



Our Commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Speech-Language & Audiology Canada (SAC) acknowledges the unjust treatment and barriers to opportunities that some people face due to individual and societal discrimination. As a national organization that aims to support and represent speech-language pathologists, audiologists and communication health assistants, we must work to dismantle systemic bias and discrimination in our society, our profession and our organization.

At SAC, we know that a strong commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion will enrich our culture, our employee experience and enable us to better service our members and associates. In line with our [mission and values](#), we will continue to hold ourselves accountable to learning and seeking feedback from one another through open and honest conversations. We know that we will support growth in our membership and our organization when we make intentional efforts to remove barriers for marginalized groups.

At SAC, we commit to:

- **Listening to and supporting our membership and employees** - By continuously seeking feedback and learning from others, we can better identify changes that will enhance inclusion and encourage more diversity in the way we operate, in the professions we serve and ultimately in our membership.
- **Building our awareness and knowledge** - Through ongoing education and training, our members and associates and operational teams will have the opportunity to learn about themselves and others to create a culture of inclusion and belonging.
- **Evaluating and revising existing processes and practices** - In an intentional and informed way, we will examine our current processes and practices. We will seek to remove barriers to participation and support more diversity and equity in the professions and in the operations of our association.

We know that advancing equity, diversity and inclusion won't always be straightforward or comfortable and that it will take personal and professional perseverance, humility and honesty. Collectively our efforts can positively impact our members and associations and the diverse populations they serve.

Thank you for being part of our journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shari Linde'.

Shari Linde, M.Sc., RSLP
Chair, SAC Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Wilson'.

Dawn Wilson, CAE
CEO, Speech-Language & Audiology Canada

Guiding Principles

We recognize that meeting this commitment of a more equitable, inclusive and diverse SAC is a continuous journey that requires ongoing learning, action and accountability. We want to ensure our actions now and in the future are based on key guiding principles that provide direction and consistency in approaching challenges or opportunities that arise along this journey.

- **Intentionally Inclusive:** We are committed to social equity to ensure there is fair access to positions of power and influence for all people, regardless of their race, gender, age and other diversity dimensions. Having diverse representation in leadership increases commitment to address systemic barriers, understanding of how these barriers can be addressed and connections with marginalized communities so their voices can be heard.
- **A Learning Organization:** We are committed to adopting the mindset of a “learning organization,” emphasizing the need to learn from other perspectives, as well as to unlearn/deconstruct structural issues of the professions that create barriers for marginalized groups. SAC will focus on education as a way to provide members and associates with tools and knowledge to make meaningful equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) change when working with diverse communities.
- **Influence Change:** While some of the practical changes required to build more diverse, equitable and inclusive professions are outside our authority, there is a degree of credibility and influence that can be leveraged with partners in the field. SAC will use our position as a national professional association to influence government, educational institutions and peer organizations to prioritize (EDI) in order to support our membership in safely and adequately serving diverse patients and clients across Canada.

What Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Means at SAC

- **Equity & Fairness:** making efforts to provide our membership and employees with the tailored support and resources they need to be successful based on their different abilities and needs.
- **Inclusion & Belonging:** embracing the diversity of our membership and employees and ensuring that everyone feel supported, have access to opportunity and feel empowered to make decisions.
- **Courage & Humility:** being committed to our membership and employees and addressing issues as they arise, acknowledging bias, and encouraging courageous conversations. This involves humbly acknowledging that we do not have all the answers and that sometimes we will make mistakes that we need to learn from and address.
- **Learning & Listening:** making a sincere effort to continuously educate ourselves, both as a group and individuals, on the challenges to incorporating diversity and inclusion in our organization, including actively seeking feedback and listening to those that face barriers to participation.

Our Journey: Actions and Key Priorities

Since formally embarking on this journey to become a more equitable, diverse and inclusive organization, SAC has undertaken a number of steps, several of which help to inform the key priorities for the coming years.

- **Spring 2021:** SAC undertook a comprehensive Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) audit, including a membership survey, to better understand the needs of members and associates. Working with an external consultant we are compiling a report on the results of the audit. We will be sharing this report with the membership.
- **Summer 2021:** All SAC Board Directors and the CEO participated in foundational training in EDI through our work with our external EDI consultant.
- **Fall 2021:** SAC provided professional development opportunities for our members and associates in the form of a webinar series focused on anti-racism and diversity awareness.
- **Fall 2021:** SAC will complete basic foundational cultural awareness and diversity training for all staff and volunteers prior to December 31, 2021.
- **Going forward:** In 2022 SAC will convene our first EDI Committee to help guide the ongoing work of the association on EDI issues.
- **Going forward:** SAC will be using the information gathered through our EDI audit to inform elements of our 2022-2025 Strategic Plan with yearly identified actions to advance our commitment to EDI in SAC and in the professions.