



HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY

AODA - Accessibility for Customers with Disabilities

Document #: 623	Version #: 2
Approval Date: 11/13/2013	Review Date: No Review Date
Approved By: CEOs	

1 PURPOSE

This policy describes the Canadian Mental Health Association, York Region's (CMHA-YR) commitment to take reasonable measures to provide accessible service to persons with disabilities.

This policy is established in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* ("AODA"), its *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service regulation (O. Reg. 429/07)*, and is consistent with the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and with CMHA-YR mission, vision and values.

2 SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- Members of the public who use our services and/or attend our facilities.
- All board members, clients, employees, students, volunteers, consultants, contractors, and others working on behalf of CMHA-YR and who provide client services.
- People who accompany people with disabilities who use our services or visit our premises.

3 POLICY STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

[AODA- Statement of Commitment](#) from Chief Executive Officer, CMHA-YR

4 POLICY

We believe that treating people with respect is a key principle in providing excellent client care, and of an effective, healthy organization.

We will use reasonable efforts to provide accessible client services consistent with core principles of the AODA: independence, dignity, integration, equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

We will do this by:

- 4.1 Allowing people with disabilities to use their personal assistive devices and any assistive device available on-site. People with disabilities have the right to use their own personal assistive devices while accessing our services unless there is a defined risk associated with that use.
- 4.2 Communicating with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disabilities.
- 4.3 Providing services according to individual needs.
- 4.4 Welcoming people accompanied by guide dogs, service animals or support persons. People with disabilities who use service animals have the right to enter our locations with the animal and keep the animal with them, unless excluded by law.
- 4.5 Assisting people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal when they request help with their animal if it is safe and reasonable to do so.
- 4.6 Providing other measures for people with disabilities to access our services if their service animal is excluded by law from certain areas of our premises.
- 4.7 Allowing full access to our premises to people with disabilities and their support persons, unless that area of the organization is not open to the public or other third parties.
- 4.8 Ensuring the person with a disability and his or her support person are able to enter our premises together and that the person with a disability has access to his or her support person at all times while in our premises.
- 4.9 Giving advance notice regarding the amount, if any, that will be charged for an accompanying support person to attend events or services sponsored by us.
- 4.10 Providing clear, complete, timely and prominent notice of a temporary disruption of any of our facilities (e.g., elevators, accessible washrooms) as soon as we can. The notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. All CMHA-YR representatives will endeavour to provide advance notice directly to clients, for example, by telephone or

e-mail depending upon the person's disability and through posted announcements. If there is an unexpected disruption, clients will be notified as soon as possible.

4.11 Providing timely and ongoing training on providing customer service to people with disabilities to all employees, board members, volunteers, students, consultants, contractors and any other people who provide a service to our clients or members of the public on our behalf. Training will include:

- The purpose of the AODA and the requirements of the Accessible Customer Service Standard regulation.
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.
- How to access internal resources on how to use the equipment or assistive devices available at CMHA-YR that may help with the provision of services to people with disabilities, for example: bell relay, accessible washrooms, etc.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing CMHA-YR's services.
- CMHA-YR's policies, practices and procedures that affect the way services are provided to people with disabilities.

Training will occur on an on-going basis when changes are made to the policies, practices and procedures.

The training for all board members, employees, students, consultants, contractors, will be recorded and tracked by the Human Resources Department. The training for all volunteers will be recorded by the Volunteer Coordinator.

4.12 Implementing and communicating our procedures for receiving and responding to feedback about how we provide services to people with disabilities.

- Clients, families and visitors are encouraged to contact Program Managers or Directors to give feedback, suggestions, complaints or compliments regarding our services. This includes any feedback related to accessibility and client service at CMHA-YR for people with disabilities.
- Any staff receiving comments/feedbacks may refer people to any of the Program Managers or Directors.
- The process for providing feedback on how we provide services to people with disabilities is as follows:

- Mail:
Attention: AODA Lead
15150 Yonge Street, Suite 201, ON, L4G 1M2
- Web-site: <http://www.cmha-yr.on.ca/accessibility-ontarians-disabilities-act/>
- E-mail: AODA@cmha-yr.on.ca
- Telephone: 905-841-3977/1-866-345-0183 Ext.2632 (AODA)
- Fax: Attention: AODA Lead, 905-853-1051
- In person, any other alternate format
- Complaints may be filed in accordance with our Client Complaint Policy:
[Policy: Client Complaint](#)

- The process for responding to feedback is contained in the *Client Complaint policy*.

4.13 Document Accessibility:

All documents required under this Policy and under the AODA are available upon request. We will take into consideration the person's ability to access the information and will provide the document or information in a format that meets those needs or by such other method that is reasonable in the circumstances, for example, via email, large font, hard copy, verbally in person or by telephone.

5 LIMITATIONS

This policy does not cover:

- The types or content of the programs or services CMHA-YR provides.
- Services provided internally to staff, students, volunteers and contractors, unless the person is also a client of CMHA-YR and participates in our programs or services.
- Events held off premises over which CMHA-YR does not have control.
- Animals that do not come under the definition of "guide dog" or "service animals".
- Events held on our premises but which are not sponsored by us.
- This policy does not cover devices that are used by people without disabilities or devices that are not related to disability.

6 DEFINITIONS

- Admission

The fee charged for attending events or obtaining services

- Alternative Ways

Ways of helping clients or visitors with disabilities access our premises or services when they are unable to use their own assistive devices. Alternative ways must consider the principles defined in this policy. Examples of alternative ways are:

- A staff person providing assistance when a personal assistive device cannot be used.
- A staff person helping clients use accessibility software installed on our computers when their software is not compatible with ours.
- Writing information clearly and simply if electrical equipment causes static in a person's hearing aid
- Asking how best to assist the person.

- Assistive Device

May be devices that people bring with them, such as walkers, magnifiers, or oxygen tanks. Assistive devices that an organization might provide include: assistive software for people with visual, hearing or mobility impairments, wheelchairs or TTY (telephone teletype), real-time captioning or assistance from a staff person.

Barrier: Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

- Client, Customer

A person who inquires about or accesses CMHA-YR services or visits our premises.

- Dignity

Treating a client with a disability as valued and deserving of the same type of service CMHA-YR provides to any other client.

- Disability

The definition of “Disability” used in the AODA and the standard is from the *Human Rights Code* and means:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- A mental disorder or
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, “Disability covers a broad range and degree of conditions, some visible and others not. A disability may have been present from birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time. It includes physical, mental, and learning disabilities, mental disorders, hearing or vision disabilities, epilepsy, drug and alcohol dependencies, environmental sensitivities, as well as other conditions.”

In relation to mental disabilities specifically, the Commission states:

“Protection for persons with mental disabilities deserves special attention. These persons have the same rights as persons with any other kind of disability. They may, however, have trouble expressing themselves or even identifying that they have a disability.”

- Equal Opportunity

People with disabilities having the same chances, options, benefits as others and their special needs are taken into account to ensure they can fully participate in programs and services.

- Guide Dog

This is a dog that has successfully completed the training program at any of the facilities listed in the *Blind Persons' Rights Act* and has been qualified as a guide dog.

- Independence

Freedom from control or influence of others, freedom to make choices or do things in a preferred way at a chosen pace.

- Integration

Allowing clients who have disabilities to fully benefit from the same programs and services in the same place and in the same or similar ways as other clients. In the context of this policy, integration of services does not mean coordinating services among service providers and jurisdictions.

- Premises

All locations under the control of CMHA-YR.

- Service

For the purposes of this policy, service is defined as work or duties performed for the benefit of the client and include providing programming, consultations and training.

- Service Animal

May also be called “assistance animals”, “assist animals”, “support animals” or “helper animals”. An animal is qualified to be a service animal if:

- It is readily apparent the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- The person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

- Support Person

May also be called “support professional”, “caregiver”, “interpreter” or “friend” to name a few. A support person is a person who assists an individual with a disability to lead a self-directed life and who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or access to goods or services. This may be a professional, relative, volunteer or friend.

7 RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Employer

- meet all requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service regulation under the AODA
- include requirements under this Policy in all CMHA policies and practices
- implement and monitor the customer service feedback process
- include accessibility requirements under the AODA as part of the planning processes and annual budget

7.2 Supervisors

- implement requirements of this Policy
- lead their programs/departments to comply with this Policy, the AODA and its regulations

7.3 Employees, Board Members, Volunteers, Students, Contractors, Consultants

- everyone who provides client care or who deals with the public, client family members, or community partners on behalf of CMHA-YR, is required to become familiar with and comply with this Policy
- participate in training on the AODA and its regulations

7.4 Human Resources (HR)

- coordinate and develop related policies and procedures and monitor compliance with the AODA and its regulations
- coordinate, implement, and monitor training programs
- maintain written training records

7.5 Volunteer Coordinator

- ensure all volunteers receive training
- maintain written training records

7.6 AODA Lead

- gather complaint and feedback
- review complaint and feedback
- organize and participate in the AODA Advisory Committee

8 ATTACHMENTS AND LINKS

- [AODA- Statement of Commitment](#)
- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#)
- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 - O. Reg. 429/07](#)
- [Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service](#)
- [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)
- [Human Rights Code of Ontario](#)
- [Blind Persons' Rights Act](#)
- [HR Policy: Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy](#)
- [Policy: Client Complaint](#)