# IDEA
## Strategic Plan
Inclusion, Diversity,
Equity, Accessibility

**2023–2027**

# contents

# Land Acknowledgement

Kids Help Phone recognizes and acknowledges the relationship that First Nations, Inuit and Métis people across Canada have with the land, waters and wildlife. We respect and affirm the inherent rights of all Indigenous Peoples across this land.

All of us, from across North America, are residing on lands that have been the home of Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial and we thank them for their continued stewardship of these lands, waters and wildlife.

We recognize and acknowledge that Kids Help Phone's main office is located on the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

We will continue to situate our Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) efforts in the journey toward reconciliation and will renew our commitment to this every single day through the implementation of this Strategic Plan, alongside **Finding Hope: Kids Help Phone's program for supporting First Nations, Inuit and Métis young people,** ↗ in partnership with Indigenous Peoples from coast to coast to coast.

As we continue to take action on a shared journey of reconciliation, we recognize that the impacts of colonization are not bound to the past, and that the effects of this history continue to impact the self-determination, livelihood and well-being of Indigenous communities today.

# Message from the Board Chair and CEO

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) is not new to Kids Help Phone. Following the murder of George Floyd in May 2020, the recent discoveries of more than 2,000 unmarked graves at the sites of former residential schools in Canada, and persistent social injustice, we resolved once and for all to turn our grief and anger into action↗. Throughout the remainder of that year, we embarked on a journey of unlearning across the organization – engaging in conversation, inviting guest speakers, publicly sharing our commitment to anti-racism and making plans. In 2021, this foundational work led to the creation of the CEO Inclusion Diversity Equity Accessibility (IDEA) Taskforce, bringing on a dedicated IDEA leader to our Kids Help Phone team, and ultimately, building an action plan that drives real and meaningful impact and change.

> **Together, and through this IDEA Strategic Plan, these steps helped to formalize and advance our ongoing journey toward anti-racism, anti-oppression, and reconciliation.**

As Canada's only bilingual 24/7 anonymous and confidential e-mental health provider for young people across the country, we recognize the importance of creating an environment that is welcoming, inclusive, and respectful to all; and that matches the impact we want to have on society. Over the past several months, our team has worked diligently to identify areas where we can improve our programs, practices and policies related to IDEA. We have conducted extensive research, engaged in meaningful conversations with over 150 stakeholders across the organization from the counselling front line, to our operational leadership team,

and the Board and executive team; and developed concrete action steps to guide our work going forward. This Plan represents our collective vision for IDEA now, and into the future.

We recognize that the work of creating a more inclusive and equitable organization is ongoing and requires attention and effort. We will continue to evaluate our progress and make adjustments as needed to ensure that we are meeting our goals, and the changing needs of young people, communities, and our colleagues.

We are excited about the opportunities ahead as we work to implement our IDEA Strategic Plan, and we invite everyone to join us in this important work. We believe that by coming together as a community, we can create a world where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Over the following pages of this document, this Strategic Plan articulates Kids Help Phone's Guiding Principles, Strategic Priorities, Objectives, and Initiatives and ties together our vision for our internal environment, with the overarching impact we are seeking to achieve.

We will not waver on our path to advancing mental health justice and equity for every young person – and we will never back down.

Sincerely,

Brian Ross,
Board Chair

Katherine Hay,
President and CEO

# Preamble

## Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) is not new to Kids Help Phone.

We have a history of advancing IDEA through our tailored programs, services, policies, initiatives and task forces. In March 2021, the CEO's IDEA Task Force was put together to develop a comprehensive action plan with the express aim of advancing our efforts in a unified, specialized, and measurable way. Specifically, the purpose of the Task Force was to articulate our IDEA mission and identify an actionable path toward embedding IDEA into everything we do — whether internal to our organization or beyond.

This five-year IDEA Strategic Plan builds on that history while continuing to reflect our commitments to reconciliation, eliminating anti-Black racism and supporting newcomers through Finding Hope: Kids Help Phone's program for Supporting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Young People, ↗ RiseUp: Kids Help Phone's program to Support Black Youth ↗ and New Journeys: Kids Help Phone's program to Support Newcomers, ↗ respectively. We're also devoted to elevating collaboration among colleagues inside and outside of the organization to help build a more just and equity-based society from coast to coast to coast.

**At Kids Help Phone, we're dedicated to practising our shared commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression, humility, accountability, ongoing learning and human dignity and aim to effect change in a way that's real and felt by the colleagues, communities and young people we support across the country.**

This Strategic Plan is based on collective accountability, and includes everyone at Kids Help Phone. It sets out strategic priorities, objectives, actions and accountabilities intended to empower teams and leaders across the organization to implement their own IDEA initiatives as we seek to become more inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible. Mutual trust and empowerment are critical to this journey.

The goal for this Strategic Plan is to define our vision for the future in actionable and measurable ways and to act as a guiding tool for partners and colleagues. The hope is that the information in this document can support each individual — and the system — in the broader quest toward equity, justice and social betterment.

# A Five-Year Plan

## A Commitment to Communities, Our Priorities and Our Performance

# What is IDEA?

**Inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility are mutually reinforcing concepts that, together, enable a holistic approach to achieving equity and impact.**

# What is IDEA?

## EQUITY

The **measured experience** of individual, interpersonal, and organizational success and well-being across all stakeholder populations, and is the **absence of discrimination**, mistreatment, or abuse for all. Equity is **achieved by eliminating structural barriers resulting from historical and present-day inequities**, and meeting the unique needs of different communities, individuals, and groups.
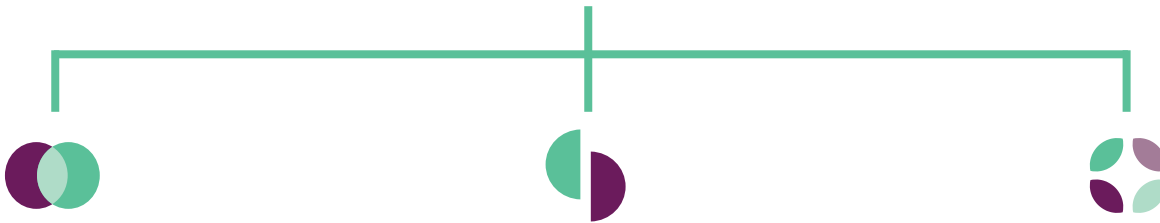
## INCLUSION

Inclusion is a choice, and is not an automatic by-product of achieving diversity and representation in an organization. It is the felt and perceived environment in an organizational setting where all community groups, especially underserved and marginalized ones, feel a sense of belonging, and can trust to be respected. Inclusion is achieved through actions that explicitly counter present-day and historical inequities to meet the unique needs of all populations. It is a culture that engages each employee, volunteer, and partner and promotes meaningful collaboration, and respect.

## DIVERSITY

Diversity refers to the composition of our workforce where communities, especially underserved and marginalized ones can trust to be represented. It is the felt experience of being seen and represented within a social and organizational setting for difference in identity, lived experience, and worldview. Diversity of identity and lived experience relates to, but is not limited to: race, ethnicity, gender identity, religion, nationality, body shape or size, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and dis/ability across all of the intersections of identity.

## ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility is the practice of making information, activities, and environments sensible, meaningful, and usable for as many people as possible. Specifically, it is the design of products, devices, services, and environments so as to be usable by people with disabilities with the express goal of removing social and systemic barriers that limit the participation of people with disabilities. This allows all people to be able to fully participate, connect, and engage in all aspects of the organization and service environment without barriers or obstacles.

## An Inclusive Approach

The work of the 2021 CEO Task Force on IDEA prompted immediate action, including the launch and continued development of Finding Hope, RiseUp and New Journeys, as well as several IDEA-related trainings, educational speaker series and a review of our baseline.

As Kids Help Phone continued to learn and unlearn, we knew it was important to go even deeper and be even bolder to ensure that our efforts generate real and lasting change.

This IDEA Strategic Plan reflects the collective perspectives and insights of Kids Help Phone's colleagues. In 2022, we engaged with over 150 Kids Help Phone team members across the organization to develop an evidence-informed plan that reflects our shared vision, high-level goals and the clear actions required for impact and positive change.

Additionally, Kids Help Phone has four Advisory Councils that collaborate with our leadership and program delivery teams to ensure that lived experiences of Black, Indigenous, and Newcomer communities are reflected in the policies, programs, and practices of Kids Help Phone.

1. The Black Advisory Council
2. The Indigenous Advisory Council
3. The National Youth Council
4. The Newcomer Advisory Network

## A Five-Year Horizon

Meaningfully addressing inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility will require a breadth and depth of work and initiatives, beginning with setting the foundation for change, embedding IDEA into everything we do in the organization, and transforming for the future.

The IDEA Strategic Plan has a five-year horizon. And while the work of IDEA is never truly done, a five-year timeline provides the backdrop to focus our investments and to hold us accountable.

## A Plan That Evolves Over Time

Over the next five years, we recognize that priorities may shift as progress is made, information on impact is gathered and social contexts and circumstances change.

Kids Help Phone will monitor performance and update initiatives on a regular basis to continually reflect the progress we've made, changing realities and community needs to which we must adapt.

> **As such, this Strategic Plan should be treated as a living document that represents our point-in-time priorities, objectives, and initiatives.**

# Guiding Principles

Guiding principles serve as a backdrop to our IDEA strategies, goals and actions. They're more fundamental than organizational practices. They provide direction and inform policies and procedures. They also help us determine and provide clarity on our vision, mission, goals, objectives and actions based on the role we want to play and the impact we want to have.

At Kids Help Phone, we know the work of IDEA does not begin and end with our organization. The impact we cultivate among colleagues and youth we support, we believe, will create lasting positive social change in our broader communities, and specifically, for young people across Canada seeking a space to feel out loud.

Our guiding principles, together with the key terms[1], create a common set of tools to help drive forward IDEA. Each of the principles are underpinned by the full participation of all of those who work within — and are supported by — our organization.

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1  Check out the list of Key Terms and Definitions on p. 43

# Guiding Principles

## 1

We will begin with and maintain empathy and humility

## 2

We will acknowledge and address individual and institutional bias

## 3

We will actively re-centre the lived experiences of equity-deserving groups

## 4

We will commit to reconciliation, anti-racism and anti-oppression practice

## 5

We will maintain transparency and ensure accountability

# 1

## WE WILL BEGIN WITH AND MAINTAIN EMPATHY AND HUMILITY

The first guiding principle is to approach our IDEA journey with the knowledge that we don't and can't know everything. Effective and impactful IDEA work requires a willingness to open oneself to the discomfort of unlearning and being corrected. We're all in different places in our understanding of identity, intersectionality, discrimination, racism, reconciliation, allyship, etc. The goal is to both learn and educate with humility, empathy, kindness, patience and the readiness to change.

# 2

## WE WILL ACKNOWLEDGE AND ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL BIAS

The second guiding principle is to situate our IDEA work in an understanding that systemic inequality crystallizes in the form of both individual and institutional bias. This means that bias can inform both the tangible and intangible elements of workplaces and other spaces — directly defining culture, practices, policies, ways of being, etc. As such, our role in the delivery of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility will require a focus on both individual and systemic change.

**Effective and impactful IDEA work requires a willingness to open oneself to the discomfort of unlearning and being corrected.**

# 3

## WE WILL ACTIVELY RE-CENTRE THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF EQUITY-DESERVING GROUPS

The third guiding principle is to acknowledge the voices and experiences of equity-deserving groups are, and have been, de-centred and marginalized in the design and development of institutions, policies, programs and practices in Canada. Re-centring lived experiences refers to the amplification of, and re-focus on, the experiences of communities who face marginalization and systemic discrimination due to identity. Re-centring lived experience is a key action to eliminate inequality, close historical gaps and inform policies, programs and decision-making in a way that ensures solutions are tailored to the challenges that exist. In practice, this means the people with the lived experience of an issue are involved in the design and assessment of whether or not progress is being made to address that concern.

> **Re-centring lived experience is a key action to eliminate inequality, close historical gaps and inform policies, programs and decision-making.**

# 4

## WE WILL COMMIT TO RECONCILIATION, ANTI-RACISM AND ANTI-OPPRESSIVE PRACTICE

It's not enough to be non-racist. The pervasive impacts of racism and colonization in Canada require an active approach to addressing both. Reconciliation, anti-racism and anti-oppression are intentional terms used to describe the action-based requirements of eliminating racism and the impacts of colonization. Reconciliation is the journey of acknowledging, accounting for, and addressing Canada's 150+ year history of colonization and its ongoing impacts by actively building and sustaining respectful, ethical relationships with Indigenous people. Anti-racism is defined as the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in organizational, political, economic and social spheres. Oppression is a tool of racism and refers to the use of power to disempower, marginalize, silence or otherwise subordinate one social group. Social oppression may not require formally established organizational support to achieve its desired effect — it may be applied on a more informal, individual basis. Anti-oppression is an active introspection and action to eliminate oppressive practice in both its formal and informal forms. Anti-racism and anti-oppressive practice necessarily incorporates principles of reconciliation, and the elimination of anti-Indigenous racism.

# 5

## WE WILL MAINTAIN TRANSPARENCY AND ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY

As an important factor for the success of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility, we will establish clear impact measures to inform our accountabilities and openly adjust initiatives and practices based on the information and insights we gather.



> **It's not enough to be non-racist. The pervasive impacts of racism in Canada require an active approach to addressing it.**

# The Strategic Plan

## IDEA Vision

**Kids Help Phone will continue to cultivate a future where young people from diverse communities and lived experiences across Canada can come as they are to access services and support for their mental health and well-being while playing an active part in shaping our tomorrow.**

# IDEA Mission

We welcome and celebrate diversity and are active agents of inclusion in everything we do. We will learn and adapt on an ongoing basis with transparency and authenticity. We will continuously strive to cultivate a workplace that represents the diversity and lived experiences of everyone so we can better reflect and understand the worldviews of the young people we support and the colleagues we work with.

We will continue to overcome barriers to access and increase our reach through innovative and considered practice while offering a welcoming and supportive space. We'll take these actions in partnership with diverse groups of youth and social and justice organizations within the communities we connect with.

# Strategic Priorities

## 1

An Inclusive, Diverse, Equitable, Accessible KHP Workplace

## 2

A Clinical Service and Operating Environment that is Inclusive, Diverse, Equity-Based, and Accessible

## 3

Government Relations, Partnerships, and Thought Leadership that Advance IDEA

## 4

Diverse and Inclusive Community Engagement and Social Responsibility at KHP

# Our Priorities, Objectives, Initiatives and Key Actions

Our IDEA Strategic Plan has a five-year horizon and outlines the priorities, objectives, initiatives and target outcomes we aim to achieve.

The plan outlined in this section and on the following pages reflects the work already underway and that work that is to come at Kids Help Phone, and recognizes that IDEA will take time to develop thoughtfully and meaningfully.

Many of the priorities and objectives are interdependent, meaning that each initiative and key action will set the stage for future IDEA efforts.

**NOTE:** All key actions are non-exhaustive. KHP may adapt or change the key actions based on progress made, and lessons learned.

# Strategic Priorities + Objectives

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

**An Inclusive, Diverse, Equitable, Accessible KHP Workplace**

### OBJECTIVES

1. KHP's Leaders are Knowledgeable of, Committed to and Accountable to IDEA Principles and Practices

2. KHP's Workplace Culture is Based on Mutual Trust, Empowerment and Collective Accountability to IDEA

3. KHP's Talent Attraction, Retention and Development Practices Advance Equity–Deserving Groups within Kids Help Phone and the Broader Labour Market in Canada

4. KHP Has a Culture of Ongoing and Collective Learning that Embeds the Principles of IDEA Within the Organization

5. KHP Communications are Clear, Consistent, and Apply an IDEA Lens Where Appropriate

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

**A Clinical Service and Operating Environment that is Inclusive, Diverse, Accessible, and Equity–Based**

### OBJECTIVES

6. KHP Creates Pathways that Strengthen Service Access for Black, Indigenous, Racialized, 2SLGBTQ+, Newcomer and Other Groups Exposed to Additional Harm Across Intersections of Identity

7. KHP Integrates IDEA principles into Service and Operational Design, User Experience and Impact Measurement

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

**Government Relations, Partnerships, and Thought Leadership that advance IDEA**

### OBJECTIVES

8. KHP Demonstrates Commitment to IDEA in the Vendor and Supplier Market

9. KHP Shapes and Enables Policy Advocacy and Thought Leadership in IDEA and e-Mental Health

10. KHP Continues to Establish Strategic Funding Partnerships and Donor Relations that Advance Internal- and External-Facing IDEA Initiatives

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

**Diverse and Inclusive Community Engagement and Social Responsibility at KHP**

### OBJECTIVES

11. KHP Enables Advocacy for IDEA and Related Social Issues

12. KHP's Brand Reflects and Represents Equity–Deserving Groups

13. KHP is Committed to Re-Centring Lived Experiences by Increasing and Strengthening Engagement with Diverse Communities and Partners

**There are four Strategic Priority Areas, 13 Objectives and 38 Initiatives outlined in our Plan.**

# An Inclusive, Diverse, Equitable and Accessible Kids Help Phone Workplace



For Kids Help Phone, an Inclusive, Diverse, Equitable and Accessible workplace is about ensuring all colleagues have and feel a strong sense of belonging. It's about the collective accountability required to cultivate a workplace that maintains a readiness to learn, unlearn and change while actively eliminating systemic inequalities and barriers to employment and development.

## OBJECTIVE 1

## Kids Help Phone's Leaders are Knowledgeable of, Committed to and Accountable to IDEA Principles and Practices

| Initiative | Key Actions |
|---|---|
| **1.1.** Enable intentional and proactive IDEA-informed leadership by building knowledge and competence in IDEA practices, principles and standards among Kids Help Phone leadership and the Board | • Develop core IDEA competencies and skills for leadership to inform training and learning opportunities<br><br>• Develop learning opportunities for leadership to have the necessary information and skills to follow IDEA principles<br><br>• Define clear expectations regarding mandatory and ongoing training for leadership (e.g. quarterly learnings, etc.) |
| **1.2.** Develop an IDEA Committee to support coordination, accountability and knowledge-sharing as well as identify and validate IDEA-related initiatives, programs and opportunities to ensure representative guidance and support for Kids Help Phone as a whole | • Define a governance framework with clear responsibilities related to ensuring and evaluating progress on IDEA<br><br>• Identify representative committee participants while ensuring a balance and unburdening of equity-deserving groups |
| **1.3.** Establish IDEA accountabilities and performance objectives for senior leaders and cascade to appropriate levels by implementing a clear set of IDEA principles, requirements and criteria that will inform operational and strategic planning processes across all levels of the organization | • Develop criteria for Executive Strategic Directions that require the incorporation of IDEA actions and include measurable goals and quarterly reporting requirements |

| | |
|---|---|
| **1.4.** Align selection and evaluation of Kids Help Phone leadership and the Board, leadership professional development and performance management and evaluation with IDEA principles and competencies | • Define Board succession planning that incorporates IDEA criteria<br><br>• Increase diversity of Board candidates by expanding search networks (e.g. through professional associations, etc.)<br><br>• Ensure interview processes are equitable and that practices to block bias are systematized |

## OBJECTIVE 2

## Kids Help Phone's Workplace Culture is Based on Mutual Trust, Empowerment and Collective Accountability to IDEA

| Initiative | Key Actions |
|---|---|
| **2.1.** Support the celebration and acknowledgement of diverse religious, spiritual and cultural observances and practices across Kids Help Phone's community | • Continue to monitor and update Kids Help Phone's Editorial Calendar to increase awareness of diverse cultural, religious and spiritual observances |
| **2.2.** Create a closed-loop, anonymous, and formalized mechanism for feedback and reporting where employees can report concerns, issues, suggestions and support needs related to IDEA | • Leverage our existing technology to create "candid conversations" that are anonymous (to enable more openness and transparency)<br><br>• Implement a regular multisource (360°) evaluation and feedback process<br><br>• Develop a regular cadence of IDEA-related, anonymous feedback surveys focused on different levels across the organization<br><br>• Provide training to leadership on how to receive, respond to and act on feedback and complaints related to IDEA<br><br>• Upgrade HR policies to include a Whistleblower Policy to eliminate harm among people coming forward with IDEA-related concerns |
| **2.3.** Cultivate a sense of belonging and empowerment in the workplace where diversity of experiences and contributions is valued, respected and celebrated | • Implement Employee Affinity / Resource Groups to cultivate a network of support within Kids Help Phone's community based on intersectional identities and lived experiences<br><br>• Provide information on existing Employee Resource Groups (ERG) during onboarding for new employees |

| | |
|---|---|
| **2.4.** Strengthen IDEA-based data gathering and information-sharing functions | • Establish a baseline for Kids Help Phone equity data to inform IDEA initiatives<br><br>• On a continuous basis, collect and examine equity-related data for trends in workforce patterns and workplace experiences of all staff |
| **2.5.** Review and upgrade Kids Help Phone's practices and policies to define opportunities for continuous improvement in IDEA | • Create and continually upgrade Kids Help Phone's Employment Equity Plan *(e.g., An employment equity plan identifies the policies, practices, procedures, and initiatives intended to ensure full representation of all designated groups including women, indigenous peoples, members of racialized communities, persons with disabilities, and 2SLGBTQ+ individuals within the respective area)*<br><br>• Embed IDEA definitions, operating principles, and key terms into relevant policies and procedures at Kids Help Phone |

## OBJECTIVE 3

## Kids Help Phone's Talent Attraction, Retention and Development Practices Advance Equity–Deserving Groups within Kids Help Phone and the Broader Labour Market in Canada

| Initiative | Key Actions |
|---|---|
| **3.1.** Create equitable professional development opportunities for promotion, retention, and advancement among equity–deserving colleagues to enable more diverse representation at all levels of the organization | • Develop directed and intentional opportunities for mentorship and secondments that enable diversity in succession planning as well as talent development |
| **3.2.** Create equitable professional development opportunities to support the social mobility for equity-deserving communities | • Leverage existing partnerships to continue to develop mentorship opportunities for people from a variety of backgrounds and lived experiences<br><br>• Develop partnerships that support talent placements at Kids Help Phone among equity-deserving communities<br><br>• Continue to diversify partnerships with higher education institutions<br><br>• Implement targeted job advertisements to increase workforce representation from equity-deserving groups |
| **3.3.** Update performance evaluation processes for staff to include criteria for learning, development and contributions that advance IDEA | • Develop and implement IDEA core competencies and skills for roles across all levels of the organization<br><br>• Review and redefine performance quadrants and requirements to include critical IDEA competencies and skills |

| | |
|---|---|
| **3.4.** Continue to update hiring and talent attraction practices to ensure IDEA is an integrated component of recruitment and evaluation | • Develop guidelines to ensure job postings are equitable and inclusive<br><br>• Ensure an Equity Statement is included in all job postings<br><br>• Review the candidate screening and selection process to eliminate unconscious bias<br><br>• Include understanding and experience of IDEA as a proficiency criterion for leadership<br><br>• Review and, where necessary, implement changes to the interview and assessment process<br><br>• Expand interview matrix to include DEI competency |
| **3.5.** Review and ensure the elimination of any existing like-for-like racial compensation gaps | • Assess the current state of equitable pay to determine a clear baseline, and to identify whether there are current like-for-like gaps that exist |

## OBJECTIVE 4

## Kids Help Phone Has a Culture of Ongoing and Collective Learning that Embeds the Principles of IDEA Within the Organization

| Initiative | Key Actions |
|---|---|
| **4.1.** Develop and provide a mandatory IDEA curriculum focused on skill-building (e.g. cultural humility, IDEA competency, conflict resolution, anti-racism, anti-colonial and anti-oppression frameworks, etc.) to enable demonstrated IDEA practices, awareness, understanding and inclusive behaviour across Kids Help Phone | • Develop a comprehensive IDEA Competency Framework by level within Kids Help Phone<br><br>• Design and deliver a comprehensive IDEA Learning Plan to all colleagues aimed at increasing awareness and uptake of equity-related training<br><br>• Create and communicate clear expectations and competencies in IDEA for all levels of the organization (e.g. frontline teams, leadership teams, etc.)<br><br>• Set clear targets and an evaluation process for employees by incorporating targets into performance goals, onboarding, role expectations and performance reviews and defining impacts for training non-compliance |

| Initiative | Key Actions |
|---|---|
| **4.2.** Create intentional spaces for cultural and behavioural shifts to take place by cultivating a collaborative learning environment that supports and respects self-determination, trust-building and knowledge-sharing rooted in IDEA | • Provide opportunities for training completion in both individual and collective settings (e.g. lunch and learns, learning modules, courses for completion, etc.)<br><br>• Co-create learning and knowledge-sharing tactics with those who self-identify from diverse groups<br><br>• Implement learning / educational series that include guest speakers, collective reflection models, discussion forums and plenaries and other collective- and discussion-based learning environments |
| **4.3.** Streamline learning and development by centralizing existing education platforms to create a learning hub that supports a clear and accessible learning environment | • Implement IDEA learning platforms and technology solutions organization-wide to support resource centralization, consistency and standardization in learning modules |

OBJECTIVE 5

## Kids Help Phone Communications are Clear, Consistent, and Apply an IDEA Lens Where Appropriate

| Initiative | Key Actions |
|---|---|
| **5.1.** Strengthen all communications by ensuring the application of an IDEA lens and cultivating a regular cadence of information and progress-sharing on IDEA organization-wide | • Create and implement an IDEA communication strategy that further elevates diversity and inclusion as a key strategic and corporate priority for Kids Help Phone and clearly outlines a cadence of communication and information-sharing<br><br>• Report on and improve Lessons Learned in IDEA to Kids Help Phone's broader community in order to create accountabilities and enable transparency |
| **5.2.** Develop a Current Events Response Framework to inform responses to major events that impact youth in Canada | • Define a Current Events Response Framework<br><br>• Develop a Content Development Plan for each year that informs media (e.g., website, digital, social media) impact and reach and reflects Kids Help Phone's IDEA principles |

# A Clinical Service and Operating Environment that's Inclusive, Diverse, Equity-based, and Accessible



**Embedding IDEA into everything we do is critical to our vision for the future. A clinical service and operating environment that's based in IDEA refers to the integration of our principles into all of the services we provide, how they're informed and delivered, how decisions are made and how progress and impact are tracked and measured.**

## OBJECTIVE 6

## Kids Help Phone Creates Pathways that Strengthen Service Access for Black, Indigenous, Racialized, 2SLGBTQ+, Newcomer and Other Groups Exposed to Additional Harm Across Intersections of Identity

| Initiative | Key Actions |
|---|---|
| **6.1.** Improve access to mental health services for everyone in Canada by developing and delivering targeted action plans that enhance service delivery, access and impact among equity-deserving groups | • Work in collaboration with the Indigenous Initiatives and Equity Programs Team to deliver on key recommendations outlined in the Finding Hope, RiseUp and New Journeys Action Plans<br><br>• Continue to collaborate with diverse community members to identify existing barriers to service access and create opportunities for service refinement and co-design<br><br>• Continue to use participatory design by working with the Black Advisory Council, Newcomer Advisory Network, National Youth Council and Indigenous Advisory Council to review and workshop recommendations and action plans |
| **6.2.** Develop a multiyear action plan to improve service accessibility among young people with disabilities | • Continue to support and lead existing accessibility initiatives and events<br><br>• Ensure all new employee onboarding materials are in accessible formats<br><br>• Develop guidelines to ensure learning and development programs meet accessibility standards<br><br>• Include American Sign Language (ASL) / Quebec Sign Language (LSQ) video content in our outreach to Deaf communities<br><br>• Include resources in visual languages (ASL / LSQ) |
| **6.3.** Improve safety planning processes to eliminate systemic harm to racialized youth connecting with Kids Help Phone | • Develop a framework and guide to support safety planning<br><br>• Create partnerships at Kids Help Phone to build relationships with community-based crisis response teams |

| **6.4.** Continue to commit to service language expansion | • Evaluate opportunities for further language expansion to include more First Nations languages |
| | • Evaluate opportunities for further language expansion to include more languages |
| | • Evaluate opportunities and barriers to increasing Kids Help Phone's internal and external representation in French and English |
| | • Evaluate opportunities to increase our accessibility for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (HOH) communities |

## OBJECTIVE 7

## Kids Help Phone Integrates IDEA principles into Service and Operational Design, User Experience and Impact Measurement

| Initiative | Key Actions |
| --- | --- |
| **7.1.** Conduct an IDEA assessment of existing internal and external Kids Help Phone services and programs to determine gaps and opportunities for improvement related to data collection, existing inequities and barriers to service access and reach | • Conduct an audit and review of Kids Help Phone's internal and external websites and digital media to determine opportunities for increased engagement<br><br>• Continue to review current service pathways and service user experiences to assess existing gaps and opportunities for improvement<br><br>• Work with diverse community members and the Kids Help Phone Advisory Councils to identify opportunities for improved user experience based on the lived experiences and intersectional identities of communities<br><br>• Strengthen service and program accessibility for young people with disabilities by evaluating the accessibility of Kids Help Phone's existing services<br><br>• Review service design processes to include tools, controls and reviews that help ensure everything we're designing has an IDEA lens |
| **7.2.** Ensure an IDEA-based approach to data and innovation that informs all decision-making for internal (programs, processes, operations) and external (services, programs) functions to support impact management data practices that are IDEA-informed | • Develop a fully integrated and targeted approach to impact measurement that enables trend analysis and key decision-making at all levels and functions of the organization<br><br>• Ensure that youth engagement, consultation and qualitative data gathering is informed by IDEA<br><br>• Develop a Bias-Free Data Framework that outlines how we design surveys, analyze data and develop data products that are informed by IDEA from an end-to-end perspective |

# Government Relations, Partnerships and Thought Leadership that Advance IDEA



The impact that Kids Help Phone can have on Canada and the broader mental health services ecosystem is, in part, informed by partnerships and our ability to share lessons learned and best practices in IDEA. Strategic Priority 3 aims to strengthen positive social impact beyond Kids Help Phone through our community partnerships, relationships with donors and connection to the public sector.

## OBJECTIVE 8

### Kids Help Phone Demonstrates Commitment to IDEA in the Vendor and Supplier Market

| Initiative | Key Actions |
|---|---|
| **8.1.** Establish IDEA standards that support organization-wide procurement and market-engagement practices | • Establish a diverse vendors and suppliers list and work with diverse service suppliers to reduce barriers and encourage IDEA in service procurement<br><br>• Develop an IDEA evaluation and assessment framework and requirements to inform procurement practices from diverse suppliers<br><br>• Develop accessible postings for procurement documents<br><br>• Develop an IDEA Playbook to inform current and future vendors on how to boost IDEA |

## OBJECTIVE 9

### Kids Help Phone Shapes and Enables Policy Advocacy and Thought Leadership in IDEA and e-Mental Health

| Initiative | Key Actions |
|---|---|
| **9.1.** Lead, enable, convene and participate in knowledge-sharing and thought-leadership efforts within the public and not-for-profit sector ecosystems that seek to advance the mental, emotional and spiritual well-being of diverse youth, identify barriers to access and inform our IDEA initiatives and ensure diverse representation in thought leadership (where possible) | • Develop a clear thought-leadership strategy rooted in IDEA principles and practices<br><br>• Identity opportunities to work with and meet public sector leaders<br><br>• Convene key leaders in the mental health sector to share insights and lessons learned in IDEA to advance more robust and equitable mental health services in Canada |

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|---|---|
| **9.2.** Work with different levels of government in Canada to understand and address public policy gaps and barriers to e-mental health access for young people across the country based on various intersections of identity | • Define and share lessons learned from Kids Help Phone data that can support policy change in mental health services<br><br>• Develop opportunities for partnership related to service improvement based on current barriers (e.g. making services available where internet access is limited or non-existent, etc.) |
| **9.3.** Reinforce relationships with governments and continue to cultivate new public sector partnership opportunities that advance IDEA | • Identify public sector opportunities related to IDEA initiatives and establish connections with relevant orders of government<br><br>• Expand services and partnerships with francophone governments to encourage Kids Help Phone's bilingual service reach to French-speaking youth |

## OBJECTIVE 10

## Kids Help Phone Continues to Establish Strategic Funding Partnerships and Donor Relations that Advance Internal- and External-Facing IDEA Initiatives

| Initiative | Key Actions |
| --- | --- |
| **10.1.** Continue to diversify Kids Help Phone's donor base and philanthropy network and enable community-centric philanthropy | • Engage with community and corporate partners as well as lead advocates in the e-mental health services ecosystem to raise awareness of Kids Help Phone's IDEA focus and efforts and establish new partnerships<br><br>• Enhance external communications and share IDEA principles broadly on Kids Help Phone's public-facing platforms to support market nudging<br><br>• Continue to prioritize diversity on Kids Help Phone's Campaign Cabinet to encourage a diversification of donors |
| **10.2.** Ensure all partnerships, fundraising and donor relations are grounded in IDEA | • Provide guidelines and trainings related to safety planning for Kids Help Phone colleagues leading fundraising and donor relations<br><br>• All fundraising professionals must be trained in anti-racism, systemic oppression, equity, wealth disparity, intersectionality and other areas important to social justice<br><br>• Ensure that donor engagements don't occur on cultural, religious and spiritual holidays<br><br>• Encourage Kids Help Phone Supporters (e.g. donors, partners) to think about the above topics and their roles and privileges within these areas (where possible), understanding that people are on different points of their learning journeys and have different lived experiences |

# Inclusive Community Engagement and Social Responsibility at Kids Help Phone



A strong, connected and engaged approach to IDEA is critical to our vision. Participatory community engagement and a sense of social responsibility will not only improve community outcomes and strengthen the well-being of the colleagues and young people we support, but will also ensure that for each solution we propose, we're actively re-centring lived experience as the starting point to progress and impact.

## OBJECTIVE 11

## Kids Help Phone Enables Advocacy for IDEA and Related Social Issues

| Initiative | Key Actions |
|---|---|
| **11.1** Leverage Kids Help Phone's existing cross-departmental assets, communication tools, guidelines and content to lead social change opportunities outside of the organization | • Identify existing assets that can act as educational tools internally and externally<br><br>• Develop clear content on our internal and external channels that defines language changes and considerations and provides guidelines on how to communicate in a way that advances IDEA |

## OBJECTIVE 12

## Kids Help Phone's Brand Reflects and Represents Equity-Deserving Groups

| Initiative | Key Actions |
|---|---|
| **12.1.** Ensure our brand resonates with, and is representative of, diverse communities across Canada | • Develop and formalize a partnership assessment / agreement framework based on an IDEA lens<br><br>• Ensure Kids Help Phone's event branding and communications reflect diverse communities and are based on inclusive practices<br><br>• Develop additional stakeholder outreach content and engagement initiatives specifically for diverse audiences<br><br>• Engage with the National Youth Council to evaluate brand resonance with young people in Canada<br><br>• Review and audit our content annually to ensure it's reflective of diverse communities<br><br>• Consistently share content that recognizes, celebrates and respects stakeholders and diverse community members<br><br>*continued on next page...* |

| | |
|---|---|
| | • Review digital assets to ensure the diversity of our stakeholders is reflected<br><br>• Celebrate community heroes from equity-deserving groups<br><br>• Demonstrate Kids Help Phone's awareness of, and commitment to, grassroots IDEA initiatives |
| **12.2.** Increase social engagement through a multichannel approach that meets kids, and the adults who care about them, where they are | • Establish a user-generated content program with a representation focus<br><br>• Develop guidelines for Influencer campaigns that support IDEA and elevate representation of equity-deserving groups<br><br>• Conduct a channel audit to determine where different groups prefer to engage with Kids Help Phone and gather data on engagement related to demographic distribution (while maintaining privacy of the young people that access our resources) |
| **12.3.** Continue to update and adopt Kids Help Phone's Style Guide and Kids Help Phone's Brand Guide as our standards to ensure inclusive, relevant and evolving language, terminology, graphics, etc. are used internally and externally | • Implement education and uptake strategies that describe the "how to" for the Style Guide for Kids Help Phone colleagues<br><br>• Annually review language, terminology, and imagery reflected and incorporated in Kids Help Phone's Style Guide and Brand Guide |

## OBJECTIVE 13

## Kids Help Phone is Committed to Re-Centring Lived Experiences by Increasing and Strengthening Engagement with Diverse Communities and Partners

| Initiative | Key Actions |
|---|---|
| **13.1.** Actively seek out partnerships with organizations, communities and individuals who support the mental and emotional well-being of equity-deserving groups to re-centre lived experience and support the overall advancement of IDEA through a community-centric model | • Develop a Community Partnership Framework to enable relationship-building with various community groups<br><br>• Identify key community partners and work with them to enable increased service reach and impact among marginalized and racialized communities<br><br>• Identify opportunities to support the elimination of key barriers related to improving mental health outcomes for young people from equity-deserving communities<br><br>• Develop key partnerships and relationships to identify lived- experience based knowledge on the gaps in mental health services<br><br>• Co-design solutions within and outside of Kids Help Phone's ecosystem of services in partnership with community groups (e.g. disability advocates, Indigenous communities, Black-led organizations, etc.) |
| **13.2.** Strengthen and support reconciliation efforts within and outside of Kids Help Phone and among Indigenous and settler people across Canada<br><br>*Finding Hope is Kids Help Phone's Action Plan to support Reconciliation, and the First Nations, Metis, and Inuit youth in Canada* | • Develop and continually review and update Kids Help Phone's Reconciliation Strategy and Action Plan<br><br>• Continue to conduct outreach to, and build relationships with, First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples in Canada to identify additional opportunities to strengthen actions toward reconciliation<br><br>• Develop and implement opportunities to better reach remote and rural communities<br><br>• Foster a commitment to enhancing relationships with Indigenous Peoples and the land |

**13.3.** Actively support and work toward the elimination of anti–Black racism in social services and institutions

*Rise Up* is Kids Help Phone's Action Plan to support Black youth in Canada

- Develop a Black Youth Action Plan to support African, Caribbean and Black youth in mental health equity and service access

- Build relationships with community organizations leading the effort to address anti–Black racism and identify opportunities to support

- Develop and implement opportunities to better reach Black youth in Canada to support well-being outcomes across the country

# Key Terms and Definitions

*This section of the document aims to outline a set of key terms and definitions that inform and support the discourse on inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility, and justice.*

*The key terms and definitions outlined below should be treated as a tool to support dialogue and to enhance a common understanding and knowledge on IDEA.*

### Anti-Racism
Anti-racism is defined by the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic and social life. Anti-racism can exist on both an individualized, and institutional level; and aims to address both individual racist behaviours and impacts, as well as systemic racism within institutional settings.

### Anti-Black Racism
Anti-Black racism is prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping and discrimination directed at Black people, and is rooted in the colonial history and experience of enslavement and its legacy. Anti-Black racism is deeply entrenched in institutions, policies and practices throughout Canada, to the extent that anti-Black racism is either functionally normalized or rendered invisible to the broader population. Anti-Black racism is manifested in the current social, economic and political marginalization of Black people, which includes unequal opportunities, lower socioeconomic status, higher unemployment, significant poverty rates and overrepresentation in the criminal justice system.

### Anti-Indigenous Racism
Anti-Indigenous racism is the ongoing race-based discrimination, negative stereotyping and injustice experienced by Indigenous Peoples. It includes ideas and practices that establish, maintain and perpetuate power imbalances, systemic barriers and inequitable outcomes that stem from the legacy of colonial policies and practices in Canada. Systemic anti-Indigenous racism is evidenced in policies such as the Indian Act and the residential school system. It is also manifest in the overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in provincial and territorial criminal justice and child welfare systems, as well as inequitable outcomes in education, well-being and health.

### Antisemitism
Antisemitism is the expressed hatred, discrimination, and negative stereotyping toward Jewish people. Manifestations of anti-Semitism is evidenced through rising acts of hostility and violence directed at Jewish community institutions, religious facilities, and on individuals and / or their property.

### Equity
An equity approach acknowledges the importance of varied treatment for distinct groups, in order for different members of society to share the same advantages. Equity initiatives aim to cultivate opportunities that "level the playing field" by addressing different exclusions, differently.

## Equity-Deserving Group

Equity-deserving groups are the communities that experience significant systemic barriers to participation in society. This could include attitudinal, historic, social and environmental barriers based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, gender identity / gender expression, nationality, race, sexual orientation, etc. Equity-deserving groups are those that experience barriers to equal access, opportunity, and resources, due to the impacts of racism and discrimination. Equity-deserving groups actively seek and deserve social justice and reparation.

## Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination occurs when a person faces negative treatment because of their gender identity or expression. Gender discrimination can be both subtle, and explicit, and can happen on the systemic levels such as through rules and policies that ultimately exclude people with various gender identities.

## Gender Expression

Gender expression refers to how a person chooses to publicly present their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance, such as dress, hair, makeup, body language and voice. A person's chosen name and self-identified pronouns are also common ways of expressing gender.

## Gender Identity

Gender identity is each person's individual experience of gender. It's their sense of identity anywhere along the gender identity spectrum. A person's gender identity may be the same as or different from their birth-assigned sex; but it is important to note that gender identity is fundamentally different from a person's sexual orientation.

## Intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to the fact that individuals may have multiple identities whereby a person can simultaneously experience privilege, and oppression. When those identities come together, they produce a qualitatively distinct experience that affects how each of us experiences the world.

These intersections occur within the context of structures of power (e.g., government, political and economic unions, religious institutions, media, etc.).

## Islamophobia

Fear, prejudice, hatred and / or dislike directed against Islam or Muslims or toward Islamic culture and practice.

## Implicit Bias

Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. Implicit biases are often expressed automatically, without conscious awareness; and affect attitudes and actions producing real-world implications. Often, implicit biases have been shown to override stated commitments to equality and fairness, thereby creating divergence from IDEA objectives, values, and principles.

## Inclusion

Inclusion is a choice, and is not an automatic by-product of achieving diversity and representation in an organization. It is the felt and perceived environment in an organizational setting where all community groups, especially underserved and marginalized ones, feel a sense of belonging, and can trust to be respected and recognized as contributing members. Inclusion is achieved through actions that explicitly counter present-day and historical inequities to meet the unique needs of all populations. It is a culture that engages each employee, volunteer, and partner and promotes meaningful collaboration, and respect.

## Lived Experience

Lived experience refers directly to the depiction of a person or community's experiences and perspectives, particularly as it's informed and shaped by their social context — including all facets of identity, physical ability, age, culture, socioeconomic and educational status, etc. Re-centring the lived experiences of equity-deserving groups refers to the amplification of, and

re-focus on, the experiences of communities who face marginalization and systemic discrimination due to identity as a way to close historical gaps and inform policies, programs, assessments and decision-making. In other words, people with lived experience of an issue are involved in the assessment of whether or not progress is being made to address it.

### Privilege
The experience of freedoms, rights, benefits, advantages, access and / or opportunities afforded to members of a particular group in a given context, based on existing power structures and dynamics, and commonly held beliefs related to group "dominance".

### Racism
Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination. Racism involves one group having power to carry out systemic discrimination through institutional policies and practices of society, and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those policies, and practices. The distinguishing feature of racism is that it is an institutional and systemic act – it is the materialization of prejudices and hatred of one or many groups in the form of policies, laws, and practices that can inform access to education, healthcare, housing, transportation, social services, among others.

### Racialized / Racialization
Racialization is the very complex and contradictory process through which groups come to be designated as being a part of a particular "race" and on that basis subjected to differential / unequal treatment. In other words, racialization is the act of giving a racial character to someone or something. It's the act of being "raced" or viewed as someone belonging to a particular race and is the process of categorizing and marginalizing according to race. Classically, racialization is based on critical race theory and articulates the false dichotomy between "white" and "non-white" — rendering whiteness as the norm and defining racial identity only in relation to whiteness. It is important to note that while white people are also racialized, this process is often rendered invisible or normative to those designated as white.

### Reconciliation
Reconciliation refers to a process of accounting for Canada's 150+ year history of colonization by actively building and sustaining respectful, ethical relationships between Indigenous Peoples and the rest of Canada based on mutual understanding and respect.

### Structural / Institutional Oppression
Structural / institutional oppression is the normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics — historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal — that routinely advantage dominant groups (e.g., white, Christian, heterosexual, able-bodied, etc.) while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for groups facing oppression (e.g., women, 2SLGBTQ+ people, Black people, Indigenous people, etc.). Structural oppression is more difficult to locate in a particular institution because it involves the reinforcing effects of multiple institutions and cultural norms, past and present, continually reproducing old and producing new forms of oppression. Structural racism is the most profound and pervasive form of oppression.

### Systemic Barriers
Obstacles that exclude groups / communities of people from full participation in, and the benefits of, social, economic and political life. They may be hidden or unintentional but are built into the way society functions. Existing policies, practices and procedures, as well as assumptions and stereotypes, reinforce them.

### Systemic Oppression
Oppression is systemic and has historical antecedents. It's the intentional disadvantaging of groups of people based on aspects of their identity (e.g. gender identity / gender expression, race, class, sexual orientation, language, etc.) while advantaging members of a dominant group.

## Systemically Marginalized

Institutions throughout Canada were created at a time when certain norms privileged and included some groups and excluded others. In Canada, equity-deserving groups have been defined as Indigenous people, Black people, women, people with disabilities, racialized people and 2SLGBTQ+ people. This definition and history is connected to the legacy of day-to-day barriers that contributed to the past and that continue to perpetuate present-day inequities that compound over time. Existing systems, in the form of policies, practices, culture, behaviours and beliefs, continue to maintain these barriers.

## Stereotypes

Stereotypes are assumptions that generalize how all people in a particular group are the same, without considering individual qualities and differences. Stereotypes are often based on misconceptions / incomplete information. It is important to note that assumptions that are commonly perceived as "positive" (e.g., being athletic, smart, funny, etc.) are also considered stereotypes.

## Xenophobia

Xenophobia is an aversion or hostility to, disdain for or fear of "foreigners", people from different cultures and / or strangers. Xenophobia is an all-encompassing term that comprises all forms of discrimination toward who is categorized as an "other."

**KIDS HELP PHONE**™

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