

# Morris Foundation

## Communications & Public Relations Policy & Procedures

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### 1. External Speakers Policy

**1.a. Purpose for Educational Speakers.** As part of our ongoing learning, we seek out speakers who can respond to either (1) Learning Needs (as expressed in our Board Education Plan), (2) one or more of our Impact Areas in the Strategic Plan or (3) one or more of the Strategic Priorities in our Strategic Plan. We recognize that our twice-yearly face-to-face board meetings are excellent opportunities to increase the board's awareness and understanding of issues, and strive to have an educational speaker at each of these.

**1.b. Choosing Speakers.** The choices of speakers will be driven by (1) recommendations and (2) priority learning needs. It is part of the ED's board meeting planning responsibilities to seek out speakers who can best address the highest priority needs as established in the Board Education Plan.

**1.b. Remuneration.** Speakers are expected to speak without remuneration, as we expect there to be mutual value in making new relationships with those allied with our cause.

**1.c. Speaker Travel Expenses.** We will consider paying a speaker's reasonable and necessary travel expenses if the board has a strong desire to have the speaker and (1) the organization the speaker is employed by is not willing or able to pay the expenses, or (2) the speaker is self-employed.

**1.d. Videoconferencing.** If we cannot afford to bring a speaker to the meeting that we feel is very important for the board's education, we will consider using technology to bring that speaker in virtually. We would prefer not to only have audioconferencing, as the addition of two-way video through our preferred conferencing system, Zoom, brings the experience a step closer to being in the same room and encourages more interaction between the speaker and the trustees and staff.

**1.e. Other Speakers.** The board from time to time may ask the ED to source speakers at additional times, or to utilize videoconferencing and recording technology to record video interviews that the board can watch. This is mainly to deal with emergent issues to which they need immediate background and/or advice.

2. **Dealing with the Media.** The first responder to media should be the Executive Director in all cases. If trustees, the founder, or associated professional advisors or volunteers receive calls from the media, they are to immediately be transferred to this person to determine the most appropriate person to respond. Occasionally the Board Chair, or another trustee, may be called upon to do an interview. In this case, the Executive Director will ensure they are properly prepared to do so.

3. **External Speaking Engagements.** Requests from outside organizations for the Executive Director, trustee or the founder to speak will be managed by the Executive Director. Requests should be vetted by the Board Chair or the Executive Director if the Chair delegates this duty. Our goal is to find a qualified speaker for as many opportunities as possible that arise. If the requested person is not available on the proposed day for the speaking engagement, the Executive Director will endeavor to find another appropriate speaker to recommend from the Foundation before responding negatively to the requesting organization.

4. **Public Response to Inquiries.** To strengthen and preserve the Foundation's reputation and to live our values, we strive in all cases to be as responsible as possible to questions, ideas and issues as they are presented by any of our stakeholders.

We will have multiple vehicles for inquiry about the Foundation, including the website, the Executive Director via phone and email, etc. The primary first responder in most cases should be the Executive Director, who may put people in contact with others within the Foundation as appropriate.

5. **Stakeholders.** It is recognized that the Foundation has responsibility to be responsive and proactive with the following groups in its Communications Strategy activities:

#### **INTERNAL**

- Trustees (focus on keeping trustees up to date on news of the Foundation before it is made public, as well as board education – see Board Education Plan)
- Staff
- Volunteers
- Professional Advisors
- Grantees

#### **EXTERNAL**

- Applicants
- Other Foundations
- Professional Associations
- Government
- Media
- Individuals who represent those we wish to serve

**6. Communication of Grant Awards.** The Foundation wants to ensure that grantees receive maximum exposure for their award, in order to potentially spur other types of support, and to help expose the project/activity to potential end users and partners. Meanwhile, we also want the responsibility for this to be shared between ourselves and the grantee to ensure the best coverage.

We do this in several ways:

1. **Foundation Annual Grant Release.** The Foundation will issue a release that gives information on its grants for the year in September of each year. The Executive Director will develop this information in consultation with the grantees.
2. **Grantee Press Releases.** We support grantees who want to issue their own press release regarding their grant. We ask that it to be (1) submitted to us for a quick review and (2) provided to us in final form prior to its release. We deliver our grant decisions and funds by June 30 of each year, and we ask that no publicity be released before that date.  
If there is an exceptional circumstance, we will consider its merits.  
We request that a one-sentence description of the Foundation be included at the end which reads, *“The Morris Foundation’s mission is to support innovative, evidence-based activities addressing mental illness and addictions in the youth population in Western Canada. More at morrisfoundation.ca.”*
3. **Foundation Website Story.** We will develop a story and photos on the grantee and project, and post it on our website in our newsfeed. Stories will be developed in July for posting in September each year.
4. **Email Blast.** We will also send an email promotion out to our entire email list as part of the Fall Newsletter in September when the stories of all that year’s grantees have been posted.

7. **Recognition of Morris Foundation.** Though our primary concern is for promotion of the project and the grantee, we know there is value in the results of our funding being connected to the Foundation. Therefore, as part of the grant award letter criteria, we ask grantees to include our logo (provided by us) on appropriate materials and/or information associated with the project, at least during the period of the funding.

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