



# VON CANADA CODE OF ETHICS

---

The purpose of VON's Code of Ethics is to provide guidance to VON as an organization (including employees, volunteers and Board) to support ethical decision-making based on the principles of autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence and justice

Autonomy – respect another's right to self-determine a course of action; support of independent decision making

Beneficence – an obligation to act in a way that produces some good or benefit for another

Nonmaleficence – do no harm

Justice – a focus on fair treatment of individuals and/or groups

The VON Code of Ethics outlines responsibilities, accountabilities and ethical considerations of the organization, all employees and volunteers (including members of the National Board of Directors and Community Corporations' Boards of Directors). It is an expression of VON's own understanding of its commitment to its clients, employees, volunteers and external stakeholders.

The VON Code of Ethics provides the framework for the VON Code of Conduct and reflects, demonstrates and promotes VON's values of respect, participation, courage and responsiveness. It is not meant to replace professional codes of ethics and practice standards but intended to complement and enhance them.

Respect - VON employees and volunteers practice with compassion and show consideration for the autonomy, rights, dignity, worth and uniqueness of individuals, groups and communities

Participation - VON employees and volunteers collaborate with each other and those external to VON to promote a healthier society.

Courage - VON employees and volunteers act with courage when they advocate for change, stand firm in adversity, challenge injustices, and support innovation in the health care environment.

Responsiveness - VON employees and volunteers respond in a timely manner to opportunities to promote health and well-being.

The VON Canada Code of Ethics consists of the four ethical principles followed by statements outlining how VON as an organization (including employees, volunteers and Board) will meet these principles.



# VON CANADA CODE OF ETHICS

## AUTONOMY

VON Canada as an organization (including employees, volunteers and Board) meets the ethical principle of Autonomy by

- Acknowledging the right of the client to accept or refuse care; to live and die in comfort and with dignity; to develop and enhance their capacity for self-care respecting cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity.
- Maintaining privacy and confidentiality
- Inviting clients to partner in informed decision making about their care and service
- Seeking out, listening to and working with clients to address needs they identify
- Empowering employees, volunteers and clients through knowledge, support and feedback to take action to create solutions

## BENEFICENCE

VON Canada as an organization (including employees, volunteers and Board) meets the ethical principle of Beneficence by:

- Collaborating as appropriate with clients, government, professional organizations and each other to promote our shared goal of meeting the health and social needs of individuals and the public
- Using our charitable status to identify and/or develop programs that enhance existing healthcare and support services
- Contributing to continuous quality improvement opportunities as presented through constructive feedback
- Maintaining, demonstrating and sharing knowledge on current health care practices, trends and issues to respond to the changing client, societal and economic environment
- Advocating for change on behalf of clients, employees, volunteers and others on health and social justice issues
- Encouraging each other to work in a way to achieve and promote safe, quality, ethical practice



# VON CANADA CODE OF ETHICS

## NONMALEFICENCE

VON Canada as an organization (including employees, volunteers and Board) meets the ethical principle of Nonmaleficence by:

- Refraining from and demonstrating zero tolerance for discrimination or harassment in the areas of culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, race, colour or socio-economic status
- Providing positive and constructive support to clients and colleagues when faced with difficult internal and/or external change.
- Advocating for clients to ensure they receive the right service, by the right provider in the right place

## JUSTICE

VON Canada as an organization (including employees, volunteers and Board) meets the ethical principle of Justice by:

- Building caring and compassionate relationships with clients, employees and volunteers with a commitment to fair treatment of individuals, integrity-preserving compromise, and to resolution of conflict;
- Developing a culture in which decisions concerning the distribution of scarce resources at the individual and/or system level recognizes inequalities among clients, employees and volunteers or within the organization and are made on how best to ensure fair treatment to all
- Creating environments in which client, employees and volunteers are empowered and supported to, in good faith, speak out about behaviours, and inequities and practices that may not be competent, safe or ethical without fear of retribution
- Being leaders in developing health and social policy that addresses the inequalities in determinants of health, and health services in populations;
- Being honest and accountable for use of all our funds including public and donor funds
- Being honesty and transparent in our fund development activities



# VON CANADA CODE OF ETHICS

## **DEFINITIONS:**

**Client:** includes individuals, families, groups, communities, society

**Employee:** an individual who gives their time and skills to support and further the mission and values of VON in exchange for monetary compensation

**External stakeholders:** funders, partners, customers

**Volunteer:** an individual who gives their time and skills unpaid to support and further the mission and values of VON Canada.