

Accessible Communications and Services Policy

Section: Corporate	Section Number:
Policy Title: Accessible Communications and Services Policy	Policy Number:
Issue Date:	Approved By: Board of Directors
Review Date:	Approved By:-----

Purpose

The right to communication is protected under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. Good communication between individuals is based on mutual respect and attentive listening. Good communication is also necessary for persons with disabilities to access St. Paul's programs, services, and facilities. The purpose of this policy is to recognize the increasingly diverse composition of the communities we serve and to be sensitive to the accessibility requirements of our clients with disabilities.

Policy

In order to provide client-centred care and enhance clients' quality of life, St. Paul's will make every effort to be sensitive to the needs of persons with disabilities by:

- Integrating clients' accessibility requirements or preferences in their care plan in a manner that respects their dignity and preferred level of independence;
- Exploring ways to improve communication and overcome barriers in order to continue providing quality service and minimize risks;
- Making reasonable efforts to ensure that persons with disabilities have an equal opportunity to access St. Paul's facilities and services.

Definition

Disability refers to:

- a) 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 coordination, 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;
- b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d) a mental disorder;
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

Communication refers to the exchange of information between individuals, by means of speaking, writing, or using a common system of signs or behaviour.

Objectives

1. Promote client's quality of life;
2. Enhance client's independence and ability to live at home;
3. Meet client's service and program needs;
4. Train staff/volunteers/instructors to communicate with the client in a manner which takes into account the client's disability.

Procedures for assigning staff

1. Assess client's needs, including physical, medical, emotional and mental health, and disability.
2. Develop a care plan with the client that meets these needs.
3. Tailor a service plan which will meet the client's needs and remove barriers to access.

References

Accessibility Directorate of Ontario
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities, 2005

This policy is adapted from the Cultural and Language Sensitivity Policy