Anti-Racist Practice Standards

Anti-Racism Position Statement

"The Eastern Region PSW network is committed to eradicating systemic racism, discrimination, injustice, making anti-racism a foundation of our practice. We will be a voice and force for change, for the people that we work with, and apply anti-racist principles in all our interactions, demanding the same from our partners.

We are committed to calling out racism and discrimination in all its forms and will ensure that this is addressed at all levels to ensure that people in our communities and the workforce are supported and valued.

We acknowledge the harm and impact of racism and that the experience of our Black staff and those from other global majority ethnic groups, is not the same as that of our white staff. We are committed to ensuring that all voices are represented and heard at every level providing support to staff who experience work-based racism and microaggressions. To that end, making sure that our workforce reflects the community which we serve, especially at the senior leadership level".

We share a mutual expectation that every practitioner takes responsibility for their own learning and development with respect to anti-racist, anti-oppressive practice.

We hold a further expectation that all staff will join us in creating a culture of critically reflective practice across the region.

We recognise that people's experience of discrimination is impacted by their intersecting identities, and whilst these are "anti-racist" practice standards, it is our hope that practitioners will use this document as a guide to not only take a proactive anti-racist stance, but as the foundation of an intersectional approach. As a result, this document should not and cannot be seen as a checklist that guarantees inclusive practice.

Anti-racism is an active process of actively identifying and opposing racism. The goal of anti-racism is to challenge racism and actively change the policies, behaviours, and beliefs that perpetuate racist ideas and actions. We understand that societal and structural racism has always been present within our work, however, we need to get make changes as individuals and Ally's. We acknowledge that for some this might result in discomfort, and we remind you that growth takes place outside of our comfort zones, as we are beginning to question our own beliefs and assumptions about ethnicities and cultures.

In these standards, and in our practice, we do not use the term 'ethnic minority', as we recognise that people who experience the negative impacts of racism are from the *global majority.* We recognise that language is constantly evolving, and that there are valuable debates about many of the terms used in these standards. We welcome this, and these debates will continue to inform the review of these standards. These standards represent the networks current preferred language.

We expect practitioners to:

- Acknowledge that we live in a society that has structural racism and know that within this context, it is not enough to be non-racist: In our practice we must demonstrate that we are actively anti-racist
- Educate themselves about anti-racist practice and Allyship self-directed learning
- Participate in opportunities to talk together and think about their own and each other's practice
- Recognise that in creating an anti-racist workplace, we will all experience moments of vulnerability, both for those speaking up about hurt personally experienced or witnessed, and for those needing to hear that, acknowledge it, and repair the harm

We expect all leaders to continually demonstrate the following:

- Proactively seek feedback using a variety of approaches about Anti-racist practice in their area of responsibility
- Receive feedback, criticism or concerns that are raised as a call to action and respond in a curious, timely and constructive manner
- Role model these Practice Standards and hold those you manage to account, whilst supporting those you lead to meet these standards

What outcomes are we aiming to achieve with these Standards?

- We want people from the global majority to be active participants in all interventions, in a way which ensures they are treated with dignity and respect. We want to build a two-way learning experience which acknowledges the unique struggles that people face because of society and/or the system(s) that place them at a disadvantage due to their culture and/or ethnicity
- We want people to be willing and able to raise their concerns about racism and discrimination, because they can be confident that we work in organisations that takes this issue seriously
- We want to reduce the disproportionality in our system, so that the cultural and ethnic background of the people we work with in our system is proportionate to the diversity of our community
- We want our staff to feel confident and competent in challenging racism in all its forms, on behalf of the people they support

How we work with people

1.	We understand that racial and cultural stereotypes and prejudices - both conscious and unconscious - underpin structural racism within our society and organisations and we are all susceptible to these. We also recognise the specific impact of racism, in relation to e.g., self-esteem, internalised oppression, inequality/equal opportunities, racial harassment and bullying. To address this, we respect that people are the experts in their own lives and we start from a position of not knowing. When we begin work with people from a background that we are not familiar with, we take time to learn about their cultural frames of reference. At the same time, we understand that within each culture there are a myriad of stories and beliefs and that the ways in which everyone interprets these will be unique.
2.	We ask whether English is their first language and if not, we always offer to provide an interpreter in a preferred language, and for the person to take the lead in determining the role of the interpreter in their interactions. We understand that there are many reasons families might express that they do not need an interpreter, when in fact they may benefit from one, including that that they have sufficient English not to require one; they feel too embarrassed to admit that they need one; they may not want to cause any 'trouble'; or they may be reluctant to 'expose' their personal stories to another person, particularly if their local cultural community is small. We accept that the onus is on us - not them - to ensure that we are communicating in a way that makes sense. Therefore, we are interested in the details, for example, which dialect a family speaks, or the language or languages they use with friends and loved ones.
3.	We ask to describe to us - in their own words - how they self-identify their culture and ethnicity.
4.	We are curious about people's cultural heritage and customs and how this shapes them and the world as they see it.

5.	We recognise that we are representatives of our service and, at times, more widely as agents of the state. We understand that people's experiences of racism - both overt and covert - will inform how they respond to us and, therefore, how we must approach our attempts to engage with them. This might include fear of and resistance to our involvement, which can be based on legitimate concerns about disproportionality, histories of state brutality and discrimation, and stories that may have been shared in families and communities about the real risks of state involvement.
6.	We responsibly initiate and validate conversations with people about their experiences of racism, big and small. We ensure that our practice is changed and improved based on what we learn from these conversations and that we advocate for people where they're experiencing racism in the wider system.
7.	We use the systemic model of the Social GRRAAACCEEESSS (see Appendix 1) to examine and reflect upon our own beliefs and biases and to think about what we bring - as well as them - to every interaction we have with people.
8.	We know that individuals from the global majority who experience racism are disproportionately represented in our services. We acknowledge the multiplicity of reasons for this, including the additional stress caused by racism and the structural racism that influences referral levels and our own engagement and decision-making.
9.	We recognise the inherent power dynamics in the context of our work and that, because of their experiences of inequality, people from the global majority may feel less confident to challenge us and other professionals. In this context, we commit to clearly explaining our processes verbally and in writing, including our complaints process. We ensure that people know their rights and support them in accessing advocacy services if they are struggling to make their voices heard.
10.	We understand that the use of professional jargon and abbreviations is disempowering for people. We consider this in the context of people who experience racism that are already disempowered by our society and systems. We are committed to using clear, straightforward language in all our communication.
11.	We are clear in our commitment to safeguard people, in a way that promotes their identities, heritage and freedoms. This means we seek to offer solutions that fit with people's heritage and values, and work in ways that support this. It also means that we will not allow neglect or harm to be done to people in the name of religion or culture, and we will promote the safety and wellbeing of any adult referred to us.

How we talk about people

12.	We use the term 'ethnicity', rather than 'race', in acknowledgement that 'race' is a social construct used to support racism. With that in mind, we use the word 'dual heritage', rather than 'mixed race'.
13.	We use the language that people use about themselves when describing identity. We have conversations with all our people that invite them to share specific details about their heritage, culture, and values. We recognise that terms like 'White', 'Black' and 'Asian' may have been used to collect data but do not always come from the people themselves and are often too generic to be respectful or informative when we assign it to others. When we've had these conversations, in our recording, we do not then generalise.
14.	We understand that the global majority are more likely to have had negative and discriminatory or racist assumptions made about them over time. With this in mind, we do not simply recycle information from previous records without giving people the opportunity to comment on, clarify and/or correct the content. Where there is a need to make use of historical documents containing harmful language, we will recognise this, and amend / qualify / repair as needed.
15.	We use the systemic model of the <u>Social GRRAAACCEEESSS</u> to critically examine how our beliefs and biases may influence the way we view people and interpret their behaviour, as well as the way they view us and interpret our behaviour.
16.	We are mindful of the power of language to contribute to the construction of damaging narratives about adults. Wherever possible we avoid the use of behavioural labels that can trigger preconceived ideas related to racism, such as 'aggressive', or 'emotionally unavailable'. Instead, we describe patterns of behaviour in detail. We are aware of dominant, ethnocentric, European ideas that contribute to a system where 'different' behaviour can be labelled as problematic. For example, a person speaking loudly, showing emotion, or avoiding eye contact may be described as 'aggressive' or 'disrespectful' in this context, but may alternatively be described as passionate or assertive if a strength-based lens is applied. We are proactive in considering the multiple contexts informing adults' ways of expressing themselves to enable us to take an ethno-relative position.
17.	We recognise that there are cultural differences in raising children and there is not a "one size fits all" blueprint for parenting. When working with families from the global majority, we proactively consider whether our expectations are that they fit in with white-centred experiences and expectations of parenting, or our own personal experiences and expectations of parenting, rather than recognising and respecting differences, and how this may inform our safeguarding decisions both in terms of risk and celebrating strengths.

How we advocate for people

19.	We actively embrace our role as powerful advocates in the system for people who experience racism and accept a responsibility to support other professionals to challenge their own individual and institutional biases and assumptions.
20.	When we are told about or observe racism - overt or covert - we will name this as racism, and we will support people to access the complaints process and where necessary escalate concerns to partner agencies to challenge and create change for this and other families.
21.	We will establish mechanisms in our organisations to log all incidents and observations of racism in the system, to continue to support the discussion and development about an anti-racist practice approach.
22.	We recognise that different organisations are at different stages of learning about structural and everyday racism and our conversations should support the learning and embedding of anti-racist practice across the system. We expect professionals to wish to learn and engage in such discussions to create change for our people.

How we respond to feedback from people

23.	When a person tells us that they feel they have experienced racism and/or discrimination from us, their complaint will be acknowledged and investigated promptly in accordance with statutory timescales and organisational approaches We also acknowledge the importance of ensuring a person's experience is validated - of the need to accept their experience and offer to learn from this. We will review the findings for further learning.

How we respond when a person makes a disclosure of racism, including in a meeting context

24.	We will ensure that our commissioning arrangements and partnership agreements make clear, our expectations of acknowledging the reality and impact of structural and every-day racism and our expectations of partner agencies taking forward pro-active anti-racist practice. We will maintain accountability for the experiences that people have in the context of agencies that we commission to support them and will also hold commissioned agencies to account

25.	We will respond to disclosures about racism as we would do about all other forms of harm treating this harm as a safeguarding issue. We will take their concerns seriously and prioritise their emotional and psychological safety and wellbeing whilst enquiries, investigations and action takes place. If a disclosure is made unexpectedly in the context of a meeting, we will listen to the person and acknowledge their bravery in being able to speak out. We will let the person know that their concerns will be taken seriously and that they will be included and kept informed in line with the principles of 'Making safeguarding personal'.
36.	We will ensure that the outcome of the investigation is shared sensitively with the person including any non-confidential actions that will be taken to address their concerns in line with the respective organisations policies.

How will we know that these standards are being adhered to?

We will use our own organisations approaches to measure against these standards. This may include:

- Audit approaches
- Feedback from people
- Staff Surveys
- Complaints and compliments
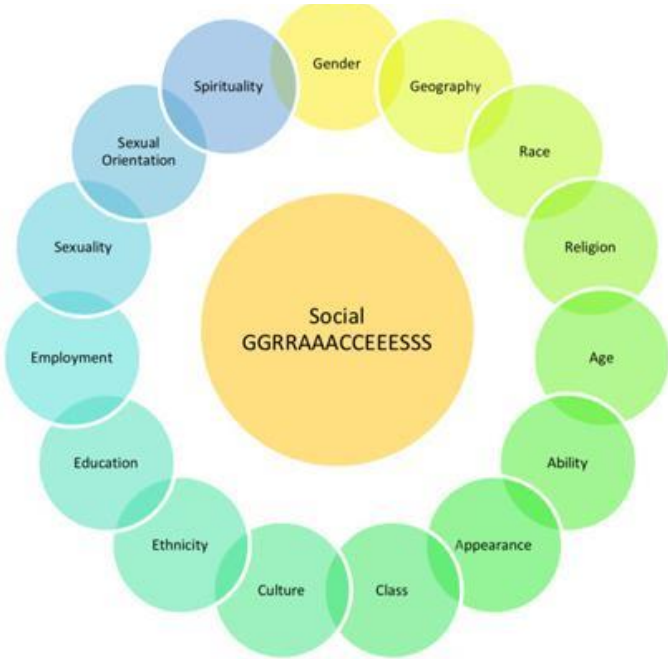- Healthcheck

Agreed by:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix 1 – Social Graces

What are Social Graces?

Power imbalance

The term 'Social Graces', Rowland explained, is a mnemonic to help us remember some of the key features that influence personal and social identity, as developed by John Burhnham, Alison Roper-Hall and colleagues (1992).

Originally, the pneumonic was arranged as 'disgraces' to highlight the fact that such inequalities were 'disgraceful', but it was feared this could be rather off-putting. So, over time, the 'dis' was dropped, and the 'social' added to the front, to highlight the fact that the graces have an impact not only on an individual level but are activated within the community.

One of the key aims of the graces is to 'name' power differentials. In doing so, it is far easier to identify (and work on) our own prejudice, or indeed on our own privilege.

Naming power differences can invite service users, colleagues or even friends to share the social graces which they feel can hold them back, or even cloud their judgement of others.

The graces in the figure about are not an exhaustive list and can be adapted. They could differ according to place, time, and culture. That's the beauty of the graces; they are fluid. There is room for reflection and correction.

The graces are about process, not procedure. It's about the interaction between people, not data. For most of us, it is people, not spreadsheets, which ignite our desire to become social workers.

<u>Ecology of mind</u>

Putting the need for the social graces into a cultural context, Rowland explained that in our western, capitalist society, we have often tended to think of ourselves first and foremost as individuals, rather than as a cohesive unit.

The social graces, however, recognise that we are not isolated beings. That there is such a thing as society –despite messages to the contrary which have seeped into our national psyche.

To learn more about the Social Graces, further detail can be found below

https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-6427.2005.00318.x

Eastern Region PSW Network

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