

HOST HOMES YOUTH RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important to have a strong understanding of your rights and responsibilities as a participant of a Host Homes, or any housing support program.

HUMAN RIGHTS:

We are all equal as human beings, and all have the same human rights. You don't have to earn human rights, you are born with them and they cannot be taken away. As a youth, you are entitled to all human rights, such as:

- Right to Health
- Right to Food
- Right to Housing
- Right to Adequate Standard of Living Accommodations
- Right to Personal Security and Privacy
- Right of Access to Justice
- Right to Education
- Right to Work
- Right to Freedom from Discrimination
- Right to Equality
- Freedom of Expression
- Freedom of Assembly

(<https://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/YouthRightsRightsNow-final.pdf>)

[The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights](#) includes 30 human rights.

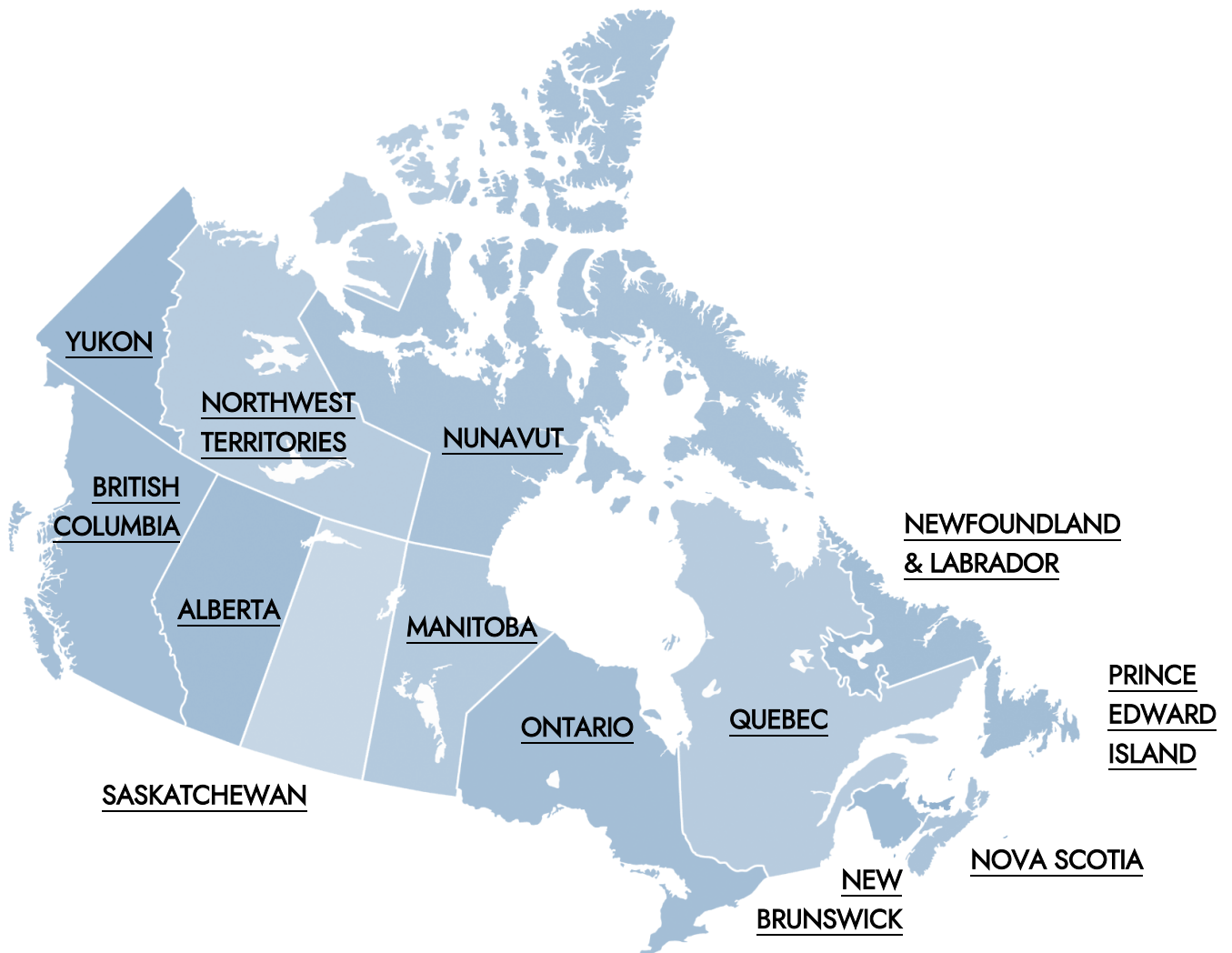
All humans of different nationalities, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, race, language or any other status are entitled to the same human rights *without discrimination*. In fact, harassment and discrimination are against the law in Canada. Across Canada, your human rights are protected by provincial, territorial, federal and international law. If you feel your human rights are being violated you can file a complaint with the [Canadian Human Rights Commission](#).



TENANT RIGHTS:

If you are paying rent, your rights and responsibilities are also protected as a Tenant. These rights change according to which province or territory you live in. Each province or territory has a different system for managing these rights and corresponding complaints. In addition, landlords have their own unique rights and responsibilities according to where they live. This can make the systems complex and hard to understand at times.

It is important to learn your rights/responsibilities and how to make a complaint if need be, prior to signing a lease agreement or even starting to pay rent without a written contract.



RESPONSIBILITIES:

In Canada, our rights come with citizenship responsibilities. These include:

- **Obedying the law** — Individuals and governments are regulated by laws and not by arbitrary actions. No person or group is above the law.
- **Taking responsibility for oneself and one's family** — Getting a job, taking care of one's family, and working hard in keeping with one's abilities are important Canadian values. Work contributes to personal dignity and self-respect, and to Canada's prosperity.
- **Serving on a jury** — When called to do so, you are legally required to serve. Serving on a jury makes the justice system work as it depends on impartial juries made up of citizens.
- **Voting in elections** — The right to vote comes with a responsibility to vote in federal, provincial or territorial and local elections.
- **Helping others in the community** — Millions of volunteers freely donate their time to help others without pay—helping people in need, assisting at school, volunteering at a food bank or other charity, or encouraging newcomers to integrate.
- **Protecting and enjoying our heritage and environment** — Every citizen has a role to play in avoiding waste and pollution while protecting Canada's natural, cultural, and architectural heritage for future generations.

(<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/discover-canada/read-online/rights-responsibilities-citizenship.html>)



PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES:

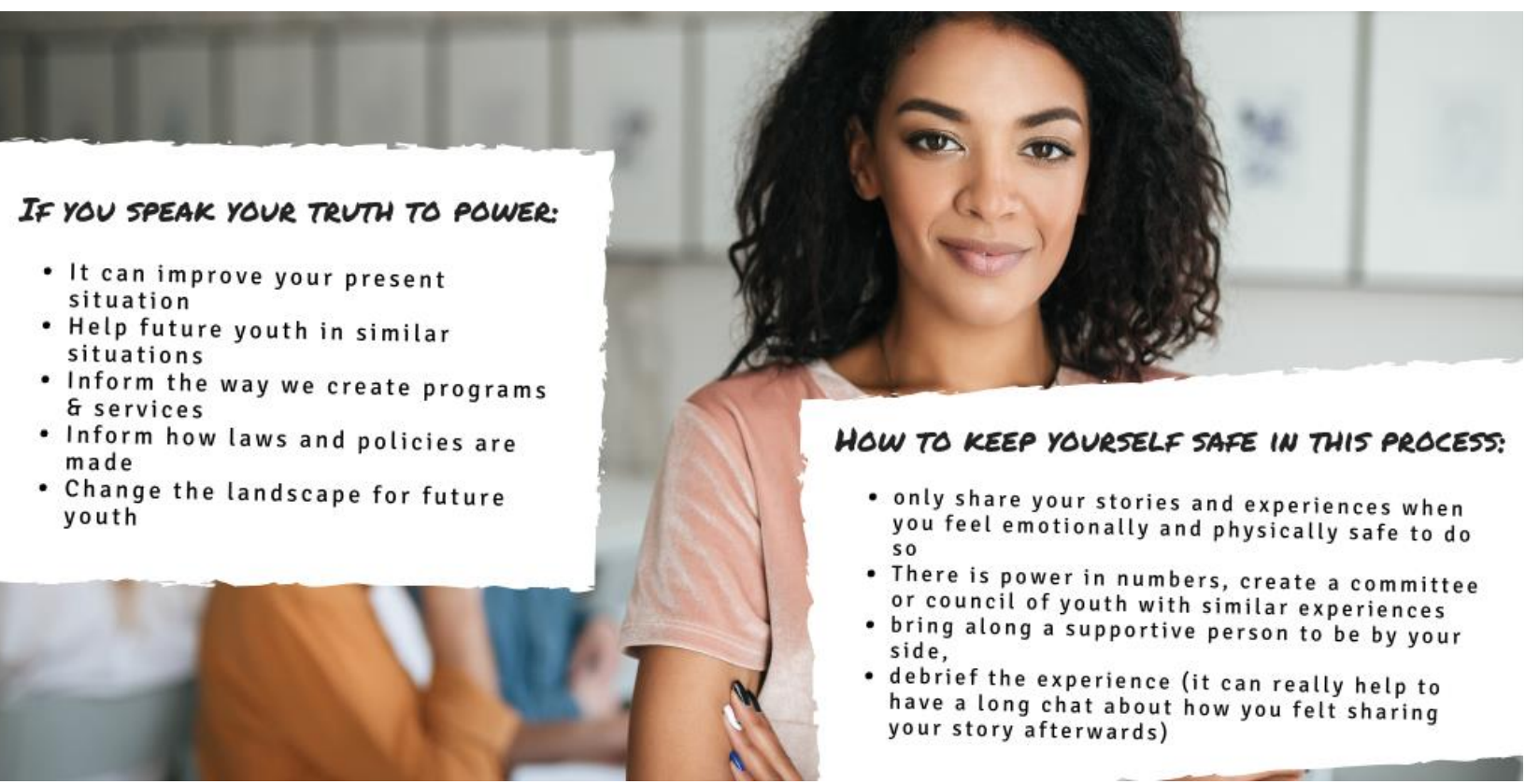
Many housing or social support programs will ask their participants to adhere to program requirements, as a form of responsibilities of the clients. It is within the discretion of an organization to ask their clients to adhere to responsibilities in order to maintain respect and safety within their culture, for their staff and community members/volunteers. If someone fails to adhere these responsibilities, they can be asked to leave a program.

CONCLUSION:

If you are facing a situation which makes you question whether your rights are being violated, it is important to report this.

- Most organizations have a process in place for responding to a complaint. You can ask about this during your intake meeting or during a regular case management meeting. It is ok to be proactive and ask about how to manage a complaint before a concern even happens.
- A good place to start is having a conversation with the people in charge, where your concern arose. Perhaps a manager or supervisor can listen to your concerns and/or mediate a conversation with you present.
- If this doesn't feel successful, you can take steps to report your concern to someone with more authority at the organization like a CEO or Executive Director.
- If you still feel unsatisfied, you can explore a formal complaint or report as per the resources above.

As youth in an ever-changing society, it is important to advocate for your rights and for the rights of those around you. It is important to *speak your truth* to people in positions of power, so that we can collectively create a society that protects all of us.



IF YOU SPEAK YOUR TRUTH TO POWER:

- It can improve your present situation
- Help future youth in similar situations
- Inform the way we create programs & services
- Inform how laws and policies are made
- Change the landscape for future youth

HOW TO KEEP YOURSELF SAFE IN THIS PROCESS:

- only share your stories and experiences when you feel emotionally and physically safe to do so
- There is power in numbers, create a committee or council of youth with similar experiences
- bring along a supportive person to be by your side,
- debrief the experience (it can really help to have a long chat about how you felt sharing your story afterwards)