treaties made to live respectfully and in harmony on this land, and commit to working toward reconciliation. As a place for healing, we are committed to walking with those with whom we are privileged to work, and understand that Indigenous peoples have been traumatized mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually as a result of colonization. We commit to unlearning and learning, to building alignment with the TRC Calls to Action, the 2SMMIWG Calls to Justice, UNDRIP, and working toward uncolonizing and anti-oppressive practice within our organization.



WHO WE ARE

Heartwood Healing Centre is the only organization in Manitoba whose mission is specific to childhood sexual abuse. Childhood sexual abuse is a societal issue that affects people of all genders and lived experience. We aim to be an accessible, safe(r) space for healing and a respected community partner, providing leadership in addressing the individual and societal impact of childhood sexual abuse.



OUR APPROACH

At Heartwood Healing Centre we believe that there are many pathways to healing. We aim to provide an inclusive, welcoming environment where everyone can thrive. Our services are trauma-focused, relationship-based, strength-based, and person-led. We encourage people to set their own goals and lead their own healing process.

Anti-Opressive Lens

We understand the presence and harm of systemic forms of oppression. We will work consciously and actively to reduce systemic oppression in our practices, learning from our mistakes. We are committed to collaborating with each other and the community to create a more just world.

The AOP Committee has developed an action plan to push change forward and hold the organization accountable. We strive to do this work in a relational way.



ANTI-OPPRESSIVE PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

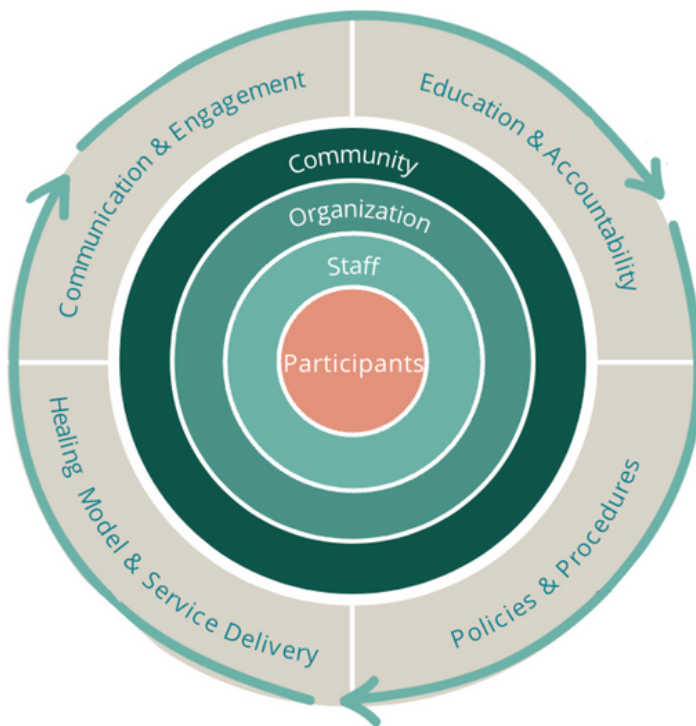
Heartwood Healing Centre understands anti-oppression to be recognition of inequitable and unjust power imbalances in our social contexts and larger structural systems. Anti-oppression is an action word and we commit ourselves to actively working towards equalizing power differences. We recognize anti-oppression as an approach through which we aim to always work and which is engrained in everything we do.

In 2020, Heartwood Healing Centre developed an Anti-Oppressive Practice (AOP) Committee. The purpose of this committee is to work towards organizational alignment with values that challenge entrenched power structures and equity for people of all identities within our organization.

In 2021, the AOP Committee developed an Anti-Oppressive Practice Framework identifying four (4) areas of focus to guide us in becoming accessible, inclusive, and a safe(r) space moving forward.

1. Communication & Engagement
2. Healing Model & Service Delivery
3. Education & Accountability
4. Policies & Procedures

ANTI-OPPRESSIVE PRACTICE FRAMEWORK



Legend:

Participants: People currently accessing services or who have accessed services in the past and their family/friends.

Staff: Heartwood Employees, Students, and Volunteers.

Organization: Heartwood's Board of Directors, governance and organizational functions and structures.

Community: Community Organizations and people connected to Heartwood's mission through life experience and/or social location.

Communication & Engagement

We aim to be understood in the community as a welcoming and safe(r) place for all people through our ongoing commitment to social justice and anti-oppressive practices.

Healing Model & Service Delivery

We aim to have our healing model reflect diverse ways of healing and acknowledge the intersectionality of oppression in trauma recovery.

Education & Accountability

We commit to the ongoing learning and implementation of anti-oppressive practices and aim to have our Board and staff recognize the power and privilege of the agency, and participate in self-reflection.

Policies & Procedures

We aim to have our policies and procedures reflect anti-oppressive principles to which Board, staff and people who access our services are held accountable.



2022-2023 ACTIONS

The AOP Committee supported the agency in the beginnings of reconciliation. Staff and leadership of Heartwood participated in a pilot program in partnership with the Indigenous Learning Circle called Tapwewin Kwayaskatsiwin Natawhohin: Truth, Setting Things Straight, and Healing Medicine. Through six (6) sessions together, we built meaningful connections with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and learned about ourselves and each other. We grew our cultural humility personally and as an agency, and set the stage for our work in reconciliation. This work together fostered Indigenous healing and decolonization and helped non-Indigenous peoples to find common ground within Indigenous values and teachings.

An Advisory Committee was struck for the Two-Eyed Seeing Healing Model and the project was gifted the name *West Standing Bear*. Data collection and model development will begin in 2023-2024. Learn more [here](#).

Our Board of Directors increased their engagement with AOP by learning about our AOP work and building awareness at every Board meeting. Additionally, they participated in the Four Seasons of Reconciliation training.

Heartwood joined mailing lists for social justice coalitions in Winnipeg, participated in the Orange Shirt Day Survivor's Walk, and walked in the Pride Parade for the first time.

We created a [Harm Reduction Statement](#), obtained access to interpretation services available in over 200 languages, updated our Land Honouring, updated our inclusion and accessibility symbols, and created an anti-oppressive practice page on our new website.

We began updating our anti-oppressive practice onboarding documents and process, including developing a reflection process and adding new trainings around 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion, anti-racism, anti-ableism, and reconciliation.



Group Agreements
Confidentiality - Stay in group
Honoring each other's boundaries and privacy
Give everyone space and voice in group
All different people - respecting everyone
Sharing rather than directing
Take calls outside

2021-2022 ACTIONS

One of the biggest tasks of 2021-2022 was ensuring all our new communication documents, platforms, and physical spaces (website, posters, brochure, social media, waiting spaces, etc.) are accessible and inclusive for all. Some examples include using gender neutral language; diversity in pictures; posting stickers, flags, and accessibility and inclusion statements in buildings and on virtual platforms; and increasing accessibility for all body sizes and abilities.

We secured funding from the Manitoba Research Alliance to have an Indigenous Ph. D student develop a Two-Eyed Seeing Healing Model for adults who have experienced childhood sexual abuse.

Staff engaged in a workshop on Health and Every Size and Working Amongst Racialized Differences on Colonized Land.

We incorporated AOP competencies into leadership performance reviews and developed a Board of Directors self-reflection exercise. We worked with Prosperity Project volunteers to review our Personnel Manual and AOP Action Plan from an external AOP perspective, and we adapted as needed. We made strides in our efforts to diversify our staff, board, and student make up.

We participated in Orange Shirt Day by providing resources for learning, planning a group walk with community, and attending a pipe ceremony. We developed a meaningful Land Honouring, declared we are a smudge-friendly space, and participated in Indigenous medicine picking and ribbon-skirt making workshops.

We engaged community by visiting other organizations to implement “warm hand-off” referrals.





2020-2021 ACTIONS

In the summer of 2020, Heartwood Healing Centre (The Laurel Centre at the time) developed an Anti-Oppressive Practice (AOP) Committee. The AOP Committee was formed to ensure organizational alignment with values that challenge entrenched power structures and to ensure organization allyship with people of all identities. The Committee developed a Framework and an Action Plan to guide our work.

We included an AOP section at all staff meetings to share our learnings and updates. Staff participated in a workshop on sex worker inclusion with the Sex Workers of Winnipeg Action Coalition and Anti-Racism trainings.

We updated recruitment questions for staff and Board members, reviewed Board governing bylaws with an AOP lens, and created a diversity policy in the Board Governance Manual. We also updated our staff holiday policy with an uncolonizing lens.

The Committee spent time gathering resources for furthering our learning in AOP work and we created resources for ourselves such as a list of important days to acknowledge throughout the year and a list of coalitions and local initiatives working towards AOP goals.

We engaged in regular meaningful group discussions around social justice, created a process for working on projects as a group, and ultimately set the tone for the committee in the coming years.





YOU



ARE



WELCOME



HERE



HEARTWOOD
HEALING CENTRE

