

COMMUNITY LIVING DURHAM NORTH
PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MEDIA COVERAGE

Policy No: A-1 (Administration)

Effective Date: August 1, 2007

Last Revision/Review: September 15, 2015

Rationale:

To ensure that the integrity of the organization is maintained through a professional standard of external communication.

Policy Statement:

All external communication will consistently reflect the Vision and Mission of Community Living Durham North.

CLDN's goal is to help people with an intellectual disability become active and participating members of their community, and it recognizes public education as an important means towards the attainment of this goal. We will therefore strive to keep the public informed of our work and activities. People with an intellectual disability will always be presented in a dignified and positive manner.

A clear distinction will be maintained between normal public relations work and the handling of crisis situations - i.e. events that create or threaten to create negative media coverage and public reaction that could damage the reputation and viability of the Association. Staff will develop and maintain a comprehensive communications plan for use in this kind of emergency. Fundamental aspects of this plan will be a commitment to provide the media with timely and accurate information, the necessity of limiting this function to designated organizational spokespersons and the need to protect the privacy and confidentiality of supported people as well as staff and volunteers.

Approved by: _____ Date: _____
for the Board of Directors

COMMUNITY LIVING DURHAM NORTH
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Procedure No: A-1-1
Public Appearances

Effective Date: August 1, 2007

- From time to time, Board members or employees may be approached to make public appearances on behalf of the organization. Requests of this nature are public awareness opportunities. At the same time, it is important to ensure that the would-be agency representative is able to effectively communicate organizational values and principles.
- Formal training will be provided to volunteers, supported persons, and staff who would like to develop their public speaking ability.
- Individual board members who are invited to speak on behalf of CLDN will put the request before the full Board.
- Typically, employees will not accept such invitations without the prior approval of the C.E.O.
- However, prior approval does not have to be obtained by certain key staff for whom public relations work is a job responsibility. Also, other employees, volunteers or teams that develop presentations on particular topics and acquire some experience delivering them will not be expected to seek permission for each successive presentation.
- It is a Strategic Objective of the organization that a Speakers Bureau be developed over time and that supported persons be a part of this pool.
- When such appearances are paid or an honorarium is given, funds so raised shall be given to the organization and considered fundraised dollars - except in the case of supported persons and their families or friends. Compensation given to them is not within the jurisdiction of CLDN.

Procedure No: A-1-2
Media Approaches

Effective Date: August 1, 2007
Last Revision/Review: Sept. 3/13

- CLDN understands that its external communications will be more effective if its key

communicators are perceived to be open, honest and accommodating. Phone calls from the media will be returned promptly even when there is cause to be concerned about the nature of the interest.

- However, the media should (and would wish to) obtain its information from senior staff persons who have a very thorough knowledge of the entire organization and of the issues that face it. Therefore, statements made to the media by CLDN employees must be authorized by the C.E.O. or designate. Also, members of the media require the permission of the C.E.O. or designate to be on CLDN property.
- In some circumstances it might be feasible and advantageous for the Chair or another board member to be an alternate or lead contact. However, such a determination will be made by the full Board.
- A self-advocate who is able to give informed consent must formally do so before he or she is named or photographed for public relations purposes. If a self-advocate cannot give informed consent, a signed, written consent must be obtained from a parent (advocate or guardian) prior to the public relations activity. The *Authorization for Media Exposure Consent* form can be used for these purposes (A-8). Written consents are filed as hard copies in the person's primary file and their presence documented in the AIMS database.

Procedure No: A-1-3
Crisis Communication Plans

Effective Date: August 1, 2007
Last Revision/Review: September 15, 2015

- This procedure speaks to those events or situations that might generate negative media coverage and public reaction which could damage the reputation and, in extreme circumstances, even the future viability of the organization. Senior staff understand that such situations do not typically arise out of nothing; there is generally time to develop an effective management plan.
- CLDN will manage this kind of crisis by promptly developing a plan that includes an identified lead spokesperson to whom the media will be referred, and a secondary spokesperson.
- A Responsibility Chart will assign to specific staff the variety of tasks that management of the specific crisis entails. One such task will be tracking media coverage; i.e. developing a "clippings file."
- Central to the plan is the development and communication of Key Messages that are truthful, short and compelling; jargon-free, easy to understand and aimed at the public interest.

- In creating truthful key message(s), staff will need to also consider legal privacy issues. That is to say, a clear decision might have to be made around what information can and cannot be released.
- The Key Message(s) should be committed to writing. The resulting document can then be used as the basis for press releases, as notes for interviews, and to communicate generally both internally and externally.
- Spokespersons will adhere to the Key Message script; it can be used sometimes to answer questions that were not asked; personal or off-the-record comments will not be permitted.
- In most crises a Serious Occurrence Report is generated and when necessary this will lead to consultation with Ministry staff. Where the service is funded by Durham Region, the Serious Occurrence will be sent in that direction and we will consult with Regional officials concerning significant media involvement.

Approved by: _____ Date: _____
CEO