

## **CAS/VAW COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENT CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY**

We recognize that the potential for conflict exists between CAS and VAW sectors. Both sectors are committed to resolving conflict in the most effective and timely manner. The conflict resolution policy is based on the belief that the most effective, satisfying and long lasting solution to a conflict is achieved by direct negotiation between the parties involved. This policy will embrace the CAS/VAW Collaboration Agreement and make reference to this agreement in identifying conflict and identify resolution.

The resolution of a conflict should take no longer than 90 days. The following steps will be applied to situations of conflict as needed:

### *1. Negotiation (This process to take place within 30 days)*

The first step is to directly approach the person with whom there is an issue, describe the issue as completely as possible, explain the impact that has been experienced and, if possible describe a possible solution. Refer to the intersection point from the collaboration agreement in the discussion.

Depending on the circumstances an immediate response may be expected. In other cases it may be appropriate to give the person some time to consider what has been said and set a time and place for a response.

In some cases the other person will readily agree to the solution proposed or may reply with a different point of view or alternative solution. This is negotiation, the objective of which is to arrive at a solution which is acceptable to both parties, within a time frame which is acceptable to both parties.

Both parties need to inform their respective supervisors of this conflict and if any resolution has been made. Supervisors need to inform their agency CAS/VAW representative of this situation.

It is anticipated that most conflicts will be resolved at the negotiation stage.

*2. Seeking to Understand (This process should take place within 30 days)*

If the conflict is not resolved in the negotiation stage the next step is to establish a case conference meeting, where discussions would focus on the family process and on the collaborative agreement. This meeting would give both parties the opportunity to seek to understand one another's role with the family, mandate and perspective. This will also provide an opportunity to explore the intersection points of the collaborative agreement. This case conference would need to be attended by the CAS and VAW workers, their respective supervisors and any other parties as agreed upon by the case workers involved.

*3. Mediation and Final Decision by Committee Representatives (This process should take place within 30 Days)*

If the conflict is not resolved at the Seeking to Understand phase, the next step is mediation. This involves a formal process of negotiation involving designated representatives from the CAS/VAW committee.

The role of the CAS/VAW representatives is not to find a solution or to take the side of one party or the other. The representatives are there to help the parties to negotiate a mutually acceptable solution while holding the collaboration agreement at the forefront.

However, if the representatives determine that this conflict is based on differences that cannot be resolved and does not reflect the collaboration agreement, then both parties will be notified to return to their direct supervisors for their agencies internal conflict resolution process. The representatives will report back to the main CAS/VAW committee that they were called upon for a potential conflict resolution and what was the outcome. The representatives will keep names of agencies and staff confidential. The representatives will also maintain documentation of this process.

If the representatives do determine that the conflict involves the collaboration agreement then the process will continue. If the conflict can be mediated with keeping the collaboration agreement at the forefront, then this will be encouraged.

If a negotiated solution is not achieved in an acceptable time frame, then the representatives can impose the solution based on the collaboration agreement. The representatives will determine a solution within 7 days of notification that a conflict was not successfully mediated.

#### *4. Lessons Learned*

The CAS/VAW committee believes that engaging in a conflict resolution process creates growth and learning for all involved. The committee also believes that these opportunities can assist the committee in enhancing the collaborative agreement and its delivery to service providers. As a result the representatives will bring the learnings and best practices from this conflict resolution process to the committee. Representatives will keep documentation on this process and will keep agency and staff names confidential.

The committee will regularly review any conflict resolution processes that have taken place in relation to the collaborative agreement.

*(revised March 29, 2007)*