**Peer Outreach Support Services and Education (POSSE) Project –**

**Philosophy and Values Statement**

Philosophy and Values:

* POSSE humbly acknowledges and provides services and support in the unceded territory of the Mi’kmaq (under the Treaties of Peace and Friendship of Mi’kma’ki), maintaining a commitment to decolonization of service provision through unity, peace and friendship through fostering relationship building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. POSSE recognizes the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and is striving to move beyond to respect all the cultural aspects, and teachings within the Indigenous nations and communities. M’sit Nokama (all our relations). POSSE values and appreciates the teachings and contributions of Indigenous relations of this land.
* POSSE acknowledges and appreciates the 400+ year history of African decedents in Nova Scotia. We honour and offer gratitude to the ancestors of those African descents who came before us to this land and settled in 52 historically Black Communities. We recognize that rich history of Black Nova Scotians whose contributions have been fundamental to this land we call home.
* Everyone has an inherent right to equality, dignity, safety, respect and their basic human rights regardless of age, race, ethnicity, culture, ability, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other distinguishing characteristics.
* All People should be understood as valuable members of their communities.
* Change is voluntary and we believe that consistent service, unconditional acceptance, and healthy relationships are imperative in developing a trusting rapport with people. It is only through this kind of trusting relationship that, when a person is ready, we will be able to assist in facilitating a transition to a healthier lifestyle. Our experience has been that a community driven, peer-based model of service provision allows POSSE to serve people who are reluctant to access “gated” services, increases empowerment, and fosters a sense of community “ownership” of the project
* We believe people have the right to meaningful participation in decision making that affects them personally, politically and programmatically, since people are experts in their own lives and needs.

* POSSE values this expertise and recognizes that people must be consulted with in making decisions that affect their lives, and the services that service them. This means providing financial compensation for their participation to make it possible for people to afford the time to get involved. We provide training opportunities for people, including those with lived and living experience, with various levels of responsibility for running within POSSE.
* We believe in reducing barriers to service by designing POSSE to fill the gaps in service provision, by offering services that are otherwise non-existent at this time.
* We believe in being a peer-based organization where person to person mentorship and skill building is fostered.
* Above all, we believe in providing a chance for the peer-driven model to evolve and change, as it will in growing to realize our full potential. POSSE began as a grassroots movement and continues to uplift and support marginalized, underrepresented and oppressed communities. We continue to uphold these values throughout our continued growth and development.

I understand that these values are at the center of the work we do with POSSE. While volunteering or employed with the POSSE Project, I will work to uphold these values wherever possible.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_