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CET - QUALITY OF SERVICE STANDARDS

People throughout our society define quality services the same way that individuals with disabilities do. When developing this section of the standards, the message that was continually conveyed by individuals receiving services was: “It is quality if I believe it is respectful to me and if it gets me to where I want to go.”

The *Quality of Service* standards measures how staff within organizations support individuals to achieve the quality of life they desire. Although service does not in itself necessarily produce a “good life,” the level of respect, skill and relationship building that are inherent in service delivery, play an important role in creating a better quality of life for those who access service. The *Quality of Service* standards closely mirrors the *Quality of Life* standards, which were developed based on information from the individuals. However, instead of measuring quality of life, they measure how staff support the quality of life desired by the individuals.

“Quality staff delivers quality services,” is AARC’s motto regarding human resources. Are the people who provide services “quality staff”? The answer to this lies in their ability to deliver, and that depends on whether or not they are the right people to do the jobs, as well as whether they are supported by the right resources to do so. The *right people* to provide services need to be carefully chosen for the position and, if appropriate, for the individual being supported. The right resources required to give support to staff include, appropriate education, training, compensation, support and leadership.

INDIVIDUALS ARE SUPPORTED TO HAVE HOMES

About this standard...

As well as providing a sense of comfort and belonging, individuals’ homes provide a sense of their personalities. Supports should be provided to allow individuals to take responsibility for the daily routines and activities within their homes. The supports should be flexible and adaptable to allow for the individuals’ changing needs and preferences, and be provided in a manner that avoids compromising the integrity of the individuals’ homes.

Initiatives and programs need to be established that enable individuals to create a home environment, ensuring that each real home has its own unique experiences associated with it.

Key indicators include...

- The service provides honors and supports the choices and preferences of the individual regarding where he is living and with whom.
- Staff can describe the concept of “home”.

- Supports in the home are flexible enough to be adjusted based on the individual's changing needs and preferences.
- Staff supports the individual to make decisions/guidelines about their home environment.
- The individual is supported to make decisions about his daily activities around the home.
- Staff respect and support the day-to-day routines and traditions of the individual.
- The visibility of the service provider's support (e.g., materials, offices) is not overly intrusive or conspicuous.

INDIVIDUALS ARE SUPPORTED TO MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT EVERYDAY MATTERS

About this standard...

This standard is about the support provided to individuals in making everyday decisions. Examples of such types of support are identified in the introduction for Standard 2.

The service provider can assist individuals to develop decision-making skills by providing:

- Options from which to choose;
- Concrete information about each option: and
- Opportunities to directly experience each option.

Staff is to provide individuals with information about their daily options, as well as opportunities to experience these. They must also have opportunities to exercise their decision-making skills in all aspects of daily living. Unless their decisions jeopardize their health and safety, or that of others, their choices should be respected and supported by the service provider wherever possible.

Sometimes choices involve an element of risk. For example, individuals who want to go shopping on their own, and need to use public transportation, may be concerned that they might get on the wrong bus. The service provider's role is to provide information, training (as needed) and emotional support to help individuals make informed decisions, to help them to succeed in the choices they make, and to support them if things go wrong.

Key indicators include...

- Staff who work with the individuals are knowledgeable about what is important to her (e.g., her wants, needs, likes and dislikes).
- The service provider has and implements strategies to assist the individual to identify her preferences.

- The service provider has and implements strategies to provide information to the individual about various options, in ways the individual can understand. In many cases, this information should include opportunities to directly experience the options.
- The service provider has a process for dealing with individual's choices that may involve some risk.

INDIVIDUALS ARE SUPPORTED IN BUILDING STRONG, POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

About this standard...

Individuals' social bonds are developed through opportunities to stay in touch and interact with family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers and fellow community members. Support should be provided to assist individuals in strengthening existing relationships, and developing new ones. Support may include: assisting with phone calls, letters and transportation; offering family counseling; and providing information and/or education on sexuality.

Key Indicators Include...

- Staff assists the individual with arrangements to meet his friends, and provide supports that such arrangements need, to the level that the individual desires.
- Staff assists the individual with arrangements to meet his family, and provide the supports that such arrangements need, to the level that the individual desires.
- The individual is supported to visit with friends or family in private, and as appropriate to the setting (e.g. work, home).
- Staff takes concrete and appropriate steps to support the development of relationship that are of the individuals' choosing.

INDIVIDUALS ARE TREATED WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT

About this standard...

Interactions that individuals with disabilities have with others should reflect the way we all like to be treated (e.g., friendly, considerate, supportive). This standard focuses on the role of the service provider in regard to upholding the dignity and respect of individuals. In addition to treating individuals with dignity and respect, it is staff's role to support them to ensure this occurs in every aspect of their lives.

Key Indicators Include...

- Staff understands and fully supports the importance of treating the individual with dignity and respect.
- Staff respects the importance of the individual's personal and private space (e.g., requesting permission to enter the individual's room).
- Staff sees the individual as having "gifts" or "skills" to contribute.

- Staff assists the individual (if needed) when others do not treat her with respect.
- Staff assists the individual with personal care (if needed) in a private place and in a manner that respects her dignity.

INDIVIDUALS' RIGHTS ARE UPHELD

About this standard...

Staff needs to be aware of the legal rights of the individuals, as they apply to their daily life. These are the same rights that Canadian citizens should enjoy, and are described in various pieces of legislation, such as the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act*, and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

In addition to legal rights, individuals have human rights as service consumers. These are often found in rights statements adopted by the service provider.

The service provider must assist individuals to become aware of their rights, as well as their responsibilities, and the potential impact of their behavior on the people around them. When individuals' rights are infringed upon, it is the service provider's responsibility to support them to rectify the situation.

The service provider must educate support staff on the rights of individuals and how to support them so those rights are upheld. Staff supporting individuals, need to understand that whenever an individual's rights are denied, limited or restricted, the individual has a right to due process. They must be aware that the unregulated restriction of an individual's rights is considered to be abuse.

Key Indicators Include...

- Staff is aware of the individual's legal rights.
- Staff supports the individual's legal right to vote, if he chooses to do so.
- Staff supports the individual's legal right to be free from discrimination based on culture, religion, language, gender, etc., as well as discrimination based on physical or mental disability.
- Staff is aware of the individual's rights as a service consumer.
- The service provider has a strategy to teach the individual about his rights, responsibilities and the rights of others.

INDIVIDUALS ARE SUPPORTED TO ACHIEVE PERSONAL CONTROL

About this standard...

The service provider needs to support individuals to attain as much personal control as they want and can achieve, given their personal circumstances. This standard focuses on whether individuals have the necessary supports that will enable them to enjoy as much personal control as possible in every area of their lives. Supports should be tailored to the individuals'

specific needs, abilities and wishes. Some areas in which support might be required include training in certain skills, personal supports (e.g., an attendant), transportation and assistive technology/environmental interventions (e.g., wheelchair, grab bars, speech synthesizer, computer, adapted telephone).

Key Indicators Include...

- Supports are in place to provide the needed encouragement for the individual to live as independently as possible.
- The service provider gives the individual opportunities to learn new skills.
- The service provider assists the individual in overcoming barriers to achieving personal control in areas such as transportation, finances, etc. This may include the provisions of technical/communication supports, if appropriate.
- If the individual uses technical/communication supports, the service provider ensures she has the training and support necessary to fully use them.
- If the individual uses technical/communication supports, the service provider ensures that the equipment is maintained in good working order.

INDIVIDUALS ARE SUPPORTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

About this standard...

This standard is about how the service provider supports individuals to become involved and participate in their community. Individuals should have the choice to live in and contribute to the community in the same way as their neighbors, friends and other community members. To achieve this outcome, services and supports should be provided to the maximum extent possible in natural home, community, work and recreation settings.

The role of the service provider is not only to support individuals to learn about and engage in activities in their community, but to find ways to support them to get to know and connect meaningfully with people in their community through involvement in everyday activities.

Key Indicators Include...

- The service provider has planned strategies to ensure that the individual knows about and can access his community.
- Supports are available to allow the individual to participate in the community in the way that he desires.
- Staff supports the individual to get to know and connect meaningfully with people in his community.
- The service provider has strategies to enable the individual to contribute to his community in the way that he desires.

- The service provider encourages and supports the individual's participation in community activities that are not sponsored by the organization.

INDIVIDUALS WHO CHOOSE TO BE EMPLOYED OR PARTICIPATE IN PRODUCTIVE OR SKILL DEVELOPMENT/MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES, ARE PROVIDED WITH OPPORTUNITIES THAT MEET THEIR EXPECTATIONS

About this standard...

For individuals who choose to be employed, participated in productive or skill development activities, or are in the process of employment planning, and require some support, the role of the service provider may range from assessing their interests and skills to providing:

- Information about various options;
- Training in specific work-related skills;
- Opportunities to observe or directly experience various employment options;
- Support on the job;
- Facilitation of relationships with work colleagues;
- Follow-up; and/or
- Transition planning (e.g. preparation for retirement).

Individuals who are retired may need support to remain active and to continue learning until they experience significant declines in health. After that, the focus of support is likely to shift to activities that help them to stay engaged and to maintain their life skills and quality of life.

Four different scenarios are described for this standard. *Scenario 1* is relevant to individuals who are employed. *Scenario 2* addresses individuals who wish to be employed, and are involved in the employment planning process. *Scenario 3* is targeted at individuals who have chosen to participate in productive or skill development activities, as defined by them. Finally, *Scenario 4* focuses on individuals whose aim is to maintain life skills, and engage in personally meaningful activities consistent with their lives. While at least one of these scenarios will be relevant for most individuals, some will find a combination of these scenarios is applicable to their lives.

Scenario 1: For the individual who is employed

Key Indicators Include...

- The service provider has given information about various employment options in a form that is meaningful to the individual.
- The service provider has honored and supported the individual's choices and preferences regarding the type of job and work setting she wants, within the limits of the job market and the individual's abilities.
- Staff supports the development of relationships with colleagues that carry over into non-work time.
- The service provider supports the individual's continued employment, as needed.

- The service provider has a strategy to assess the individual's satisfaction with her job on an ongoing basis, and initiates/support as required.
- If applicable, the service provider has a strategy to support the individual's transition in or from her employment status.

Scenario 2: For the individual who wants to be but is not currently employed

Key Indicators Include...

- The service provider has given information about various employment options in a form that is meaningful to the individual.
- Staff supports the individual with any issues that arise from frequent changes as new training and employment options are explored.
- Support is provided as needed to help the individual obtain specific employment of his choice.
- The service provider has a strategy to assess the individual's satisfaction with his employment plan on an ongoing basis, and initiates help/support as required.

Scenario 3: For the individual who has chosen to participate in productive or skill development activities

Key Indicators Include...

- The service provider has given information about various activity options in a form that is meaningful to the individual.
- Support is provided as needed to help the individual access a specific activity of her choice.
- Staff supports the development of relationships with others in the setting.
- The service provider supports the individual's continued activity participation, as needed.
- The service provider has a strategy to assess the individual's satisfaction with her productive or skill development activity on an ongoing basis, and initiates help/support as required.

Scenario 4: For the individual whose aim is to maintain life skills and engage in personally meaningful activities

Key Indicators Include...

- The service provider provides information about various activity options in a form that is meaningful to the individual.
- Support is provided as needed to help the individual access a specific activity of his choice.

- Staff supports interaction with others involved in the same or similar activities in accordance with his stamina level and interest.
- The service provider supports the individual to rest or change activities in accordance with their stamina level and interest.
- The service provider has a strategy to assess the individual's satisfaction with his activities on an ongoing basis, and initiates help/support as required.

INDIVIDUALS ARE SUPPORTED IN THEIR LEISURE TIME PURSUITS

About this standard...

Leisure time is not called “free time” because there is “nothing to do.” Rather, it is a time frame that individuals are free to use to engage in fun, enjoyable and possibly stimulating activities. Individuals with disabilities should be able to choose to participate in the same types of leisure activities as people without disabilities in their community. The service provider should provide information about options and opportunities to experience these, and support individuals to spend their leisure time in a way that is personally fulfilling.

Key Indicators Include...

- The service provider knows what the individual's interests and preferences are regarding leisure activities.
- The service provider presents information to the individual about potential leisure activities that are compatible with her interests.
- The service provider creates opportunities for the individual to experience leisure activities that are compatible with her interests.
- Staff supports the individual to find the right balance for her, between being too busy and not busy enough.
- Staff supports the individual in her choice of leisure activities.
- The service provider has a strategy for helping the individual to assess her satisfaction with her leisure activities, and takes follow-up action as appropriate.

INDIVIDUALS ARE SUPPORTED TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR HEALTH

About this standard...

In order to assist individuals to access appropriate health interventions, the service provider should support them as required to understand their health needs. They should be provided with information and education about health-related services, and be supported to understand the process for making decisions about their health. They should be informed about their right to receive or decline treatment, and be supported in that decision. Individuals must also be supported as necessary to follow recommendations, and manage their personal health needs.

Key Indicators Include...

- The service provider has strategies to assess and monitor health concerns. Staff is aware of the individual's specific needs (e.g. allergies, special diet) and has the appropriate training to meet these needs.
- If the individual takes medications, staff are trained in the medication administration process, and either assist the individual with medications, if necessary, or ensure that the individual knows the proper way to administer his own medications.
- The service provider ensures that the individual's wishes are considered in all aspects of his health care and that consents are obtained where appropriate.
- If appropriate, staff facilitates appointments with doctors, dentists and other specialists.
- The service provider provides the individual information on the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and supports them in his efforts to achieve this to the extent that he chooses.
- The service provider shares relevant medical/health information with others as needed (e.g. volunteers, other service providers) in a manner that respects the dignity of the individual and takes into account the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP)*.

INDIVIDUALS ARE SAFE FROM PHYSICAL HARM

About this standard...

This standard considers whether or not individuals are safe in their living and work environments, as well as in their community. While individual safety is an important concern for the service provider and the individual's support networks, it has to be balanced with sensitivity to their right to make decisions. To achieve this balance, services and supports need to be in place to provide individuals with opportunities to practice safety skills without exposing them un-due danger and harm. When there is a question about whether they can provide for their own safety, the service provider has analyzed the risks to ensure that appropriate supports and services are identified. If individuals cannot provide for their own safety, the service provider must ensure that the appropriate services and supports are in place to meet this standard.

Key Indicators Include...

- The service provider has analyzed the risks to identify needed supports to ensure the individual's safety.
- If the individual cannot provide for her own safety, staff is trained to do so.
- Appropriate safety equipment is present in the individual's environment, and it is in good working order.
- Safety procedures are clearly outlined and readily available in the individual's environment. Staff is familiar with and follows the safety procedures.

- Where applicable, the service provider provides training to the individual on safety procedures and the use of safety equipment.

INDIVIDUALS ARE FREE FROM ABUSE

About this standard...

Individuals who are dependent on paid personal supports are especially vulnerable to abuse. One of the most overlooked aspects of abuse prevention is the role of healthy and strong social networks. Research shows that the more individuals are included in their community, the less likely they are to be abused. This is yet another reason why paid supports need to focus on facilitating inclusion and relationships, as well as personal control, choice and full citizenship. With knowledge comes power; providing individuals with information and orientation regarding abuse prevention and reporting assist to keep them safe.

Service providers must fully understand the standards related to the use of restrictive procedures (see Standard 33 Appendix III) to ensure that they can differentiate the appropriate use of these from abuse.

If incidents of abuse are reported, the service provider should follow the relevant policy or act. In Alberta, abuse should be reported according to the *Abuse Prevention and Response Protocol* or the *Protection of Persons in Care Act* (whichever applies). If the incident occurred prior to January 5, 1998 (i.e., before the implementation of the *Protection of Persons in Care Act*), it should be reported according to the *Abuse Prevention and Response Protocol*, or the police should be notified.

Key Indicators Include...

- Staff has provided information about abuse and how to report it.
- Staff has received training on preventing, detecting and reporting abuse and can practice what they've learned.
- IF the individual, or others, have reported that the individual was abused, he was provided with support (e.g., active listening, counseling, support groups, follow-up, education, assertiveness training).
- If the individual, or others, have reported that the individual was abused, the incident was investigated and followed up in accordance with provincial requirements (i.e., in Alberta, the *Abuse Prevention and Response Protocol* or *The Protection of Persons in Care Act*, whichever applies).
- If restrictive procedures are used with the individual, they have been developed, approved and reviewed according to Standards 30-33.