2.1   **Communications**

Spectrum Society uses a variety of materials and methods for communicating with persons served, families, personnel, funders, community partners and other stakeholders, including:

- Reports
- Correspondence
- Presentations
- Training events
- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Meetings
- Website
- Brochures
- Information bulletins
- Forms
- Publications
- Newsletters
- Social media
- Policies and procedures

Communication plays a critical role within the organization. The Communications Policy sets forth guidelines for presenting Spectrum Society and its activities to stakeholders, both internal and external.

(a)   Objectives

The objectives of Spectrum's communications are:

(i)   To share information with all of our stakeholders in ways that are most meaningful and accessible to them;

(ii)   To clearly and consistently articulate Spectrum's mission, values and strategic priorities;

(iii)   To strengthen confidence in the organization and its services;

(iv)   To strengthen Spectrum's reputation and public image;

(v)   To minimize bureaucracy by using plain language and direct communication whenever and wherever possible;

(vi)   To demonstrate compliance with legislation, standards and contractual requirements in ways that are effective, efficient, and least bureaucratic;

(vii)   To share our learning and successes so as to encourage innovation and creativity, and contribute to a world-wide dialogue on best practices.

(b)   Spokespeople

Only designated spokespeople are permitted to speak on behalf of Spectrum Society.

As a non-profit society, the Board of Directors has ultimate authority to speak on behalf of the Society. The Board delegates authority to the Co-Directors of Spectrum, who communicate on behalf of the Board and remain accountable to the Board.

<u>Internal Communications</u>:

The Director of Communications oversees all internal communications, on behalf of the Co-Directors. This includes the development of written policies, procedures, manuals, forms, reporting and monitoring templates, etc. Operational responsibility for particular tasks or functions may be delegated or shared with other personnel, but any changes to established communications must be reviewed and approved by one of the Co-Directors.

Reporting requirements and routine communication between departments, programs and team members are outlined in the Society's personnel policies, and in job descriptions for each position. Please refer to the Personnel Policies and Procedures for more information.

<u>External communications</u>:

The Co-Directors of the Society have designated responsibility for all external communications. This includes official correspondence on behalf of the Society, website content, media relations, social media[i], special projects, proposal writing, fundraising, and publications. Co-Directors may delegate particular tasks or functions to other personnel from time to time or request their participation in an event, for example presenting at conferences. All such activities must be reviewed and approved by one of the Co-Directors, who will affirm that the person(s) speaking on behalf of the Society has the information and resources needed to carry out the activity consistent with the objectives of the communications policy as described above.

In addition to our planned external communications, Spectrum Society is often asked to provide personnel to communicate with external stakeholders or take part in projects as a representative of the Society, for example:

- Presentations about our services
- Training events
- Focus groups
- Committees
- Interviews

All such requests should be referred to the Co-Directors for consideration, to ensure that the activity aligns with Spectrum's goals and priorities, that it doesn't duplicate or interfere with the work of another department or project within Spectrum, that the scope of the request is clearly understood and agreed upon, and that the person(s) chosen to participate are the best suited to represent the Society.

(c)   Communications guidelines

    (i)   Our communications will reflect the Society's values and accepted best practices with regard to language and terminology, including:

- Using *people first* language – referring to the person first and the disability second ("people with disabilities" rather than "the disabled"); avoiding the use of labels and stigmatizing language;
- Using *plain language* – limiting the use of jargon, acronyms, and highly technical, specialized or bureaucratic language.

    (ii)   Writing tips:

- Give your document an appropriate heading and date;
- Use a consistent font throughout (standard business font is Times New Roman, 12 point);
- Be clear and concise;
- Use sub-headings to indicate different sections in a document;
- Proof read your document, or have someone else proof-read it

    (iii)   Written correspondence on behalf of the Society should be typed, on letterhead, appropriately dated, formatted and signed;

    (iii)   Copies of all written correspondence will be saved on the server or on the appropriate Sharevision site.

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[i] Social media includes the Spectrum facebook page, twitter, youtube, blogs, webinars and online discussion forums.