



Position Statement on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity

Position

The CSRT recognizes that all individuals have the right to respect and acceptance without bias.

The CSRT commits to value and respect all members, volunteers, and employees, and to ensure a culture that embraces equity, diversity, and inclusivity is safeguarded in the organization.

Rationale

Individual protection from bias and discrimination is a fundamental human right. The CSRT recognizes that systemic and structural barriers exist throughout society that undermine these fundamental rights for some. Enacting the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusivity can help address the causes of these barriers within the CSRT and the profession of respiratory therapy.

The intent of this position statement is to affirm that the guiding principles of equity, diversity, and inclusivity are enshrined within the CSRT; and to set out the manner in which the CSRT, its members, volunteers, and employees will ensure these principles are integrated into practice.

The principles of equity, diversity, and inclusivity are encompassed within the requirement for respiratory therapists to practice with independence and impartiality¹. This responsibility asserts that everyone has an equal right to be valued and respected. The CSRT recognizes that through openness and discourse, those who have been traditionally marginalized and/ or under-represented may have opportunity to assert their right for equality, value, and respect. This empowers all CSRT members, volunteers, and employees to participate and contribute fully, and in turn enriches their support for patients and communities.

As a highly diverse organization, the CSRT is dedicated to encouraging a supportive and inclusive culture amongst its membership, volunteers, and employees. The value that varying life experiences, perspectives, and expertise bring to the organization and to the profession cannot be overstated.

The CSRT also recognizes that the success of the organization, its accomplishments and those of the respiratory therapy profession are a result of the contributions made by a highly diverse membership. The CSRT and the respiratory therapy profession are strong because of their diversity.

It is in the best interest of all respiratory therapists to promote equity, diversity, and inclusivity within the CSRT, and across practice settings to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate

and contribute. It is through full engagement that ongoing innovation, growth, and improvement will occur in the organization and throughout the profession.

As affirmed in this statement, a primary aim of the CSRT is therefore to ensure all members, volunteers and employees are given equal opportunity within the organization, and to ensure the organization is representative of its membership and communities they serve.

Recommendations

Accomplishing equity, diversity, and inclusivity across the CSRT will require action on the part of all members, volunteers, and employees. To achieve this, the CSRT commits to addressing the following broad areas of action, each of which will require more specific initiatives spanning the range of CSRT activities.

The CSRT will:

- Create environments that promote dignity and respect for every member, volunteer, and employee.
- Foster environments in which individual differences and the contributions of all members, volunteers, and employees are recognized and valued.
- Engage in initiatives that assure staying abreast of equity, diversity, and inclusivity broadly and within the context of the respiratory therapy profession. This will establish pathways for all members to be heard and their perspectives to meaningfully guide the CSRT.
- Ensure that equity, diversity, and inclusivity are central priorities incorporated within future strategic planning activities and integrated at every stage of the process. This will ensure that activities and initiatives are adequately informed by broad perspectives that support the full membership in a fair and equitable manner.
- Commit to ongoing review of existing and future organizational policies through the lens of equity, diversity, and inclusivity. Any process that is supportive of this goal will be established to ensure these principles are enduring components of the fabric of the organization.
- Systemic and structural biases also span contexts outside of the CSRT where respiratory therapists practice, such as in health care environments, educational institutions, and other practice settings.

The CSRT will:

- Call upon all respiratory therapists to take a leadership role in advancing the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusiveness within their own organizations, institutions, and practice settings.
- Promote the practice of each respiratory therapist to exemplify the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusivity in their respective setting.
- Endeavor to develop and facilitate access to practice supports for respiratory therapists, empowering individuals to provide exemplary leadership, interprofessional collaboration, and clinical care.

Understanding Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity

Equity stands for fairness and justice in outcomes. It is about recognizing opportunity and directing resources/ services to ensure equal outcomes for all. Equity is not achieved by providing identical treatment to all despite their individual circumstances. It is instead achieved by acknowledging individual differences: the ideas expressed, the experiences shared, the stories told that are recognized and valued, and by removing barriers which exist for some as a result of social or cultural differences^{2,3,4}.

Diversity is a term that describes the distinct variations that are inborn or other human differences that influence socialization. The primary dimensions of diversity include age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical abilities/ qualities, and race. The secondary dimensions of diversity include educational background, geographical location, income, marital status, experience, and religious beliefs². Diversity also refers to including, recognizing and valuing the different perspectives that these differences provide, and to the equal ability of persons with these differences to participate in the activities of a larger group³.

Inclusion is an approach that creates environments for a diverse group to feel welcomed, valued, respected, and supported. It requires the different voices and viewpoints to be heard, incorporates differing knowledge and perspectives, and makes conscious effort to validate, honor, and respect diverse views, experiences, and realities. It ensures equality of opportunity and capability of all members to participate and contribute fully^{2,3}.

About the Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists (CSRT)

The CSRT is the national professional association representing respiratory therapists across Canada. The CSRT promotes the respiratory therapy profession at the national and international level and is the credentialing agency for respiratory therapists who practice in non-regulated jurisdictions in Canada.

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References:

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2. Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Handbook (2019). A Guide to Equitable, Diverse, and Inclusive Practices in the City of Hamilton.
3. Chan, A. S. (2005). Policy discourses and changing practice: Diversity and the university-college. *Higher Education*, 50(1), 129–157.
4. Savage et al (2013) in Tamtik, M. and Guenter, M. (2020). Policy Analysis of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategies in Canadian Universities – How Far Have We Come? *Can J Higher Education*, 49 (3), 41–56.