

## **RESPONDING TO HARM DONE BY RACIST AND MARGINALIZING ACTIONS, WORDS AND ATTITUDES IN THE CHURCH FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Background**

In 2022, The Presbyterian Church in Canada adopted the report of the Special Committee re Petition Nos. 1 and 2, 2021. The report draws on the stories of people who shared their experiences of harm done by racist and marginalizing actions, words and attitudes in The Presbyterian Church in Canada. In recognition of the harm the church has caused, funds are available to provide financial assistance for accessing counseling or psychotherapy to help support healing. This document includes information about who is eligible for funding and how the fund is administered.

If you would like to inquire about the funds or request financial assistance, you may contact any member of the review committee by phone or email.

- Dr. Allyson Carr, Associate Secretary for Justice Ministries: [acarr@presbyterian.ca](mailto:acarr@presbyterian.ca), 1-800-619-7301, ext. 322 (temporary),
- The Rev. Victor Kim Principal Clerk, General Assembly: [vkim@presbyterian.ca](mailto:vkim@presbyterian.ca), 1-800-619-7301, ext. 227,
- The Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald General Secretary, Life and Mission Agency: [imcdonald@presbyterian.ca](mailto:imcdonald@presbyterian.ca), 1-800-619-7301 ext. 289.

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### **What is the fund for?**

The fund provides financial assistance to support psychotherapy or counseling for those who have been harmed by racist and marginalizing actions, words and attitudes of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and how it has negatively impacted them. For the purposes of this fund, “The Presbyterian Church in Canada” may refer to congregational ministries, courts of the church, colleges, camps, retreat centres and other programs that are affiliated with the denomination. In some cases, harm may not have occurred in a church or building owned by The Presbyterian Church in Canada, but may have been perpetrated by an employee, volunteer, member or adherent of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Requests may be submitted:

- to reimburse costs incurred for past counseling or psychotherapy sessions, and/or
- to cover the cost of ongoing counseling or psychotherapy sessions.

Financial assistance provided through this fund may be used for an array of therapeutic options. However, fund for counseling can only be used by therapists who are qualified to practice according to provincially regulated standards and colleges.

#### **Who is eligible to receive funding?**

People who have experienced racist and marginalizing actions, words and attitudes in the church within the church are eligible to be considered for financial support. Individuals inquiring about funds will be asked to briefly relate their story and describe how actions, words and attitudes in the church have negatively impacted them.

#### **What level of funding is available?**

Requests vary based on the needs of those applying. People inquiring about the funds should take into consideration the hourly fee of the professional they want to work with and how many sessions they expect to need.

#### **Who reviews requests for funding?**

Requests will be considered promptly by a small review committee. There is no annual or quarterly deadline to submit a request. All requests are kept strictly confidential. The review committee is comprised of the Associate Secretary for Justice Ministries, the General Secretary, Life and Mission Agency and the Principal Clerk, General Assembly Office. The review committee’s work is confidential and only pertinent details are shared with the full review committee by the person who receives the initial request. Questions about this process and its composition can be discussed when speaking with one of the members of the committee about applying for funds.

**What can individuals do if they want to inquire about the fund but are reluctant to contact the denomination's offices directly?**

People who have experienced harm in the church may be hesitant to contact the church's national office. In such cases, individuals may choose to ask a trusted person to contact a member of the review committee on their behalf to seek additional information about the process. A trusted third party might be a family member, friend, minister, church elder, or mental health professional. The review committee would not require a third party to disclose the name of the person who asked them to inquire about the fund.

**What information do individuals need to provide when requesting funds?**

The amount of information disclosed is at the discretion of the individual making a request for funding. Intake conversations will typically cover the following:

- A general description of the harm experienced and the reason for seeking help from a counselor or psychotherapist. The description of harm should include an account of how the events impacted the individual. It may not be necessary to disclose names or identifying details of other parties involved;
- The amount of funding requested; and
- A general plan for the use of the funding. This will usually include both the hourly rate of the professional the individual requesting assistance plans to work with as well as an estimate of how frequently they plan to see the counselor or psychotherapist of their choosing to work on this part of their healing)

The information that we hear will also be used to consider ways to reduce racism and marginalization in the church and to address its impacts.

**Do individuals need to have filed a complaint under one of the church's harassment policies to be eligible?**

No. This program is separate from any proceedings related to The Presbyterian Church in Canada's policies and procedures for instances where there has been harassment.

**Can individuals request funds if they don't already have a counsellor?**

Yes. Financial assistance can be held until counseling begins.