

SECTION 6

Community Relations

Building and maintaining strong community relations are an important part of the work of a drop-in. This Section starts with a descriptive overview of different levels of interaction between drop-ins and the wider community of individual neighbours and local businesses; the second is a discussion of a variety of methods for developing and improving these relationships:

- **6A COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP MODELS**

- **6B STARTING A NEW DROP-IN AND CONSULTING THE COMMUNITY**
 - Attachments
 - Appendix 6B.1 – Tips for Establishing Strong Community Relations when Starting a New Drop-In
 - Appendix 6B.2 – Tips for Holding Public Meetings

- **6C FOSTERING POSITIVE COMMUNITY RELATIONS**
 - Writing Community Relations into Job Descriptions
 - Soliciting Donations
 - Space-Sharing
 - Emergency Response
 - Attachments
 - Appendix 6C.1 – Sample Space Use Policy
 - Appendix 6C.2 – Sample Space Use Application

- **6D IMPROVING NEGATIVE COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

SUBSECTION 6A

Community Relationship Models

Relationships with neighbours range from active antagonism to peaceful coexistence to mutual support. These models are not exclusive categories; at any given time there may be individuals or groups in your community who fall into one of these categories. However, peaceful coexistence should be the baseline of community interactions, and mutual support should be a goal to work toward with as many neighbours and local businesses as possible.

Community relationship models include:

- 1. Active antagonism.** Neighbours and local businesses view the drop-in and its participants as a problem. They do not understand what the drop-in does and they may actively work to close the drop-in (often through the local MP or City councilor). Drop-in participants may not, for their part, respect the property of neighbours or respond in constructive ways to their concerns (for example, they may ignore requests to not crowd the sidewalks in front of local stores when out for a smoke).
- 2. Peaceful co-existence.** There is no animosity between the drop-in and its neighbours. Each group has a separate life, and only sporadic and minimal interactions occur (for example, individuals may say hello to each other on the street, or the drop-in may distribute flyers to advise when a renovation is about to take place). Most drop-ins need this basic level of tolerance and mutual respect to operate; however, an outbreak of violence in the community or another kind of critical incident can quickly change a peaceful situation into one of active antagonism.
- 3. Mutual support.** Each group recognizes it has something to offer the other, and resources of time, space, money, and goods, are shared. These relationships between the drop-in and members of the wider community are spontaneous and may or may not be formalized. For example, staff may make a point of patronizing local businesses; a local restaurant, in turn, may cater a fundraising event for the drop-in. The drop-in may make its space available to community groups like the Rotary Club or the BIA, and these, in turn, may donate goods or services to the drop-in. Individuals may stop by the drop-in with donations of surplus goods.

SUBSECTION 6B

Starting a New Drop-In and Consulting the Community

Community consultations may be required for a variety of reasons – you may be starting a new drop-in, or moving an old drop-in to a new neighbourhood, or seeking neighbours' input on plans to renovate, re-zone, or build an addition onto an established drop-in. If you are starting a new drop-in, you will want to do some groundwork before you open your doors – you are not walking into a “blank slate” situation.¹

Every area has a unique history and set of population demographics, local personalities, and political hot buttons, so getting a sense of the community is important:

- Find out who your neighbours are – what languages they speak, what their political leanings are, and what types of businesses they operate in the area
- Identify potential supporters, potential opponents, and community leaders (e.g. local politicians, BIA members, etc.)
- Network with other support agencies in the vicinity
- Assess how the site of your drop-in is currently perceived and used by your neighbours

For further elaboration of these points and for tips on how to establish strong community relations when starting a new drop-in, please see **Appendix 6B.1**.

You may consult with the community formally or informally. **Informal techniques** involve a lot of legwork – walking around the neighbourhood and talking to local people and local businesses. This method has the advantage of putting a friendly face to the drop-in and laying the groundwork for personal relationships.

Formal consultations may involve:

- Public meetings,
- Open houses,
- Canvassing neighbours, and
- Sending out flyers (translated into the main languages spoken in the community).

¹ This section on Community Consultations has been adapted in large part from HomeComing Community Choice Coalition, *Yes, In My Backyard: A guide for Ontario's supportive housing providers*, Revised edition, 2005. Available at: www.homecomingcoalition.ca/pdfs/YIMBY.pdf.

Formal consultations can sometimes have the unwanted effect of creating an issue where there does not need to be one, and pitting the drop-in against the community in an “us-them” struggle. However, formal consultations may be required by a re-zoning, renovation, or building process. One of the best ways to change the tone of a formal meeting is to invite local neighbours, business, and agencies who support the drop-in to the meeting to express their support. If possible, try to ensure that your supporters are the first speakers so that they can set the tone of the meeting. Please see **Appendix 6B.2** for more tips on holding public meetings.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Appendix 6B.1 – Tips for Establishing Strong Community Relations when Starting a New Drop-In**
- **Appendix 6B.2 – Tips for Holding Public Meetings**

Appendix 6B.1 Tips for Establishing Strong Community Relations when Starting a New Drop-In

Source: Adapted from HomeComing Community Choice Coalition, *Yes, In My Backyard: A guide for Ontario's supportive housing providers*, revised edition, 2005. Available at: www.homecomingcoalition.ca/pdfs/YIMBY.pdf.

Note: This document was written as a guide for supportive housing providers, but many of its points are relevant to drop-ins, as well; particularly when conducting community consultations for a new building or an addition to an older building.

TIPS FOR ESTABLISHING STRONG COMMUNITY RELATIONS WHEN STARTING A NEW DROP-IN

Keep in Mind

- ✓ **You are not asking a favour from the neighbours.**
- ✓ **You do not need the community's permission.**
- ✓ **This is not necessarily the time to educate the public about mental illness, poverty or other issues.** Although providing basic information to neighbours is a good practice, you do not want to suggest that neighbours have the right to choose their neighbours or restrict your ability to serve the population that you serve.

What Can You Do?

1. Find potential supporters that work or live near the site

As soon as you identify the location for the drop-in, begin to compile a list of friends, allies and supporters. These supporters will be your first source of information. Talk to them before you plan your strategy or approach the broader community.

You will draw on these friends to:

- ✓ Learn more about the location, and how it is seen by neighbours.
- ✓ Give you information about the community itself.
- ✓ Be a supportive voice at community meetings.
- ✓ Speak on behalf of your drop-in at public meetings.
- ✓ Write letters of support.

The most valuable supporters are individuals who live or own businesses closest to the site, and organizations that are respected in the immediate neighbourhood.

Consider:

- ✓ **Members of your own Board of Directors and staff who live near the site.**
- ✓ **The Board and staff of other social service organizations.** Contacts can be made through the Toronto Drop-in Network or the City of Toronto.
- ✓ **Other community or service agencies.** Again, speak to your own contacts first. Contact information can also be found through the Community Information Centre or, in Toronto, through the Network for Social Justice listserv.
- ✓ **Members of faith groups**, particularly those involved in Out of the Cold and other programs for homeless or under-housed people, who live in the neighbourhood.

2. Learn how the community sees the location now

Visit the area several times at different times of the day. Talk to your friends and supporters. Find out:

- ✓ **What the neighbourhood values about the site or building now.** If the site is a vacant lot, for example, are there mature trees? Is it a convenient short cut? Is it used as a playground? If the site has a building on it, will tenants be evicted? Is there anything attractive about the building's exterior that should be maintained? You may be able to adapt your proposal to preserve those things the neighbours value most.
- ✓ **What the neighbourhood dislikes about the site now.** You will want to show how your development improves the neighbourhood. If your site is a vacant lot, is it filled with trash? Do neighbours feel it is an unsafe hangout? Does it present an unsightly gap on a commercial street? If there is a building on the site now, will you be improving the exterior? Is it seen as a centre for crime now?

3. Learn about influential community members

Local support or opposition for your proposal will be shaped by community leaders. Community leaders also expect to be consulted – even if they have no official role in the approval of your development – and may be insulted if they are overlooked or deliberately ignored.

These leaders can include:

- ✓ Elected officials, especially the city councillor, but also the MP, MPP and school trustee
- ✓ The chair of community groups, residents' or ratepayers' associations, business improvement or business development groups
- ✓ Chairs or Executive Directors of local community centres or major agencies
- ✓ Local school principals
- ✓ Local religious leaders
- ✓ Editors of local newspapers
- ✓ Political aspirants (this is particularly crucial in election year)

You will need to develop an outreach strategy for these leaders. To inform this strategy, ask your supporters:

- ✓ Who the local leaders are.
- ✓ How they might be expected to respond to your proposal.
- ✓ Any public statements leaders may have made, for or against social housing or community services of any kind.
- ✓ Whether any of your known supporters have a close relationship with them.
- ✓ Any interest they might have in the outcome.

4. Hone your message

You know what your organization does. You also know your plans for the location. You may have described these plans to government funders. Now, you need to find the best way to describe yourselves, and your plans, to both supporters and opponents. You need a "message."

Start with your research. Have you found ways of describing your proposal that seem to resonate with the people you have interviewed? When do you find yourself having to clarify or explain? How are supporters describing the benefits of your proposal? And what are opponents saying about you, or about other drop-ins? There are also many resources in both the library and on the internet on creating a message and delivering it to the public and through the media. Once you have found a simple, compelling message, use it consistently in all written materials and public presentations. Imagine questions you will get, and practice answering them, always turning your answers back to your key message.

5. Canvassing neighbours

Some tips for knocking on doors to gain support for your proposal:

- ✓ **This is a good “early outreach” strategy**, timed before rumours have begun to circulate. Door-knocking can also be used after the drop-in is open as a “meet our neighbour” outreach.
- ✓ **Go out in pairs.** The ideal team includes someone who lives or works in the neighbourhood, as well as someone who is very informed about the details of the proposal. Early evening (before dark) and weekends are often the best times to visit.
- ✓ **Start with the most immediate neighbours to the site.** Ideally, you should have a flyer or handout describing the main features of the proposal (see Written Materials, below) to hand to people at the door, or to leave behind if no-one answers (with a “sorry we missed you” handwritten on the flyer).
- ✓ **At the door, explain briefly who you are and your proposal and the site involved, and offer to answer questions.** If they support the proposal, ask if they would be willing to come to a meeting and repeat what they have just said. Be sure to get their name and phone number. If they oppose the proposal, do not get into an argument. Answer questions or provide factual information, and show you are taking their concerns seriously. Say that you are carefully noting down their concerns, and will take their thoughts back to your board. You may also use these comments to develop a Question and Answer sheet. If you hear discriminatory comments, be sure to write these down and read them back to the speaker. This gives the speaker a chance to reflect on and retract their comments.
- ✓ **Keep a record of all the houses you visited** (to demonstrate your commitment to outreach), the names of any supporters (to invite to public meetings or other events), and comments or questions raised (to inform future meetings or written materials).

6. Written materials

Written materials can take the form of letters (ideally signed by a board member who lives or is otherwise known in area), or flyer-style invitations to an open house or other event. A two-page “frequently asked questions” can be an effective attachment. Use it both to explain your proposal and deal with concerns. All written materials should be cleanly designed and easy to read. But they do not need to be fancy. An expensive brochure can suggest you are squandering money.

Your written materials should convey:

- ✓ Who you are, and how your organization has been successful in the past.
- ✓ What you propose.
- ✓ What opportunities there are for input (this should not look like either a “done deal” or a “free for all,” but rather a process of orderly consultation).
- ✓ How the drop-in will be managed, including the support you will provide.
- ✓ How to contact you.

If possible, translate your written materials into the languages most often spoken in the community around the site. Local libraries, community centres and schools may be able to suggest which languages to choose.

7. Open houses

Many organizations use open houses, rather than public meetings, as their chief way to inform and consult with the community. Unlike public meetings, which often foster an “us-them” dynamic, open houses offer opportunities for both informal and in-depth conversations.

Some tips:

- ✓ **Invite all neighbours within the immediate area, other community leaders, your own board, some tenants, the architect and your supporters.** Your Board and staff should have name tags, and be ready to greet visitors and answer questions. If extensive opposition is expected, some organizations have begun their outreach by asking supporters living near the site to invite their neighbours to open houses in their homes. In areas where many neighbours share a common religion, the local faith leader has been asked to host an open house, inviting members of the congregation to learn more about the proposal.
- ✓ **You may want to organize two open houses**, one on a weekday evening, the other on a weekend afternoon.
- ✓ **Create an inviting atmosphere.** Serve refreshments. Have at least one person equipped to amuse bored children while their parents talk. Have a “welcome” table. Invite visitors to sign a guest book, but do not require them to do so. Have written materials available to take away. Distribute “comment sheets” that allow people to write comments or ask questions. Thank visitors for coming.
- ✓ **Display photos of other drop-ins, letters of recommendation from neighbours or community organizations, and descriptions of the proposal.** Do not, however, have detailed architectural plans that suggest all important decisions have already been made.
- ✓ **Ask supporters whether you can contact them, or invite them to speak on the drop-in’s behalf on other occasions.** Record concerns or objections, ideally obtaining the visitor’s name and contact information. Do not get into arguments. Just repeat the facts, answer questions, and thank visitors for their input.

Ongoing Relations with Neighbours

Once your drop-in is under construction or renovation, keep neighbours informed of unavoidable disruptions (noise from heavy equipment, blockages to the street) and

particularly when the disruption will end! Give neighbours a contact number for complaints or concerns. After your drop-in is open is another major opportunity for community outreach. Many organizations have invited neighbours to open houses or barbecues. Other organizations maintain links with the community by sending representatives to residents' association meetings (not to report, but to participate as one member of the community).

Appendix 6B.2 Tips for Holding Public Meetings

Source: Adapted from HomeComing Community Choice Coalition, *Yes, In My Backyard: A guide for Ontario's supportive housing providers*, revised edition, 2005. Available at: www.homecomingcoalition.ca/pdfs/YIMBY.pdf.

Note: This document was written for supportive housing providers, but its suggestions have been adapted to drop-ins.

TIPS FOR HOLDING PUBLIC MEETINGS

1. Try to Break Down the “Us-Them” Dynamic that Can Plague these Meetings

- ✓ Invite both neighbours in immediate area, and your own **supporters**, to the meeting.
- ✓ Make sure the invitation **clearly describes the purpose** of the meeting, and where it fits in the entire consultation process.
- ✓ Choose a **neutral chair** to host and facilitate the meeting. A chair that both knows the community and exudes moral authority, such as a local religious leader, school principal or community centre director, is ideal. The chair should set the **ground rules** at the beginning of the meeting, and enforce these rules. A chair who states outright his or her commitment to human rights, including the rights of people with disabilities, can be a powerful force against slurs.
- ✓ One effective way to focus discussion is to post **flip-chart** paper across one wall. All comments are then recorded. If speakers repeat arguments, the chair can then note, “Yes, we have written that comment down. Are there any new comments?”
- ✓ If you can, organize **chairs in a semi-circle** or U-shape. Presenters should speak briefly, cover the key aspects of the proposal, and then rejoin the “circle” when they are not speaking.
- ✓ Set up **microphones** for speakers, and ask speakers to identify themselves before they speak.
- ✓ Often the **tone** of the meeting will be set by the first few speakers. Ensure your supporters are among the first, ideally the very first, speakers to approach the microphone.
- ✓ Ensure that **all comments are directed to the chair**. The chair can then ask you, as the proponents, to answer questions or clarify information. You should not be jumping up to argue with or refute speakers. Nor should you make any **promises** except to listen carefully, and bring back comments to your board.

2. Know the Difference between Discrimination and Legitimate Opposition

There could be many legitimate reasons for opposing a new drop-in: concerns about design, parking, access or other characteristics of the proposed building or site plan. You may not agree with these concerns, but they are not discriminatory. It is only discrimination if the opposition is based on the characteristics of the people who will be using these facilities.

- ✓ **Use the “cringe” test.** To identify discriminatory statements, start by using the “cringe” test. If you substituted the word “black” or “Greek” or “gay” for the term “homeless people” or “people on welfare” or “people with addictions,” would the statement make any fair-minded person cringe?

- ✓ **Point out the discrimination.** People or organizations who would never think of opposing a proposal on racial or ethnic grounds will oppose it for homeless people or people with mental health issues. Simply reminding them that the Ontario Human Rights Code prohibits discrimination on various grounds (including disability and the receipt of public assistance) can make them stop. This is especially true of community leaders who would be shamed by charges of discrimination. Does this mean your opponents will simply cover up their prejudices? Of course. On the other hand, changing language can be the first step in changing hearts and minds – as many human rights activists know. And once you are talking about legitimate issues, then you can respond with facts and arguments.

3. Be Prepared for Opposition

Changes of any kind – even positive changes – often receive a wary response from neighbours. The widespread prejudice and fear that surrounds homeless people or people living in poverty almost guarantees that, no matter how good your proposal, or how carefully you plan, you will receive some community opposition.

The articulated opposition to any social service development typically centres on two issues:

- ✓ **Design issues** – building dimensions, appearance and parking.
- ✓ **Process issues** – how and when the community is consulted, and whether the rights of the community (perceived or actual) are being upheld.

However, actual opposition is also likely to be based on:

- ✓ **Context and history** – issues that may have nothing to do with your proposal but affect how people feel about it. These could include the community’s experience with existing services or a history of feeling ignored as a community.
- ✓ **Prejudices about social service facilities** – concerns about property values, traffic, noise and property management.
- ✓ **Prejudices and fears about homeless people or people living in poverty and particularly fears about safety and exposure to people who are “different.”**
- ✓ **Concerns about the impact of “different” people in their neighbourhood.**

4. Predictable Objections – And How to Deal with Them

Below are some of the most commonly heard objections, and a response to each. You may not have the chance to give the entire answer at a public meeting; sometimes people are too angry or upset to hear a reasoned answer. However, you can go to meetings with confidence, knowing there are answers, backed by research and hard facts, to unfair questions or objections. These objections are rooted in fears and biases that can be challenged and refuted.

“Our neighbourhood already has its fair share of social services”

If this neighbourhood had a large percentage of Greek people, or Catholics, or Black people, would you say the neighbourhood had more than its fair share, and similar people should be turned away? Probably not – partly because we know it is against the law to discriminate against Greeks, Catholics, and Black people. It is

also against the law to discriminate against homeless people or people living in poverty. No part of the city can be, or should be, “off limits” to any group of people.

But there is another reason we don’t object to Greek or Chinese or Caribbean communities: we see ethnic neighbourhoods as part of the richness of the city. Homeless and marginalized people are also part of this city. The concept of “fair share” implies that these people are a burden that must be “spread out” to allow neighbourhoods to manage the burden. Homelessness and poverty can certainly be a burden to the people who find themselves in this state, just as cancer is a burden to the people who have it. But that does not translate into a burden to people who live next door, or on the same street.

“When you bring in problem people, you get problem neighbourhoods.”

Some people who are homeless do have a problem. That problem is inadequate housing, or not enough money to afford the housing they have now, or inadequate support services. And these problems can become neighbourhood problems if people end up spending their days and nights on the sidewalk or in the parks. These problems are not created by good support services such as the ones we propose – they are solved by them.

“This development is too close to the school (or the daycare, or the playground, or to family homes).”

Your question implies that homeless people are dangerous. This is simply not the case.

“You’re spending taxpayers’ money, so we have a right to say how our money is being spent.”

I know my tax dollars pay for hospitals, but that doesn’t give me the right to cruise around hospital wards and decide who should be there and who should not. Instead, we elect officials who support policies we believe in. We have a civil service that carries out these policies, and we have professionals who make decisions according to the standards of their profession. It’s the same with social service facilities.

SUBSECTION 6C

Fostering Positive Community Relations

Many drop-ins have discovered that without active public relations and community relationship-building, a situation of peaceful co-existence can rapidly change into hostile antagonism. A clash between a program participant and a local resident or business owner can ignite a neighbourhood backlash against a drop-in. Even well-established drop-ins may be vulnerable to these types of backlashes, as they can endanger their standing with their landlord, funders, Board of Directors, sponsoring agency, insurance company, and so forth.

For these reasons, it is a good strategy to proactively develop community relationships that will allow neighbours to put such incidents into context or to respond to them with requests for a mutually-developed resolution, rather than with calls for the drop-in to close its doors.

Writing Community Relations into Job Descriptions

When advertising for a position, or reviewing an employee's job description, build in a community relations component. As one drop-in manager notes, "There is no replacement for walking around the neighbourhood and having daily interactions with local people and businesses." This should not be seen as an "add-on" to a position, but an integral part of the job. Some drop-ins hire a Doorperson to foster and maintain positive community relations. The Doorperson works primarily in front of the drop-in's doors. They welcome participants to the centre, monitor behaviour in the vicinity of the drop-in, and maintain frequent contact with nearby residents and businesses. (See Appendix 4E.3 for a sample Doorperson job description).

Soliciting Donations and Fundraising

Often the most common form of positive community relations is donations. Asking for donations – whether of money, in-kind gifts, or volunteer time – is a way of educating your neighbours on the work that you do and giving them a stake in your success. When neighbours volunteer or make donations to the drop-in, they may feel more protective of it and defend it to detractors. It is important to recognize these donations, whether by a thank-you letter, a tax receipt (if your organization is a registered charity), or both. See Section 8 for strategies in soliciting donations and further discussion of fundraising issues.

Fundraising events offer opportunities to socialize with neighbours and raise the visibility of the drop-in and its participants in a positive way. Open houses, bake sales, and other social events are a good way to challenge negative stereotypes of drop-in participants. One participant suggested that drop-ins find ways to reach out to the wider community by filling business niches. For example, the New Years celebrations at Nathan Phillips Square can be expensive; it might work for a drop-in or several drop-ins to organize a food stand there that served cups of hot chocolate and plates of pancakes for a dollar each. These sorts of fundraising activities help to foster community support and give

people who might normally donate to large, international charities a sense of the initiatives that are going on locally.

Space-Sharing

It is a good practice for drop-ins to find ways to give back to their local community; this will help neighbours to see the drop-in as a resource and a benefit to the neighbourhood. One much-needed resource that a lot of drop-ins can share with their communities is space. Many drop-ins have large rooms that individuals, clubs, or other organizations can make use of. Some drop-ins also have an outdoor courtyard or front yard space.

Space-sharing may be done informally or formally, depending on the size and complexity of your drop-in. **Appendix 6C.1** gives a sample space use policy and **Appendix 6C.2** gives a sample space use application form from a large, multi-service community centre. If you run a smaller drop-in, you may not need such a complex policy and detailed application form.

When developing your own space-sharing policy, you may find it useful to consider:

- **Costs** – Will you provide the space for free or for a price? If the latter, will you charge market rates or reduced rates? Will you charge everyone the same amount? The detailed space use policy attached as **Appendix 6C.1** applies a different set of charges to different types of users. For example, rental fees are charged for fundraising events, LLBO licensed events, conferences, parties, election campaign events, and space booked outside of the building’s regular hours. Meeting space is free for organizations and programs that serve the centre’s priority communities.
- **Rules** – What are the guidelines for appropriate use of the space? What are the responsibilities of the users? To what extent must they clean up afterward?
- **Restrictions** – Is there any activity or group that your drop-in would not feel comfortable accommodating? For example, if your drop-in has a no-alcohol policy, does that extend to other groups who may want to organize events in your space? If you decide to permit alcohol, how will you ensure that the group has obtained the appropriate permit to sell or serve it?
- **Monitoring** – How will you ensure that the rules you set out are being followed? How will you monitor whether a group is using your space appropriately or not? The sample space use policy attached as **Appendix 6C.1** subjects programs operating in its space to periodic review, and gives a list of types of organizations that may be restricted from using its

space altogether.

- **Priorities** – If the demand for use of your space becomes very high, how will you determine which groups or individuals get priority?
- **Participant Reactions** – How will participants respond to sharing their space with neighbours? It is a good practice to consult with participants about whether or not the drop-in space should be made available to others and what the basic expectations for use of the space should be.

Emergency Response

Drop-in space can also be used to respond to local emergencies, as a central gathering place for neighbouring residents.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Appendix 6C.1 – Sample Space Use Policy**
- **Appendix 6C.2 – Sample Space Use Application**

Appendix 6C.1 Sample Space Use Policy

Note: This policy has been adapted from a multi-service community centre space use policy (collected during the TDIN Good Practices Toolkit consultations in May-July 2006). As such, the policy is very elaborate and addresses a wide range of circumstances and conditions. Smaller-scale drop-ins may not need this level of complexity.

[DROP-IN NAME] SPACE USE POLICY

ARTICLE I	GENERAL STATEMENTS and POLICIES
ARTICLE II	RESPONSIBILITIES
ARTICLE III	PRIORITIES and DEFINITIONS
ARTICLE IV	RESTRICTIONS
ARTICLE V	PROGRAM FEES
ARTICLE VI	REVIEW and APPEAL
ARTICLE VII	RENTALS

Article I

General Statements and Policies

Purpose: The purpose of this document is to describe the policies and priorities for space to be allocated among different community groups and activities at [Drop-In Name]. An addendum to the policy outlines processes and procedures.

Policy in relation to strategic planning processes: From time to time the Board of Management or its committees may review or amend this policy to reflect emerging community needs. The review process will respect and seek input from the community.

Who starts activities: [Drop-In Name] sees itself as a resource to be used by the community as well as a creator of activities for the community. Therefore activities can be started by individuals and/or groups approaching staff with their ideas and needs. The Board and staff at [Drop-In Name] may also promote and create new activities.

Context: This document is grounded in the mission statement, strategic plan and policies of The [Drop-In Name]. Here are some of the important points from those documents:

- 1. Mission Statement:** [Drop-In Name] is a meeting-place and focus for its vital and varied downtown community. Within a supportive environment, it responds to community issues and needs by supplying the resources and opportunities to foster self-determination. It is committed to principles of accessibility, voluntarism, individual dignity and value, participation, and celebration.
- 2. Policy on Non Discrimination:** [Drop-In Name] adopts and upholds the City of Toronto policy statement which prohibits discrimination and harassment and protects the right to be free of hate activity based on age, ancestry, citizenship,

creed (religion), colour, disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender identity, level of literacy, marital status, place of origin, membership in a union or staff association, political affiliation, race, receipt of public assistance, record of offenses, sex, sexual orientation or any other personal characteristics by or within the organization.

Article II Responsibilities

Responsibilities of [Drop-In Name] to Organizations and Individuals using [Drop-In Name]:

1. [Drop-In Name] supplies the resources and opportunities to foster self determination.
2. [Drop-In Name] has clear and transparent procedures for allocating space.
3. [Drop-In Name] provides free space to programs (Article III, parts 1, 2 and 3) which serve our priority communities, to the best of its ability, given competing demands and limited capacity. It also provides free organizational meeting space (Article III, part 4) and provides space for rental activities and individuals (Article III, parts 5 and 6).
4. [Drop-In Name] resolves disputes between groups regarding space, when conflicts arise.
5. [Drop-In Name]'s anti harassment and anti discrimination policies, and their implementation, ensure that all users enjoy safe space, free from discrimination.
6. [Drop-In Name] has safety procedures in place, including procedures for fire safety. These procedures are posted and otherwise available to facilitators and program leaders.
7. [Drop-In Name] promotes programs that take place at [Drop-In Name].
8. [Drop-In Name] communicates with program leadership and fosters communication between groups and throughout the community.
9. [Drop-In Name] has a co-operative working relationship with all partnership programs.
10. [Drop-In Name] may advise program leaders and facilitators regarding recommended meeting guidelines, leadership changeover, governance, and other issues.
11. Program leaders and facilitators are given a free membership in recognition of their contribution as volunteers, and to facilitate communication between [Drop-In Name] and the program.

Responsibilities of Organizations and Individuals to [Drop-In Name]:

1. Activities taking place at [Drop-In Name] enhance and promote the purposes of [Drop-In Name], as stated in the Mission Statement and Anti-Discrimination Policy.
2. All groups, including those which are chapters of larger organizations, remain fully subject to [Drop-In Name]'s policies, constitution and administrative guidelines.

3. All users of [Drop-In Name] co-operate with the staff in keeping the building clean and safe. This includes, out of courtesy, stacking furniture and leaving a room neat and clean for the next user.
4. The leadership in every organization using space at [Drop-In Name] is encouraged to become familiar with safety issues, such as fire exit procedures, and communicate regularly with their members about safety.
5. After each meeting, the number of attendees at the meeting should be reported to the front desk staff for [Drop-In Name]'s records.
6. When there are leadership changes, the front desk staff must be notified of the contact information for the new facilitator or program leader.
7. Program leaders and facilitators are asked to encourage participants to become members of [Drop-In Name] and to participate in other [Drop-In Name] activities
8. All programs are open to new members. Facilitators and leaders are asked to encourage people in the local community to join or participate in their program.
9. Community Programs are non-profit in organization and operation.
10. Community Programs have an inclusive decision making process, with members able to participate in activities as organizers and coordinators, not merely as observers and supporters.
11. Partnership and community programs should demonstrate the ability to successfully administer their own affairs, including keeping accurate financial records. These records may be reviewed by drop-in staff on request.

Article III Priorities and Definitions

Priorities: The following types of groups and activities are given priority for use of space at [Drop-In Name]:

- [Drop-In Name] Programs and Partnership Programs, as defined below, have the highest priority for use of space.
- Community programs have the next priority for use of space.
- Groups holding organizational meetings, rental groups and individuals have a lower priority for use of space.

Once space is booked a group is not cancelled to accommodate a group from a higher priority category, unless there are exceptional circumstances. In exceptional circumstances, [Drop-In Name] may clear the building by moving scheduled programs off site or by canceling regularly scheduled meetings.

Definitions:

1. **[Drop-In Name] Programs** are approved by the Board and
 - Provide services to the local community.
 - Are co-ordinated by program staff of [Drop-In Name].
 - Have volunteers who are recruited through [Drop-In Name]'s volunteer program.
 - Are funded through [Drop-In Name]'s self-sustaining budget lines.

- Receive administrative and communications (design) support from the front desk / information centre staff.

Space Use: [Drop-In Name] Programs have free use of space.

2. **[Drop-In Name] Partnership Programs** are created by another agency in partnership with [Drop-In Name] and
 - May include courses or workshops offered by partner agency staff.
 - Serve the local community.
 - Provide activities at [Drop-In Name].
 - Activities are coordinated and provided by the partner agency's staff. The partner agency is a social service agency, non governmental organization (NGO) or government department with staff expertise in the program they are offering.
 - Volunteers are recruited through the partner agency.
 - Activities are funded by the partner agency.

Space Use: [Drop-In Name] Partnership Programs may be charged rental fees for use of space. Rental fees for ongoing space are based on the cost to provide the space and utilities, and not on market value rents. Full rental fees will be charged for fundraising events, LLBO permitted events, conferences, parties, and for space booked outside of regular [Drop-In Name] hours.

3. **Community Programs** are proposed to [Drop-In Name] by volunteers in the community and
 - May include courses or workshops offered by volunteer instructors.
 - Serve the local community.
 - Core meetings and activities take place at [Drop-In Name].
 - Services are provided by volunteers who are peers and who have come together to form an independent group within [Drop-In Name]'s structure. Volunteers are therefore recruited within each group.
 - Have an inclusive decision making process, with participants involved as organizers and co-ordinators.
 - Are organized on a non-profit basis. Any fees charged are for expenses of the program offered on site. Fees are approved by [Drop-In Name] staff. Financial records are open to [Drop-In Name] staff if requested.
 - [Drop-In Name] front desk/information centre staff liaise with volunteer leaders and may provide support to these independent volunteers depending on needs and available resources.

Space Use: Space for Community Programs is provided free of charge. Rental fees will be charged for fundraising events, LLBO permitted events, conferences, parties, and for space booked outside of regular [Drop-In Name] hours.

4. **Organizational Meetings** include the following groups:
 - Social Activists

- Professional Associations & Unions
- Tenants' Groups & Housing Co-ops
- Political Parties
- Community Fundraising Organizations
- Community Based Research Projects
- Social Service Agencies
- Non Government Organizations (NGOs)
- Government Departments

Space Use: Meeting space at [Drop-In Name] is available to organizations whose major activities take place away from [Drop-In Name]. Organizational meeting space is provided free of charge. Rental fees will be charged for fundraising events, LLBO permitted events, conferences, parties, and for space booked outside of regular [Drop-In Name] hours. In addition, political parties must pay a rental fee during election campaigns.

- 5. Arts, commercial and individual rentals** involve organizations not included in the categories.

Space Use: These groups and individuals will be considered on an individual basis by staff to assess their compatibility with the mission statement and policies of [Drop-In Name], and the needs of the local community [Drop-In Name] serves. (See also Restrictions, below.)

Article IV Restrictions

Restrictions are in place for both free use of space and rental use of space.

Religious interests: [Drop-In Name] is a secular organization. All organizations and groups may engage in religious activities only on an occasional and peripheral basis. Under no circumstances are groups using space at [Drop-In Name] to be involved in recruiting new members for any religion, faith, belief system or spiritual organization.

Commercial interests: [Drop-In Name] is a community resource. Commercial rentals are restricted to company meetings or parties, and commercial film making. Other commercial activity is strictly prohibited, including commercial advertising, promotional meetings and sale of goods or services for personal or corporate profit.

Exceptions to commercial rates and “no sale of goods” policy: Cultural and educational activities relevant to [Drop-In Name]’s community may have a commercial component. Book launches and art exhibits, for example, may take place as long as the event has a component relevant to our priority communities. Staff approval of the sale must be obtained in advance.

Health Care and Health Education: [Drop-In Name] is not equipped for the provision of health care. However, community-based health service agencies may provide health education workshops on an occasional basis, as long as these activities complement the work of [Drop-In Name] Programs.

Self Help and Peer Support Groups: Peer support groups may not hire a professional facilitator. Self help groups with a professional facilitator must show [Drop-In Name] staff that arrangements for appropriate supervision are in place.

Counseling: All professional counselors operating as such in [Drop-In Name] must have appropriate supervision either through [Drop-In Name]'s counseling program or through another agency, even if they are volunteers. Fees will not be charged to users of any counseling service taking place inside [Drop-In Name].

Courses: Courses must meet a need in the community and may not serve a commercial interest. Instructors' credentials will be examined by [Drop-In Name] staff to ensure the proposed course has educational merit. Courses may be time limited or ongoing, and must strictly follow the policy on program fees, below.

Article V Program and Course Fees

All programs (Article III, parts 1, 2 and 3) providing activities or courses at [Drop-In Name] may charge fees to participants. Fees are for the expenses of the program offered on site, for example, for materials, memberships, and refreshments.

In addition, programs may charge a fee to participants in order to provide honorariums to people assisting in the provision of the program, such as the life drawing model, the square dance caller, or the leader of a tai chi practice group.

Programs and courses must adhere to [Drop-In Name]'s fundamental philosophy that no one will be turned away due to lack of finances. Programs must have a method, approved by the office manager, for accepting members who are unable to pay set fees.

Fees will be reasonable for non-profit organizations, and are subject to approval by [Drop-In Name] staff. Groups which

- refuse to admit people who can't afford the fees, or
- set fees that are at a commercial rather than non profit level,

may have their privileges at [Drop-In Name] terminated.

[Drop-In Name] does not monitor fees of groups holding organizational meetings (Article III, part 4).

Donations to [Drop-In Name]: All programs charging a fee for any purpose are encouraged to make a yearly donation to [Drop-In Name]'s general fund, for the purpose of supporting its programs.

Article VI Review and Appeal

[Drop-In Name] is not responsible for the content of community programs, organizational meetings, or rental events (Article III, parts 3, 4 and 5) taking place on the premises. However, complaints can be brought forward to any staff person. Staff will direct the complaint for appropriate resolution.

Review: Programs are subject to periodic review regarding compliance with this and other [Drop-In Name] policies.

The following are examples of serious concerns: undue noise, causing disturbances within [Drop-In Name], engaging in commercial activities, allowing hate language to go unchallenged in meetings, or giving false information on the space use application form or update form.

For serious and unresolvable breaches of [Drop-In Name] policy, a program or organization may have their privileges at [Drop-In Name] terminated with one week's written notice.

Appeal: Community members who have an issue with the administration of this policy should discuss possible resolution of the issue with [Drop-In Name] staff. Community members may appeal a staff decision to the Board through its space use and program planning committee.

Matters eligible for appeal include:

- denial of a new program or meeting space request
- termination of a group's meeting privileges at [Drop-In Name]
- conflict over participant fee levels

Appeals must be made in writing, and be submitted within 30 days of the incident in question. Appeals will be considered at the next meeting of the Board's space use and program planning committee.

Article VII Rental Fees

Rental fees, based on [Drop-In Name]'s rental fee schedule, are charged to groups defined above in Article III, as being engaged in rental activities. On rare occasions, at [Drop-In Name] initiative, rental fees or a performance bond may be waived. Rental space is made available in part to raise funds for [Drop-In Name]'s programs.

Setting Rental Rates: Rates and requirements for performance bonds will be reviewed by [Drop-In Name] staff from time to time.

Performance Bonds: A performance bond will be required for most rentals, the level to be determined by [Drop-In Name] staff. The performance bond may be retained, in full or in part, if the conditions of the contract are not fully observed. For individuals, a signed credit card slip will be required instead of a performance bond.

If [Drop-In Name] retains the entire performance bond due to serious breach of contract, then the group will no longer be permitted to use space at [Drop-In Name]. Serious breach of contract may include, but is not limited to, the following: total failure to clean up space, failure to comply with LLBO regulations even when requested to do so by [Drop-In Name] staff, failure to cooperate with staff on other matters, overcrowding, harassment of staff or other users.

Categories for rental fees:

- 1. Non Commercial Rates** – Non-commercial fees for space are set so that non-profit groups have access to space at prices comparable to other community halls. These fees are offered to programs and organizations, as defined in Article III, when they are involved in an activity requiring rental payments.
- 2. Theatre and Arts Rates** – Theatre and Arts groups are permitted to use space only during off-peak times. Theatre groups and artists may book space by the hour, day or week, if available.
- 3. Commercial Rates** – Businesses may rent space for commercial film-making, business meetings or private parties. Minimum commercial rates are set, but commercial enterprises may be assessed for higher fees depending on activities planned, and anticipated general disruption to the building. In exceptional circumstances and for the purpose of fundraising for programs, [Drop-In Name] may clear the building for commercial film making by moving scheduled groups off site, or canceling meetings.
- 4. Individual Rates** – Rates for individuals are set at slightly higher than non-commercial rates but at prices comparable to other community halls. A signed credit card slip will be required instead of a performance bond. Individuals holding a special event should fall within the following guidelines:
 - Priority is given to residents of [Drop-In Name]'s catchment area, users, and members of [Drop-In Name].
 - Individuals must be holding a special event such as: a wedding, cultural event, ceremony, memorial, birthday, or other one-time-only or infrequent event.
 - To help prepare staff so that they can provide better service, the individual will give a description of any ceremonies to staff at the time of booking.
 - Individuals may not book on a recurring basis
 - Individuals may not conduct personal fundraising and/or business activities in [Drop-In Name].
- 5. Staff Charges** – When the building is open beyond the regular hours, additional staffing will be required. Staff charges will be added to any rental fees for space.

Appendix 6C.2 Sample Space Use Application

Note: This policy has been adapted from a multi-service community centre space use policy. As such, the policy is very elaborate and addresses a wide range of circumstances and conditions. Smaller-scale drop-ins may not need this level of complexity.

[DROP-IN NAME] SPACE USE APPLICATION

Please complete this form and return it to the Office Manager at _____

Be concise, but if you need additional space, feel free to continue your answers on the back of the form.

GROUP NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION

1. Name of Group or Activity: _____

2. **Contact people:** Two contact people must be identified for this application to be considered.

	Contact Person # 1	Contact Person # 2
Name		
Address		
Phone (Home)		
Phone (Other)		
Fax		
Email		
Position in group		

3. Group mailing address if different from above: _____

4. Group Web Site: _____

GROUP STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES

5. **Is this group:** Established A new endeavor A chapter or branch of another group (please specify: _____)

6. Explain membership criteria, if any: _____

7. Briefly describe the goals and objectives of your group: _____

8. Briefly describe what a meeting or activity would include: _____

9. How do participants have input into how the group is run? _____

[DROP-IN NAME]'S POLICIES AND YOUR GROUP

10. [Drop-In Name]'s Mission statement reads as follows: [Insert your mission statement here.] _____

How will your group help [Drop-In Name] fulfill its mandate?

11. At [Drop-In Name], discrimination on the following grounds is prohibited: Age, Marital Status, Number of Dependents, Political Affiliation, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Gender Orientation, Race, Ethnic Background, Colour, Creed, Citizenship, Physical or Mental Handicap, Membership in a Collective Bargaining Unit, or any other factor that is a violation of fundamental human rights.

[Drop-In Name] serves _____ [Describe your population here. For example, "people who are socially marginalized and living with poverty, mental health problems, and addictions"]. Mutual respect between the people we serve is an essential component that all users of [Drop-In Name] are expected adopt.

Will your group be able to respect the policies stated above? yes no

INCORPORATION AND FINANCES

12. Is your group incorporated? yes no

non-profit co-operative sole proprietorship corporation

other (please specify: _____)

13. Does your group have charitable status through Revenue Canada? yes no

14. How is your group funded? _____

15. Will participants be charged a fee? no yes (please specify: \$ _____ per _____)

Please check off the expenses that this fee is meant to cover:

- Membership information (e.g. a newsletter)
- Materials costs
- Refreshments served at the meeting / activity
- Wages or salary for facilitator or group leader
- Other (please specify: _____)

16. It is a policy of [Drop-In Name] that no individual be denied access to a group or activity because of their inability to pay. Can your group accommodate this policy?

yes no
If no, please explain: _____

17. Does anyone receive compensation for their participation in the group?

yes no If yes, who receives compensation, for what purpose, and how much do they receive? _____

18. Are financial records maintained for your group? yes no

19. Would your financial records be accessible to [Drop-In Name] for review?

yes no

GROUP MEETING TIME REQUEST AND PREFERENCES

20. Our group wants to meet: occasionally weekly monthly
 twice monthly other (please specify: _____)

21. We hope to have space that is: ongoing
 seasonal (please specify months: _____)
 time-limited (until _____)

22. For weekday meetings, choose preferred days and time slots:

Mondays Tuesdays Wednesdays Thursdays Fridays
 mornings – time: _____ afternoons – time: _____
 evenings 6 - 8 p.m. 8 - 10 p.m.

For weekend meetings, choose preferred days and time slots:

- Saturdays (please specify time slot: _____)
- Sundays (please specify time slot: _____)

23. How many people do you anticipate will be attending this group’s meetings?

- fewer than 15 16 - 40 41-75 75-250 _____

Please note that a request for a particular time does not guarantee that an appropriate room will be available at that time. When a group is approved we try to accommodate the group based on this request.

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

24. If someone inquires about joining your group, how would you like our front desk staff and volunteers to handle their request? Choose one of the following:

- Give them the following name and contact number: _____

- Tell them when the next meeting is, and invite them to attend.
- Give them the following address so they can write for more information: _____

- Other: _____

25. How do you plan to publicize your group? _____

AGREEMENT AND SIGNATURE

We certify that we have given accurate information about our group, and our signatures below confirm our intent to abide by [Drop-In Name]’s policies.

Contact Person # 1	Contact Person # 2
<i>Name (printed):</i>	<i>Name (printed):</i>
<i>Signature:</i>	<i>Signature:</i>
<i>Date:</i>	<i>Date:</i>

This Space for Office Use Only			
Group Code: _____	Group Category _____	Status _____	
Regular Meetings <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no Effective _____			
Days _____	Times _____	Room _____	
Letter sent date: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> accept <input type="checkbox"/> conditional <input type="checkbox"/> reject			

SUBSECTION 6D

Improving Negative Community Relations

Some community members may see a drop-in as a “problem” – as something that negatively impacts a neighbourhood or lowers property values. **The challenge is to change this perception so that community members see a drop-in as a resource and benefit that adds to the neighbourhood, rather than detracts from it.**

Subsection 6C discusses ways to work toward this goal in an environment of neutral or positive community relations; this Subsection discusses ways to work toward this goal in an environment of negative community relations.

The tactics and tips discussed below may not be feasible for all drop-ins; the strategies a particular drop-in uses will depend on its size, resources, and organizational capacity:

- **Develop a policy and procedure for neighbour complaints.** Develop a policy that addresses how the drop-in will deal with participants’ actions outside of the drop-in itself and/or outside of drop-in hours. In the case of extreme neighbourhood antagonism toward the drop-in, you may want to dedicate resources to a separate telephone line or email system to neighbours’ complaints.
- **Be an advocate for both populations.** Drop-ins are responsible both to the particular community they target for service, and to the wider community to which they belong. When there is a clash, the safety of both populations must be protected. Get the full story from both sides before deciding what course of action is appropriate.

Example – safeguarding drop-in participants: One local convenience store owner accused a drop-in participant of robbing their store and attacking their staff. The program coordinator asked to watch the in-store camera’s videotape of the incident and was able to prove to the store owner that the perpetrator was not actually a drop-in participant.

Example – safeguarding community: On another occasion, some drop-in participants made offensive and discriminatory comments to two local residents as they passed through the community park attached to the drop-in building. The program coordinator discussed the inappropriateness of this behaviour with the participants and, over the course of their discussion, made the decision to bar them from using the drop-in for a specified amount of time.

- **Improve communications.** Find ways to facilitate positive communications with the community, so that there is a basis for interaction that does not rely exclusively on a complaint-and-response model. For example, one drop-in is starting to print a newsletter about the drop-in’s social events, newsworthy

occasions, and success stories, that will go out to businesses and residents in the neighbourhood as well as being distributed among participants.

- **Attend BIA meetings.** The local Business Improvement Area (BIA) association can become a focal point for neighbours who are not happy with the drop-in or have complaints about its participants. Local store owners may feel that participants are shoplifting from them or bringing down the property values of their business.

It is a good practice to work with the BIA so that its members understand what the value and purpose of the drop-in is. Staff and interested participants should commit to attending BIA meetings regularly to represent the positive aspects of the drop-in. Too often business owners only see the worst aspects of participants – for example, a participant panhandling in front of their store – and they don't see the positive aspects of how that person is working to find meaningful employment.

Participants argue that the BIA and the neighbourhood as a whole need to learn about poverty and oppression. They want to join with staff to advocate and “translate” their life experiences into terms that these neighbours can understand and identify with. They say that the BIA needs to be reminded that mental and physical illness can hit anyone at any time, so it is important not to judge other people or look down on them. Staff who have themselves dealt with addictions, or struggled with mental health issues, are particularly powerful voices to send these messages.

A particularly effective argument for drop-ins based in the downtown core is that socially marginalized people have been gathering here for a long time and would continue to spend time here whether the drop-in was here or not. The drop-in provides a valuable service to local businesses by providing a place for people to go and access important resources like food. If the drop-in was shut down, these people would be lacking in vital social supports.

- **Identify the individual.** Often, in situations where a community becomes galvanized against a drop-in, the problems stem from one individual or a small group of individuals. They gain power – whether through the BIA, local politics, or some other avenue – and begin to promote a different vision for the community. When you first join a community, it is important to get a sense of who the local power-brokers are and what their politics are.
- **Be on-call.** If you have the staffing capacity, develop relationships with local businesses and landlords so that they know they can call a staff person to come and deal with a problem involving a drop-in participant. Respond to these calls immediately, so that a relationship of trust is developed. However, you should make sure that you have the resources to handle this level of involvement with participants outside of the drop-in before instituting this system. Otherwise, it may

detract from the quality of service that participants within the drop-in are receiving.

- **Engage participants.** In the case of legitimate neighbour complaints about participants’ off-site behaviour, discuss these concerns with participants in an open and collaborative way. Explain that even when they are not in the drop-in, their behaviour impacts the drop-in and affects the drop-in’s position in the neighbourhood. Ask them for help in maintaining positive community relations. In the case of discriminatory neighbour complaints (or, speaking more broadly, discriminatory municipal bylaws, or provincial, or federal legislation), some participants may be interested in advocating on their own behalf. This may involve attending community meetings or protests on issues that concern them.

Example: One women’s drop-in organized a social action working group that works with women to help them develop leadership skills and empower them to take action. Some participants contribute to letter-writing campaigns, put up posters, and go to International Women’s Day meetings.

- **Public relations.** See Subsection 6B (and Appendices 6B.1 and 6B.2) for tips on how to conduct community consultations, hold open houses, canvas neighbours, distribute promotional brochures, and so forth. It may be useful to establish a standing public relations committee to work on the strategies discussed above for improving community relationships (e.g. attend BIA meetings, engage participants in advocacy, and handle neighbour complaints).

The Training Manual prepared for the Toronto Drop-In Network gives some more useful tips on how to develop constructive neighbourhood relationships and improve strained relationships.²

Individual/Personal Actions	Agency/Management Responses
<p>Community Outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk around the neighbourhood and look at your agency in the context of the neighbourhood • Don’t get defensive when a neighbour makes offensive comments • Pop into a new store and introduce yourself • Patronize local businesses <p>Know what services are available in the area and if they are “homeless friendly”</p>	<p>Complaint System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a formal complaint system in place that includes documentation of complaint action taken and the follow up • Listen attentively to local businesses’ or neighbours’ complaints • Report complaints to the supervisor • Follow up on the complaint • Check in with the person

² This table is adapted from Evelyn Mitchell, “PART A. Positive Strategies (To Improve Neighbourhood Connections),” *Drop-In 201: Workshop Facilitator’s Manual*, Toronto (ON): TDIN and THTC, 2005.

Individual/Personal Actions <i>(cont'd)</i>	Agency/Management Responses <i>(cont'd)</i>
<p>Community Outreach <i>(cont'd)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never use neighbours' parking • Hold participant meetings to talk about supporting neighbours and why it's important to remain as part of the community • Be pro-active – for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a separate smoking area to avoid neighbour complaints • Organize neighbourhood clean-up days <p>Relationships between the drop-in and other support agency services</p> <p>Friendly communication when doing referrals, seeking information, or doing advocacy work</p>	<p>Complaint System <i>(cont'd)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of your manner of speaking (are you coming across as polite, patient, sarcastic...?) • Don't engage in a shouting match • Recognize what is legitimate in their complaint • Address problems in a staff meeting <p>Community outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a community advisory group and enlist sympathetic friendly neighbours who have been responsive to the program • Advise neighbours of upcoming events and invite them to special occasions • Participate in local events