



**FOOD MATTERS**  
M A N I T O B A

## Guiding Statement

**A statement of intention & accountability for our organization moving forward**

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### **At Food Matters Manitoba, we...**

1. Acknowledge that all people are entitled to a personal and cultural relationship to food, and that all foods have a place and hold value.
2. Recognize that food security requires a variety of food options so that individuals are able to act with agency in their food choices.
3. Recognize these personal and cultural relationships to food exist within complex and intersectional frameworks of harm: white supremacy, racism, colonialism, patriarchy, ableism, classism, sizeism, and ageism (among other oppressions).
4. Work both internally and alongside others to seek to ensure our ongoing work in food security (and beyond) does not perpetuate or reinforce harm, and seeks to de-centre whiteness.
5. Recognize that food security is a collective and shared experience, and celebrate the importance of sharing; knowledge, resources, ideas, discomfort, and joy.

# Guiding Statements

## **All food has a place and holds value.**

We acknowledge that all people are entitled to their own personal and cultural relationship to food. These relationships include emotional, cultural, physical, spiritual connections.

## **Racism is often present in how we think and talk about food.**

We acknowledge our individual, organizational, and collective responsibility to approach all food with respectful curiosity, and a willingness to interrogate initial bias and personal judgement. We acknowledge our responsibility to active anti-racism, and to de-centring whiteness.

## **Labelling certain foods as 'whole', 'good' or 'healthy' promotes the idea that food consumption is a moral act.**

The impacts of this moralizing of food and eating are felt by all, but disproportionately impact individuals who have been made food insecure.

We recognize that relationships to food exist within broader social frameworks of harm: white supremacy (racism), colonialism, patriarchy, ableism, classism, sizeism, and ageism (among other oppressions) that disproportionately impact certain individuals.

We acknowledge that these social frameworks of oppression inform which foods are determined 'good' and which are determined 'bad', and therefore create a self-sustaining cycle.

## **Labelling foods as 'junk', 'bad', 'processed', 'unhealthy' promotes restrictive thinking and behaviours.**

Restrictive attitudes and behaviours towards food (diet culture) leads to fractured and unsatisfying relationships with food and our bodies.

We acknowledge use of these labels reinforces diet culture (restrictive thinking and behavior); positing that thinness = health; that thinness is universally attainable; that thinness is superior.

We acknowledge the strong correlations between diet culture and disordered eating.

We recognize that food security requires a variety of food choices, and the acknowledgement that all foods have a place and hold value, so that individuals are able to act with agency in their food choices.

# In Action

## Food Matters Manitoba acknowledges our individual, organizational, and collective responsibility to:

1. Increasingly centre IBPOC voices and leadership and challenge white supremacy in food security work.
2. Approach all foods, and all relationships to food with respectful curiosity, and a willingness to interrogate initial bias and personal judgement.
3. Be conscious and deliberate in the language we use when talking about food, pausing to consider “what is it that precisely that I am trying to say?”, in recognition that messaging which suggests particular foods are ‘good’ and others are ‘bad’ perpetuates a false moral dichotomy surrounding food choices and the people who make them. The pervasiveness and expansiveness of diet culture requires that we think reflexively, as functional language is often co-opted.
4. Implement a body justice approach (informed by previous FMM work regarding Health At Every Size) as one of multiple internal and external strategies to challenge oppressive ideas about food and bodies.
5. Facilitate necessary dialogue throughout food security works (and beyond), engaging with the complex and sometimes harmful ideas we have about food and bodies (one often an expression of the other, but both as a reflection of oppressive notions). Ensure resources and space for conversation are available through Food Action Hub.
6. Work with partnering and out-of-sector agencies and individuals to create and facilitate their own structures of accountability.
7. Create a long-term collaborative strategy which seeks to interrogate and inform ongoing and future public health research regarding food insecurity. Such works regularly utilize BMI and body weight as the primary measure of health outcomes, obfuscating valuable data.

**The above is a working draft, which will be regularly revisited. We recognize that some of our existing materials may reflect historical statements which conflict with this guiding statement, and ask for your patience as they are updated.**