Respite Policy Lens/Framework

Purpose:
The policy lens is intended to provide an analytical and developmental framework by which policy recommendations relating to respite for family caregivers can be analysed or evaluated. The lens has been developed using key definitions which appear on page two of this document.

Format:
The lens is structured as a worksheet with nine lead questions, with sub-questions to be answered with one of four possible responses: *"yes"," no", "not sure/not enough information" or; "not applicable."*

The questions start with the rationale for the proposed policy, and conclude with a question about the planned communications strategy by which the policy will be introduced.

After each lead question, there is space to note additional comments that may form the basis for further research, investigation or modifications.

Once the worksheet has been completed, each column can be tallied in order to arrive at totals, which will guide future steps related to the proposed policy. Comments after each of the nine lead questions should also be considered in arriving at a decision about the policy.

Respite Policy Lens

Definitions

Family Caregiver:
A person who, by virtue of a prior relationship, provides ongoing care and assistance to a family member, friend or neighbour in need of support due to physical, cognitive or mental health conditions.

Respite:
The emotional, psychological, spiritual, physical and/or social **relief or renewal** experienced by the caregiver as a result of access to services and strategies intended to help them maintain their own health and achieve greater balance in their lives. This in turn enables caregivers to secure better quality of life and greater opportunities for community participation for themselves and the family members or friends for whom they provide care and support.

Array of services: the variety of services that will enable the caregiver to choose the service or combination of services that will best meet his/her individual need to experience respite. These may include formal services as well as access to resources and informal supports from a broad spectrum of community agencies.

Integration and Coordination: service delivery across the continuum of care that is characterized by clear communication, cooperation and lack of service duplication among service providers, community support agencies and family caregivers.

Assessed Need: a process by which the caregiver can identify what will provide him/her with the experience of respite, with the opportunity to re-assess as necessary.

Public Policy: a set of interrelated decisions and strategies to achieve particular goals.

Question	Yes	No	Not enough information/unsure	N/A
1. Does the policy reflect current practice, policy, trends and research related to respite as relief and renewal for family caregivers?				
a. Does this policy address a gap or inconsistency in current respite policy?				
b. Has this policy considered implications for key stakeholders including caregivers, care receivers, service providers, the voluntary sector and other government departments?				
c. Is the policy user-friendly and easy to understand in terms of language (vocabulary), content and format?				
Comments:				
2. Is the policy based on the rationale of facilitating relief and renewal for family caregivers?				
a. Does the policy minimize administrative burden for caregivers, care receivers, service providers and government(s)?				
Comments:				
3. Does the policy reflect and recognize participation by all stakeholders and/or potential partners?				
a. Family caregivers?				
b. Care receivers?				
c. Service providers?				
d. Family caregiver associations/organizations?				
e. National/provincial/local advocacy organizations e.g. disability, seniors, ethnocultural groups?				
f. Voluntary organizations and community support agencies?				
g. Employers?				

Question	Yes	No	Not enough information/unsure	N/A
h. Professional associations?				
i. Labour unions?				
j. Research community?				
k. Municipal, regional, provincial and federal governments?				
Comments:				
4. Does the policy recognize the individual nature of caregiving and the resulting need for access to an array of services or community resources?				
a. Does the policy address both scheduled and emergency need for respite?				
b. Does the policy include referral and coordination mechanisms to meet the diverse needs identified by caregivers?				
c. Is there a choice of setting (e.g. in-home, day program, overnight stay)?				
d. Is the policy sensitive to diversity in culture, language, gender, values?				
e. Does the policy address the needs of family caregivers who are physically or socially isolated?				
f. Does the policy exclude any caregiving situations?				
Comments:				
5. Is the policy based on an assessment framework to assure that caregivers' expressed needs and preferences are an integral part of ongoing development of respite service plans?				
a. Is there an independent assessment of caregiver need for respite based on self-assessment by the caregiver?				
b. Is the caregiver involved in planning to experience respite/relief/renewal?				

Question	Yes	No	Not enough information/unsure	N/A
c. Will the caregiver be consulted in a timely manner regarding any changes policy, services or status of care receiver?				
d. Is there a mechanism to reassess on a regular basis?				
e. Can the family caregiver initiate reassessment?				
f. Will unmet needs be captured as part of the assessment?				
Comments:				
6. Are resources in place to implement and sustain this policy?				
a. Are there adequate funding levels?				
b. Is there a sufficient number of staff and volunteers?				
c. Do staff and volunteers have appropriate education and/or training?				
d. Is there administrative infrastructure?				
Comments:				
7. Does the policy address the cost of services to families?				
a. Are some and/or all services to be universally available at no cost to families?				
b. Are some and/or all services within the means of individual families?				
c. Is there an appeals process available to caregivers?				
Comments:				

Question	Yes	No	Not enough information/unsure	N/A
8. Does the policy include outcome indicators to measure the effectiveness of the policy?				
a. Does the policy meet the needs of the target population, family caregivers and the persons for whom they care?				
b. Is there a mechanism in place for service providers to evaluate whether the policy meets its intended objectives?				
c. Is there a mechanism in place for caregivers to evaluate whether the service enables them to experience respite, relief or renewal?				
Comments:				
9. Does the policy include a communications/education strategy?				
a. Does the strategy target all stakeholders and potential partners?				
b. Does the strategy use appropriate communication mechanisms for each group?				
c. Is there designated funding for marketing and promotion?				
d. Are there realistic timeframes for the strategy and implementation of the policy?				
Comments:				
TOTAL				

Once the worksheet is completed, the responses in each column can be tallied.

More "yeses" than "nos":   review to see what changes need to be made to increase the number of yeses
More "nos" than "yeses":   re-examine for content and purpose
More "unsures" than either "yeses" or "nos":   more information, more research needed
More "not applicables" than either "yeses" or "nos":   revisit to determine if it is relevant

Conclusion:
Accepted as developed   _____
Accepted as revised   _____
Need more information   _____
Need to rework/revise policy _____