CMHA Respect, Growth, and Empowerment Toolkit
Community Mental Health Association of Michigan

Table of Contents

Segment 1

Preamble to CMHA Respect, Growth, and Empowerment Toolkit

Definition of Respect, Growth, and Empowerment

The definition, provided below, as recommended by the CMHA Respect, Growth, and Empowerment Advisory Group, will be used by CMHA in its respect, growth, and empowerment efforts. This definition aligns with the dialogue of the CMHA Board of Directors and the CMHA Respect, Growth, and Empowerment Advisory Group.

RESPECT: Respect is the recognition and appreciation of individual perspectives, experiences, and contributions. It involves fostering an environment where all voices are valued, differences are acknowledged, and people feel heard and understood. A culture of respect encourages open dialogue, collaboration, and mutual understanding within a work group, organization, or community.

GROWTH: Growth is fostering fairness by understanding and addressing individual differences. Growth is not uniformity, where all individuals are treated the same, but rather an environment where people feel supported in reaching their full potential. It involves providing resources and opportunities based on need, helping a multitude of populations achieve their highest state of health, economic well-being, and quality of life.

EMPOWERMENT: Empowerment is fostering involvement and confidence, where the inherent worth and dignity of all people are recognized. An empowering organization promotes and sustains a sense of belonging; it values and upholds respect for the talents, beliefs, backgrounds, and lived experiences of its members.

Value of Respect, Growth, and Empowerment

Respect, growth, and empowerment efforts have a number of benefits to the organizations that engage in them and all of their stakeholders, including employees, persons served, contractors, and partners, including:

- o Improves ability of organization to reach and serve community members with varied characteristics and backgrounds
- o Boosts creativity and innovation
- o Attracts talent and persons served/clients/customers
- o Improves the organization's bottom line
- o Creates a culture of trust with stakeholders
- o Aligns with ethics of clinical disciplines

CMHA Commitment to Respect, Growth, and Empowerment and a Variety of Approaches

The Community Mental Health Association (CMHA) is committed to:

- o Promoting respect, growth, and empowerment among its members, within itself, and among the persons served, its stakeholders, and partners
- o Identifying and disseminating a variety of sound approaches to fostering respect, growth, and empowerment within organizations which are members of CMHA
- o A continuous process of self-learning and connecting with others

Tool Kit Purpose

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide concepts, tools, and resources representing a variety of approaches, in support of the work of CMHA's member organizations and CMHA as they facilitate and encourage respect, growth, and empowerment.

The contents of this toolkit are intentionally varying, designed to reflect the range of needs, communities, and organizational cultures in which CMHA and our members operate.

This tool kit is just that – a tool kit containing a set of practices and policies that foster respect, growth, and empowerment. The use of any of the components in this toolkit is at the discretion of CMHA's member organizations. This tool kit is not a set of actions or beliefs recommended by CMHA; nor is it an exhaustive collection of all resources around respect, growth, and empowerment.

The toolkit is a living document, meant to be revised periodically as the needs and views of CMHA members change and new tools and resources are identified.

CMHA Respect, Growth, and Empowerment Tool Kit: Resources for CMHA Members

Respect, Growth, and Empowerment Value Statements

Purpose of a respect, growth, and empowerment value statement: Value statements offer the opportunity to make all stakeholders aware of an agency's commitments to a respectful, growth-focused, and empowering environment. This includes employees and persons served alike.

Five key elements of a sound organizational respect, growth, and empowerment value statement: Opinions on what a good respect, growth, and empowerment statement should include will vary based on whom you ask and their personal preferences.

CMHA has identified, through a review of a range of respect, growth, and empowerment resources, five key elements that contribute to the creation of a sound respect, growth, and empowerment value statement and supporting narrative and resources.

- **Start with the actual statement:** A respect, growth, and empowerment statement should be short and to the point.
- **Add information and data:** If the organization has information available on its current respect, growth, and empowerment efforts and progress, this information helps to demonstrate the organization's commitment to respect, growth, and empowerment.
- **Be transparent:** Nothing is wrong with admitting that the organization is continuing to work toward its respect, growth, and empowerment goals, or that the organization could/should have started working on them a bit sooner, as long as the respect, growth, and empowerment statement does not become a standard organizational line with little intention of improving or achieving respect, growth, and empowerment goals.
- **Specify commitments:** Define the organization's commitments, whether in brief or in detail. In their respect, growth, and empowerment statement (examples provided in the next section), some organizations published their main respect, growth, and empowerment commitments with in-depth descriptions of each initiative, while others opted for more concise descriptions.
- **Add resources that enrich the respect, growth, and empowerment statement:** Some (large organizations) publish resources to support their respect, growth, and empowerment work along with their respect, growth, and empowerment statement. Some of these resource include: documents and other material on representation and pay, employee resource groups, etc. Additionally, including candidate or employee testimonials can further enrich the statement.

Examples of organizational value statements on respect, growth, and empowerment: Additional guidance related to writing a respect, growth, and empowerment value statement and examples of organizational value statements on respect, growth, and empowerment can be found here.

Segment 2

Internal Organizational Policy

- [Examples of internal policies that further RGE in the workplace](#)
- [Harvard Business School's recommendation for policy auditing can be found here.](#)
- [The Center for Creative Leadership](#) provides a framework for organizing the workplace around RGE principles, as well as providing training solutions to "help you build a stronger organizational culture and equip your leaders to work together more effectively"
- [The "RGE Maturity Model" by Korn Ferry](#) provides both an assessment tool for where your organization stands with regards to RGE best practices, as well as a roadmap for improvement
- [Respect and Empowerment Policy: The 13 Policies Your Organization Needs](#) provides a concise list of 13 policies your organization could easily adapt and adopt as needed
- [How to Build an Anti-Racist Company](#) provides seven clear steps to making a company or organization anti-racist, with a helpful audio option for listening instead of just reading!
- [The Path to Becoming an Antiracist Organization](#) an extensive article that has many resources, including an assessment to see where your organization stands currently, helpful tips on crafting a RGE statement, budgeting for RGE work, restructuring to support RGE work, roles and responsibilities, hiring practices, and more
- For other internal policies, refer to the section of the toolkit relevant to the type of policy your agency is looking for. Many of the recommendations in these sections are primed to be implemented as policies.

Policy Advocacy
Local & State Policy
- Keep up to date on local and state policy initiatives and advocacy efforts that can further RGE & mental health initiatives.
  - [The Michigan Department of Civil Right's RGE page](#) has great resources and toolkits
- Ensure that stakeholders have access to this information and consider an alternative form of distribution of these policy efforts to employees to make access easier.

National Policy
- [How National Politics Are Impacting RGE in the Workplace](#)
- [The government's role in Respect, Growth, and Empowerment](#)
- [Advocacy as a Change Strategy for Nonprofits](#)

Organizations

- Supporting organizations already advocating for RGE initiatives can be the easiest way to engage in policy advocacy. Listed here are some organizations and their activities that are possible candidates for supporting, partnerships, or collaborations.
- The NAACP
- Human Rights Campaign (HRC)
- The National Disability Rights Network's Initiatives
- The Michigan Nonprofit Association works with nonprofits across Michigan to advocate for many issues, including RGE

Internal Engagement with Staff, Contractors and Persons Served

Internal Engagement

- Within agencies, increasing efforts among teams and between staff to be respectful and empowering can positively impact the culture of the agency.
- Increasing RGE focus can improve workplace culture and will help with incorporating RGE efforts in other facets of the agency and its engagement.
- Despite RGE Backlash, Nearly 60% of US Workers Support Current RGE Policies

Cultural Competency

- Cultural humility vs. cultural competency
- Cultural Competence: The Ultimate Guide to Cultural Proficiency provides a great guide on cultural competency and what it looks like in practice, as well as examples from several industries

Education and Training

- The ambiguity surrounding RGE can make it difficult for agency stakeholders to understand the motives and goals of the agency regarding RGE. By defining RGE and creating concrete goals and initiatives, it can lead to an agency culture shift.
  - Forbes' recommendations for improving workplace respect, growth, and empowerment
- Offering training in additional therapy and intervention practices so that therapists & other clinicians can learn about and retain skills to address a wide range of clients.
- The American Psychological Association's Guidelines for Psychological Practice
- Refer to the Internal Organizational Policies for more info!

Surveys & Self-Assessment

- Surveying your employees can be a first step in determining why a work environment may not be perceived as respectful and empowering.
  - Survey Monkey guide to creating a RGE survey in the workplace
  - Workleap survey question examples
- Taking the assessment, identifying gaps/weaknesses, developing an action plan to address them.

- Action plan included improving fairness in hiring practices
- Assessing the community demographics
- Refer to the Internal Organizational Policies for more info!

Focus Groups
- Conduct focus groups with clients and community members to understand what barriers they face in accessing mental health care. Utilize this information to create action plans that commit to a reduction in barriers.
- Conducting RGE focus groups & listening circles to give employees a voice - a quick guide on setting up and running RGE focus groups

Improving Meeting Dynamics
- Encourage leadership in the organization to be aware of meeting dynamics.
- Notice what individuals are contributing and what individuals are not. Encourage those who do not normally speak to allow themselves to be heard.
- Adjust the pace of meetings or space meetings out to allow time for additional processing.
- Therapy Changes' basics of improving respect, growth, and empowerment

Mentorship
- By creating a mentorship program within the agency, employees from marginalized groups can connect with one another.
- Forbes' recommendations for improving workplace respect, growth, and empowerment
- PROMOTE respect, growth, and empowerment with Mentoring Programs - Discusses the benefits of RGE mentorship programs and the ways in which various companies have implemented them.

Avoiding Burnout
- Addressing Burnout in RGE Efforts
- Why RGE Leaders Are Burning Out — and How Organizations Can Help

Barriers and Disparities Impacting Persons Served
- The National Council for Mental Wellbeing's toolkit to address disparities in access to healthcare Pages 3-5 cover barriers to accessing treatment.
- The National Council for Mental Wellbeing's Health Disparities module and resources
- SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery for American Indian and Alaska Native Communities
- Language
  - Low-language proficiency is a "risk factor for coercive measures throughout hospitalization"
  - See CMS' guide to developing a language access plan.

Segment 3

Hiring & Promotion

- By including principles of RGE in the practice of hiring and promotion, barriers and favoritism in the process can be reduced.
- [Measurement and metrics to ensure fair hiring, promotion, and recruitment.](#)

Candidate Recruitment

- Limiting applicant pools excessively can eliminate strong candidates
  - For example, remove college degree, certificate, or experience requirements where possible
  - [Forbes' fair hiring practices recommendations](#)
- Increase recruitment partnerships to broaden and expand your candidate pool.
- Removing names from resumes, as names can trigger favoritism
  - [Applied's guide to blind recruitment](#)
- Review your job descriptions
  - See further strategies from the HR Consulting group [here](#)
- Eliminate referral hiring programs
  - Referral programs can promote nepotism & perpetuate a cycle of hiring monolithic employees

Interviewing

- Ensuring a varied set of interviewers/increase the number of interviewers when it comes to hiring and promoting to improve fairness of hiring practices
  - [DeVry on 'Creating a More Fair Hiring Process'](#)
- Addressing equality in the interviewing process via training and conscious reflection.
- Attempt to include questions about Respect, Growth, and Empowerment in the interview.
  - [University of Washington's checklist for interviewing/hiring committees](#)

Hiring

- The tendency to hire the first candidates interviewed is a documented phenomenon. Try challenging this thinking within your agency and reviewing the favorable and unfavorable aspects of each candidate.
- Ensure the candidates you hire have a wide range of skills across all of them, as opposed to applying them to monolithic skill expectations.
- Candidates can be lost in the shuffle if there is no follow-up after they've missed a piece of their application. Ensure that every step of recruitment, interviewing, and hiring has a concrete "action plan".
  - [Harvard Business Review's guide to fairness in hiring](#)

Transparent promotion process:
- Being clear about requirements for promotion and offering development programs and opportunities to all staff.
- Implementation of clear evaluation expectations can increase the credibility of the agency's promotions.
    o RGE promotion initiatives via LinkedIn
- Ensure that everyone has opportunities to meet senior leadership.
- Transparency is key; foster a relationship with all employees and encourage them all to take advantage of opportunities for promotion.
    o Perrire Farque's recommendations for fair promotion

Agency Involvement
- Seek feedback from employees on the hiring and promotion process prior to and throughout implementation of new practices.

Supervision

Communication
- Creation of guidelines for respectful communication can improve supervision so that employees feel more comfortable in discussion.
- See a guide to Respect, Growth, and Empowerment in clinical supervision here.

Self-Reflection
- Keeping in mind ethical guidelines and engaging in self-reflection can improve supervisory practices. Making mistakes in communication and supervision is human. It is how you address them afterwards and how you improve upon them matters.
    o Not only can supervisors utilize this resource to self-reflect, but may reflect with peer input as well.

Governance

Structure
- Heidrick & Struggles have created a solid pdf handbook for how to structure governance based on RGE principles. It outlines a governance model, the importance of executive support, and the differences between top-down, bottom-up, and middle-out governance.

Benefits
- SEI Investments Company has a great post about the benefits for governance and operations when RGE principles are integrated.

Board Composition

Bylaws

- NEO Law Group has a post about RGE and board composition in their RGE and Bylaws section on their website.
  - They also link to a post from the Keeping it Ethical blog, which highlights "33 Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice", of which Principle 11 is related to board composition.
  - They also have another post specifically about RGE in Nonprofit Bylaws which goes more in-depth about the methodology of incorporating RGE into a board's bylaws.

Best Practices

- fundsforNGOs has a short, but informative post about the top 10 best practices for nonprofit boards looking to incorporate RGE principles into their structure and bylaws.
- CCS Fundraising has a post that discusses three areas of consideration as nonprofits seek to apply a RGE lens to board activities.

Segment 4

Community Engagement
Community Engagement
- When organizations engage with the community, it is important to think of them as a partner.
- Allowing and seeking out community involvement and input in agency planning.
- Partnering with a variety of stakeholders.
- [University of Michigan's plan for engaging in your community](#)
- [University of Kansas' Community Toolbox](#)

Additional Resources
These resources include a variety of toolkits and other information to be reviewed and used at your agency's discretion.
- [National Council Health Parity Toolkit](#)
- [Coalition for Respect & Empowerment in Scholarly Communications Toolkit for Organizations](#)
- [University of Kansas Community Toolbox](#)
- [Coalition for Respect and Empowerment in Scholarly Communication's Resource List](#)
- [Out & Equal](#)

Historic Basis for Commitment to Respect, Growth, and Empowerment
- [Forbes](#) posted a very succinct article on the history of RGE practices in the United States
  - A more detailed explanation and history of RGE can be found on [Britannica's website](#)
- A short 7 minute video segment on the history of RGE from [PBS News](#)