

COMMUNITAS SUPPORTIVE CARE SOCIETY

# HUMAN RESOURCES

## Policy & Procedures Manual

January 2012



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## ***About This Manual***

This manual has been produced by Communitas for the guidance and orientation of our employees. It is also a helpful resource that can be used as a reference providing ongoing employment information.

The benefits or policies in this manual are not intended by its publication to confer any rights or privileges, or to entitle you as an employee to be or remain to be employed by this organization.

This manual does not constitute or express an implied contract for employment. It provides guidelines only and may be changed or overruled when, in the opinion of administration, circumstances so require. Communitas reserves the right to change the provisions of this manual at any time.

It is also important to note that certain rights and responsibilities are imposed on us as an organization by provincial and federal legislation and court decisions. Many of these have implications for policies and procedures governing employment. For this reason, please be advised that we hereby reserve any and all management rights regarding employees' employment status. These rights and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- To manage and direct this organization's employees, including hiring, promotion, scheduling, transfers, assignment or retention of employees in positions within the organization and to establish work rules
- To lay off employees
- To discharge or take other appropriate disciplinary action when necessary
- To schedule overtime work as required, consistent with the requirements of the organization
- To develop job descriptions, bearing in mind that such descriptions are usually guidelines and not rigid limitations and that employees shall perform any reasonable assigned duties
- To introduce new or improved methods or facilities or to change existing methods or facilities
- To fulfill its obligations in contracting out for matters relating to the operation of the organization
- To discontinue certain operations; and to direct all questions of the organization

Some policies and procedures in the manual include the statement; *"Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary measures up to and including termination of employment"*. This may seem harsh, but it is important that each employee clearly understands the potential consequences of failing to follow these policies and procedures. It is also important to understand that while this statement is included in some policies and not others its absence does not exclude disciplinary consequences. Violation of any policy or procedure may result in discipline or dismissal depending on the circumstances.

The HR Manual may also be viewed on the Communitas website at [www.CommunitasCare.com](http://www.CommunitasCare.com). Choose the "Employment" tab, then "Resources" link located on the right side of the page to find the HR Manual.

Please carefully read and thoroughly understand these policies and working rules and comply with them at all times. If you have any question at all, please feel free to speak to your supervisor.

For Union Employees Only: Policies and procedures outlined in the Communitas Human Resource manual are to be adhered to by all union Communitas employees. However, when a policy differs from the current Collective Agreement, the Collective Agreement will take precedence.

**WELCOME ...**  
**TO COMMUNITAS SUPPORTIVE CARE SOCIETY (COMMUNITAS)**

We believe that your ministry of supporting people in the community is vital and will provide you with opportunity for growth and meaningful employment. We are confident that you along with the skills and abilities you bring will be an asset to Communitas and to the people we are committed to serving.

This manual was developed to help you get to know us and understand how we function as an organization. If you have any questions that this manual does not answer, please do not hesitate to ask your Manager for assistance.

We are committed to helping you have a positive employment experience with us. We look forward to getting to know you and working with you. Our ongoing success as an organization and individuals depends on our mutual respect, cooperation and with each of us contributing to our objectives.

We recognize that Communitas can only carry out its mandate by ensuring that you are appropriately supported, encouraged and assisted. It is our commitment that you will be treated with respect and dignity, empowered to do your work and recognized for the contributions you make.

The people we serve are the heart of our ministry and we take pride in the services we provide each day. Our good reputation is evident to the people we serve, the funding agencies that partner with us, and the communities we work in. All testify to the contributions our employees have made in the past and reflect the work we do today as we bring honour to God and continue to improve the support we give to people.

**COMMUNITAS LEADERSHIP TEAM**

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SECTION 1  
PHILOSOPHY and VALUES

### **OUR STORY**

1.1

Communitas Supportive Care Society (Communitas) is an organization that has roots in Mennonite tradition and history, deeply influenced by a Christian understanding of non-violence, pacifism and community. Consistent with the beliefs and values of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), its parent organization, Communitas commits itself to work with individuals who have been marginalized and stigmatized by the society around them. It has a specific focus on supporting and empowering people from all walks of life, regardless of faith, social standing, race or ethnicity.

In 1973 MCC BC was approached by a new, parent-initiated organization called “Samaritan Society for Comfort and Cheer.” This organization asked for assistance in carrying out their vision of creating homes for their sons and daughters who lived with a disability. About a year or two later, MCC BC accepted this responsibility, establishing its first two group homes. The foundational principle of its work focused on nurturing people towards greater independence and interdependence in a supportive Christian environment. As its vision and ministry grew, a decision was made in 1992 to establish a separate legal entity called MCC Supportive Care Services (MCC SCS).

In 2007, another significant milestone was achieved when MCC SCS officially changed its name to Communitas Supportive Care Society. The first word, a Latin noun, is rich in meaning and significance. It was carefully and thoughtfully selected because it identifies a noble calling and vision. Communitas means “*a community where all people are equal.*” And while we have adopted a new name, our philosophy and culture of care, service, support, and accountability remain the same.

Since its early days, Communitas has been committed to supporting people using the best methods and ideologies available. The work focused not only on establishing residential settings with a sense of “home” and “family” but also introduced creative daytime support for individuals with a developmental disability. In the early 1990s we began assisting people who have a mental illness and providing services in the areas of semi-independent living, vocational training and peer support. Several drop-in centers for people surviving an acquired brain injury were also initiated during this decade.

Today, Communitas continues to look for new ways of addressing the needs of adults and seniors who have a disability of one form or another. Supporting individuals who live with the effects of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and creating employment through social enterprises are two of the newer initiatives we are involved in. We also work collaboratively with many individuals and organizations in order to participate in the larger movement of liberating people who live with a disability.

While we work mainly in BC, Communitas explores other options to work with and learn from individuals and organizations in Canada and beyond. For example, a recent partnership with the Florence Centre, a community development organization in Ukraine, is an opportunity for us to share, support and be influenced by the challenges of working toward the creation of a civil society in a country that has a deeply fractured history.

Building on a rich tradition of service common to Mennonites, the people of Communitas desire to continue in their commitment to building community in the name of Christ.

### **Mission:**

Inspired by Jesus Christ, Communitas will be a place of belonging, growth and contribution.

### **Guiding Principles:**

#### ***Love, Compassion and Gentleness***

We believe that our relationship with each person we support is inspired by the values of love, compassion and gentleness.

#### ***Teaching and Learning***

We recognize that we can assist people by teaching skills, knowledge and awareness.

We believe we have much to learn from the people that we support.

#### ***Consistent Ethic***

We believe that relationships with people we support, their families, our employees, constituency, and ministry partners must be based on consistent values and principles.

#### ***Home***

We believe that each person we support is entitled to a home that provides nurture, safety, opportunity, choice and shalom.

#### ***Community***

We believe that community involvement enriches a person's life providing growth, opportunity and choice.

#### ***Family***

We believe that it is important to support a wholesome family relationship, from which a person receives nurture, acceptance and direction for life.

#### ***Friendships***

We believe that the development and nurture of wholesome relationships brings meaning to life and the greatest certainty of safety.

#### ***Spirituality***

We recognize the spiritual dimension is an intrinsic part of being human, and affirm that Christian principles provide a foundation for personal wholeness.

## **OUR MORAL VALUES**

**1.3**

The following moral values assist Communitas staff to move towards a statement of ethical conduct:

### ***The Dignity of the Human Person***

All persons possess an intrinsic dignity and worth that is independent of the person's abilities or what other persons think or say about them.

### ***The Interconnectedness of Every Human Being***

Human persons are social beings and cannot live or develop their potential outside of human relationships and community.

### ***Stewardship and Creativity***

Creation is both a gift and a responsibility. Humans share a responsibility to respect, protect and care for all of creation and for ourselves. We are given the ability to be creative with and manage our response to need.

### ***Human Life***

All of human life is sacred. It is a gift from God.

### ***The Common Good***

Every individual has a duty to share in promoting the well being of the community as well as the right to benefit from being a member of the community.

### ***Charity/Solidarity***

Charity is the virtue urging us to respond to the needs of others. Solidarity, including empathy and compassion, is a way to express our interconnectedness and respond to need.

## **SANCTITY OF LIFE**

**1.4**

Every human being, from conception to death, has ultimate value.

This ultimate value is established by God and is not dependent on age, ability, race, gender or religious heritage.

Human life is given as a fragile gift from God. It must therefore be respectfully and carefully nurtured toward growth and health.

The pain and disability of an individual is not to be borne alone. It is to be shared by the larger community.

Pain and disability should never be seen as reasons to question the value of the life of an individual.

People living with severe pain and disability are capable of intense joy and fulfillment in their life.

Regarding the provision of medical procedures, there shall be no discrimination on the basis of a person's disability.

Death is a natural part of the cycle of life. Individuals shall be supported physically, mentally and spiritually as they transition from this stage of life.

The following statement of ethical conduct draws freely from the *Health Ethics Guide* of the Catholic Health Association of Canada (2006). Communitas believes that the conduct of its staff is guided by several factors including one's moral and spiritual foundations, their personal and life values, principles that bring together Biblical teaching, traditions and current Canadian social values.

The intention of articulating and enacting a statement of ethical conduct is to ensure that the good of the person, in other words the person who is being served by us, is the end result of a relationship between a person with a disability and those that support him/her. Four "calls" are pre-eminent in Communitas' statement:

- The call to heal
- The call to respect dignity
- The call to promote justice
- The call to foster trust

Communitas acknowledges and embraces its historical Anabaptist roots as part of this statement. Whether for remuneration or not, Communitas staff at all levels are at their best when they perceive their work as a service or ministry – to be a servant to those who need us to be involved in their lives.

Our values can best be explained in the following statements of ethical conduct. As part of the relationship with a person being supported, Communitas staff will:

- Be gentle and compassionate when giving support
- Be mindful of the person's immediate care needs, but also perceptive and supportive of the person's long-term life goals
- Support the person in dignified, active and visible roles in the community
- Oppose discrimination or segregation of any kind
- Be mindful of the person's legal and human rights and the person's right to self-determination, and supportive of those rights when necessary
- Be competent and skilled in offering support
- Set goals and help the person achieve goals, as articulated by the person
- Do what is necessary to ensure that the person is empowered to articulate needs and wants
- Ensure that life is, at all times, respected and supported
- Not enter into "dual relationships" with a person (for example: relationships that have a conflict of interest, or a potential conflict of interest)
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of the person, obtain consent when needed, and provide accurate information and documentation
- Whenever possible, allow the person to make decisions based on informed consent
- Encourage an active role for family and friends in the person's life
- Not act alone in making decisions, but include a reasonable circle of persons
- Not abandon the person without support
- Not engage in sexual activities with the person being supported
- Allow the person being supported to see the person's file, upon request
- Ensure that all client records are securely stored
- Obtain an individual's permission prior to releasing and/or sharing their information, photograph, videoed or recorded conversations
- Understand that the boundaries of ethical support conduct are a "24/7" expectation for the entire time that a person is being supported by Communitas
- Declare any perception of an ethical conflict to their supervisor

As part of the relationship with colleagues, Communitas staff will:

- Treat colleagues with respect, courtesy, fairness and good faith
- Work together as a team
- Respect confidences shared by colleagues
- Maintain a mutual relationship of teaching and learning from each other
- Respect the beliefs and opinions of their colleagues
- Collaborate with professionals and colleagues from outside the organization as part of their support of the person
- In an honest, direct and respectful way, hold each other to the highest standard of service

As part of ethical conduct to society, Communitas staff will:

- Adhere to, promote, advance and exemplify the principles of the Spirit of Gentleness and community living
- Remain current in the methods of best practice
- Advocate for the rightful place of people with disabilities in society
- Work to eliminate stereotyping, cultural barriers, discrimination and attitudinal barriers whenever possible

Communitas expects its programs to make community living a central focus of its energies. This means that assisting in building relationships, increasing visibility and participation in the community, and supporting personal choices are some of the most important tasks that support staff must do.

Communitas has adopted life in community as fundamental to its service core. We believe that people with disabilities have the greatest opportunities for personal safety, choice, empowerment and meaningful relationships when in close proximity to others. Only community living offers these opportunities.

From a historical perspective this adopted life of community, where all people are equal, comes from the Anabaptist belief in "Gemeinschaft." "Gemeinschaft" German in origin means "community." Some individuals that have led and influenced community living that have impacted our culture include Jean Vanier, Wolf Wolfensberger, John McKnight and Henry Nouwen.

While Gemeinschaft and these mentors have been positive models for community, one would be remiss not to mention the horrors witnessed during the Second World War by Mennonite conscientious objectors who chose to work in institutions for people with mental illness as part of their alternative service. These experiences caused them to embrace the community living movement as a better model to minister to those who were deeply wounded in society.

It may be helpful to view community living as a movement and a paradigm that stands in contradiction to other models of supporting individuals. Institutional models have been the defining example dating from the post Second World War era western world, whether it be in schools, hospitals, extended and intermediate care facilities and the like.

Some predominant characteristics of institutions include a prescriptive mindset. This means they seek to be curative, rehabilitative or have the need to "fix." They are usually driven by a curriculum, tend to be hierarchical, include segregation and "de-individualize" people. While these descriptions are not entirely negative for all people, the institutional model has, in recent decades, been vigorously challenged as being universally harmful for people with disabilities and, more recently, also for people with mental illnesses.

The Mennonite tradition, tracing its roots from the 16th Century, has always embraced strong traditions of community. This has included beliefs of mutual support and aid, combined with mission and social service endeavors along with a personal service orientation. The Mennonite faith has always included a strong church-centered understanding of caring for one another, as a witness of God's peace. Influenced by faith and tradition, along with the teaching and writings of individuals like Vanier, Wolfensberger, Nouwen and others, Communitas has embraced the tradition of those who advocate for life in the community – that the community, for all of its shortcomings, remains the safest and most wholesome place for all people to live.

***What do we mean when we say "community living?"***

The first prerequisite, but only the first, is to actually live where others live. Community living cannot happen without physically being present in the neighborhood. This consumed the energies of many people during the 1980-90s when Woodlands, Glendale and Tranquille institutions were closed down and people were moved physically into our neighborhoods.

But community living only makes a start when location is addressed. In her book, *What's Really Worth Doing and How To Do It*, Judith Snow indicates that the real challenges of community living are met in exploring giftedness and inclusion. Community living is truly achieved when we move beyond "disability" as the defining reason for service. Rather we need to emphasize the gifts that each of us have and to use those gifts to move towards inclusion into any and all aspects of existing community life.

Wolfensberger makes reference to the need for the appearance of normality – to de-emphasize the “specialness” in the home and emphasize conformity to the norm (also known as normalization.) He expressed the need to ensure that where the person lives is perceived to be his or her home and to the greatest degree possible has control of the home environment. This includes choice of food, decor and participation in household duties and chores, as well as the right to choose with whom to live.

In true community “special” programs take a back seat because they are segregating and highlight disability. Inclusion places a higher value on the human rather than on his or her achievement or the need to be “fixed.” It places value on the person rather than value determined by contribution, education or appearance. It assumes that *“we are all wounded and that those wounds made available to others can become sources of healing.”* (Henri Nouwen).

Community living also encourages people to be members of social groups, consumers, tourists, entrepreneurs, employees, artists, friends – anything. And in our context, community living requires that we as staff allow people to fully experience the options that we all experience in the community. It looks for the gifts within people, encourages solidarity and interdependence. It gives one a high level of choice and allows a reasonable level of risk to occur. It recognizes that while we serve we are also being served. It also means being close and mutually supportive in our relationships with those around us.

Service follows philosophy. For many years, even centuries, the philosophy which drove supports for people with developmental disabilities could be characterized by deviancy, difference, inadequacy, even sub-humanness. The service which inevitably followed such characterizations included marginalization and impoverishment. It was not until families and a few unique individuals began to think in different ways, that services changed in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Communitas is indebted to these families, to Wolf Wolfensberger and Jean Vanier for their work and commitment to changing cultural paradigms and, with it, the lives of people with developmental disabilities. Most dramatically, these changes included a change in perceived value of the person, a change in the beliefs of the potential for growth in the person and the potential for contribution, as well as a change in the person's rights under law, including the right to live in the same communities as all other citizens. In particular, Jean Vanier also reflected deeply on how the care and support of people with developmental disabilities was part of a larger faith perspective. For Communitas, these reflections are of significant interest.

**Normalization**

Wolf Wolfensberger's book Normalization was written in 1972 and became the most important work for North Americans. It spoke of the need for service systems, such as Communitas, to be guided by values of intrinsic human worth, normality of appearance and the importance of ability and contribution. This meant that it was important for people with developmental disabilities:

- to live in the community in homes that appear the same as anyone else's;
- to contribute and participate in the life of the larger community;
- to be assisted by people who support them respectfully and are prepared to advocate for them when necessary;
- to develop as holistic individuals, including spiritually.

**Community and Growth**

At about the same time, Jean Vanier, the son of Canada's Governor General George Vanier, left a promising public career to live with two men with developmental disabilities in a small community in France. Out of this experience came the L'Arche movement and the first of many books, Community and Growth. Vanier examined Western Society and found it lacking: excessively individualistic, materialist and devoid of "heart" and spiritual centeredness. This was particularly true of people living on the margins, including people with developmental disabilities. His call was to have people, particularly Christians who are called by God to serve others, join in living, working and worshipping together with others who live on the margins. It was of importance to Vanier that people who serve also learn from those who are being served. He believed that those needing support also had much to offer in the way of openness, gentleness and a ready willingness to love – attributes that are often absent in the busyness of life. It is these dimensions of the heart that resonate deeply with Communitas.

Communitas calls its staff to help guide those whom we support to a life of growth, contribution, personal value and relationships. It also calls on its staff to learn the important lessons of the heart from these same individuals.

Communitas applies the principles and practices of Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR) to its care of the people it supports. This effective method is especially meaningful to individuals with mental health issues because it provides hope and sets its goal to achieve one's recovery as best as possible. The focus is on health rather than illness, with services designed to assist individuals to restore and maintain their sense of confidence and wellbeing.

The means of recovery is unique to each individual. Communitas promotes and offers various choices and decisions to individuals allowing them to set and realize their personal goals, and acquire the skills and resources they may need. Individuals are assisted to recognize their personal strengths, learn coping strategies and skills and develop a supportive and caring environment in which to live as independently as possible.

There is a strong emphasis of participating in any and all activities that are part of every day life and include community involvement. Peer support, family involvement and additional assistance from Communitas or other service providers within the mental health sector are other resources that are explored and may be included to assist in one's recovery.

At Communitas, we believe that everyone we serve should have the opportunity to achieve recovery to the best of their ability and that hope is an essential ingredient to that end.

***The Mandt System***

*"The entire philosophy of The Mandt System® "Putting People First" is based on the principle that all people have the right to be treated with dignity and respect...all individuals should be seen as people first and that everyone has the right to a personal identity, the right to normalization, and the right to the least restrictive and most appropriate environment. Communitas believes in a "Person Directed Planning" that will support people affected by disabilities, and these individuals must receive training to achieve empowerment in decision making and self-management, problem-solving, coping skills, social skills, and nonverbal and verbal skills.*

*The Mandt System® "Putting People First" is utilized within a conceptual framework that understands that all behaviors serve a purpose. At times, that purpose may not be readily visible or apparent, but that does not change the fact that the behaviour serves a purpose; it merely means that the purpose may not be known. The central issue is defining the purpose of a particular behaviour for a particular individual, and what intervention and behaviour support is the "best practice" for that person.*

*The most effective strategy for managing challenging behaviour(s) is based in prevention, early interaction, and de-escalation before the behaviour escalates. Communitas believes this involves developing a relationship with people by meeting each person's needs, which will provide the best possible care, welfare, safety, and security for the staff as well as the people they support and provide care for on a daily basis. Physical interaction should be used only as a last resort when people are presenting a danger to themselves or others, or in cases of extreme property damage, and should be used only until the person is out of danger."*

(Quoted and extracted from [www.mandtsystem.com/mandtsystem.ca](http://www.mandtsystem.com/mandtsystem.ca))

Spirit of Gentleness, or Gentle Teaching, is the philosophy of care used at Communitas. We prefer to use the phrase Spirit of Gentleness, as we believe it better describes our actions or response to the people we serve rather than emphasizing it as a teaching method. The Spirit of Gentleness focuses on our attitude and directs us to ask ourselves these questions:

- What is our attitude about those we serve?
- What is our attitude toward those we serve?

At Communitas, we serve those who have been wounded or hurt through many life experiences. Some residents have been neglected or abused because they are a person with a physical or developmental disability. Others have been misunderstood or poorly treated because they are unable to communicate their needs. Some clients faced life-changing circumstances when they survived an accident that resulted in an acquired brain injury. Yet others struggle coping with the day-to-day demands while living with a diagnosis of a mental illness.

Our attitude about and toward those we serve directly influences the care we provide to residents and clients. As our name Communitas indicates we are a community that recognizes that “all people are equal.” We believe that everyone should be served with care and a spirit of gentleness. Through developing a spirit of gentleness we are able to serve those who have been deeply wounded. We are able to help them build good memories, realize their self-worth and develop confidence. They are then empowered to experience personal wellbeing and this gives them hope for tomorrow.

### ***Supporting Positive Behaviour with the Spirit of Gentleness***

People who are “wounded” may sometimes act or behave inappropriately. The Spirit of Gentleness isn't meant to change this behaviour. Rather it is the positive support given through unconditional love and the individual's response to that love that creates new and positive memories and enhances a person's self-worth.

Dr. John McGee, the founder of “Gentle Teaching,” believes behaviours, especially self-destructive ones, are the result of deep hurts within a person. To address these behaviours, Dr. McGee determined through everyday interactions that emphasize this spirit of gentleness, a wounded person's sense of value can increase and be enhanced. With gentleness you are able to show the following:

- When you (the client or resident) are with me (the caregiver), you are safe.
- I will love you unconditionally.
- It is good to be with me.
- It is good to do things together.
- It is good to do things on your own and also with others.
- You will learn to reach out to others.

We show individuals that they are safe and loved by various means. It begins with a peaceful and non-violent attitude. Other qualities are acceptance and empathy toward the person and the ability to forgive and not hold grudges. The comfort and relief felt by the resident or client when their caregiver is around is the primary outcome. Words are used to build up, not tear down, encourage, not blame or reprimand. Listening is sometimes more important than speech. Eye contact may say more than words alone. Used with discernment, the gentle act of touch when given by the caregiver is one of acceptance and tells a resident or client they are safe and loved.

The feelings of solitude or being apart felt by a wounded individual slowly diminish as the relationship between them and their caregiver grows. Interdependence and community is created. A person's wellbeing can be realized as companionship and community is established. Healing can also take place in this safe, loving and supportive environment.

Regardless of the activity or situation, the Spirit of Gentleness should be evident in every daily interaction with residents and clients. Every effort will be made to prevent inappropriate behaviours by clients or residents. These efforts include:

- Removing any possible causes/triggers beforehand that may lead up to the behaviour
- Anticipating and intervening before a behaviour occurs
- Looking at medical and environmental factors that may contribute to behaviour
- Positively reinforcing an individual's strengths and abilities rather than focusing on the negative or changing a behaviour
- Encouraging participation in programs that lead to positive outcomes

Communitas is committed to providing services and programs that develop an individual's potential and add quality to their life. Their wellbeing and safety is vital. Personal rights and the freedom to choose are respected. Learning is encouraged. As advocates, we ensure meaningful involvement in the community. Programs may include one or more of the following: learning life skills, how to communicate and interact with others socially, involvement in the community through recreational activities and the development of skills in a volunteer or vocational environment.

While our emphasis is on gentleness, should a person's safety be jeopardized – whether client, resident, staff or volunteer, the use of restraints may be needed. The urgency of the incident, safety needs and the level of suitability required for that instance will guide the use of restraints. Staff is trained to use the least amount of restraint needed to deal with any emergency. Communitas does not permit the use of corporal punishment, isolation, locked seclusion, mechanical or chemical restraints unless mandated by the court.

We believe in the following rights and responsibilities for persons served by Communitas Supportive Care Society. You can expect:

- An environment where you are safe and loved, free of abuse and neglect
- Affirmation of your being, by being given dignity, respect and encouragement to be who you were created to be
- The opportunity to choose where and with whom you will make a home and to be fully informed of services provided before agreeing to become a resident
- To have a care plan developed and implemented that meets your needs and reflects who you are
- Assistance to connect with and be supported by loving and honouring individuals
- That services will be delivered in a way that respects your individual history, culture, race, religion and sexual orientation
- To receive services and supports required to ensure your full participation in society
- That you will be given the opportunity to determine your own needs and make your own decisions and, when necessary, to receive the support to do so
- To receive enough financial resources to have a reasonable quality of life
- To receive holistic nurture for personal psychological, spiritual, emotional and physical growth
- To have respect of privacy and personal possessions - including the right to receive visitors and to communicate with them in private; to send and receive communications (mail, phone calls, etc.) privately; and to have personal privacy even in relation to personal records, bedroom, belongings and storage spaces
- To experience the dignity of risks
- Supportive relationships and friendships essential for a quality life
- To receive basic information as to how to lodge complaints, grievances and appeals regarding the service that is provided
- To have the opportunity to participate in a resident council or committee, and to receive the support to continue to participate
- To have transparency and accountability from Communitas, meaning that you will have access to inspection reports, your care plan, and to freedom of information legislation

Communitas has identified “home” as an integral part of its guiding principles. We believe that there are many contributing factors that provide a home-like environment in a residential setting. We have carefully considered each of the following to be the rights and privileges of a person living in one of our residential homes.

***“A person has a right to live in a place that he/she calls home.” will mean:***

- Living in a home is an important part of one’s wellbeing. It meets the fundamental human need of belonging.
- Home is something to be valued, respected and honoured by those living in the home and by those who come and go.
- Home is a safe place that allows people to face sorrows, setbacks and hardships and to celebrate events that give meaning and joy to life without fear of judgment.
- Individuals living in the home are considered the owner(s) or tenant(s) of the home and are responsible for matters related to ownership or tenancy.
- Showing hospitality, sharing one’s home with others and being a good neighbour are dynamic elements of living in a home environment. Relationships and social activities outside of the home environment will be encouraged.

***“A home will be safe and comfortable. It will respect the personal and cultural needs of its residents.” means:***

- Those living in the home are entitled to their personal tastes or preferences and self-expression in their surroundings. Their “voice” will be heard regarding choices that impact their life and day-to-day routines.
- Roommates, staff and volunteers will be carefully chosen to ensure compatibility, safety and security of all. Staff members who share a home with a resident should consider it a “calling.” This means that staff recognize and understand they are working in someone’s home and not “just another workplace.”
- The location of the home is suitable to a resident’s needs and necessities.

***“The house will be accessible and will address the various requirements of its residents.” will mean:***

- The home should appear ordinary and not special in any way.
- While there are certain rules and regulations that are required while providing care and services to residents in their home, the primary objective is a safe and home-like environment. A sterile or agency feeling in the home is to be avoided.
- A housekeeping schedule and a maintenance program are essential to the overall care and wellbeing of residents in the home.

We recognize that family is a vital part in most of the residents and clients lives we serve. In many cases, family members were responsible for providing the physical, emotional and spiritual support to our residents and clients during their childhood and youth. Parents and/or siblings may be the only constant in an individual's life that has contributed to their self-awareness and worth. Whatever the family experience has been or is for a resident or client, Communitas is committed to supporting the resident or client. The objective is to nurture positive relationships with the family and maintain contact that will continue to contribute to the resident or client's wellbeing.

Relevant information about personal care, activities, health and other issues, as required, will be shared with the appropriate family member. Visits with family and participation in celebrations such as birthdays and other significant life events are encouraged. Family members are encouraged to share their values and concerns with staff. Communitas will work to resolve complaints or issues as they arise. This will ensure appropriate care or services are being received and the individual's needs are appropriately addressed.

Other considerations that may include family participation are legal matters related to guardianship or representation agreements. Training opportunities are sometimes available to family members and Communitas will share information related to these events when they occur.

## **ACRONYMS USED AT COMMUNITAS**

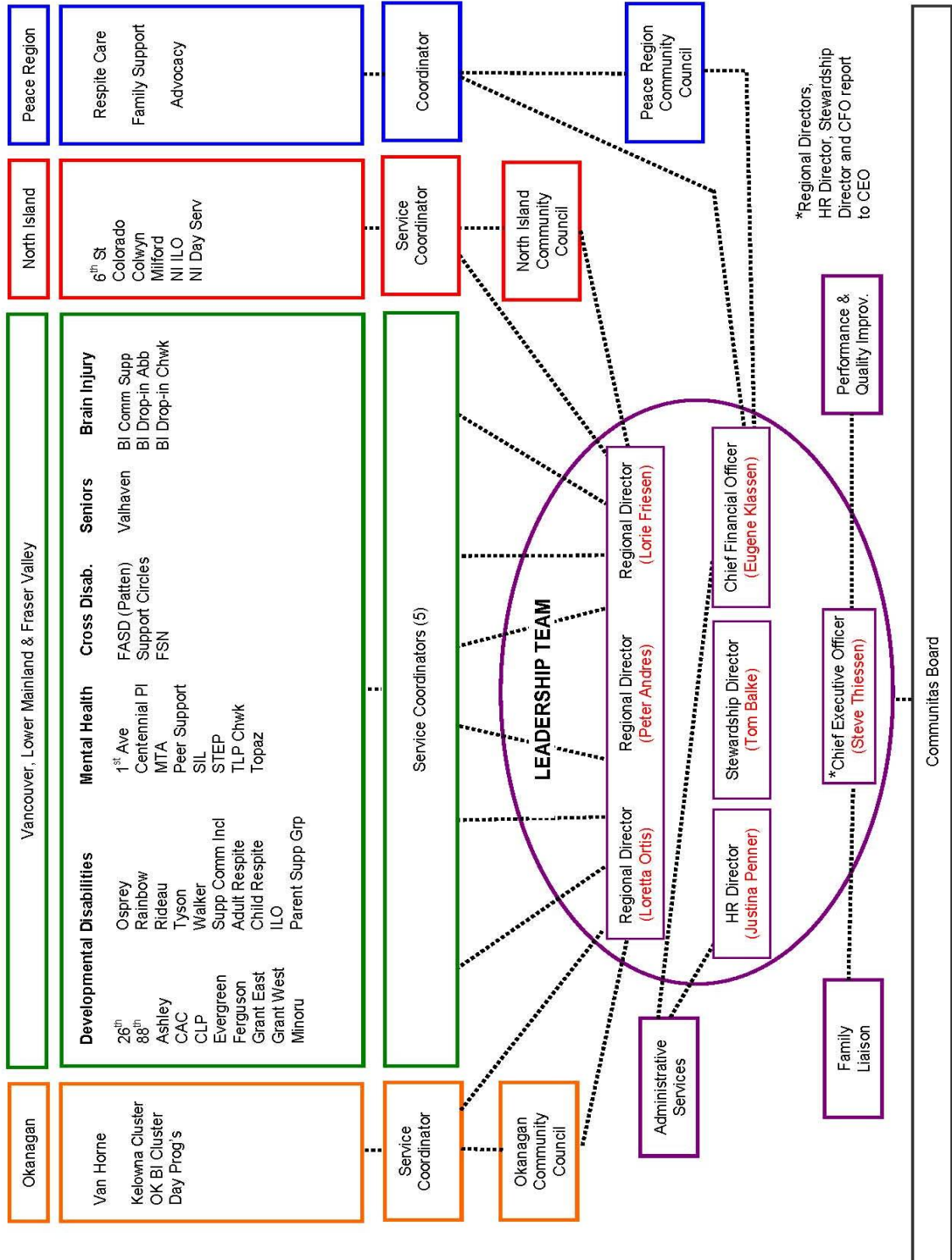
**1.14**

<b>ADS</b>	Adult Day Services, reference to Council of Accreditation (COA) standards
<b>AOS</b>	Among Ourselves is a semi-monthly newsletter that is distributed to employees with their pay stubs on the 10 <sup>th</sup> and the 25 <sup>th</sup> of each month, or as required.
<b>BCACL</b>	BC Association for Community Living. This is a provincial organization that seeks to promote the participation of people with disabilities into all aspects of community life
<b>BI</b>	Brain Injury. Communitas has several programs that provide support to people with an acquired brain injury.
<b>CAC</b>	Choices and Connections. This program offers leisure, recreation and social daytime activity for adults living with disabilities.
<b>CEO</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>CFO</b>	Chief Financial Officer
<b>CLBC</b>	Community Living British Columbia delivers support and services to people with developmental disabilities, children with special needs and their families in British Columbia. This government branch emerged from MCFD in 2004 and strictly deals with community living. It has a board of self-advocates, family and community members, as well as staff located throughout the province.
<b>CLP</b>	Community Living Program. This service assists people in the community who are living with disabilities.
<b>CMHA</b>	Canadian Mennonite Health Assembly. An association of services, largely comprising of residential homes for seniors but also including organizations providing services to people with disabilities.
<b>COA</b>	Council on Accreditation. Every four years Communitas undertakes an in-depth accreditation process where all aspects of service are inspected to ensure that quality and proficiency remain integral.
<b>CSSEA</b>	Community Social Services Employers' Association. An employers' association assigned to negotiate labor issues in the social service sector with the government. This provision of service is available for agencies that are all or partially unionized.
<b>DDS</b>	Services for People with Developmental Disabilities, reference to COA standards
<b>FASD</b>	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Communitas offers a program that provides support and life skills training for individuals with FASD.
<b>FHA</b>	Fraser Health Authority
<b>FSN</b>	Family Support Network. Communitas provides opportunities for families of individuals with disabilities to get together through events such as workshops, picnics, potlucks and retreats.
<b>GCDC</b>	Grid Category Designation Committee. This group, comprised of the CFO, RDs, HRD and HR Mgr, meets to make decisions regarding organizational wage and vacation grids, and the placement of positions on them.
<b>GLS</b>	Group Living Services, reference to COA standards
<b>HRD</b>	Human Resources Director

<b>ILO</b>	Individualized Living Options. These are non-group home residential options, emphasizing an attempt to create a residential support that uniquely addresses an individual's needs. Individuals with a disability either live on his or her own with adequate support from the organization or with a family where individual living space is provided.
<b>ISP</b>	Individual Service Plan designed specifically for residents/clients.
<b>LT</b>	Leadership Team. This team, comprised of the CEO, CFO, RD's and HRD, meets regularly to discuss and make decisions regarding the overall operations of Communitas.
<b>MCC BC</b>	Mennonite Central Committee British Columbia. The provincial headquarters of MCC.
<b>MCFD</b>	Ministry of Children and Family Development
<b>PATH</b>	Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope. Residents/clients meet with a group of support workers and family or friends to map out goals and dreams for their life.
<b>PLP</b>	Personal Life Plan designed specifically for residents/clients.
<b>PQI</b>	Performance Quality Improvement. There are two committees that facilitate the flow of information regarding our accreditation process through COA.
<b>PSP</b>	Peer Support Program. A program in which mental health clients are provided with support and encouragement by their peers.
<b>PSR</b>	Psychosocial Rehabilitation
<b>PSRC</b>	Psychosocial Rehabilitation Canada
<b>RD</b>	Regional Director. This refers to the level of management that oversees the different regions of the organization. Regional Directors share the responsibility of the oversight of Communitas programs.
<b>RFP</b>	Request for Proposal. This refers to the written contract proposal that includes a rationale for funding and a specific budget of the program desired.
<b>RFQ</b>	Request for Qualification. In order to qualify for a contract for government funding for a specific program, agencies must fill out a request for qualification in order to be approved to write a RFP.
<b>RP</b>	This refers to our Respite Programs that provide support for families that have either children or adults with developmental disabilities. There are two programs under the banner of respite: Children's Respite Program (CRP) and the Adult Respite Program (ARP).
<b>SC</b>	Service Coordinator. This is a level of management that provides oversight to a group of programs and their Managers.
<b>SCL</b>	Supported Community Living, reference to COA standards
<b>SCRMP</b>	A committee comprised of Service Coordinators, Regional Directors, and the Human Resources Director, that meets semi-monthly.
<b>SIL</b>	Supported Independent Living Program. This service assists people in the community who are living with mental illness

<b>STEP</b>	Support Toward Employment Program. Individuals with mental health challenges participate in various job readiness activities such as recycling, shredding and yard waste disposal.
<b>TLP</b>	Transitional Living Program. This service assists people who have a mental illness to transition from full support to living in the community.
<b>VM</b>	Volunteering Mentoring, reference to COA standards
<b>VR</b>	Vocational Rehabilitation
<b>VOC</b>	Vocational Services, reference to COA standards
<b>VOICE</b>	Vocational Options Integrating Choice Employment provides employment-counseling services to individuals that have mental health and/or developmental disabilities.
<b>WRAP</b>	Wellness Recovery Action Plan is a course offered by the Peer Support Program. It is geared towards mental health recovery and is 7 weeks in duration. Individuals who have had personal experience with mental health challenges facilitate this course and are able to provide genuine insight into managing mental illness.

Communitas Supportive Care Society  
REPORTING STRUCTURE



Revised: December 2011

**SECTION 2  
STAFFING**

**HIRING PRACTICE****2.1****Policy**

Communitas is a Christian organization with the mandate to provide the highest quality of support for people in the name of Christ. We welcome individuals that are capable of fulfilling this mandate.

**Procedure**

Selection of staff is based upon the assessment of education, training, experience, personal suitability, eligibility to work in Canada, positive references and other factors deemed important to the individuals we support. Communitas will not unlawfully discriminate against any person or category of persons protected by law.

**Employees**

Prior to time of hire, employees are required to submit to the Communitas office:

- Valid Social Insurance Number or other authorization to legally work in Canada
  - Criminal Record Check (Communitas HR Department will perform record check after employee signs the Consent to a Criminal Record Check form.)
  - Doctor's Note of Good Health
  - Tuberculosis Screening (available at your local Health Unit)
  - Driving Record Abstract (available at your local Motor Vehicle Branch)
  - Emergency First Aid Certificate (or approved equivalent as required by position)
  - BC Class 4 drivers license – unrestricted (as required by position)
  - Certification of training per position requirements
- Example: "Community Support Worker" Certificate (or registration with Communitas for the *Introduction to Community Support Work* modules before hire)

**Volunteers**

Prior to being assigned to a service area, volunteers are required to submit to the HR Department:

- Criminal Record Check (Communitas HR Department will perform record check after employee signs the Consent to a Criminal Record Check form.)
- Tuberculosis Screening (available at your local Health Unit)
- Pledge of Confidentiality form

Upon being assigned to a specific program, staff will meet with the Manager of the program to sign an Employment Agreement form or Volunteer Agreement form, complete a Pledge of Confidentiality form, receive a job description, a list of probation requirements, and participate in a work orientation. An Employment Agreement will also include necessary payroll information such as the completion of a TD1 form and automatic bank deposit information.

Employment Agreement Forms or Volunteer Agreement Forms will need to be signed for each program worked at. Employees may work in more than one program as long as Communitas policy regarding number of hours worked, back-to-back shifts, and time off per week is observed. Employees may not work in non-unionized and unionized programs at the same time.

**Forms**

Employment Agreement  
Volunteer Agreement  
Pledge of Confidentiality

**Start date** is the first day of paid work. An employee's start date is recorded on their Employment Agreement Form, which is filled out and signed at the end of the first orientation shift.

A volunteer's start date is recorded on their Volunteer Agreement Form, which is filled out and signed at the end of the first orientation shift.

**Staff Member** refers to any paid employee or volunteer of Communitas.

**Job Status** is determined by the number of permanent hours an employee works each week.

- *Full time:* Staff working 30-40 regularly scheduled hours per week
- *Part time:* Staff working 1-29 regularly scheduled hours per week
- *Casual:* Staff who are not assigned regular hours but are "on call" only
- *Temporary:* If temporary is added to either the part time or full time designation, it signifies that the employee is given those hours for a specific time period only, not permanently. Employees who have been given full time temporary hours are not eligible for benefits unless the temporary period is one year or longer in duration.
- *Volunteer:* A person authorized to work with Communitas, but without pay.
- *Volunteer Exchange Program Personnel:* Staff who are working with Communitas as part of MCC BC's VE program.
- *Friend:* A friend is a person who wants to spend time with a resident and with whom the resident wants to spend time. This person (friend) is not expected to participate in any work aspect of the organization.

**Employment Status** refers to whether an employee is active or inactive, on leave or vacation, etc.

**Lay off** occurs when an employee's position is significantly reduced or no longer exists due to no fault of his or her own.

**Contractor** refers to a person who provides support to clients in the Respite or Independent Living Options (ILO) programs. Independent contractors are **not** considered Communitas employees, and their service is guided by a contract and any related policies or procedures outlined in the contract agreement. Contractors are not guided by policies or procedures specifically relating to employees.

Payment to the contractor is made following the receipt and approval of invoices for service provided. These invoices are submitted according to the terms of the contract and payment is independent of the organization's payroll system. Contractors do not have statutory deductions (e.g. income tax, CPP, EI) taken from their pay and are independently accountable to Revenue Canada.

Employees who are also contractors:

Occasionally Communitas employees will also have an independent contract relationship with Communitas. For example, someone who works in a group home might also support a client in the Respite program. Since taxation for employees and contractors is treated independently by Revenue Canada, *it is important that these relationships are kept completely separate in all areas.*

**Communitas requires that employees refrain from performing contracted duties during time for which they are being paid as employees.** For example, an ILO caregiver must not engage in activities related to his or her client during paid time at a Communitas group home or day program. In this regard, a contracted relationship with Communitas will be treated the same as "other employment" and interference with employee duties will be seen as conflict of interest (see HR Manual 3.8).

At no time should a Communitas employee provide service as an employee for an individual they also support through a contract. Example: Heidi, an ILO contractor is also employed by Communitas in a group home. Heidi's ILO client normally also receives day program services through Communitas with a different employee, Jack. If, in an emergency Jack cannot provide his day program support,

Heidi must discuss options with her ILO manager. If Heidi is scheduled for a shift with her group home employment that day and cannot remain home with the client, she must either make arrangements for alternate care or request time off (vacation, banked time or unpaid leave of absence) from her group home shift using normal procedures. The ILO client **may not** be brought to or supported at Heidi's group home location.

**Related Policies**

Casual Employees, Section 2.3

Benefit Package (Non-Union), Section 6.1

Conflict of Interest, Section 3.7

## **CASUAL EMPLOYEES**

**2.3**

**Policy**

Casual employees are employed on an “on call” basis to cover regular staff absences due to sick leave, vacation or other leaves of absence.

Because Communitas provides 24/7 care for the people we support, casual employees must be available to work a variety of shift hours, and are expected to be available to work at least two to three shifts per week unless formally exempted by the HR Director. Casual employees who are unavailable for shift requests will have their employment with Communitas evaluated. Frequent unavailability may lead to termination of employment.

Casual employees do not receive paid vacation time, but will receive vacation pay to be paid out with each pay cheque. Casual employees will be entitled to make themselves unavailable for a period of not more than three weeks per year to provide a vacation period for that employee. This period must be requested in writing and approved by the Manager who will take operational requirements into consideration, but will not unreasonably withhold approval. This period will be without pay.

Casual employees will be expected to be available during summer vacation periods and statutory holidays.

## **PROBATIONARY PERIOD – STAFF**

**2.4**

### ***Policy***

All new employees and volunteers will be required to serve a probationary period of six months.

### ***Procedure***

During the probationary period, the employee's suitability of philosophy and quality of support, teamwork ability and adherence to policy and procedures of Communitas will be evaluated.

Evaluations will be performed at six weeks (at Manager's discretion), three months and prior to an employee's six-month anniversary date.

Where the staff person's suitability is found to be unsatisfactory, their employment will be terminated.

Before the end of their six-month probationary period, employees must have completed all probation requirements specific to their position/program.

Upon successful completion of the probationary period the employee must contact the HR Department to arrange for a wage grid review and to be placed at the appropriate position on the Communitas wage grid. Wage increases will be dated to the first pay period following the employee's successful completion of probation. Should the employee delay the submission of the Wage Grid Credit Application form for more than one pay period, the wage increase will be dated to the closest pay period to the submission date.

### ***Related Policies***

Work Requirements, Section 3.38

Wages, Section 6.13

### ***Forms***

Wage Grid Credit Application

## **ORIENTATION**

**2.5**

### ***Policy***

Orientations aim to provide staff with both a working knowledge as well as a philosophical knowledge of the work of Communitas.

At the commencement of employment, and when starting a new program/position, all employees will receive an orientation package and be required to complete orientation shifts. These shifts will be paid for at the employee's regular wage rate.

Orientations will include required reading of the Communitas HR Manual and applicable program manual(s), which may include the Community Care Facility and Assisted Living Act/Regulations, and will orient staff to the philosophy, values and expectations of the agency as well as individual program(s).

Periodically, Communitas will present Organizational Overviews to further acquaint new staff to the organization.

## **Policy**

All Communitas employees will have equal opportunity to apply for posted positions throughout the organization and to obtain the job status they are eligible for and want. Communitas will maintain a fair process for increasing and decreasing hours throughout its programs.

## **Procedure for Increasing Hours**

1. Communitas will post available program hours at the Communitas office, on all program bulletin boards, and on the Communitas website.
2. Existing program staff are given first consideration for the posted hours.
3. Casual employees and new applicants may be considered at any time for posted hours.

Program Managers are responsible for staff selection within their program and must consider the support needs of the residents/clients in all staff selection decisions. All staff selection within Communitas will be based on the following criteria:

1. Suitability
2. Qualifications
3. Length of Service

Employees may work in more than one program as long as Communitas policy regarding number of hours worked, back-to-back shifts, and time off per week is observed. Employees may not work in non-unionized and unionized programs at the same time.

When a job status change occurs, the Manager will submit a Status Change Form to the HR Department.

A program/position-specific trial period of three months will apply to employees who begin a new program or position within the organization. The trial period for a management position will be six months. During the trial period, the employee's suitability, quality of support and teamwork ability will be evaluated at six weeks and three months.

## **Procedure for Decreasing Hours**

Employees working in more than one residential program and desiring to resign from one program or position must submit a written letter of resignation to the Manager of that program at least two weeks prior to their last scheduled shift.

Resigning from a program or position may impact an employee's eligibility for benefits and the rate at which they earn a wage increase.

Once a position is relinquished, the employee does not have the right to reclaim those hours. If the hours become available again, the employee must apply for them in the same way as all other interested employees.

## **Related Policies**

Benefit Package (Non-Union), Section 6.1  
Wages, Section 6.13

## **Forms**

Status Change

## **TRANSFERS**

**2.7**

### ***Policy***

At times, Communitas may find it necessary to transfer an employee from one program to another due to operational necessity. These reassignments will not be arbitrary or indiscriminate and will consider service continuity to be of primary importance.

## **EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES**

**2.8**

### ***Policy***

**Staff:** A relative of an existing Communitas employee may be refused employment or transferred to a new work area at the discretion of the HR Director.

**Board Members:** A relative of a member of the Board of Directors may be hired, provided the director thereafter absents him/herself from any committee or board discussion and/or vote pertaining to personnel or labour relations issues (salaries, benefits, conditions of work, recruitment).

### ***Definitions***

For the purpose of this policy, "relative" shall include parents, parents-in-law, spouse, children, siblings, siblings-in-law, grandchildren, grandparents, grandparents-in-law, daughter or son-in-law, stepchildren, guardian, and any person who lives with an employee as a member of the employee's family.

### ***Conditions***

In cases where related staff members are already working at the same location, and the relationship negatively affects the program or working relationships within the program, a determination will be made as to whether a transfer or termination of one of the related staff members will take place.

### ***Procedure***

All Managers/Supervisors responsible for hiring will determine whether applicants for positions are related to present employees, directors, residents or clients as part of the selection process prior to making an employment offer.

## **TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT – EMPLOYEES**

**2.9**

### ***Policy***

Employees are required to give Communitas notice of their intent to resign prior to the last day of service.

Employees will endeavor to give a notice of termination to the Manager, of at least 14 calendar days.

The period of notice must be for time to be worked and may include vacation time with the agreement of the Manager.

Any vacation or banked time accrued will be paid out to the employee with their final pay.

The requirement to give notice may be waived by the HR Director.

***Policy***

Where an employee’s services are terminated other than for just cause, they will be entitled to notice in writing, or regular pay in lieu of notice.

For service of three months to one year an employee is entitled to one week of notice or pay in lieu of notice.

For service over one year, an employee is entitled to two weeks of notice or pay in lieu of notice. In addition for each subsequent year served one more week of notice or pay in lieu of notice will be added to an employee’s entitlement. The maximum notice or pay in lieu of notice is eight weeks.

***Exceptions***

This policy does not apply to:

- Casual employees
- Employees who have been dismissed for just cause
- Employees who have been offered and refused reasonable alternative work
- Employees who have been hired for a definite term or for specific work to be completed in a period not to exceed 12 months

***Procedure***

Notice must be given to the employee in writing. The period of notice, if applicable, must be for time worked and not include vacation time (unless agreed to by the HR Director).

When a working notice of termination has been given to an employee, the wage rate and conditions of employment will not be altered except with the employee’s consent. Notice will be deemed to be without effect if the employee continues to work after the expiration of the notice.

When an employee is on temporary layoff, they must first be recalled to work before being given notice of termination. Otherwise they will be considered terminated and eligible for severance pay if the layoff exceeds thirteen weeks in a twenty-week period. For the purpose of calculating length of notice or severance pay, employees will be considered terminated at the commencement of the temporary layoff.

**EXIT INTERVIEW****2.11*****Policy***

An employee completing service with Communitas will be contacted by the HR Department regarding the scheduling of an exit interview, if desired.

***Procedure***

An exit interview may be performed in person or by phone, fax or email with a Regional Director. At the employee’s request, this interview may be scheduled with the HR Director.

### ***Policy***

Communitas welcomes the participation of volunteers within our organization. Volunteers enrich the services we provide by offering a variety of gifts and are viewed as an integral part of our team. Volunteers are responsible to the Manager of the location at which they are working.

Volunteers may assist in a wide range of areas. A sample of activities that volunteers in Communitas programs may become involved in are:

- Assisting people in eating
- Grooming (hair and nails)
- Reading with or to people
- Accompanying residents and staff on outings
- In-home activities with staff and residents together
- Other activities specific to individual programs

There are some functions reserved for employees due to the level of responsibility, special training and skills that may be required (unless the volunteers are trained and authorized by the Manager). Examples of functions that are normally reserved for employees are:

- Assisting with personal care provision
- Being left alone with residents in a position of responsibility

A volunteer who wishes to become an employee of Communitas must complete the regular application processes for employment. Being a successful volunteer does not guarantee employment status with Communitas upon application.

Communitas employees are required to forward questions and/or concerns regarding the conduct or role of volunteers in the program to their Manager.

Program Managers will complete Work Performance Reviews for regular volunteers after three months and annually thereafter. These evaluations will be forwarded to the Service Coordinator for review, with copies to the volunteer's personnel file.

SECTION 3  
CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

### **ABUSE: CLIENT/RESIDENT**

**3.1**

#### **Policy**

Clients and residents of the organization have a right to expect an environment that is safe and free from any abuse or neglect. Any staff member or volunteer who, when confirmed upon investigation, has inflicted abuse or neglected a client or resident will be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

Any staff member or volunteer who has knowledge of an incident of suspected abuse or neglect has the responsibility to report such an incident immediately to their Manager. Failure on the part of any witness to report such an incident will result in severe disciplinary action and may result in termination of employment.

When a resident or client is acting in a way which might harm the staff member, the staff member has the right to move away from that individual, provided that resident or client is left in a safe situation. The expectation in those instances is that the staff member will immediately report incidents to the Manager, designate or 911.

In order to maintain an atmosphere in which clients, residents and staff may live and work without fear of abuse, every possible effort will be made to ensure that all reported incidents are thoroughly investigated and dealt with as soon as possible.

#### **Procedure**

1. All concerns of possible abuse raised by clients/residents, families, staff or other persons must be reported immediately.
2. If a situation arises which a staff member feels incapable of handling, or if a staff member is abused by a client/resident, the staff member must withdraw from the situation as soon as practical and seek assistance. On no occasion is it appropriate for a staff member to "punish" or take retaliatory measures against a client/resident.
3. Any staff member who has witnessed abuse of a client/resident or suspects there has been abuse should report the incident immediately to their Manager. Failure to report such an incident will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
4. The Manager will begin appropriate action in cooperation with CLBC and Licensing personnel.
5. All investigations of abuse in licensed programs are to be directed by the Licensing department. Licensing will make an early decision whether or not the police should be involved. If police become involved, they will complete the initial investigation. If police are not involved, Licensing will proceed with their own investigation. During the investigation, the staff member accused of abuse will be suspended from working shifts. Final determination of employment status will be made at the conclusion of the investigation and final report.
6. Investigations of allegations of abuse in unlicensed homes are conducted jointly between Communitas and Community Living Services. Suspension of the accused staff person will apply as will determination of employment status at the end of the investigation.
7. If the investigation provides proof of such abuse, the staff member will be disciplined with an appropriate penalty up to and including termination of employment.
8. Any volunteer who has abused a client/resident or whose behaviour puts a client/resident at risk, will be immediately relieved of their volunteer responsibilities. Communitas employees are required to forward questions and/or concerns regarding the conduct or role of volunteers in the program to their Manager.

#### **Related Policies**

Abuse Policy and Processes, Section 4, *Residential Services Manual*

## **ATTENDANCE – LATENESS AND ABSENTEEISM**

**3.2**

### ***Policy***

It is the responsibility of every employee to attend work as scheduled on a regular and consistent basis. Employees are expected to be punctual and ready to commence work at the start of their scheduled shifts and to remain on duty until the stipulated quitting time.

Attendance/punctuality is considered a criterion of performance and is measured when assessing overall employee performance at work.

### ***Definitions***

**Lateness** means not being at work and/or ready to work at the time the shift is scheduled to begin.

**Absenteeism** includes sick time, leaves of absence, unauthorized time off, missed staff meetings, missed mandatory training.

### ***Procedure***

Employees who are unable to report to work at the scheduled time must advise their Manager in advance so that necessary arrangements can be made.

If an employee is late for a scheduled shift:

- Employee who is late must notify the Manager or otherwise note the missed time on the schedule
- Employee who remained on shift longer than scheduled must notify the Manager or otherwise note the extra time worked on the schedule

Employees who are unable to attend a scheduled shift due to severe weather, natural disasters, (flood, earthquake, etc.) or other personal circumstances (transportation or childcare issues) will not be paid regular wages for the shift, or portion thereof, that they did not work. In these situations, employees may access vacation or banked time accruals to compensate for the hours of work missed.

Employees whose attendance is not consistent and punctual will receive discipline up to and including termination of employment.

### ***Related Policies***

Conduct and Behavior, Section 3.6

Wages, Section 6.13

## **BULLETIN BOARDS**

**3.3**

### ***Policy***

Notices, posters and similar materials will be posted on designated boards only. Walls, windows and other surfaces are not to be defaced with notices, posters and other materials.

### ***Procedure***

Authorization must be obtained from the Manager or designated staff in the specific program before posting items on bulletin boards.

## **CHANGES OF ADDRESS AND/OR TELEPHONE NUMBER**

**3.4**

### ***Policy***

It is the responsibility of each staff member to keep the HR Department informed of any changes in their name, address, telephone number, marital status or number of dependents. These changes are required for benefit entitlement and other official communications.

### ***Procedure***

Please forward all changes to your name, address, telephone number, marital status or number of dependents in writing to the HR Department as soon as possible

When resigning from the organization, a forwarding address must be filed with the HR Department to ensure the employer can forward income tax T4 slips and other relevant documentation.

## **COMPUTER USE AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

**3.5**

### ***COMPUTER USE***

**3.5.1**

#### ***Policy***

Computer technology is made available to Communitas programs with the intent of providing employees with the tools and technology to improve their effectiveness and efficiency in serving the people we support.

Program Managers are fully responsible for the computers designated to the home or program that they oversee. Staff will direct any queries/proposals regarding the computers and their use to their Manager. If further assistance is required, the Manager will consult with the Information Technology Manager (IT Manager).

Special permission from your supervisor is required prior to using computers for personal use. Communitas will periodically monitor and track employees' usage of the Internet and/or email. The methods for doing so could include external traffic capturing and/or the installation of software to track this activity.

Communitas computers have been loaded with software deemed necessary for carrying out normal tasks and duties. No additional software may be downloaded or installed unless approved by the IT Manager. The IT Manager will maintain a database of the applications that are installed on all computers.

Communitas strictly prohibits the use of agency owned computer resources for use in the illegal download or upload of copyright materials without express written permission, and authorization from the copyright holder.

All information and programs stored on Communitas computers are the private property of Communitas and must be treated with respect and confidentiality. This includes all client information, passwords, Communitas information and Manager's notes, etc.

Conduct that varies from this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

#### ***Related Policies***

Conduct and Behavior, Section 3.6

***Policy***

Communitas strives to maintain a positive image in the community and has adopted this policy to ensure that our staff members are aware of their responsibility to maintain a positive image as a representative of our organization. All company social media accounts with outlets such as, but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, MySpace, blogs, etc. are intended to be used as a means of communicating important information regarding Communitas Supportive Care Society.

***A. PERSONAL***

We would like to remind employees that they continue to act as representatives of this organization outside of regular business hours.

Communitas employees that maintain personal social media pages or accounts with outlets such as, but not limited to Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Four-Square, MySpace, etc. are required to comply with the following guidelines as they relate to their association with Communitas.

***Guidelines***

1. As internet access at Communitas is periodically monitored, please be advised that use of social media for personal reasons during work hours is a misappropriation of company time and resources, and may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
2. Use of personal social media that conflicts with any of Communitas' existing policies will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. This includes (but is not limited to) the Conduct and Behavior Policy, Section 3.6.
3. Employees that use these sites are prohibited from sharing any private organizational information, or any negative comments regarding the organization.
4. Posts involving the following will not be tolerated:
  - Confidential agency information;
  - Discriminatory statements or sexual innuendos regarding co-workers, management, or clients;
  - Defamatory statements regarding the agency, its employees, clients.
5. Communitas staff are prohibited from speaking on behalf of the organization, releasing confidential information, releasing news, or communicating as a representative of the organization on personal social media sites.
6. Communitas policies governing the use of copyright materials, corporate logos and other forms of branding and identity apply to electronic communications. Staff are prohibited from using Communitas protected materials (copyright material, branding and/or logo(s)) without prior express written permission.

This policy is not intended to interfere with the private lives of our staff members, or infringe upon their right to freedom of speech. This policy is designed to ensure that Communitas' image and positive working relationships are maintained.

## **B. WORK-RELATED**

This policy is designed to provide all Communitas employees with guidelines regarding the appropriate use of company social media accounts with outlets such as, but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, MySpace, etc.

### **Guidelines**

1. Confidential or proprietary information will not be disclosed on Communitas Social Media pages. Disclosure of confidential or proprietary information by staff without prior authorization may result in immediate termination of employment. Confidential and proprietary information includes, but is not limited to, discussions regarding client information, legal issues in which the agency is involved, or government issues related to the agency and our services.
2. Communitas employees will be held responsible for what they write or post on Communitas pages. Inflammatory comments, disparaging remarks, or negative/ inappropriate language or posts will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
3. All staff are required to comply with copyright laws. Posting text, images or video created by someone else without proper attribution and/or authorization is prohibited. If you have questions about copyright law and/or usage of certain media, contact the Communitas Provincial Office.
4. Keeping in mind that it is a public forum, social media is not a substitute for inter-agency communications. Any information should be transmitted within normal agency communication channels, not through social media outlets.
5. If a Communitas staff member discovers any group(s) that users have formed to discuss the company, its clients, or services, they must be brought to the attention of the Manager or designated supervisor.
6. Questions or concerns about how to respond to a specific post or group should be discussed with the manager prior to posting.
7. Before posting photos from work-related events, approval must be obtained from the Communitas Provincial Office. This includes, but is not limited to, photos of clients, their homes or photos of co-workers, etc.

Any breach of the above guidelines will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

### **Related Policies**

Computer Use, Section 3.5.1  
Conduct and Behavior, Section 3.6  
Confidentiality, Section 3.20.1  
Media Contacts, Section 3.20.2

### ***Policy***

Communitas exists to fulfill the needs of those members of our community who require the services that we provide, and their needs take precedence over other considerations.

Staff members should always conduct themselves in a professional manner appropriate to a community social service environment, including:

- Maintaining a safe and home-like atmosphere for clients/residents
- Being courteous, friendly and cooperative
- Showing respect and compassion for the person being supported and his/her family
- Providing client-focused support; including limiting the personal use of telephone, computers/Internet, or other non-work related interactions

The use of abusive language, gossiping, showing disrespect for residents/clients, fellow employees, supervisors, family of residents/clients, professionals, community people, etc. or engaging in sexual or other forms of personal harassment will not be permitted and will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

All employees are expected to share in preserving and enhancing Communitas' image and reputation of integrity, credibility and honesty. Communitas expects all employees to maintain a level of personal conduct that will not reflect negatively on themselves or on the credentials of the organization.

No employee should act in any way that would diminish the credibility of any other employee or supervisor within the organization. Employees are expected to show respect for the supervisors of the organization. This includes taking direction or correction and cooperating in working to achieve the Mission Statement and Guiding Principles of Communitas. Employees whose conduct compromises any of these principles will be subject to disciplinary measures up to and including dismissal.

While friendly or professional relationships between employees and resident/clients are acceptable and indeed are expected, employees and volunteers are prohibited from initiating or participating in intimate or sexual relationships with the resident/clients, both during and outside of work hours, while employed with this organization. Breach of this policy is cause for dismissal.

### ***Related Policies***

Teamwork, Section 3.29

### **Policy**

Communitas recognizes the right of staff members to be involved in activities as citizens of the community. However, staff members must keep their role as private citizens separate and distinct from their responsibilities as staff members.

Conflict of interest includes situations:

- Where a staff member's private affairs or financial interests are in conflict with their work duties, responsibilities and obligations or may result in a public perception that a conflict exists
- Which could impair the staff member's ability to act in the public interest
- Where a staff person's actions would compromise or undermine the trust which the public places in the organization
- Where staff may influence a person being served to make decisions that could be interpreted as being in the staff's interest rather than the person's true choice.

### **Procedure**

Staff members should not place themselves in a situation where they are under obligation to any person who might benefit from or seek to gain special consideration or favor. The honesty and impartiality of employees must be above suspicion.

Staff members are obligated to declare any perception of a conflict of interest to their supervisor.

### **Regarding Other Employment**

Staff members may engage in remunerative employment with another employer, carry on a business, or receive remuneration from public funds for activities outside their position provided that:

- It does not interfere with the performance of their duties as a staff member
- It does not bring Communitas into disrepute
- It is not performed in such a way as to appear to be an official act or to represent the organization's opinion or policy
- It does not involve the use of Communitas' premises, services, equipment or supplies to which the staff member has access by virtue of their employment

Independent contract work through Communitas' Respite and Independent Living Options (ILO) programs is considered "other employment" and must comply with the above. Communitas employees who also provide contracted service must keep these relationships separate in all areas. **Communitas requires that employees refrain from performing contracted duties during time for which they are being paid as employees.** At no time should a Communitas employee provide service as an employee for an individual they also support through a contract.

### **Regarding Gifts**

No staff member will accept compensation or rewards from individuals or agencies because of the position they occupy in the organization. Money or other gifts offered should be firmly but kindly refused. If the client or their family insists and the gift is of a minor nature, it may be accepted with the prior approval of the appropriate supervisor. If a problem arises, please discuss it with your supervisor. No staff member may sell goods or services to a resident/client nor accept money or loans from a resident/client. Nor will staff buy gifts for other staff on behalf of a client/resident and with their money unless authorized by their supervisor.

### **Regarding Referrals/Solicitation**

Staff members are prohibited from using the services of any business, agency or practice where they, their family or friends would benefit, without the approval of their supervisor.

Employees who leave Communitas for private practice may not solicit from those persons served by Communitas for a period of six months.

### **Related Policies**

Staffing Terms, Section 2.2

Overnight Outings with Residents, Section 6.8

## **Policy**

Communitas is committed to creating an atmosphere of dealing Honestly, Directly and Respectfully (HDR) in conflict situations and to “relate to each other with mutual respect in appreciation for God’s creative work in all of our lives.”

Teamwork is a core value of our organization. It directly affects the work life of all of our staff as well as the quality of life of the clients/residents we support. All employees are required to have positive, healthy working relationships with the members of their team (whether supervisor or peer), and the people they support.

Conflict sometimes results when people disagree. Each person brings an individual style and cultural background to conflict. These differences need to be acknowledged.

How conflict is dealt with is important to the health of Communitas. Conflicts can provide opportunities for hearing each other, for seeking the voice of God together, for exploring important issues, and for producing better, more creative decisions.

Conflict is not in itself a sign of organizational dysfunction. Indeed, suppressing or avoiding conflict damages a work environment. A healthy organization affirms the differences, responds creatively when those differences result in conflict and refuses to tolerate disrespectful or violent responses to the conflict. Communitas sees “success” not in the absence of conflicts, but in how they are handled. **Communitas will affirm staff who use this process and will not discriminate in any way against them.**

## **Procedure**

### **A. Conflict Between Co-Workers/Peers**

Staff members should use the following problem-solving process for working through both small and large conflicts. Step 1 should be and is used informally and loosely on a daily basis in routine situations involving conflict. If a conflict escalates, Step 1 should be implemented formally, moving on to subsequent steps if necessary.

Staff should use this procedure regularly and do so early in the development of conflict. It is inappropriate to allow a conflict to continue without addressing it. It is important to keep the process moving, not letting weeks go by between the steps.

The following steps are appropriate for resolving relational conflicts between co-workers. If the conflict is between an employee and their supervisor, they should refer to the steps outlined in Section B.

### **STEP 1**

Talk directly with the person involved.

- a. Agree to both listen and summarize the views of the other.
- b. List the things you can agree on.
- c. List your main concerns. What matters most to you?
- d. Discuss possible solutions for the concerns.
- e. Select the best option(s) and agree on the next steps.
  - Writing out your agreement helps clarify who agreed to what, when and how.
  - There are times when “agreeing to disagree” may be the best option. If this is the case, agreeing on how to treat each other is critical.
- f. Set a time for check in and follow-up.

### **STEP 2**

If Step 1 failed to adequately resolve the problem, either party may ask a supervisor to be present to help lead the process and facilitate listening and understanding between you.

**STEP 3**

If a resolution cannot be found using Steps 1 and 2, an appeal can be made in writing to the Service Coordinator/Supervisor. The Service Coordinator/Supervisor will then make a decision binding on both parties, providing a written response to the employees within five (5) working days of the complaint/dispute being received.

***B. Conflict Between Employees and their Supervisors***

Communitas recognizes that in any organization it is difficult to avoid occasional misunderstanding, or for an employee to believe they have been unfairly treated at some time by their supervisor. Should matters of this kind occur, the steps below should be followed.

Communitas maintains an “open door” policy. All employees, whether staff or management, will be treated fairly, justly and equally. Communitas will act immediately if problems do occur. All employees are encouraged to bring forward to management any complaints or recommendations dealing with safety, health standards, proper working conditions and management practices without fear of negative job related consequences.

**STEP 1**

Talk directly with your immediate supervisor.

- a. List your main concerns and what matters most to you
- b. Try to come to an agreement on ways to resolve the issue(s)

These discussions must always take place in a private place and away from other employees or residents/clients. If the nature of your conflict does not allow you to feel safe in following this step, you may move directly to step 2.

**STEP 2**

If you do not feel that your concern has been heard or addressed by your immediate supervisor, you may discuss the problem with one of the following people (in order of):

Service Coordinator      —————>      Regional Director      —————>      HR Director

The person hearing the complaint will follow the investigative process outlined below and attempt to resolve the issue as soon as possible.

**STEP 3**

If your problem remains unresolved, it may be submitted in writing to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO will follow the investigative process outlined below and respond as soon as possible.

***Investigative Process***

The people with the authority to investigate a conflict situation will follow a predetermined process:

1. Receive the written complaint.
2. Consult with the appropriate sources and decide if the matter is one of substance and if the staff person has put significant energies into working it through with the people involved in the initial dispute.
3. Respond to the complainant with a decision as to whether the complaint needs further investigation.
4. Gather the facts:
  - a) Review all documentation.
  - b) Interview people involved including the employee who has brought forward the complaint, the employee’s Manager, and the employee’s peers if the situation requires that they be interviewed.
5. Make a final determination in writing to the employee with a copy going to their personnel file.

## **CORRECTIVE/DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

**3.9**

### ***Policy***

An employee who breaches a policy of Communitas or fails to fulfill their work requirements as directed by their Manager may be subject to corrective action or discipline ranging from a coaching discussion or verbal/written warning to suspension and ultimately to dismissal.

### ***Conditions***

Communitas will ensure any corrective action or discipline taken is commensurate with the offense. Although the levels of discipline will vary, progressive discipline will apply in the majority of cases.

### ***Procedure***

Depending on the severity of the breach, the normal course of action will be for the Manager to address the issue with either formal or informal Coaching before proceeding to progressive discipline.

Progressive discipline has the following stages (for each same or similar offense):

1. Written warning(s)
2. Final Warning
3. Suspension(s)
4. Termination

The identification of work performance difficulties or breach of policy is for the purpose of clarification and correction. However, the nature of the incident warranting discipline may be such that the employer determines it is appropriate to bypass the normal steps of progressive discipline. In cases of serious misconduct, discipline may commence at suspension and lead to termination, or discipline may start and end with termination.

Disciplinary notes will remain as a part of an employee's permanent record. An evaluation of the disciplinary action will be performed at an employee's annual work performance review.

## **FUNDRAISING**

**3.10**

### ***Policy***

All employees are encouraged to support the fundraising efforts of Communitas.

Communitas operates a number of programs outside of government funding, such as:

- HOPE, a program for church families with members who have a mental illness
- Choices And Connections
- Family Support Network
- Support Circles
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder projects
- Mental Health retreats
- Various STEP projects
- Chapter developments and services as needed

There are unlimited possibilities for us as an organization to meet the needs of people with disabilities and we need your help to do it. When fund raising projects are announced, please get involved.

Communitas is a charitable organization that is able to provide donors with tax-deductible receipts. Employees who wish to make tax-deductible contributions to Communitas on a regular basis can do so through our payroll deduction program. Please contact our Payroll Department to sign up.

## ***Policy***

Communitas promotes a work and service environment where all persons are treated with respect and dignity. Communitas is committed to ensuring that all staff members, contractors, clients and visitors are entitled to a workplace and services environment that is free from any form of discrimination or harassment (including sexual harassment), which is prohibited by the BC Human Rights Code.

For the purpose of this policy “staff members” includes any non-union or union employee, volunteer, or student.

Staff members will not engage in discriminatory conduct (including harassment and sexual harassment) prohibited by the BC Human Rights Code and this policy. Staff members found to have engaged in harassment under this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

## ***Definitions***

### ***Discrimination***

Discrimination means unfair or differential treatment of an individual or group, whether intentional or unintentional, on the basis of one or more of the prohibited grounds contained in the BC Human Rights Code. These grounds are: race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, age, conviction of a criminal or summary conviction offence that is unrelated to the employment or the intended employment of that person.

### ***Harassment***

Harassment relating to any of the prohibited grounds under the BC Human Rights Code constitutes discrimination. Harassment does not include acceptable social banter in the workplace nor does it include actions occasioned through the exercising of Communitas supervisory rights and responsibilities.

Harassment is defined as any physical, visual or verbal conduct, whether intended or unintended, that is either unsolicited or reasonably or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome, which denies individual dignity and/or respect based upon any of the prohibited grounds of the BC Human Rights Code. It may be one incident or a series of incidents depending upon the context. Examples of harassment include but are not limited to:

- Physical threats or intimidation made or perceived based on any of the prohibited grounds under the BC Human Rights Code
- Derogatory written or verbal communication or gestures or practical jokes (Examples: Name-calling, slurs, taunting, pictures or posters, graffiti) that relate to any of the prohibited grounds under the BC Human Rights Code
- Application of stereotypes or generalizations based on any of the prohibited grounds under the BC Human Rights Code

### ***Sexual Harassment***

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination under the BC Human Rights Code. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct that is sexual in nature, sexually oriented verbal or physical behaviour that may detrimentally affect the work environment or lead to adverse job related consequences. Such behaviour could include, but is not limited to:

- Touching, patting or other physical conduct
- Leering, staring or the making of sexual gestures
- Demands for sexual favors
- Verbal abuse or threats
- Unwanted sexual invitations
- Physical assault of a sexual nature
- Distribution or display of sexual or offensive pictures or material
- Unwanted questions or comments of a sexual nature
- Practical jokes of a sexual nature

### **Procedure**

An employee who believes that he/she has a complaint about discrimination and/or harassment under any prohibited ground of the BC Human Rights Code should take the following steps:

1. If reasonable and comfortable, tell the individual(s) concerned that the behaviour is unwelcome and request the offensive behaviour to cease.

Keep a written record of the steps taken to alleviate the problem. If a complaint is dealt with to the employee's satisfaction under #1, it is considered to be resolved.

2. If the complaint is not resolved to the employee's satisfaction, or if the employee chooses not to proceed pursuant to #1 above, before proceeding to the formal complaint mechanism an employee who believes he/she has a complaint of harassment or discrimination may approach their supervisor, union steward, or other contact person (if the complaint involves their supervisor), to discuss potential means of resolving a complaint and to request assistance in resolving the matter. If the matter is resolved to the employee's satisfaction the matter is deemed to be resolved.
3. An employee who wishes to pursue a concern arising from an alleged violation of this policy may submit a complaint in writing under this policy within six months of the latest alleged occurrence directly to the Human Resource Director. Upon receipt of the written complaint, the HR Director, or designate, will notify the respondent(s) of the complaint and of the request for an investigation and provide the respondent with a detailed account of the allegations. An individual(s) accused of discrimination or harassment will be entitled to respond to the complaint and may wish to offer his/her perspectives regarding the allegations in writing or present a proposal for resolution.
4. The HR Director, or designate, will investigate the complaint and take such steps as may be required to resolve the matter. Following the investigation the parties involved will be advised of the outcome in writing.
5. All reports of an alleged violation of this policy will be taken seriously and investigated promptly by the HR Director, or designate. All employees involved in the alleged violation of this policy either as a witness, a victim or the person who allegedly violated the policy will have an obligation to participate in the investigation of any allegations of violations of the policy. All individuals interviewed in conjunction with an investigation are expected to keep the investigative process confidential.

### **No Retaliation**

Any interference with the conduct of an investigation, or retaliation against a complainant, respondent or witness, may itself result in disciplinary action.

Where the complaint is determined to be of a frivolous, vindictive or vexatious nature, the employer will take appropriate action that may include discipline.

The parties involved shall treat complaints under this policy in strict confidence.

### **Non-Interference**

This policy will not interfere with any procedures specified in the current collective agreement between Communitas and the union regarding harassment.

Nothing in this policy prevents an employee from filing a complaint under Section 13 or the BC Human Rights Code or filing a harassment complaint under the collective agreement.

**Policy**

All employees must be in good health as determined by the requirements of their job. Pre-employment medical assessments are required as a condition of employment for all Communitas employees. In the event of an outbreak of disease, Communitas will abide by all health authority and licensing requirements.

**Conditions**

Staff members who are regularly involved in the preparation and/or handling of food are expected to report all incidence of illness, particularly those involving digestive upsets, (e.g. diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, or infections), to their Manager.

Any staff member who contracts a communicable disease must report it to their Manager immediately.

If a person is in an acute contagious stage of the disease, they should not work until they are no longer contagious or their hygiene techniques are such that there is a low risk of passing on the disease. Prior to the employee returning to work the Program Manager may request a doctor's note of good health. Communitas will reimburse the cost of these doctor's notes.

Examples of communicable diseases: *(Note: This is an incomplete list for example purposes only. For a complete listing of reportable communicable diseases refer to the Communitas Residential Services Manual - Appendix)*

Campylobacter	Impetigo	Pertusis	Scabies
Chicken pox	Influenza	Pink eye	Scarlet Fever
Fifth Disease	Lice	Pinworm	Strep Throat
Giardiasis	Measles	Ringworm	Tetanus
Influ B Meningitis	Meningococcal Meningitis	Roseola	Tuberculosis
Hepatitis A	Mononucleosis	Rubella	
Hepatitis B	Mumps	Salmonellosis	

Staff members with rashes, lesions, suture lines, burns, or other skin conditions may require medical approval prior to work. All such conditions are to be reported to their Manager.

All staff members must observe general rules of hygiene and maintain a high level of personal cleanliness. Staff providing direct care or preparing/handling food must keep their fingernails short and clean. Due to increased risk of bacterial contamination and transfer, artificial fingernails are prohibited for any staff providing direct care or preparing/handling food.

Staff members providing direct care must wash their hands before and after providing such care.

Staff members are required to follow safe working procedures, universal precautions and to reduce the risk of exposure to blood/body fluids by properly disposing of sharps and wearing adequate protective equipment when required.

Any staff member who refuses to provide required health/medical confirmations will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

**TB Screening**

Pre-employment TB screening is required as a condition of employment for all Communitas staff. Existing employees, who travel outside of North America or come into contact with "at risk" people groups during their employment, must receive TB testing upon their return to work. The cost of this testing will be reimbursed by Communitas.

**Hepatitis B Vaccination**

The requirement for Hepatitis B vaccination is determined program by program.

***Influenza Immunization***

The Fraser Valley Health Region, through its public immunization program, will provide influenza immunizations to all employees at no cost. Staff will be informed of immunization clinics offered in the community, but must make arrangements for their own immunization. Once immunized, staff must provide written evidence of such immunization to their program Manager. Managers will maintain a written record of the immunization status of all employees and volunteers at their location and, in the event of an outbreak, those staff who are taking a suitable prophylaxis.

Staff choosing not to receive free immunization may, when an outbreak of influenza occurs within the program, choose to take either Amantadine or another neuraminidase inhibitor as a prophylaxis. It is the responsibility of the employee choosing the alternate prophylaxis to cover any associated costs, since the option of free immunization exists.

If, during an influenza outbreak, health authorities prohibit unvaccinated staff from a worksite, such staff will not be permitted to work unless taking an approved prophylaxis. If not permitted to work, employees may access available vacation or banked time accruals, or contact the HR office to apply for casual hours at other locations not affected by the outbreak.

***Related Policies***

*Residential Services Manual* Section 3.3.4 Universal Precautions, Section 3.3.6 Communicable Diseases, Section 3.3.7 Influenza Immunizations

## **Policy**

Even though everyone works together to create a workplace that is safe and free of hazards, on-the-job accidents or injuries may still occur. All workplace incidents resulting in injury to staff must be thoroughly documented in writing, and promptly reported.

Staff members must report all injuries and complete the required forms as outlined below.

## **Procedure**

Procedures for on-duty injury reporting are posted at all program locations.

If you are injured while performing work duties, you must:

1. Receive care for your injury as necessary.
2. Immediately report the incident to your Manager.
3. Call the Disability Management Institute (DMI) toll free at 1-866-963-9995 to report your injury. DMI is a contracted agency that administers WSBC claims, investigations and return-to-work programs for Communitas.
4. Complete an Injury/Accident Report form and forward it to your Manager.
5. Your Manager will complete the Investigation portion of the Report form and forward it to the HR Department.
6. The HR Department will process the Report form and forward it to DMI.

### ***If the injury results in time loss from work,***

1. The employee is responsible to initiate communication with the Manager regarding their inability to report to work prior to their scheduled shifts. A doctor's note stating the employee's inability to work must be provided, including a general reason for the inability to work and an expected return to work date. If the medical prognosis changes or for some other reason the employee is unable to return to work by the expected date, the employee must advise the Manager immediately in writing and provide an updated doctor's note with the new information and expected return date. Communitas will reimburse the cost of these doctor's notes.
2. Employees who have been absent from work due to illness or injury must provide sufficient notice to the Manager prior to their return to work.
3. Before returning to work, the employee must provide a doctor's written confirmation that they are able to return to full work duties as outlined in their job description. Forms for this purpose are available at the Communitas office and in the HR Templates Folder on Winken. Failure to provide this doctor's note may result in a delay in being allowed to return to work. Communitas will reimburse the cost of these doctor's notes.
4. Failure to communicate appropriately may be cause for discipline up to and including termination of employment.

### **Disability Management Institute (DMI)**

Communitas has contracted the services of DMI since 2003 to administer claims, investigations and return-to-work programs for both workplace injuries (WSBC) and non-occupational illness/absences. DMI's team of kinesiologists, physical therapists, WorkSafe BC and return to work specialists are authorized on Communitas' behalf to liaise with medical professionals involved in employees' care and insurance carriers to facilitate a safe transition back to work as soon as possible.

DMI is bound by the same confidentiality policies as Communitas, and will hold personal and medical information in strictest confidence. They may dialogue with health professionals if necessary but will keep all information received confidential (even from Communitas) and only use it to help formulate a safe return to work plan.

Though participation in DMI's early intervention and return to work planning is optional, we highly recommend it. Failing to participate in return to work planning may jeopardize future Long Term Disability eligibility.

**Related Policies**

Workers Compensation Benefits, Section 6.14

**Forms**

Injury/Accident Report and Investigation

**IN-SERVICE EDUCATION**

**3.14**

**Policy**

In order to ensure the best quality of care, Communitas will require employees to take in-service training annually or as deemed necessary by program. Communitas also encourages employees to improve the quality of support they are able to provide by attending non-mandatory in-services or workshops, as they are made available.

**Conditions**

**Mandatory in-services**

In-service education Communitas deems mandatory for employees will be paid for at their regular wage rate including tuition costs.

Mandatory in-services will not cause a staff member to lose wages they would normally have earned on that day.

**Non-mandatory in-services**

Communitas may choose to pay for non-mandatory, work related in-service education. The HR Director must approve any non-mandatory training in order to receive reimbursement. Where non-mandatory training is approved, Communitas will cover tuition and hourly pay of \$10.00 per hour of in-class instruction.

Training received on the job during staff meetings is not considered part of this policy.

Communitas does not consider in-service training as part of one's regular work and therefore allows employees to work shifts before or after an in-service event.

**Procedure**

Payment for in-service hours happens when an employee submits a Training Response Form to their Manager. If the employee has paid for the tuition, receipts must be turned in with the form in order for reimbursement to take place. Managers will note the in-service hours on the payroll following receipt of the Training Response Form.

Completed Training Response Forms are kept in staff personnel files for future reference.

**Forms**

Training Response

## **JOB ABANDONMENT**

**3.15**

### ***Policy***

Employees have a responsibility to report to work when scheduled.

Employees who fail to report for work for three consecutive scheduled shifts without informing their Manager of the reason for their absence will be considered to have abandoned their position. If an employee provides a reasonable explanation to the HR Director for their absence within ten calendar days, their employment may be reinstated.

This policy applies to return from leaves of absence as well as when an employee is injured at work and fails to communicate with their Manager regarding their return to work plans.

## **JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

**3.16**

### ***Policy***

All employees will be given a job description that outlines the basic duties of their position.

### ***Conditions***

Job descriptions for each position in the organization will be developed and kept up-to-date by the HR Department in conjunction with applicable management staff.

Each job description will describe the general duties of the position and will include information such as:

- Job summary
- Who the position reports to
- Key duties of the position
- Education/experience requirements
- Personal qualifications required for the position

## **PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

**3.17**

### ***Policy***

As a Communitas employee, you are required to present yourself in a professional manner that reflects standards of modesty, cleanliness, utility, health and safety. ***An individual's appearance and the manner in which they care for themselves may reflect the manner in which they care for others. A professional appearance also displays respect for the people we support.***

An exhaustive list of what "can" or "cannot" be worn will not be given – rather we are asking all employees to let good judgment be their guide. If in doubt about the appropriateness of clothing, check with your Manager. Below are some guidelines:

1. All staff are expected to maintain acceptable standards of personal grooming and hygiene while performing their duties, and to avoid any personal practices or preferences that may prove offensive to others.
2. All staff are expected to wear clean, comfortable clothes, suitable for the work performed (Example: bending, lifting). The following are some examples of acceptable and non-acceptable attire.

#### ACCEPTABLE

Jeans  
Walking shorts  
Sweat shirts  
Knee length skirt

#### NON-ACCEPTABLE

Tank tops, sleeveless tops  
Beachwear  
Halter-tops, spaghetti straps  
Short shorts  
Bare midribs

3. For reasons of health and safety, all staff working with clients/residents and equipment such as wheelchairs, mechanical lifts, etc. are required to wear footwear that include closed-toed shoes that have soles with good grip. In programs where sandals are appropriate, they must have soles with good grip and a heel strap.
4. Staff taking clients/residents to pools, lakes, etc are required to wear either their own water shoes or those provided by Communitas. Bikinis are not acceptable beachwear.
5. Rings with stones or crevices, bracelets, and wristwatches will be removed when providing direct care or preparing/handling food.
6. Large loop or dangling earrings may not be worn when providing direct care or preparing/handling food.
7. Dangling chains will be removed or worn inside clothing when providing direct care or preparing/handling food.
8. All staff are prohibited from displaying any body art or tattoo(s) that may be of an offensive nature to another staff person or a client/resident that is supported by Communitas. Tattoos that are perceived as offensive must be covered, and not visible to staff, clients or visitors.
9. Employees providing direct care or preparing/handling food will keep their fingernails short and clean. Due to increased risk of bacterial contamination and transfer, artificial fingernails are prohibited for any staff providing direct care or preparing/handling food.

***Procedure***

Any staff person failing to observe the above conditions will be subject to discipline.

***PERSONAL PROPERTY DAMAGE***

**3.18**

***Policy***

Communitas will repair or indemnify any damage to the belongings of an employee, provided that:

1. The employee was on duty at the time;
2. Reasonable proof is submitted that the damage was caused by the actions of a client or resident and/or in the normal course of duty;
3. The personal property damaged is an article of use or wear of a type suitable for use or wear while on duty; and
4. The employee has taken reasonable precautions/protective measures.

If an employee regularly goes swimming with residents/clients as part of their day program activities (minimum of two to three times per week) and needs to replace their swimsuit due to wear and tear, Communitas will reimburse the employee for swimsuit replacement up to a maximum of \$60.00 per year. Receipts must be submitted to the HR Department for reimbursement.

**PRIVACY PROTECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION****3.19.1****Policy**

Communitas is committed to protecting the privacy of the personal information of all persons who come into contact with us. We value the trust of those we deal with, and of the public, and recognize that maintaining this trust requires that we be transparent and accountable in how we treat the information that you choose to share with us. Our privacy practices are designed to achieve this. This policy and related procedures are consistent with the Personal Information Protection Act and Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act.

During the course of your employment, Communitas will be required to gather and use personal information. All employees can be assured that this information will be carefully protected and will only be used or disclosed as required for specific, legitimate business purposes (example: payroll deposits, benefit plan administration.)

No data transmission over the Internet can be guaranteed to be 100% secure. As a result, while we strive to protect personal information, we cannot guarantee the security of any information transmitted or received electronically. This is especially true for information transmitted to us via email. Once we receive a transmission, we make our best efforts to ensure its security on our servers.

**Procedure**

If you have questions with respect to our policies concerning the handling of your personal information, or if you wish to request access to, or correction of, your personal information under our control, please contact our Privacy Officer at the Communitas office. If the Privacy Officer is not available to address your concerns, the issue may be referred to the Chief Executive Officer. You may find further information on privacy and your rights in regard to your personal information on the website of the Privacy Commissioner of British Columbia at <http://www.oipcb.org>.

**Related Policies**

Personnel Files, Section 3.19.2

Release of Employment Information, Section 3.19.3

**PERSONNEL FILES****3.19.2****Policy**

Personnel files for each employee will be maintained and will contain information such as:

- Application for employment
- Record of work requirements
- Verification of registration (where applicable)
- Employment Agreements
- Written performance appraisals
- Records of disciplinary action(s)
- Other information relevant to the employee's employment

Personnel files will be kept in a secure area and will not be accessed by anyone other than designated management and office staff.

An employee will be permitted to review their personnel file after arranging an appointment to do so. Files may be reviewed in the office in which they are normally kept.

After termination of employment, employee records will be retained for the minimum number of years dictated by legislation. During this period, only designated management and administrative personnel will have access to employee records.

**Related Policies**

Retention of Employee Records, Section 3.19.4

## **RELEASE OF EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION**

**3.19.3**

### ***Policy***

Information about employees will not be given out without the employee's authorization except as required for legitimate business purposes.

### ***Procedure***

All requests for employment references must be forwarded to the HR Director. The employee or past employee must fill out and sign a *Consent for Release of Employment Information* form prior to this information being released.

Requests for employment verification required by banks, landlords, loan agencies, etc. must be authorized by the employee, verbally or in writing, prior to this information being released. These requests should be directed to the HR Department.

Communitas is not responsible for advising the employee when a request for information has been made.

### ***Related Policies***

Privacy Protection of Personal Information, Section 3.19.1

### ***Forms***

Consent for Release of Personnel Information

## **RETENTION OF EMPLOYEE RECORDS**

**3.19.4**

### ***Policy***

After termination of employment, employee records will be retained for the minimum number of years dictated by legislation. During this period, only designated management and administrative personnel will have access to employee records.

Upon the expiration of the designated period, the employee's records will be destroyed either by shredding or incineration to ensure confidentiality.

Employee records will include:

- Payroll records
- Personnel files

### ***Related Policies***

Personnel Files, Section 3.19.2

**CONFIDENTIALITY****3.20.1****Policy**

Information obtained or taken verbally, in writing and/or digitally and/or electronically and/or using any other technological means such as camera cell phones that concern a client/resident or the affairs of Communitas is privileged and confidential. Employees will not transmit any information to another person without authorization from the CEO or designated supervisor. When authorized, confidential information will be only be released on a “need-to-know” basis. A signed Confidentiality Statement is required upon employment.

All matters and information pertaining to the clients/residents that has been gained within the organization must be treated as confidential. Under no circumstances may resident/client information be divulged either inside or outside the organization other than to persons authorized to receive such information in the course of their duties.

Under no circumstances will any person working in or for Communitas use any such information to his/her personal advantage. Violation of this policy may result in dismissal.

**Conditions**

Communitas will designate person(s) who can review requests for the release of confidential information. Established, written procedures by which such information may be released will be used.

**Procedure**

When confidential information is requested, employees must state that they are not authorized to release any information concerning residents or agency affairs, and should then refer the individual requesting information to the CEO or designated supervisor.

Information requests from newspapers and other public news organizations should be referred as above. Staff should make no public comments.

Information about a client/resident may be given to family members when the client/resident is not able to properly inform his/her family and when the release of information is in the best interest of the client/resident. Some information will be available directly from staff members, while other information will need to be obtained from the Manager. Each program will determine what information is available from staff members and what information needs to be obtained from the Manager.

All requests for information about staff or the agency are to be referred to the Manager of the program.

Client/Resident home addresses and phone numbers are considered to be confidential information. As such, employees should not use their program/residence address as their work address for the purpose of bank/credit applications, emergency contacts, passport applications, etc. If a work address is required for any purpose outside of the organization, employees should use the Abbotsford office address and phone number. If located in the North Island or Okanagan areas please use their regional office contact information.

A breach of confidentiality will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

**Related Policies**

Media Contacts, Section 3.20.2

**Forms**

Confidentiality Statement

## ***MEDIA CONTACTS***

**3.20.2**

### ***Policy***

Media contacts will be handled by the Chief Executive Officer or designate only.

### ***Procedure***

Employees who are contacted by the media should refer them to the Chief Executive Officer or designate.

### ***Related Policies***

Confidentiality, Section 3.20.1

## ***PERSONAL AFFAIRS OF RESIDENT***

**3.20.3**

### ***Policy***

Employees will not become involved in the ongoing personal affairs of a resident/client relating to legal, financial, or property matters unless directed by the Program Manager.

Employees or relatives of employees may not:

1. Sign "consent for treatment" forms on behalf of residents/clients admitted to hospital
2. Witness the signing of wills or other legal documents
3. Handle or manage a resident/client's monies or assets, or accept for safekeeping personal effects and jewelry unless required in the course of daily support as directed by the Manager.

### ***Procedure***

In the event an employee is requested by a resident/client to carry out any of the above, the employee will refer the individual to the Program Manager.

Employees must report to the Manager any questionable situations where a resident/client may be unable to handle his/her own finances, or of mismanagement of his/her finances by relatives or friends.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE**

**3.21**

### ***Policy***

As funds allow, Communitas may assist employees with college level course tuition.

### ***Conditions***

- Eligible staff must have successfully completed probation and be working 20 or more permanent hours per week.
- Casual staff who have been employed with Communitas for a minimum of three years, and have demonstrated consistent availability for shift coverage, are eligible to apply for this benefit.
- Courses must be relevant to the staff person's current position, or possible future leadership positions.
- Consideration for approval will be on a case-by-case basis.
- As a general rule, Communitas will sponsor staff a maximum of one course per semester.
- Courses must not interfere with regularly scheduled working hours.

### ***Procedure***

Employees must apply in writing to the HR Department using the application form provided. The application must state the course name, course content, and the cost and start date. If approved, reimbursement will be made on successful completion of the course (B average or better). A receipt and course transcript must be submitted.

### ***Forms***

Professional Development Assistance Application

## **PROFESSIONAL OR OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATION**

**3.22**

### ***Policy***

Employees must maintain the professional or occupational certification (Example: Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses) as dictated by their job description.

Any fees or costs associated with maintaining the professional or occupational certification are the sole responsibility of the employee.

Employees are required to submit copies of their re-certification as scheduled by Communitas.

Failure to maintain the required certification may result in the termination of employment.

## **PURCHASING AND SELLING OF GOODS AND SERVICES**

**3.23**

### ***Policy***

The purchasing and selling of goods or services between staff and client/residents, and/or their visitors, is not permitted. Program related fundraising and client initiated selling is permitted.

Employees may not use their position of trust to sell goods or services to clients, residents or visitors, nor may they encourage residents, clients or visitors to purchase any products or services.

A breach of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

### ***Related Policies***

Conflict of Interest, Section 3.7, Personal Affairs of Resident, Section 3.20.3

***Policy***

To clarify retirement, and to enhance Communitas' ability to address succession planning and other operational workplace issues we recognize the "normal retirement" age for employees of Communitas as age 65.

***Procedure***

- Employees must provide notice of retirement in accordance with Section 2.9.
- This policy does not prevent employees from retiring before they are 65 or prevent employees from working beyond the normal retirement age.
- Employees who decide to work beyond the normal retirement age will continue to perform the full scope of their duties and responsibilities and will be expected to maintain a satisfactory performance level.
- To ensure the health and safety of clients/residents, employees occupying safety sensitive positions may be required to undergo testing to demonstrate individual capacity. Communitas will reimburse the costs for such verification.

***Related Policies***

Termination of Employment – Employees, Section 2.9

***Policy***

Physical and mental wellbeing is important both to you as employees and to us as an organization. The Communitas Occupational Health and Safety Manual outlines specific procedures for Managers and staff to follow in order to ensure a safe working environment.

***Procedure***

Employees are expected to know and use proper lifting and transfer techniques in the performance of their duties. Program Managers will train their staff regarding any and all safety issues in their program. If you are unsure of any procedure, please alert your Manager and obtain appropriate training so that your safety is ensured. Do not perform any duty that you know will cause injury. Failure to use correct lifting techniques may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Some programs require employees to work independently with clients in the community. Where risk to staff has been identified, check-in procedures will be put in place by the Program Manager to ensure employee safety. These procedures will be outlined on the Staff Safety Check-In form available at applicable program locations and at the Communitas office reception desk.

Staff who wish to address issues related to their personal mental health and wellness may access WRAP (Wellness Action Recovery Program), available through our Peer Support Program.

In order to monitor and address health and safety issues for our employees, Communitas provides an Occupational Health and Safety Committee (OHSC) consisting of an HR Assistant and representatives from staff and management. For concerns or questions about hazards or unsafe conditions in your workplace, please immediately notify your supervisor. In addition, you are invited to contact a member of the OHSC (names and phone numbers available from the Communitas Office).

**Rights**

1. You have the right to a safe work environment.
2. You have the right to training and information regarding hazards in your workplace.
3. You have the right to training in proper lifting and transfer techniques and other procedures necessary for you to safely perform your work.
4. You have the right to refuse to perform unsafe work, either physical or mental in nature.

**Responsibilities**

1. By law, you are required to report all work related accidents or injuries immediately. A poster outlining reporting procedures is displayed at your program location.
2. You are required to report any unsafe working conditions to your manager, the Communitas office, or an OH&S representative.
3. You are required to correctly use all safety devices and/or personal protective equipment, and follow proper lifting and transfer techniques.

***Related Policies***

WorkSafe BC Benefits (WSBC), Section 6.14

**SMOKING**

**3.26**

***Policy***

Smoking of cigarettes is a severe hazard not only to the smoker's health but also to those who breathe the second hand smoke. Therefore, employees and volunteers of Communitas are not permitted to smoke cigarettes, pipes or any other substance while performing work for Communitas. Smoking is not permitted at any Communitas operating location, or at any Communitas sponsored or related event. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action.

**STAFF FORUM**

**3.27**

***Policy***

In order to encourage dialogue and a sense of organizational team between all levels of management and staff, Communitas provides a Staff Forum for non-union programs to discuss primarily employment related ideas and concerns.

***Procedure***

Staff Forums will be held once every two months for a duration of approximately two hours.

Members will consist of:

- One staff representative per program, chosen by staff teams
- One Manager, chosen by the management team
- Chief Executive Officer
- HR Director

Staff will set agendas for and chair the meetings. Minutes will be recorded by staff; with copies available to all non-union programs and kept on file at the Communitas office.

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

**3.28**

### ***Policy***

Communitas is an organization entrusted with the safety and well being of both its employees and the people it supports. Therefore, employees coming to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs will face immediate suspension of shifts and possible termination.

Employees who are unable to perform their duties at work due to previous consumption of a drug (whether prescription or non-prescription) or alcohol will be sent home from work without pay and face disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Consumption of an illegal drug or alcohol at any Communitas program site or event will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Employees who are struggling with a drug or alcohol abuse problem are encouraged to talk with a professional counselor.

### ***Related Policies***

Counseling Provisions, Section 6.2

## **TEAMWORK**

**3.29**

### ***Policy***

Teamwork is a core value of our organization. It directly affects the work life of all of our staff as well as the quality of life of the clients/residents we support.

All employees are required to have positive healthy working relationships with the members of their team (whether supervisor or peer), and the people they support.

### ***Conditions***

Teamwork expectations are outlined in the employee Work Performance Reviews. These expectations will form part of the employee's work performance review criteria.

Where an employee is found to be unable to resolve conflicts, or where the employee continues to cause conflicts by their actions or their words, disciplinary action up to and including termination will take place.

### ***Related Policies***

Conduct and Behavior, Section 3.6  
Work Performance Reviews, Section 3.37  
Conflict/Grievance Resolution, Section 3.8

## **TELEPHONES - USE OF**

**3.30**

### ***Policy***

Communitas' telephones, whether land lines or cellular, are intended for official business only.

### ***Exceptions***

In some situations, Communitas cell phones may be approved for personal use. In these cases, personal use of the Communitas cell phone will be in moderation, with the employee carrying related expenses.

### ***Procedure***

Personal telephone calls during working hours are discouraged and should be used only for urgent matters. Personal cell phones will be turned off during working hours. Messages may be checked and calls made during breaks unless it is an emergency situation.

The use of cell phones or other hand held portable electronic devices while driving a vehicle in the course of work duties (whether operating a company vehicle or any other vehicle) is prohibited.

Unauthorized or inappropriate use of telephones will result in discipline up to and including dismissal.

***Related Policies***

Traffic Accidents/Motor Vehicle Safety, Section 3.33

***THEFT/DISHONESTY/VANDALISM***

**3.31**

***Policy***

Theft/dishonesty/vandalism of any kind will not be tolerated. An employee occupies a special position of trust with client/residents. It is essential that trust be maintained and that complete confidence exists in the employment relationship.

Theft/dishonesty is defined as the unauthorized procurement of property, finances or services that do not belong to the employee. Vandalism is defined as the destruction/defacement of property that does not belong to the employee.

Theft/dishonesty may take many forms. The following are examples of prohibited conduct:

*Example(s):*

- Theft of property, services or time from the organization
- Unauthorized use of the organization's equipment
- Unauthorized use or theft of property from clients/residents, visitors or other employees
- Theft outside working hours and the workplace that may affect the employment relationship
- Fraudulent WSBC claims
- Falsifying illness in order to receive sick pay or time off work
- Lying about hours worked
- Actions that result in the destruction/defacement of Communitas property or equipment

This policy also applies in cases of attempted theft by an employee.

Theft/vandalism or attempted theft/vandalism by an employee may result in immediate dismissal and he/she may be reported to the local police authority.

An employee suspected of theft/vandalism may be suspended from work pending further investigation.

***TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS***

**3.32**

***Policy***

All employees are expected to drive in a responsible, safe manner and to comply with all applicable legislation while operating a vehicle in the course of their work. Where a traffic violation is committed, the employee may be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

***Procedure***

All vehicle violations (accidents, tickets, prohibitions, etc.) committed while operating a company vehicle, or any other vehicle where clients are passengers must be reported to the Manager within 24 hours of the violation.

In the event that an employee has their driver's license suspended or revoked whether in the course of their work duties or on personal time, they must cease driving and provide immediate notification to the HR Director and their Program Manager. Failure to cease driving or provide notification of suspension/revoking of license will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

## **TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS/MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY**

**3.33**

### ***Policy***

All employees are expected to drive in a responsible, safe manner and to comply with all applicable legislation while operating a vehicle in the course of their work. The use of cell phones or other hand held portable electronic devices while driving a vehicle in the course of work duties (whether operating a company vehicle or any other vehicle) is prohibited.

### ***Procedure***

If an employee is involved in a motor vehicle accident while performing work duties (whether operating a company vehicle or any other vehicle) they must notify their supervisor immediately, and fill out a DMI Injury/Accident Report Form. Any resulting time loss from work will be compensated by WSBC. A detailed list of procedures to be followed after a motor vehicle accident is located in the glove box of all Communitas vehicles.

Where a work-related motor vehicle accident involving an employee is found to be caused by negligence or unsafe operation of the vehicle, the employee may be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal.

If an employee is involved in a motor vehicle accident outside of working hours resulting in injury that causes them to miss work, Communitas will not compensate any resulting time loss from work. Affected staff may apply to ICBC for wage loss compensation.

### ***Related Policies***

WorkSafe BC (WSBC) Benefits, Section 6.14  
Telephones – Use of Section 3.30

### ***Forms***

DMI Injury/Accident Report

## **VEHICLE USE (COMMUNITAS)**

**3.34**

### ***Policy***

Communitas vehicles are primarily for the purpose of transporting individuals who are within Communitas support programs and other program related duties.

### ***Procedure***

There may be occasions where non-residents/non-clients or non-staff will also request program related transportation. This could include family members, volunteers, advocates and others going to the same event as the person being supported. This is permissible only when all health and safety issues have been addressed. At all times the person who is being supported must receive priority consideration, including emotional preferences regarding whether the extra person should be given a ride.

There may be rare occasions when non-residents/non-clients or non-staff will request transportation that is not related to an event or activity that affects the people we support. Communitas is not in the business of providing transportation, so granting such a request would be an exception, and would require approval from a supervisor before transportation is provided. Primarily the answer is "no", unless there are circumstances that would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

In some situations, the use of a staff-owned vehicle for work related purposes may be approved or required. These vehicles must be insured for “business” use and be insured for third party liability to at least \$5 million. A staff person required to use their personal vehicle for work will be reimbursed by Communitas for the difference in insurance costs between the “to and from work” level and the “business use” level and increased liability. A written statement from the insurance provider of the difference in cost must be submitted to the HR Department for reimbursement using the Communitas form provided.

If an employee, as part of their job duties, is required to use their personal vehicle to transport residents/clients a minimum of ten hours per week on an ongoing basis, the Program Manager may authorize reimbursement for detailing of the vehicle once per year, to a maximum of \$150. If a detailing company other than the one contracted by Communitas is used, receipts must be submitted to the Manager, who will forward them to the Payroll Department for reimbursement.

***Related Policies***

Mileage and Vehicle Insurance, Section 6.6

***Forms***

Business Insurance Reimbursement Request

***VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE***

**3.35**

***Policy***

Where a risk of injury to employees from violence is identified, employees will be instructed as to the nature and extent of the risk and how to minimize the risk of injury.

An employee reporting an injury or adverse symptom as a result of an incident of violence is advised to consult a physician of their choice for treatment or referral.

Employees working in a situation where a risk assessment has been conducted will follow the established procedures, policies and work environment arrangements.

Some programs require employees to work independently with clients in the community. Where risk to staff has been identified, check-in procedures will be put in place by the Program Manager to ensure employee safety. These procedures will be outlined on the Staff Safety Check-In form available at applicable program locations and at the Communitas office reception desk.

Employees will follow established procedures for reporting, investigating and documenting incidents of violence.

***Related Policies***

Safety at Work, Section 3.25

***VISITORS AT THE WORKPLACE***

**3.36**

***Policy***

The privacy of residents and the intention to create community and relationships must be considered when requests by staff members or visitors to a workplace are made. All requests for visits must be discussed and approved by your Manager.

- Employees are not permitted to have family members and/or personal company while on duty except for planned program events (Example: Christmas) and where staff families are included in order to promote community for clients/residents.
- Tours of the home or program location will not be given unless there is an exceptional reason, and your Manager has given prior permission.

- Residents' privacy is paramount. Bedrooms will not be shown without their personal consent. If a resident is able to understand the request and give consent independently they should be asked first before viewing. If a resident is unable to indicate their consent, staff will act on behalf of the resident's best interest.
- Other than an introduction to the resident(s), information about the resident(s) will not be shared with the visitor.

Breach of this policy and guidelines will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

## **WORK PERFORMANCE REVIEWS (WPR)**

**3.37**

### ***Policy***

In order to assess an employee's suitability of philosophy, quality of support, teamwork ability and adherence to policy and procedures, Communitas will administer regular Work Performance Reviews for all employees and volunteers.

The WPR is intended to be a positive experience for you. Your Manager will provide you with a fair and accurate review of your past accomplishments, analyze your current performance, and work with you to set goals for improving your work performance. This is also a chance for you to express appreciation and dialogue about your work performance.

During the probationary period, evaluations will be performed at six weeks (at the Manager's discretion), three months and prior to an employee's six-month anniversary date. Where the probationary staff person's suitability is found to be unsatisfactory, their employment will be terminated. After successfully completing their probationary period, all employees' work performance will be evaluated on an annual basis.

Work performance reviews will also be completed during an employee's trial-period for a new program or position. These reviews will be scheduled at six weeks and prior to the end of the three-month trial period.

### ***Procedure***

1. The Manager will set WPR meetings with each employee in their program prior to their anniversary date.
2. Prior to the WPR the Manager will distribute feedback forms to other staff in the program and an Employee Self Evaluation form to the employee being reviewed.

Staff who receive feedback forms for their peers or supervisor are expected to complete them within the timelines given.

Feedback forms and all documents related to the review process are confidential and may not be discussed with anyone other than the supervisor conducting the review. Any questions about the form should be directed to the person who requested the feedback. The supervisor will shred the feedback forms after receipt in order to ensure confidentiality.

3. After the evaluation meeting, employees will be provided with a copy of the WPR.

Some programs may require periodic medication testing for their employees. The results of this testing will be included in the annual evaluation of an employee's job performance. Employees who do not consistently pass medication testing will be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

***Policy***

Prior to their first day of work, employees are required to submit to the Communitas office:

- Valid Social Insurance Number or other authorization to legally work in Canada
- Criminal Record Check (Communitas HR Department will perform record check after employee signs the Consent to a Criminal Record Check form.)
- Doctor's Note of Good Health
- Tuberculosis Screening (available at your local Health Unit)
- Driving Record Abstract (available at your local Motor Vehicle Branch)
- Emergency First Aid Certificate (or approved equivalent as required by position)
- BC Class 4 drivers license – unrestricted (as required by position)
- Certification of training per position requirements  
Example: "Community Support Worker" Certificate (or registration with Communitas for the Introduction to Community Support Work modules before hire)

Before the end of their six-month probationary period, employees must have completed any program-specific requirements.

Staff working in programs where a risk of Hepatitis B has been identified will be required to obtain a vaccination for Hepatitis B. Costs associated with this vaccination will be reimbursed.

***Ongoing Requirements***

Employees are expected to keep requirements as indicated below current and valid. Expiry dates for all requirements should be noted and arrangements made to re-certify or renew well in advance of the expiry date. Failure to keep requirements current and valid may result in loss of shifts without pay until requirements are met.

***Criminal Record Check (CRC)***

Per the BC Criminal Records Review Act, Criminal Record Checks through the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General are required for all staff and volunteers upon hire and every five years thereafter. This 5-year renewal requirement will be paid for by Communitas.

\*Note: Local RCMP and Police Criminal Record Searches are no longer approved by the Community Care Facilities Licensing Act.

***First Aid***

Communitas will reimburse employees for the cost of First Aid **renewals** (tuition and payment for hours attended at the employee's regular wage rate). Should an employee take a First Aid renewal course that is in excess of the required training, reimbursement will be limited to the cost of the basic requirement.

***Class 4 Drivers License***

Communitas will reimburse eligible employees for costs associated with Class 4 Drivers license **renewals** that are over and above the costs associated with Class 5 Drivers license renewals.

Class 4 **renewal** costs that will be reimbursed are:

- Medical Exam Form Fee, if required (charged by Doctor)
- Medical Exam Processing Fee, if required (charged by Motor Vehicle Branch)

In some situations, the use of a staff-owned vehicle for work related purposes may be approved or required. These vehicles must be insured for "business" use and be insured for third party liability to at least \$5 million. A staff person required to use their personal vehicle for work will be reimbursed by Communitas for the difference in insurance costs from the "to and from work" level to the "business" level and increased liability costs. A written statement from ICBC of the difference in cost must be submitted to the HR Department for reimbursement.

***Food Safe Certification***

In programs where staff are required to obtain a Food Safe Certificate, Communitas will reimburse employees for training costs. Employees will be reimbursed for the cost of the course and paid at

their regular wage rate for hours attended. Reimbursement will be limited to the cost of the basic requirement (i.e. “Food Safe Level One”).

**Professional Certification**

Staff hired to provide services requiring a specific certification (RNs, LPNs, Care Aids) are responsible to keep their certification current.

**Doctor’s Note of Good Health**

In addition to the initial pre-employment requirement, Communitas may, at its discretion, require employees to provide a doctor’s assessment of their ability to meet the physical and mental demands of their position. The purpose of these assessments will be to ensure the health and safety of employees, coworkers and persons supported. Communitas will reimburse the cost of doctor’s notes related to this policy.

**Related Policies**

Probationary Period, Section 2.4

Professional or Occupational Certification, Section 3.22

SECTION 4  
HOURS OF WORK

### **BREAKS**

**4.1**

#### ***Policy for Residential Settings***

Communitas employees who are paid for a half hour meal break are expected to be “on duty” through mealtime.

Employees working in residential and day program areas are expected to eat meals with those they are supporting. It is understood that staff will eat the food provided at meals free of charge and be paid wages for the meal period, in exchange for being 'on duty' through the mealtime. Provision of meals to staff will be based on program/client schedules and may vary from program to program.

### **HOURS OF WORK/OVERTIME**

**4.2**

#### ***Policy***

Communitas is committed to ensuring that all employees maintain a work schedule that allows them to remain healthy and well balanced.

Communitas is exempt from Part 4 of the Employment Standards Act that deals with hours of work and overtime.

Employment Standards Regulations section 34 (1) (r) states: “ Part 4 of the Act does not apply to... any of the following who are employed by a charity to assist in a program of therapy, treatment or rehabilitation of physically, mentally or otherwise disabled persons: a counselor, an instructor, a therapist, a child care worker, an instructor or counselor employed by a charity at a summer or seasonal camp for persons under 19 years of age.”

Regular work schedules will not exceed a maximum of eight hours per day or 40 hours per week, unless the schedule includes sleepover night shifts.

Communitas will seek to schedule staff for four hour shifts or longer. In situations where our scheduling need is of a shorter duration we will pay for a minimum of two hours.

The working of hours greater than eight per day and 40 per week is not allowed unless authorized by the Manager in consultation with the Service Coordinator and HR Director.

Employees are responsible to inform their Manager regarding hours worked at another Communitas program that may bring their work hours to a total greater than 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week.

## **SHIFT WORK SCHEDULES**

**4.3**

### ***Policy***

The workweek will provide for continuous operation of residential programs Sunday through Saturday. A week is defined as Saturday at midnight through to the following Saturday at midnight.

Communitas has the right to alter shift times. Communitas has the right to require staff to work rotating shifts.

### ***Casual employees***

Since Communitas provides 24/7 care for the people we support; casual employees must be available to work a variety of shift hours. Casual employees are expected to be available to work at least two to three shifts per week unless formally exempted by the HR Director.

Casual employees who are not available for shift requests will have their involvement with Communitas evaluated. Frequent unavailability may lead to termination of employment.

### ***Procedure***

Managers will post major program schedule changes at least two weeks prior to the end of the old schedule being completed. If an employee is unable to fulfill the new shift hours for personal reasons, they may choose to transfer to casual status, or apply for other vacant positions within the organization.

Changes to the schedule may be made on short notice in emergency situations (example: when no casual staff are available to cover the absence of a scheduled employee or when a resident goes on vacation etc.)

## **STAFF MEETINGS**

**4.4**

### ***Policy***

Attendance at staff meetings is required of all part time and full time staff. Employees are paid at their regular hourly rate for the hours they participate in a staff meeting.

Authorization from the Manager is required in order to miss staff meetings. Employees who do not attend staff meetings and have not received authorization to be absent will face disciplinary action including reduction of classification to casual or termination.

## **STATUTORY HOLIDAY SCHEDULING**

**4.5**

### ***Policy***

Employees are responsible to work all regularly scheduled shifts or casual shifts that they have committed to filling.

### ***Procedure***

Employees not wishing to work a Statutory Holiday may request the day off. If the shift is unable to be filled, the employee who would regularly fill the shift must work it.

Once authorized by the Manager, an employee voluntarily filling a shift of another assumes responsibility for that shift. Failing to fulfill your shift responsibility will result in disciplinary action.

### ***Related Policies***

Trading Shifts, Section 4.7, Statutory Holiday Pay, Section 6.11

## **TIME CHANGES**

**4.6**

### ***Policy***

Employees who are at work during a shift when time changes between Pacific Standard and Pacific Daylight Savings or vice-versa will be paid for the actual number of hours worked during that shift.

### ***Employees who work eight-hour shifts***

Employees who usually work eight hours and are affected by the spring change from Pacific Standard to Daylight Savings Time will work and be paid for seven hours rather than eight.

Employees affected by the fall change from Daylight Savings to Pacific Standard Time will work and be paid for nine hours instead of the usual eight hours.

### ***Procedure***

Employees at work during either changes of time will record the actual number of hours worked on their time sheets.

## **TRADING SHIFTS**

**4.7**

### ***Policy***

Employees may exchange shifts with prior approval from their Manager, provided that the trading of the shift does not negatively impact the program and sufficient advance notice in writing is given.

Once authorized by the Manager, an employee voluntarily filling a shift of another assumes responsibility for that shift.

Failing to fulfill your shift responsibility will result in disciplinary action.

### ***Forms***

Shift Exchange Request

**SECTION 5  
LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

### **BEREAVEMENT LEAVE**

**5.1**

#### ***Policy***

In the event of a death in an employee's immediate family (parent, parent-in-law, spouse, sibling, brother-in-law or sister-in-law, grandchild, grandparent, grandparent-in-law, daughter or son-in-law, guardian, and any person who lives with an employee as a member of the employee's family), the employee will be entitled to be absent from work up to two days with pay. This may be extended to three days if the death requires out-of-town travel.

The purpose of the leave is to allow the employee to grieve, make arrangements for the funeral, and/or attend to business and estate matters related to the death.

In the event of the death of a spouse, child or step-child the employee will be entitled to up to five paid days of leave. An employee who is unable to complete their shift following notification of death in the immediate family will be paid full shift hours, in addition to the eligible bereavement leave.

Bereavement leave of absence with pay will not apply when an employee is on an unpaid leave of absence.

#### ***Procedure***

Bereavement leaves are applied for through your Manager using the Leave of Absence form.

#### ***Forms***

Leave of Absence

### **COMPASSIONATE CARE LEAVE**

**5.2**

#### ***Policy***

Employees are entitled to eight weeks of unpaid leave if they must be absent from work to provide care or support to a family member (spouse, child, parent, guardian, sibling, grandchild or grandparent, or any person who lives with the employee as a member of the employee's immediate family) who is gravely ill with a significant risk of death.

Employees eligible for EI may apply for Employment Insurance Compassionate Care Benefits during this time. The eight weeks of benefits must be taken within a twenty-six week or six-month time frame.

#### ***Procedure***

Compassionate care leaves must be requested through your Manager using the Leave of Absence form.

#### ***Forms***

Leave of Absence

## **JURY DUTY LEAVE**

**5.3**

### ***Policy***

If an employee is summoned for jury duty or is summoned to serve as a witness in a court action, Communitas will top up court payments to a maximum of his or her regular wages, provided such court action does not involve the employee's private affairs. This support will be provided for a maximum of one calendar month, after which the employee will only receive what the court pays.

In cases where an employee's private affairs have required a court appearance, such leave to attend at court will be without pay.

An employee must advise their Manager or designated supervisor as soon as they are aware that a leave is required for the reasons stated above.

### ***Exception***

An extension of top up to regular wages may be considered on a case-by-case basis for jury duty lasting longer than one calendar month.

### ***Procedure***

1. An employee is responsible to provide the Payroll Department with receipts for court payment amounts in order for top up wages to be paid.
2. Upon completing jury duty or serving as a witness in a court action, an employee will return to their same shifts and responsibilities.

The following example describes the above process:

John normally earns \$77 per day. The court pays him \$20 per day. Upon notification by John, the remaining amount of \$57 is provided by Communitas for the first calendar month of jury duty.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE – UNPAID**

**5.4**

### ***Policy***

Employees with permanent hours who have completed their probationary period may request unpaid leaves of absence for reasons such as marriage, education, extended vacation, short-term missions projects, or to meet family responsibilities.

### ***Procedure***

1. Unpaid leave of absence requests described in this section will be considered only after available banked time and vacation accruals have been used.
2. Such leaves of absence will be for a maximum period of one month per year of continuous employment with Communitas, to a maximum of four months, as earned.
3. Unpaid leaves, including "day off" requests, are applied for through your Manager using the Leave of Absence form.
4. Communitas may deny leaves for reasons of operational necessity.
5. Request for leaves greater than one month in length must be made in writing at least two months prior to intended leave, except in case of emergency. Requests for leaves less than one month in length must be made in writing at least one month prior to intended leave, except in cases of emergency.
6. If the employee wishes to change their expected return to work date (as stated on Leave of Absence request form), they must notify their Manager no less than two weeks prior to expected return to work date.

7. Upon return, the employee will be reinstated to a position similar to the position vacated, or if not available, to a different position with a similar number of hours. Employees who take an unpaid leave of absence greater than one month in length will have their annual wage increase date adjusted.
8. During the first month of an employee's leave of absence, benefits will continue as per their employment agreement, after which the cost of any benefits will be borne by the employee (employer's and employees portion). Post-dated cheques for this purpose must be submitted to the Payroll Department before commencement of the leave. Any unpaid premium amounts will be deducted from the employee's first earnings upon their return to work.

Arrangements for continued benefit coverage must be made with the Payroll Department prior to taking the leave of absence. If post-dated cheques for benefit premiums are not received prior to the commencement of the leave, benefit coverage will be cancelled.

9. Specific requirements as stated on the Leave of Absence form must be followed in order for the employee to ensure their position is retained.

### **Related Policies**

Benefit Package (Non-Union), Section 6.1

### **Forms**

Leave of Absence

## **MATERNITY LEAVE**

**5.5**

### **Policy**

Communitas will grant up to one year of unpaid maternity leave for employees (17 weeks unpaid pregnancy leave plus 35 weeks unpaid parental leave).

### **Exception**

If an employee is unable to perform her duties due to pregnancy, she may be asked to start her leave sooner as per the Employment Standards Act No. 7.3.

### **Procedure**

A maternity leave may commence no sooner than eleven weeks immediately before the anticipated date of birth.

A maternity leave extension of six months may be given for medical reasons. A doctor's note stating the anticipated date of return is required.

Employees taking a maternity leave will return to their previous or similar position with Communitas.

Benefit coverage may remain in place during this Leave. Prior to going on maternity leave, the employee must provide post-dated cheques to the Payroll Department to cover their portion of the benefit premiums. If post-dated cheques for benefit premiums are not received prior to commencement of the leave, benefit coverage will be cancelled.

Employees taking a maternity leave will return to their previous or similar position with Communitas. Employees must notify their Manager of their return to work intentions no later than 1 month prior to their expected return to work date.

### **Forms**

Leave of Absence

**Policy**

A birth father or an adopting parent is entitled to up to 37 consecutive weeks of unpaid parental leave. A birth mother who does not take pregnancy leave may take up to 37 weeks of unpaid parental leave.

A birth father must begin the leave within 52 weeks after the birth of the child, and an adopting parent within 52 weeks after the child is placed with the parent.

An initial period of parental / adoption leave may be extended up to five weeks if the child requires an additional period of parental care.

**Procedure**

A request for parental /adoption leave by a birth or adopting parent must be made in writing at least four weeks before the proposed start date. A doctor's certificate or other evidence that the employee is entitled to a parental/adoption leave and/or leave extension may be required by the HR Department.

**Related Policies**

Fatherhood Benefit, Section 6.4

**Forms**

Leave of Absence

**SICK LEAVE****5.7****Policy**

To ensure the efficient delivery of services to clients/residents, every employee is responsible for working their scheduled shifts. An employee will be eligible for paid sick leave during a period of sickness or injury, as specified below:

- Employees with permanent hours who have passed probation earn sick leave credits at a rate of 4.6% of their regularly scheduled hours to a maximum of 12 days per twelve-month period.
- Family Responsibility: Allowances are made to employees, who, in caring for their dependent family members, are unable to work their regular shift. Notification must be given as soon as possible. Eligible staff may use up to two days (or 16 hours) of their paid sick time per year for this purpose. This benefit applies to non-unionized staff only.
- Unused sick leave credits will not be paid out on termination or resignation from employment.

**Exceptions**

- Employees who have not completed their initial probationary period, and employees classified as casual are not eligible for sick leave benefits.
- Employees who are on leave of absence will not accrue sick leave credits while they are off work.
- Sick leave credits will not apply to any period compensable under the Workers' Compensation Act or ICBC.
- Employees requiring extended sick leave because of a major medical illness or surgery will be eligible to apply for any unused sick accrual from the twelve-month period prior to the current year, in addition to the current year's credits. This benefit applies to non-unionized staff only.

**Procedure**

An employee who is not able to work their scheduled shifts due to illness must contact their Manager as soon as possible. Communitas reserves the right to require employees to provide proof of illness for sick leave. Failure to meet these requirements can be cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Payment for Sick Leave must be applied for in writing using the Request for Sick Pay form prior to the applicable pay period ending date. If approved, the Manager will then record the sick hours on the payroll time sheet.

If the return to work date from a medical leave will be different than originally requested on the leave of absence form, employees must notify their Manager at least two weeks prior to the original return date. A doctor's note stating the new expected return to work date must also be provided. Communitas will reimburse the employee for the cost of the doctor's note.

Employees who are absent from work due to illness or injury for greater than one month may have a return-to-work program arranged for them through Disability Management Institute (DMI). DMI is a contracted agency that administers long-term disability claims, WSBC claims and investigations, and return-to-work programs for Communitas.

Employees unable to work because of sickness or injury will have benefit coverage as per policy for 12 months. Employees unable to return to work after 12 months will no longer be eligible for benefit coverage.

Employees who have been absent from work due to illness or injury must provide sufficient notice to their Manager prior to their return to work. Upon return to work, employees who have been on sick leave for more than one month will have their annual wage increase date adjusted.

**Related Policies**

Benefit Package (Non-Union), Section 6.1, Workers Compensation Benefits, Section 6.14

**Forms**

Request for Sick Pay

**STRESS LEAVE**

**5.8**

**Policy**

Communitas Managers may allow eligible employees to use up to two days (or 16 hours) per year of their accumulated sick time as stress leave.

We encourage all Communitas staff to strive towards good mental health through wholesome diet, exercise, sufficient sleep, prayer and having a good support network of friends.

This leave is intended for times of significant distress and after other avenues of relief have been pursued including utilizing banked time, vacation, rearranging of priorities, etc.

This benefit applies to non-unionized staff only.

An employee is eligible for stress leave if they earn sick leave credits.

**Procedure**

Stress leave is applied for through your Manager by filling out a Leave of Absence form.

Authorization must be received prior to a leave and will be granted based on program needs at the time of the request.

**Related Policies**

Sick Leave, Section 5.7

**Forms**

Leave of Absence

**SECTION 6**  
**WAGES AND BENEFITS**

### ***BENEFIT PACKAGE (Non-Union)***

**6.1**

#### ***Policy***

It is mandatory for all full time employees (30 or more standard hours per week) who have completed probation to enroll in the Communitas benefit plan. An employee may opt out of the Medical Service Plan (MSP) and Supplemental Health and Dental portions of the benefit package, provided they have coverage through their spouse's plan.

Benefits for permanent full time employees come into effect after the probationary period has been successfully completed.

The benefit package includes the following:

- Medical Services Plan (MSP)
- Supplemental Health
- Dental
- Life/Dependent Life Insurance
- Basic Accidental Death & Dismemberment
- Accident and Serious Illness
- Long Term Disability

Medical Services Premiums are paid in full by Communitas. All other benefits are paid 50% by the employer and 50% by the employee. The employee's portion of benefit premiums will be deducted from their pay cheque.

If employees choose to waive the Supplemental Health and Dental portions of the benefit plan, the cost allocation for benefit premiums (employer/employee ratio) will change. For further information call the Payroll/Benefits Department.

Any employee with permanent full time hours may purchase voluntary Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Optional Life/Spousal Life Insurance coverage and/or Critical Illness. Contact the Payroll/Benefits Department for application.

A comprehensive benefits manual is provided to all employees receiving benefits.

#### ***Exceptions***

Employees reducing their status from full time to part time will no longer be eligible for benefits. If hours are increased to full time again within six months, there is no waiting period for benefit coverage to be re-activated.

#### ***Employees who take an extended leave of absence***

During the first month of an employee's leave of absence, benefits will continue as per their employment agreement, after which the cost of any benefits will be borne by the employee (employer's and employees portion). Post-dated cheques for this purpose must be submitted to the Payroll Department before commencement of the leave. If post-dated cheques are not received prior to commencement of the leave, benefit coverage will be cancelled.

***Employees unable to work because of sickness or injury*** will have benefit coverage as per policy for one month beyond the month in which the leave of absence commenced. If the employee wishes to maintain their benefits beyond this period, they will be responsible for the employee portion of the premium costs. Post-dated cheques for this purpose must be submitted to the Payroll Department prior to this stipulation taking effect. If post-dated cheques for benefit premiums are not received within two weeks of the commencement of the leave, benefit coverage will be cancelled.

Employees unable to work because of sickness or injury will have benefit coverage as per policy for 12 months. Employees unable to return to work after 12 months will no longer be eligible for benefit coverage.

***Procedure***

Eligible employees are required to submit completed benefits application forms to the Payroll/Benefits Department upon completion of the probationary period. Failure to do so will result in the employee paying benefit premiums retroactive to the eligibility date. These retroactive premiums will be deducted from the pay cheque following the billing date.

***Related Policies***

Leave of Absence – Unpaid, Section 5.4

***COUNSELING PROVISIONS***

**6.2**

***Policy***

Communitas will strive to support any permanent full time or part time employee who is aware of mental health issues or emotional needs and would like to receive professional counseling.

Communitas will provide financial assistance for counseling fees up to \$300 on a one-time basis.

Casual staff who have been employed with Communitas for a minimum of three years, and have demonstrated consistent availability for shift coverage, are eligible to apply for this benefit.

***Procedure***

Receipts for counseling services may be submitted to the HR Department for reimbursement.

***EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE - EI***

**6.3**

***Policy***

Employment Insurance (EI) is available to all employees of Communitas.

***Procedure***

Employment Insurance premiums are deducted from employee pay cheques. Communitas also pays premiums for this coverage at a rate of 1.4 times employee premiums. In the event that you are sick or disabled and unable to work for more than two weeks due to circumstances outside of your employment with Communitas, you may apply to EI for assistance. Please contact your EI office for eligibility requirements and coverage amounts.

***FATHERHOOD BENEFIT***

**6.4**

***Policy***

One day off with pay is provided to fathers to enable them to be with their wife and family on the day of their child's birth/adoption or any day during the week following the birth/adoption of their child.

***Related Policies***

Parental/Adoption Leave, Section 5.6

***Forms***

Leave of Absence

### ***Policy***

Communitas seeks to recognize the dedicated contribution of long-term employees by offering the following benefits:

#### ***Birthday Benefit***

All non-union employees of Communitas, after completing eight consecutive years of service, will receive one day off with pay in recognition of their birthday each year. Casual employees who have been available for shifts as per policy will receive an average day's pay (to a maximum of eight hours) in lieu of a day off with pay. This average day's pay will be calculated using the same formula as Statutory Holiday Pay for casuals.

The actual day to be taken off will be mutually agreed upon by the Manager and employee and must be taken within five working days before or after their birth date. This benefit must be applied for in writing, using the Leave of Absence form.

#### ***Ten-Year Anniversary Benefit***

All non-union employees of Communitas, after completing ten consecutive years of service, will receive the anniversary of their start date with Communitas off with pay each year. Casual employees who have been available for shifts as per policy will receive an average day's pay (to a maximum of eight hours) in lieu of a day off with pay. This average day's pay will be calculated using the same formula as Statutory Holiday Pay for casuals.

The actual day to be taken off will be mutually agreed upon by the Manager and employee and must be taken within five working days before or after the anniversary of their start date with Communitas. This benefit must be applied for in writing, using the Leave of Absence form.

This benefit is in addition to the above described birthday benefit.

### ***Related Policies***

Statutory Holiday Pay, Section 6.11

### ***Forms***

Leave of Absence

## **MILEAGE AND VEHICLE INSURANCE**

**6.6**

### ***Policy***

#### ***Mileage***

Employees who use their personal vehicle for work related duties will be reimbursed at the rate of 46 cents per kilometer.

#### ***Business Class Vehicle Insurance Reimbursement***

In some situations, the use of a staff-owned vehicle for work related purposes may be approved or be required. These vehicles must be insured for “business” use and be insured for third party liability to at least \$5 million.

### ***Procedure***

#### ***Mileage Reimbursement***

An employee must submit a fully completed Transportation Claim form to their Manager, who will approve and attach it to the next payroll submission for reimbursement.

**NOTE:** Claim forms for mileage reimbursement must be submitted within one month of the travel date. Claims submitted after the one-month date will not be reimbursed.

#### ***Business Class Vehicle Insurance Reimbursement***

A staff person required to use their personal vehicle for work will be reimbursed by Communitas for the difference in insurance costs between the “to and from work” level and the “business use” level, and the cost of increased third party liability to \$5 million. A written statement from the insurance provider of the difference in cost must be submitted to the HR Department for reimbursement using the Communitas form provided.

### ***Forms***

Transportation Claim  
Business Insurance Reimbursement Request

## **MUNICIPAL PENSION PLAN (MPP)**

**6.7**

### ***Policy***

All Communitas employees who work 35 or more permanent hours/week and have completed probation are required to enroll in the Municipal Pension Plan (MPP). Employees already contributing to the Plan through another employer are also obligated to enroll.

Employees who work less than 35 permanent hours/week or casually, and have completed at least two years of continuous employment and earned more than 35% of the Yearly Maximum Pensionable Earnings (YMPE) amount during any two consecutive calendar years while working for Communitas will have the option of enrolling in the MPP.

### ***Procedure***

All new employees will complete a Declaration of Employment form as part of their Employment Agreement package. Employees who are enrolled in the MPP through another employer are required to disclose this information on the form provided, and will be enrolled through Communitas as well.

Existing employees who become eligible based on earnings or time worked will be notified by the Communitas office and provided with Plan information and enrollment procedures. If, at any point during their employment with Communitas, an employee is enrolled in the MPP through another employer, they are obligated to notify the HR Department and will be enrolled through Communitas as well.

### ***Forms***

Declaration of Employment

## **OVERNIGHT OUTINGS WITH RESIDENTS**

**6.8**

### ***Policy***

On occasion, residents/clients will plan a vacation or extended holiday outing that involves being away from home for longer than a day. When employees accompany residents/clients on such outings as a part of their work, they will be compensated based on actual hours worked to a maximum of ten hours for each 24-hour period. Food and accommodation costs will be covered according to program specifications.

Employees are not obligated to accompany individuals on vacations or overnight outings.

Employees will not influence a person being served to make decisions regarding choice of vacation location and/or accompanying staff members that could be interpreted as being in the staff's interest rather than the person's true choice.

Communitas will make its best effort to provide one month's notice with regard to the planning of future client vacations.

### ***Procedure***

For purposes of this policy, a day equals 24 hours that begins at the time when an employee begins supporting the resident/client the day they leave on their holiday.

To calculate partial days, such as when staff and resident/client return home, hourly pay will be determined from the time the last 24 hour period ended to when they have returned home and are finished their support, up to a maximum of ten hours.

Example: On Tuesday, employee and resident leave at 9 a.m. and return on Thursday at 3 p.m. The employee receives ten hours pay for Tuesday to Wednesday, ten hours pay for Wednesday to Thursday at 9 a.m. and six hours pay for Thursday.

## **PAGER RELIEF (POINT OF CONTACT)**

**6.9**

### ***Policy***

When an employee is asked to be Point of Contact, that is carrying the program's pager while a Manager is absent, pager relief pay will be authorized.

Employees who carry the program pager for the Manager will be compensated at a rate of \$10 per day, in addition to regular wages for hours worked on shift. For the purposes of this policy, one day will be defined as a 24-hour period. Partial days will be pro-rated according to the number of hours that the pager was carried at a rate of 42 cents per hour.

## **PAYROLL ADVANCES**

**6.10**

### ***Policy***

Payroll advances may be granted on an emergency basis only. Communitas may, at its discretion, provide a maximum of two advances per calendar year per employee. Payroll advances are available only to employees who work permanent, regularly scheduled hours.

### ***Procedure***

Advances must be requested and approved through the HR Manager, using the Payroll Advance Request form.

If approved, advances will only be made on income earned to a maximum of \$500. Repayment will occur through payroll deduction on the first available pay cheque following the advance.

Payroll advances will be subject to a \$20 administrative fee.

### ***Forms***

Payroll Advance Request

**Policy**

The following eleven holidays are eligible for Statutory Holiday pay:

New Year's Day	Canada Day	Remembrance Day
Good Friday	BC Day	Christmas Day
Easter Sunday	Labour Day	Boxing Day
Victoria Day	Thanksgiving Day	

To be eligible for Statutory pay, an employee must have been employed for a minimum of 30 calendar days and must have worked during the 30 calendar days prior to the Statutory or paid holiday. Vacation, sick days and other paid leaves are included as days worked when determining entitlement to Statutory Holiday, and vacation pay counts as wages earned when calculating the amount of Statutory Holiday pay.

**Employees who work Statutory Holidays**

Anyone who has been an employee of Communitas for at least 30 calendar days and works on the Statutory Holiday will receive payment in one of the following ways:

- a) An employee may choose to be paid 1½ times their regular wage for the time worked. In addition, the employee may bank a day off with pay. This banked time must be taken within six months of the Statutory or paid holiday. The program Manager and the employee concerned will mutually agree upon this date.
- b) An employee may choose to be paid 2½ times their regular wage for the time worked in lieu of option a) as indicated above.

If an employee is scheduled to work on a Statutory Holiday and does not work it because of illness, they will be paid Statutory Holiday pay only for their scheduled hours.

Salaried employees such as Program Managers who work a "hands-on" shift on a Statutory Holiday will receive 1½ times their regular hourly wage for hours worked in addition to their regular salary.

**Employees who do not work Statutory Holidays**

Anyone who has been an employee of Communitas for at least 30 calendar days and does not work on the Statutory Holiday will be paid in one of the following ways:

1. *An employee with a regular schedule of hours* who has worked at least 15 of the 30 days before the stat holiday will be paid for the hours they were regularly scheduled for.

If an employee does not normally work on the day the Statutory Holiday falls on, they will be paid for an average day's number of hours.

2. *An employee who does not have a regular schedule of hours*, who has worked at least 15 of the 30 days before the Statutory Holiday will be paid for an average day's number of hours.

$$\text{Calculation: } \frac{\text{Total hours worked in the 30-day period before the Statutory}}{\text{Number of days worked}}$$

3. *An employee who has worked less than 15 of the 30 days* before the Statutory Holiday will receive pro-rated Statutory Holiday pay:

$$\text{Calculation: } \frac{\text{Total hours worked in the 30-day period before the Statutory}}{15}$$

Employees who do not normally work on the Statutory Holiday are entitled to an unpaid day off in addition to Statutory Holiday pay (Example: an employee who normally works Tuesday – Saturday and Statutory Holiday falls on Monday). This day off without pay must be taken within six months of the Statutory or paid holiday. The Program Manager and the employee concerned will mutually agree upon this date.

**Non-Union Programs Only:**

At Christmas time, Statutory Holiday pay begins at 3:00 pm on Christmas Eve and ends at 3:00 pm on Boxing Day. At New Years, Statutory Holiday pay begins at 3:00 pm on December 31 and ends at 3:00 pm on January 1. All other Statutory Holidays begin with the night shift and end 24 hours later.

When a Statutory Holiday falls on a day that a program is normally closed, the Statutory Holiday will be observed on the next working day. Programs that operate continuously (Example: residential programs) will observe the Statutory Holiday on the day on which it falls.

Example: Remembrance Day falls on a Sunday

- Communitas office, CLP, mental health programs, etc. would observe the Statutory Holiday on Monday
- Residential programs and/or those that operate 24/7 would observe the Statutory Holiday on Sunday

**VACATION PAY**

**6.12**

**Policy**

**Permanent Full time and Part time Employees**

Vacation leave will be granted to permanent full time and permanent part time employees at the following rates:

<u>Vacation Time</u>	<u>Vacation Rate</u>	<u>Rate Increase Trigger (whichever is last)</u>
2 weeks	4%	probation to after 2 years of service (0 – 3,000 hours)*
3 weeks	6%	after 3 years to after 6 years of service (4,500 – 6,000 hr)*
4 weeks	8%	after 7 years to after 10 years of service (10,500 – 15,000 hr)
5 weeks	10%	after 11 years to after 14 years of service (16,500 – 21,000 hr)
6 weeks	12%	after 15 years of service (22,500 hr)

*\*Note: Employment Standards minimums will apply at two weeks per year for the first five years of service, three weeks per year after five years of service.*

Vacation time accrued will not exceed two (2) times an employee’s annual entitlement. Employees must take the minimum amount of vacation time specified by Employment Standards.

Vacation leaves are subject to a review of operational requirements by the program Manager.

Employees may begin taking vacation time after they have earned one week of vacation time. Employees are eligible to take vacation time only after it has been earned.

All employees must take a minimum of the Employment Standards required vacation time each year. Employees with one to five years of service are required to take a minimum of two weeks of vacation time per year and employees with more than five years of service are required to take a minimum of three weeks of vacation time per year.

Vacation pay for employees who are paid on an hourly basis will be calculated as a percentage of gross earnings.

Part time and full time employees accrue vacation pay. The total vacation pay accumulated to date is shown on each pay cheque stub. To calculate the number of hours of vacation time per year an employee is eligible for, the following formula may be used:

*Permanent hrs/week times number of weeks of vacation entitlement = Eligible vacation hours per year*

Vacation pay is due only:

- On the pay date immediately following an employee's scheduled vacation unless pay day is during the vacation time taken
- On termination of employment
- On the payday prior to the scheduled vacation time if requested by the employee. Request for this option must be submitted in writing to the Payroll Department two weeks prior to payroll submission date

### **Casual Employees**

Casual employees do not receive paid vacation time, but will receive vacation pay to be paid out with each pay cheque. Casual employees will be entitled to make themselves unavailable for a period of not more than three weeks per year to provide a vacation period for that employee. This period must be arranged with the Manager who will take operational requirements into consideration, but will not be unreasonably withheld. This period will be without pay.

### **Exceptions**

An employee whose employment ceases before they have completed five working days of employment is not entitled to annual vacation pay.

Pay in lieu of vacation leave will not be granted; as such payment is contrary to the purpose of vacations. Vacation dollars accrued in excess of that which is needed to take the required vacation leave will be paid out annually.

Vacation pay will not be paid in conjunction with WSBC payments.

### **Procedure**

All employees will submit tentative vacation schedules by March 16th of each year. Thereafter vacations must be scheduled and authorized by the Manager at least one month prior to the vacation date. Length of service may be used to determine which vacation requests to approve when several staff members are seeking approval for the same time period. During prime time vacation periods, full time and part time staff will be given first consideration for requested time off.

A staff person who voluntarily fills a shift vacated by an employee requesting vacation time assumes responsibility for that shift. Once transfer of "ownership" of a shift has occurred, the employee vacating the shift does not have the right to reclaim it.

Employees who have commenced their annual vacation will not be called back to work except in the case of emergency.

### **Related Policies**

Casual Employees, Section 2.3  
Trading Shifts, Section 4.7

***Policy***

Wages are paid on the 10th of each month for the period worked from the 16th to the end of the previous month and on the 25th of each month for the period worked from the 1st to the 15th. When the 10th or 25th falls on a weekend or holiday, pay cheques will be issued on the previous Monday to Friday workday. Employees must submit payroll time sheets to their Manager prior to the dates provided by the Payroll Department. Late payroll submissions will be processed with the next available pay period.

***Exceptions***

Employees who are unable to attend a scheduled shift due to severe weather, natural disasters (examples: snow, flood, earthquake) or other personal circumstances (examples: transportation or childcare issues) will not be paid regular wages for the shift that they did not work. In these situations, employees may access vacation or banked time accruals to compensate for the hours of work missed.

***Procedure***

An initial placement on the six step Communitas wage grid is based on a credit system that reflects previous experience/education related to the work being performed. Upon successful completion of the probationary period, employees may submit a Wage Grid Credit Application form to the HR Department. Wage increases will be dated to the first pay period following the employee's successful completion of probation. Should the employee delay the submission of the Wage Grid Credit Application form for more than one pay period, the wage increase will be dated to the closest pay period to the submission date.

Full time employees who have passed probation receive wage increases annually on the pay date closest to the anniversary of their start date, until such time as they reach the top (Step 6) of the wage grid.

Part time and casual employees who have passed probation receive a wage increase after every 1500 hours of service, but not sooner than one year from their start date or date of last increase.

Employees who take an unpaid leave of absence greater than one month in length will have their annual increase date adjusted by the length of the leave.

Wages may also increase for employees when the Communitas Wage Grid rates are adjusted.

***Related Policies***

Attendance: Lateness and Absenteeism, Section 3.2

***Forms***

Wage Grid Credit Application

### ***Policy***

Workers Compensation Benefits coverage is provided for all employees of Communitas. Communitas pays WCB insurance premiums on behalf of its staff.

The BC branch of the Workers Compensation Board, Work Safe BC (WSBC) provides wage coverage for employees who are unable to work due to a work-related injury.

When an employee is absent from work due to a work related injury, their position will be retained for them for a period of 12 months. After 12 months of absence, their position will no longer be held for them and may be posted and filled permanently.

*Note:* If an employee is deemed by their doctor to be unable to return to their pre-injury position, their position will be posted and filled permanently by a replacement as of the date of notification.

Employees unable to work because of work related sickness or injury are eligible for continued benefit coverage as per policy for one month beyond the month in which the illness or injury occurred.

### ***Benefit Coverage while on WCB Leave***

If the employee wishes to maintain their benefits they will be responsible for the employee portion of the premium costs. Post-dated cheques for this purpose must be submitted to the Payroll Department prior to this stipulation taking effect. If post-dated cheques for benefit premiums are not received prior to the commencement of the leave, benefit coverage will be cancelled.

Full time employees unable to work because of a work related injury will have benefit coverage as per policy for 12 months. Employees unable to return to work after 12 months will no longer be eligible for benefit coverage.

### ***Procedure***

Procedures for on-duty injury reporting are posted at all program locations.

If you are injured while performing work duties, you must:

1. Receive care for your injury as necessary.
2. Immediately report the incident to your Manager.
3. Call the Disability Management Institute (DMI) toll free at 1-866-963-9995 to report your injury. DMI is a contracted agency that administers WSBC claims, investigations and return-to-work programs for Communitas.
4. Complete an Injury/Accident Report form and forward it to your Manager.
5. Your Manager will complete the Investigation portion of the Report form and forward it to the HR Department.
6. The HR Department will process the Report form and forward it to DMI.

### ***Related Policies***

Injury-On-Duty Reporting Requirements, Section 3.13

Benefit Package, Section 6.1

Sick Leave, Section 5.7

### ***Forms***

Injury/Accident Report and Investigation