

# Anti-Oppression Policy

## 1. Policy Intent

VIDEA has established this policy to eradicate oppression within our environment by identifying and challenging barriers that exists in obtaining or accessing services, education and/or employment.

Anti-oppression is a way of naming oppression that happens based on a person's identities. Anti-oppression is a practice that works toward ending that mistreatment, oppression, violence toward that particular group.

This policy is intended to

- promote the principles of equality for marginalized populations and have this reflected across all organizational policies, procedures, work and in relation with staff, interns, Board members, and volunteers.
- assist in the full representation of specific groups facing marginalization when developing, implementing and evaluating VIDEA's policies, procedures and services on an ongoing basis.

## 2. Policy

This policy commits VIDEA to providing an environment free of all forms of oppression, discrimination and bias, where all people are treated with respect and dignity. VIDEA recognizes that the responsibility extends to all individuals involved in the organization.

## 3. Definitions

**Anti-oppression** "requires that people examine their own experiences and actions, and critically analyze social structures of power and privilege. It insists that the dominant group recognize the power of its own social location(s) and how that power results in societal privilege and benefit to the exclusion of marginalized people" ([Springtide](#), 2008, p. 4).

**Oppression** is the domination of one individual or group by another, more powerful individual or group, using cultural, economic, physical, psychological, or social threats or force, and frequently using an explicit ideology to justify the oppression.

Oppression takes many forms including but not limited to; sexism, gender binarism, ableism, ageism, heterosexism, classism, anti-Semitism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, and discrimination based on cultural, ethnic or religious background.

Oppression, evidenced through discrimination, is systemic in our society. It is more than individual acts of violence, segregation, or discrimination motivated behaviour and actions. Oppression is endemic in our institutions and has the effect of exclusion. It is a part of our society and is inextricably linked to the equality rights of women and other marginalized populations.

Discrimination is a system of oppression. Discrimination installs and reinforces false divisions between groups of people. It attributes positive and negative values to membership of these groups. It allows access to economic, political and social power in society dependent upon memberships of these groups. Each discriminatory system has its own unique characteristics and specific content which is directed at a particular social group, but all discriminatory systems share the common elements of identifying a target group characterized by a particular identity, and denying economic, political and/or social power to members of that group.

VIDEA understands that:

- society operates within a socially constructed hierarchy of difference where some people are valued and privileged and others are marginalized and exploited.
- people do not belong to just one category or social location. Our identities are complex and multiple; fluid rather than fixed. As a result, we can be both victims and perpetrators of oppression.
- the ideas, thoughts and beliefs of people who “belong” to groups that are highest on the social hierarchy create “dominant culture”. Dominant culture becomes the standard or norm by which everyone is compared.
- people who are members of privileged groups have the power to control access to resources and information. This perpetuates the cycle of power and oppression for people who are not members of these groups. People who are marginalized and exploited experience limited access to the power to shape their own past, present and future.
- not everyone from the same social group has the same experiences because people have many different lived experiences. When people have multiply marginalized identities, they do not merely face extra barriers; their lived experience is entirely different.

## 4. Procedure

Anti-Oppression is a lens through which all work at VIDEA will be seen. All staff, interns, Board members and volunteers are expected to hone their critical reflective abilities, asking how their practice, actions or policies affect individuals differently based on their lived experiences.



In our commitment to eradicate oppression, VIDEA will take active measures to position itself against all forms of discrimination, internally and externally.

All VIDEA staff, interns, Board members and volunteers will be responsible for the implementation of the Anti-Oppression Policy. Each person will be responsible for ensuring that their behaviour is in accordance with the terms of this policy and that their environment is free of oppression and discrimination.

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