NORTHWEST INTER-NATION FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS:

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide community based and community driven child and family care services that protect and preserve the unique cultural identity of every child and family in the bands we serve.

Definition:

Conflict: Conflict can be broadly defined as the *divergence of goals, objectives, standards, attitudes or expectations, aims, methods or behavior.* Where two entities (be they individuals, groups or organizations) are in relationship with one another and their goals diverge, they are in conflict. The degree of divergence determines the severity and duration of conflicts and affects whether they will become manifest in disputes.

Conflict Resolution: Seeks to deal with conflict by substantially converging the goals of the parties. And results in a more durable, more stable and more comprehensive outcome because it identifies and deals with underlying conflict.

Conflict Resolution Principals:

- Any form of conflict or disagreement will be attempted to be resolved between the parties involved.
- Where the conflict does not include agency social worker/s, then NIFCS social worker/s may act as a mediator or broker in order to seek resolution.
- Where the conflict does include NIFCS social worker, then efforts must be made to resolve such conflict between the social worker and the other party(s).
- Each community will determine the process for conflict resolution according to their standards and practices (i.e. Mediation, healing circles…).
- Nothing in this process prohibits in any way an individual right to seek resolution to a complaint or conflict in a manner of their choosing.
- The Agency has designated a person to initiate the conflict resolution process.

Complaint Process (Informal):

A complaint process is a process that allows the client to appeal (disagree) with a decision made by the social worker (one to one). NIFCS believes in **listening** to and **responding** to the clients' complaint. When a client is unsatisfied with a decision made by a social worker, this process allows for the opportunity to reconsider decisions and to continue focusing on the best practice service delivery to clients.
When dealing with complaints informally usually resolve complaints effectively. However, if this informal complaint process does not resolve your concerns at the informal level, the complainant is given the option of making a formal complaint.

This pamphlet has been developed to assist you with this process.

Process:

1) Upon receipt of a phone call, visit or written complaint or concern to an office, the complaint will be managed using the problem-solving approach where the client must first speak and meet with the case social worker, from which the conflict arose.
2) If after discussing the clients concerns, the client and the social worker are still in disagreement, the social worker's supervisor will participate in further discussion of the problem.
3) If agreement still cannot be reached, the social worker supervisor may request in writing that NIFCS Associate Executive Director participate in the resolution of the complaint.
4) If the matter has been heard at all levels and is still not satisfactorily resolved and is not within the jurisdiction of the courts, the Executive of NIFCS is the fourth and final level. The complaint is always directed in writing, clearly stating the problem or conflict.
5) If a formal complaint is requested, the following complaints process takes place:

Complaint Process (Formal):

Receipt of Complaint:

The Formal complaints process begins when an eligible complainant, as defined in the informal complaint process indicates that they are making a formal complaint.

The complaint may be made in writing, verbally or by any other means, such as using an alternative communication device or using the assistance of an interpreter. The complainant will be given every assistance possible to facilitate making the complaint. Each Region will have designated staff to log complaints into the complaint tracking system.
The staff member receiving the complaint will ensure that:

- The complaint is documented immediately,
- The complaint is given to the designated staff person to be logged into the complaint tracking system,
- The complainant is informed of the name and contact information of the Associate Executive Director (AED) responsible for complaints,
- The AED responsible for complaints is notified.

Guidelines for Prioritizing a Complaint:

In some circumstances it may be necessary to prioritize complaints. The E.D. responsible for complaints may prioritize complaints using the following criteria as guidelines, or any other criteria which is considered relevant:

- The complaint involves risk to a child or other vulnerable individual.
- The complaint involves a breach of rights of a child in care of the director under *S. 70, Child, Family and Community Service Act* or a violation of rights under *S. 3 or S. 11* of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act.*
- The complaint involves health and safety issues or the personal safety and security of the person (s) affected by the complaint
- The Minister has requested a review
- The Office of the Children & Youth has requested a review
- The complaint involves systemic issues, which may lead to additional complaints if not addressed immediately.

External Review Process

A complainant who disagrees with the NIFCS decision from the formal complaint process, and wants to appeal, may ask for a further review by one of the following, according to the program area involved.

- Office of Children and Youth
- Deputy Minister, Ministry for Children and Families
- Office of the Ombudsman

When an external review authority notifies the Executive Director that there is an appeal of a decision, the Executive Director will:

- Cooperate with and offer assistance to the external review authority as requested.
- Notify the Division Head, Audit and Performance Management Division of the appeal.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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