



Anti-Racism, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Commitments

V1: October 1, 2020 | V2: February 5, 2022 | V3: August 15, 2023

Our organization is based in Tkaronto; what is colonially known as Toronto, Canada. This land has been the site of human activity for over 15,000 years and is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples. We are eternally grateful to be sustained by this land, and for the opportunity to work and live on this land, among the many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island who call this place home. We acknowledge the ongoing colonial atrocities and advocate for Truth, Reconciliation, and Indigenous Sovereignty.

We stand in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, and the Movement for Black Liberation while supporting and amplifying calls to end police brutality, defund the police, and invest in social services. Most importantly this will create the possibility for healing within BIPOC communities, but it will also elevate the wellness and prosperity of our society as a whole. *No one is free until we are all free.*

Canada's long history of state-sanctioned violence and systemic oppression has caused, and continues to cause, immeasurable harm to marginalized communities including but not limited to those who identify as BIPOC, LGBTQ2S+, disabled/differently-abled, neurodivergent, economically disadvantaged, and belonging to/with other non-dominant communities in relation to one's ancestry, citizenship, age, family status, immigrant status, receipt of public assistance, political affiliation, religious affiliation, level of literacy and primary language. We include ourselves as a part of Canada, and acknowledge our participation and complicity in these unjust societal patterns of harm and lack of care.

We can and will do better. This will be an ongoing process of reflection and transformation. We commit to listening, learning, and dismantling anti-Indigeneity, white supremacy, heteronormativity, bias that benefits able bodies and neurotypical minds, and other forces of oppression and exclusion within our organization, sector and community. We recognize the generations of people engaged in this work and seek to contribute to their efforts.

The commitments outlined in this document are a way to hold ourselves accountable for small actions that can be accomplished within the modest scope of our organization. We will gratefully receive any suggestions or questions that may arise and look forward to adjusting/refining this outline as we learn our way forward.

www.toesfordance.ca \ info@toesfordance.ca

We commit to:

1. **Fostering a culture of care**
2. **Ensuring diverse representation**
3. **Enhancing the accessibility and inclusivity of our programming**
4. **Decentering dominant culture, identity and practices**
5. **Contributing to a positive impact beyond our events**
6. **Continuous listening, learning, and improving**

See the next page for a detailed breakdown of our approach and actionable steps.

What do we mean by “diversity”? Borrowed/adapted from qcc.cuny.edu/diversity/definition

The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. It is the exploration of differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.

Diversity is a reality created by individuals and groups from a broad spectrum of demographic and philosophical differences. Diversity is a set of conscious practices that involve:

- Understanding and appreciating interdependence of humanity, cultures, and the natural environment.
- Practicing mutual respect for qualities and experiences that are different from our own.
- Understanding that diversity includes not only ways of being but also ways of knowing;
- Recognizing that personal, cultural and institutionalized discrimination creates and sustains privileges for some while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others;
- Building alliances across differences so that we can work together to eradicate all forms of discrimination.

Diversity includes, therefore, knowing how to relate to those qualities and conditions that are different from our own and outside the groups to which we belong, yet are present in other individuals and groups. We acknowledge that categories of difference are not always fixed but also can be fluid and we respect individual rights to self-identification.

What do we mean by “accessibility”? Borrowed/adapted from accessibleuniversity.com/accessibility-basics

One definition of accessibility is “*an umbrella term for all aspects which influence a person’s ability to function within an environment.*”¹ Put another way, accessibility is a measure of how simply a person can participate in an activity. Accessibility takes many forms in many places. Physical environments, such as dwellings, offices and other buildings, elevators, ramps and sidewalks are an obvious category. Transportation is another category - an example of improved accessibility here is wheelchair-friendly buses. Web and digital environments fall into another grouping, in which enlarged fonts and speak-to-text features can be used to improve accessibility.

What do we mean by “Core Team”?

For the purposes of this working document, the term Core Team refers to the TOES FOR DANCE personnel who are primarily responsible for the organization’s operations, namely:

- David Norsworthy, Co-Artistic and Executive Director
- Kristen Carcone, Co-Artistic Director
- Chantelle Good, Artistic Associate

We commit to...	We will...	Actions
Fostering a culture of care	Recognize and celebrate every person as an individual with their own unique identities, histories and human-ness	Welcome audience members, dancers, staff, and guest artists to show up unapologetically as their full selves.
		Organize events so that there's always a support person available for students, staff, and audience members.
		Create a list of references/experts who can offer support when the support needed is beyond our capacity to provide (ie. mental health workers, physicians etc)
		Recognize that this is an ongoing practise that will necessitate forgiveness and compassion.
	Advocate for and cultivate spaces of mindful wellness	Expect that event participants and audience members contribute their best efforts towards creating a safe space
		Educate event participants, staff, and guest artists about needs-based requests, and check-ins for consent and boundaries
		Hire an Intimacy Director, or Safe Space Coordinator to assist with creating a safe space when TFD team is unable to do so
		Create and protect spaces for rest/recovery for staff during/after events and meetings
		Allow space, time and funds for staff and community celebration
	Practice transparent communication	Create the time to ensure that all staff members and guest artists feel informed, supported, and prepared before an event (ie. hold pre-event meeting with the team)
		Create space for concerns to be heard and actively request feedback
	Commit to paying no less than a living wage	Budget for all staff and guest artists to be paid at least Toronto's living wage (\$23.15/hr at the time of publication)

		Adjust scope of work/complexity of programming as needed to ensure this commitment functions with integrity
Ensuring diverse representation	Work towards robust diversity in our artist curation/selection, staff and board of directors	Consciously research, build, and hire a diverse roster of artists who reflect a wide range of identities, communities, dance histories, and dance practices
		Work with our Board to cultivate community relationships in a way that widens the pool of prospective future Board candidates
Enhancing the accessibility and inclusivity of our programming	Foster a welcoming and inclusive environment for students and audience members	Create programming that features diverse artists, stories, and dance practices
		Self produce more events in locations not affiliated with a majority group of participants, to better facilitate gatherings that bring together different circles
	Commit time and resources towards broadening our accessibility efforts	Share public transit routes to events
		Implement sliding scale payment options at as many events as possible, when free ticketing/admission is not possible
		Invite accessibility requests before events, and work to meet the needs of patrons and participants to the best of our ability
		Ask workshop facilitators to design lesson plans that are adaptive and welcoming for people with different kinds/levels of mobility, and experience with dance
		Curate an accessibility track for performances when possible (ie. wheelchair routes)
		Hire an ASL interpreter for at least one event annually. Meet with interpreter(s) prior to event to ensure they are supported.
		Include visual descriptions of photos on social media platforms and TFD website

		Acknowledge when our accessibility efforts fail to include a particular group due to circumstances beyond our control
Decentering dominant culture, identity and practices	Recalibrate language and values to subvert normative ways of being and working	Decenter whiteness with language when speaking about dance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referring to contemporary and modern dance, with specificity of the origins/lineage (i.e. contemporary dance that derives from western white culture) Not referring to ballet as a foundational technique Not referring to hip hop dance forms as “urban dance” but rather specifying the genre or technique when possible, as determined by the artist (house, popping etc).
		Remove gender binary language (masculine, feminine) from all written materials and verbal communications, except when referring to a particular person whose pronouns are known
		Consider, question and challenge qualities of white supremacist culture (ie. perfectionism, individualism), during event planning and implementation
	Direct resources and attention towards historically marginalized artists and their work	Feature non-dominant dance practices in curated performances to uplift their presence and visibility
	Develop equitable relationships in workshop events	Research ways to reimagine pedagogical behavioral management through a lens of trauma-informed leadership. Share what is learned with guest artists and staff.
		Develop strategies through which participants, staff, and guest artists have permission to set personal boundaries and opt-in / out of activities autonomously
	Elevate awareness of Indigenous presence and land rights in everyday life	Promote in-depth learning about the land on which we work, its traditional caretakers and the Métis, Inuit, and First Nations communities who continue to live here.

		Verbally acknowledge the land and its traditional caretakers at the beginning of each event and group meeting. Consider what it means to do so in a way that is heartfelt and action-oriented.
		Publish a land acknowledgement on the TFD website and in email newsletters
	Acknowledge the contributions of BIPOC artists to the dance genres that we teach and present	Research dance history and ways to share it in an accessible manner through online learning and by talking with other dancers
		Share the history of dance practices in all workshops and when non-dominant forms are within our programming
Contributing to positive impact beyond our events	Support community organizations that align with our organization's values, including social justice and youth education	Make a donation, with a percentage of proceeds from classes or performances
		Spread awareness through social media
		Offer in-kind teaching for charitable/advocacy events, if requested
	Deeply consider who we work with and how we engage with/support them	Ask artists/partners to acknowledge and pledge support towards these commitments during the contracting process
		Research ways to create TFD merchandise ethically (avoid overproduction, use sustainable materials, consider ethical conditions for workers, thrift when possible)
Continuous listening, learning, and improving	Implement practical feedback processes (i.e. processes that lead to actions/change)	Intentionally collect feedback from staff and guest artists, about programming and EDI/anti-racism. Pay for their input.
	Learn together, change our minds, deal with failure, acknowledge our shortcomings, forgive, adapt	Annually engage in group learning
		Annually re-evaluate these commitments.
	Share leadership and flatten hierarchies	Include core team in planning sessions and professional development opportunities
Invite staff, guests, and teachers to AGM		