



## AVA Guiding Principles

The following Guiding Principles outline the AVA team's commitment to fair and equitable policies and practice in the context of our objectives.

### AVA's Objectives

- **Strengthen and build capacity** to transform population (community) health and social services to promote the health and wellness of girls, women, and gender-diverse people, at risk/affected by violence and adversity over the life cycle.
- **Use a collaborative, innovative**, cross-sectoral/disciplinary/jurisdictional training platform to train hundreds of Canadian service providers and academics in the social services/community health field working with this population.
- **Make intergenerational and population impacts**, and promote a positive lifespan for girls, women, and gender-diverse people.

### What are AVA's Guiding Principles? These guidelines detail AVA's overall working principles, expectations, and obligations of all partners.

- AVA is committed to addressing inequities and health disparities disproportionately impacting girls, women, and gender-diverse people with intersectional identities. This includes, but is not limited to, (dis)ability, race, and gender identity. AVA relies on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) initiatives, and Sex and Gender-Based Analysis (SGBA+) is at the core of reaching AVA's objectives.
- AVA seeks to ensure sensitivity to EDIA, cultural and emotional safety, in all aspects of the AVA Training Platform by engaging with Patient Partners and AVA designated Champions who specialize in EDIA, Indigenous Knowledge, SGBA+ and Black and Other racialized people.<sup>1</sup>
- AVA aims to strengthen and build capacity to address the intersections between sex, race, (dis)ability, social locations, gender-diversity and other identities, while acknowledging (to the degree possible) the impacts of colonialism, classism, racism, and Canadian culture (albeit recognizing that AVA may influence, but cannot itself change, these things).
- AVA recognizes that diverse voices from community experts, as well as Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, and Metis), Black, and other racialized people, continue to be minimal and

minimalized in academic research; hence, our aim is to have academic, community, Indigenous, Black, and other racialized people, as partners, co-creating culturally safe, supportive, and reciprocal learning for all team members.

- All team members whether academic or community partners, or mentees, are considered trainees engaged in reciprocal learning.
- AVA also commits to principles of integrated knowledge translation (iKT) including:
  - true partnership, rather than simple engagement,
  - considering iKT is an approach to research rather than a methodology,
  - core values of co-creation, reciprocity, trust, fostering relationships, collaboration, respect, co-learning, active participation, democratisation of knowledge and shared decision-making in the generation and application of knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

### **AVA's EDIA Principles**

- 1) Priority will be applied to Indigenous, Black and Other racialized people, as well as disabled, gender-diverse and other identities.
- 2) We will seek equity by removing systemic barriers and biases in recruitment, application and participation processes (see AVA's Guiding Principles for examples).
- 3) We will ensure diverse perspectives and lived experiences (e.g. races, places of origin, religions, immigrants and newcomers, etc.) are represented amongst the AVA team.
- 4) We will focus on inclusion by valuing and respecting all contributions, particularly eliminating hierarchies, by treating team members equally.
- 5) Seeking to address the 2 key objectives of the Government of Canada's EDI Tri-Agency Action Plan for 2018-2025 by ensuring fair access to Tri-Council resources and ensuring equitable participation in recruitment of trainees (i.e. Triadic Mentorship Program)
- 6) All AVA members shall participate in EDIA training and it will be part of the core AVA courses in AVA Online.

### **How will AVA do this?**

- AVA seeks to ensure EDIA in all aspects of the AVA Training Platform by engaging with Patient Partners and AVA designated Champions who specialize in EDIA, Indigenous Knowledge, SGBA+ and Black and Other racialized people.
- EDIA will influence selection of participants to take part in AVA programs (e.g. Community Agency Internship; Early Career Researcher Teaching Release).
- All AVA team members will be asked to attend mandatory annual EDIA training.
- AVA Online includes courses specifically designed to enhance trainee and team members' knowledge and practice related to EDIA.
- SGBA+ and intersectionality are core AVA Online curriculum components. AVA team members, especially leadership, have training in SGBA+, intersectionality and research knowledge that address racialized people.
- AVA prioritizes the inclusion of Indigenous, Black, and other racialized people on the AVA team and in trainee recruitment.
- AVA's Land Acknowledgements will include an acknowledgement of the land where AVA headquarters is located (Calgary, Alberta) as well as a national land acknowledgement. The person to provide the land acknowledgements will alternate each time, to allow the opportunity for a more personalized acknowledgement.
- In all training activities, including experiential learning activities, internships, networking and/or other innovative training opportunities, attention will be paid to ensure that the

Guiding Principles of AVA are upheld (e.g. by including EDIA assessments in meeting agendas)

- The EDIA, Indigenous Knowledge, and Black and Other racialized people Champions are represented at the highest level by being part of the Platform Advisory Committee (PAC). These Champions' opinions are sought frequently and as appropriate.
- The call for applicants will prioritize racialized, (dis)abled, gender-diverse and other identities.
- We will employ best practices in EDIA recruitment and application adjudication, with our EDIA, Indigenous Knowledge, and Black and Other racialized people Champions reviewing/providing input into the process and written materials in every form.
- We will seek equity by removing systemic barriers and biases to recruitment by ensuring all PAC members, who will approve calls for applicants and approve final adjudication of applications, have training on unconscious bias (individual) but also from a systems approach (systemic).
- The AVA training platform will develop a broad range of research skills and provide training on emerging approaches to advance rigorous and responsible research (e.g. sex- and gender-based analysis (SGBA+), research data management, research involving Indigenous Peoples, ethics, unconscious bias).
- AVA trainee recruitment efforts will aim to ensure that diverse perspectives and lived experiences (e.g. race, place of origin, religion, immigrants and newcomers, ethnic origin, ability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and age) are represented among AVA trainees. An example of how this will be done is by advertising training opportunities via community partners and academics that provide services and support to diverse people.
- AVA's mandatory core activities will address EDIA (including unconscious bias assessed with the Harvard Implicit Association Test and training with the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, which includes unconscious/implicit bias recognition training), Sex and Gender-Based Analysis (SGBA+), and intersectionality, and Indigenous research methods.
- Team members who do not feel that either EDIA or iKT principles are adhered to, or who wish to report a conflict of interest (**whistle blow**) should report concern to a leader at AVA, who is not a subject of the concern. In order of consideration, reports can be made to AVA Team leader N. Letourneau, or Platform Advisory Committee Chair C. Donnelly, or Platform Advisory Committee members Vice-Presidents of the Universities of Manitoba and/or Calgary. If all of these persons are subject to the concern, reports should be made to the University of Calgary ethics review board.
- AVA Team Champions will review and edit these principles and definitions annually.

## EDIA Definitions

### Equity

Means fairness; people of all identities being treated fairly. It means ensuring that the processes for allocating resources and decision-making are fair to all and do not discriminate on the basis of identity. There is a need to put measures in place to eliminate discrimination and inequalities which have been well described and reported and ensure, to the best degree possible, equal opportunities. Equity is needed to achieve equality. For example, treating people as equals in an environment in which historical and systemic disadvantages prevent people from operating as equals can be inequitable – it lacks the fairness of a truly equitable situation (NSERC, 2017)

### Diversity

Consists of the conditions, expressions and experiences of different groups identified by age, education, sexual orientation, parental status/responsibility, immigration status, Indigenous status, religion, disability, language, race, place of origin, ethnicity, culture, socio-economic status and other attributes. Recognizing and valuing diversity must be accompanied by concerted efforts to ensure inclusion of diverse populations, meaning that individuals are and feel valued, respected and equally supported (NSERC, 2017).

### Inclusion:

Requires creating an environment in which all people are respected equitably and have access to the same opportunities. Organizationally, inclusion requires the identification and removal of barriers (e.g. physical, procedural, visible, invisible, intentional, unintentional) that inhibit [applicants'] participation and contribution. Inclusion values and principles include fairness, justice, equity, and respect, by being open to different voices and perspectives, developing an understanding of different cultures, experiences and communities, and making a conscious effort to be welcoming, helpful and respectful to everyone (NSERC, 2017).

### Accessibility:

"The provision of flexibility to accommodate needs and preferences, and refers to the design of products, devices, services, or environments for people who experience disabilities. It can also be understood as "a set of solutions that empower the greatest number of people to participate in the activities in question in the most effective ways possible" (Baker & Vasseur, 2021).

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## References

1. Ruzycski SM, Ahmed SB. Equity, diversity and inclusion are foundational research skills. *Nature Human Behaviour*. 2022;6(7):910-912.
2. Nguyen T, Graham ID, Mrklas KJ, et al. How does integrated knowledge translation (IKT) compare to other collaborative research approaches to generating and translating knowledge? Learning from experts in the field. *Health research policy and systems*. 2020;18(1):1-20.

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**Reviewed and approved by all study Champions: October 1, 2022**

**Signature, AVA Scientific Director and Principal Applicant:**



**Date: October 2, 2022**

