



## **Section 10: Accessibility**

- 10.00 Provision of Client Services
- 10.01 Use of Assistive Devices by the General Public
- 10.02 Assistive Devices Provided by CMHA
- 10.03 Communication
- 10.04 Service Animals
- 10.05 Support Persons / Admission Fee – Advance Notice
- 10.06 Notification of Disruption of Service
- 10.07 Accessible Client Service Training
- 10.08 Monitoring and Feedback on Accessible Client Service
- 10.09 Provision of Documentation
- 10.10 Emergency Evacuation

CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION, SIMCOE COUNTY BRANCH  
ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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**ORGANIZATION - Accessibility**

**Section: 10.00**

**Subject: Provision of Client Services**

**Page: 1 of 1**

**Revision Date: JAN/17**

**Review Date: JAN/18**

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CMHA, Simcoe County Branch, is committed to meeting our clients' needs for accessible services based on the four guiding principles set out in legislation and listed below. We are committed to the development, ongoing monitoring and improvement of accessibility standards. Where limited by building structure we are committed to ensuring new rentals (where available\*) or property purchases meet all applicable accessibility standards.

\*e.g. Collingwood has very little affordable accessible office space for rent currently.

**Guiding Principles:**

**Dignity** - service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people.

**Independence** - when a person with a disability is allowed to do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others.

**Integration** - service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other clients, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to access goods or services.

**Equal opportunity** - service is provided to a person with a disability in such a way that they have an opportunity to access our goods or services equal to that given to others.

The following accessibility policies and training apply to all staff, volunteers, students and others who may provide services on behalf of the agency or participate in the development of policies and procedures for the agency.

*The development of the following policies has relied on the 'Accessibility Standards for Client Service Tool Kit and Resources' for the mental health and addictions sector, 2009, 'Training Resource – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and website policies of the Simcoe County District School Board and the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services 'Access ON' website at*  
<http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcss/programs/accessibility/ComplyingStandards/clientservice/index.aspx>

**ORGANIZATION - Accessibility**

**Section: 10.01**

**Subject: Use of Assistive Devices by the General Public**

**Page: 1 of 2**

**Revision Date: JAN/17**

**Review Date: JAN/18**

---

**Responsibility**

- 1.1 Directors and Program Managers will ensure that staff, volunteers and students are trained to support clients and the general public who may use assistive devices while accessing CMHA services or attending functions hosted by CMHA.
- 1.2 **Training is focussed on how to interact with people using assistive devices** rather than on the technical use of the assistive devices.

**Communication Re: Use of Assistive Devices**

- 2.1 Assistive Devices Carried by Persons with Disabilities – all such devices are welcome in all CMHA facilities. A statement indicating that all CMHA facilities provide services that respect the independence and dignity of individuals with disabilities will be posted on our website and posted at all program sites.
- 2.2 Each reception area or front office will post information that welcomes the assistive devices and encourages users to seek support from staff, students and volunteers as they require it.
- 2.3 Examples of personal assistive devices include:
  - Wheelchairs
  - Scooters
  - Walker
  - Canes
  - Amplification devices that boost sound for listeners who are hard-of-hearing without reducing background noise
  - Hearing aids
  - Oxygen tanks
  - Electronic notebooks or laptop computers
  - Personal data managers
  - Communication boards used to communicate using symbols, word or pictures
  - Speech-generating devices that ‘speak’ when a symbol, word or picture is pressed

**One should not touch or handle an assistive device without permission.**

Required training:

- Read Appendix A on Assistive Devices

View relevant video at

[http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/tools/howto\\_videos.aspx](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/tools/howto_videos.aspx)

**ORGANIZATION - Accessibility**

**Section: 10.01**

**Subject: Use of Assistive Devices by the General Public**

**Page: 2 of 3**

**Revision Date: JAN/17**

**Review Date: JAN/18**

---

## **Appendix A – Assistive Devices**

### **Moving Personal Assistive Devices**

If you have permission to move a person in a wheelchair:

- Wait for and follow the person's instructions
- Confirm that the person is ready to move
- Describe what you are going to do before you do it
- Avoid uneven ground and objects that create an unsafe ride
- Practice consideration and safety – do not leave the person in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors

Do not move items or equipment, such as canes and walkers, out of the user's reach. Respect personal space. Do not lean over a person with a disability or lean on their assistive device.

Let the person know about accessible features in the building i.e. accessible washroom, elevator, automatic doors.

*(Copyright for the above resource is Queen's Printer. The resource is excerpted from the e-learning course developed by the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario and modified for this use.)*

## **HOW TO USE TTY AND CANADA RELAY SERVICES**

### **How to Make a Call with a TTY System**

Please note: from the experience of using the device in our Crisis program – when there is not a dedicated line for the device people answering the phone can be confused - thinking that it is a fax line that is trying to connect.

1. Push the ON switch.
2. Push the DISPLAY switch if you wish to use the screen alone or the PRINT switch if you want what is typed both on screen and in print.
3. Place the telephone receiver on the TTY's rubber receptacles. Make sure that the receiver is firmly in place and that the telephone's receiver cord is on the LEFT side of the TTY.

**ORGANIZATION - Accessibility**

**Section: 10.01**

**Subject: Use of Assistive Devices by the General Public**

**Page: 3 of 3**

**Revision Date: JAN/17**

**Review Date: JAN/18**

---

4. Check the telephone indicator light; if it is lit, you have the line.
5. Dial the number, and watch the telephone light; if it is flashing slowly, this indicates that the device on the other end is ringing.
6. When the person you are calling answers, you will see a phrase appear on the screen such as: "Hello, John Smith here, GA." The "GA" stands for "Go Ahead". Don't forget to use it whenever you have finished speaking, so the other person will know it's his or her turn to speak. The person who receives the call is always the one who starts typing first.
7. When the call is over and you want to advise the other person that you are ready to get off the phone, type "SK". It means Stop Keying. The other person will respond by typing "SK" if he or she agrees that the call is completed. To be courteous, each person waits until the other one has indicated "SK" before hanging up the phone. Always switch the TTY "OFF" as soon as you have finished the call.

**How to Make a Call Using the Relay System**

1. Phone the number (1-800-855-0511), and tell the operator your name, the name of the person you are calling, and the number you wish to reach.
2. The operator will make the call for you, and you speak to the operator as if you were talking directly to the person you are calling. For example, say "Hi, 'How are you doing?" Do not say: "Tell him I said hello." Remember to say "Go Ahead" when you finish speaking, so the person on the other end will know it is his or her turn to speak.
3. If you normally speak very quickly, the operator may ask you to speak slower so your message can be typed. There will be brief silences as the operator types to the TTY user and the user replies.
4. Operators will not betray confidences. They will not relay profanity, threats or criminal propositions, but will relay marriage proposals, banking and personal financial information and other personal (and even intimate) conversations.

*(From the SCDSB website Admin. Procedures Memo A4015 Appendix B)*

CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION, SIMCOE COUNTY BRANCH  
ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

---

**ORGANIZATION - Accessibility**

**Section: 10.02**

**Subject: Assistive Devices Provided by CMHA**

**Page: 1 of 1**

**Revision Date: JAN/17**

**Review Date: JAN/18**

---

**CMHA maintains TTY service at CARAH House (Crisis Services).** A second TTY device owned by CMHA will be deployed to a location when a suitable site is identified (re: greatest need) A decision to purchase an additional unit(s) to be made in response to need and availability of funds. Full functionality of the units requires a dedicated line. CMHA is committed to providing other Assistive Devices where a need is identified and when funds can be dedicated to the acquisition.

**ORGANIZATION - Accessibility**

**Section: 10.03**

**Subject: Communication**

**Page: 1 of 1**

**Revision Date: JAN/17**

**Review Date: JAN/18**

---

All communications with a person with a disability will be in a manner that takes into account the person's disability. If one form or method of communication cannot be used by a person with a disability, they may be able to use another form or method, or a combination. A form of communication could be writing, speaking or the use of pictures. A method of communication could be in person, over the phone or online.

Staff, students and volunteers will be trained in:

- Communicating with clients over the telephone and in person in clear and plain language
- Understanding how to communicate with people who use assistive communication devices
- Assistive devices used for communication that are available at program sites
- Offering alternative formats that are available to address the needs of people with disabilities

A directory will be maintained listing staff who speak languages in addition to English or can provide sign language who could provide translation services.

A directory of external translator resources and known cost, if any, will be maintained.

All CMHA screening forms will be revised to ask if the person uses assistive devices.

All public\* CMHA sites will post their hours of operation and, for after hours, the telephone number for Crisis, in a place visible from outside the main entrance.

Agency services content on the website is available to be viewed in larger fonts.

A resource list indicating where to obtain other formats e.g. audio, video, Braille and sign language video will be available to enable an agency response to less frequently required supports.

*\*Does not include Gloria House or Shanty Bay*

**ORGANIZATION - Accessibility**

**Section: 10.04**

**Subject: Service Animals**

**Page: 1 of 2**

**Revision Date: JAN/17**

**Review Date: JAN/18**

---

Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal will be welcomed at all agency owned and leased sites. Access will include all areas open to the public.

- 1.1 Program sites that are shared with other services or operated by other services e.g. Ontario Works offices we will recommend and advocate for the same level of access as described for CMHA sites.
- 1.2 Once an animal has been accepted as a service animal or pet the client's name will be entered on a list readily available at the site to communicate this fact to other staff and volunteers and students to reduce or eliminate the need for asking the client on subsequent visits.
- 1.3 In the category of 'pet' CMHA reserves the right to limit the entrance of "exotic animals" to its premises on the grounds of health or safety or common fears engendered by some species. In all cases alternate arrangements for meeting will be made.
- 1.4 In the event a service animal's presence presents a health & safety risk e.g. severe allergic reaction to someone working in the same shared space it is CMHA's expectation that the situation be fully analyzed and all measures to eliminate the risk be considered and alternate arrangements, based on what is most reasonable, will be made in all cases to accommodate all parties involved. Examples could include creating distance between the parties concerned, making reasonable alterations to schedules or identifying an alternate meeting location.
- 1.5 In the rare instance where a service animal must be excluded CMHA must make every effort to put alternative arrangements in place to provide the services required by the person with a disability.
- 1.6 In the event any of the aforementioned limitations appear necessary to act on the staff will consult with a Program Manager or Director before doing so. Where this will create a significant delay to responding to the client, the staff will proceed using the above noted guidelines and will report the situation to a Program Manager or Director as soon after the situation is resolved as is practicable.



CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION, SIMCOE COUNTY BRANCH  
ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

---

**ORGANIZATION - Accessibility**

**Section: 10.04**

**Subject: Service Animals**

**Page: 2 of 2**

**Revision Date: JAN/17**

**Review Date: JAN/18**

---

**Policy: Service Animals When excluded by another law**

Exclusion of a Service Animal: A service animal can only be excluded from access to any part of the agency premises where this is required by another law. The most relevant for CMHA is the Health Protection and Promotion ACT and Food Safety and Quality Act. The former Act prohibits service animals in places where food is prepared, processed or handled (e.g. the kitchen in RSVP and the kitchen areas in CARAH House, Gloria House and ACTT-NS). Service dogs are permitted in the areas where food is served.

**ORGANIZATION - Accessibility**

**Section: 10.05**

**Page: 1 of 1**

**Subject: Support Persons / Admission Fee – Advance Notice**

**Revision Date: JAN/17**

**Review Date: JAN/18**

---

CMHA is committed to allowing full access to our premises to people with disabilities and their support persons. We will do this by:

- allowing full access to our premises to people with disabilities and their support persons in all areas open to the public
- 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 on CMHA premises
- educating staff, volunteers, students and others dealing with the public about how support persons will be treated
- providing training to staff, volunteers, students and others dealing with the public on how to interact appropriately with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person

**Admission Fee – Advance Notice**

- giving advance notice about the amount, if any, that will be charged for support persons who accompany people with disabilities to events or services held:
  - on CMHA premises and sponsored by CMHA
  - held at other venues and sponsored by CMHA
  - other groups using CMHA facilities will be required to uphold this policy

Due to the complexities of mental health and/or addiction issues, a case by case assessment of need will be made as part of the decision to waive or reduce fees, should they be required at all.

**ORGANIZATION - Accessibility**

**Section: 10.06**

**Subject: Notification of Disruption of Service**

**Page: 1 of 1**

**Revision Date: JAN/17**

**Review Date: JAN/18**

---

1. **Temporary Planned Disruption of Service:** Disruption of service can be a program or agency wide or due to repairs to certain accessible features such as accessible washrooms, elevator (available at two sites), automatic doors or TTY equipment.
  - For equipment repairs or washroom shutdown planned in advance clients with disabilities will be notified in advance where possible via posted notices in conspicuous places at the site, on our website and individually at the time of booking an appointment.
  - The posted notice will provide information on the location of the disruption, the reason for it, the expected length of the disruption and any alternatives that can be identified.
  - Responsibility for providing these notices will be the manager/director responsible for the site or program.
  - When the regular schedule for a program service is to be altered the above in-program notification methods will be utilized in a timely fashion.
  - When the agency is to be closed e.g. all day annual meeting or staff picnic the above modes of communication will be utilized at the direction of the CEO or designate.
  - Public Service announcements will be utilized when deemed useful to the situation.
  
2. **Unexpected Disruption of Service:** Disruption is likely to be site specific due to equipment failures that may limit service e.g. accessible washroom closure or close the facility e.g. heat or hydro, or due to weather.
  - Clients will be reminded from time to time during the winter months to call ahead in the event of storm conditions that could delay or prevent their counsellor from reaching work.
  - Scheduled clients will be contacted where possible to inform them of an unexpected disruption that will affect them.
  - Notices will be posted in prominent locations at public entrances with the required details of the disruption as outlined above.
  - The Manager or Designate at the affected site will be responsible for ensuring all notifications have been put in place.

**ORGANIZATION - Accessibility**

**Section: 10.07**

**Subject: Accessible Client Service Training**

**Page: 1 of 2**

**Revision Date: JAN/17**

**Review Date: JAN/18**

---

CMHA supports and promotes policies, practices and procedures that are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity. To succeed in achieving these principles requires all agency staff, volunteers and students to be fully trained in the policies and practices that are found under the Accessibility Act.

1. All staff, volunteers and students who have direct contact with clients and their families will receive the required training as indicated in each policy during the orientation period.

Ongoing training will be provided when changes are made to policies, practices or procedures governing the provision of services to clients and their families with disabilities.

All training in these policies is to be documented indicating the training component, date obtained, signature of the person trained and signature of the manager or trainer. The training log can only be completed at the conclusion of the activity.

A training program includes the following:

- A review of the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the client service standard
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disability
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device, service animal or a support person
- How to use the equipment or assistive devices available on our premises that may help with the provision of services to people with disabilities
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing our services
- Our client service policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of services to people with disabilities.

Training will include:

- Reading all policies and Appendix B
- Discussing policies in work groups or one to one with program Manager
- As often as required and at least annually each program will review how successfully they are meeting all policy requirements i.e. Program Review Day , Team Meetings
- Viewing all of the required and some of the recommended training videos – see below Page 2 of 2
- Attending an in-service mandatory training presentation when scheduled

**ORGANIZATION - Accessibility**

**Section: 10.07**

**Subject: Accessible Client Service Training**

**Page: 2 of 2**

**Revision Date: JAN/17**

**Review Date: JAN/18**

---

Performance Assessments will include a notation indicating the completion status of all current accessibility training - All training comprised of reading the policies, manual and viewing listed videos must be completed within the first month of employment. Additional training timelines to be determined based on availability.

Videos:

**Required viewing:**

“Talk” parts 1 & 2 on the following links

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZfOVNwjFU0> – part 1

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9a2ZqLhuAw> – part 2

‘Serve-Ability’ video [www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/serve-ability/splash.htm](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/serve-ability/splash.htm)

“Talk to Me – serving Clients with Disabilities” found down the page on the following link. Other videos on the page also useful to expand understanding of issues and sensitivity


[http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/tools/howto\\_videos.aspx](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/tools/howto_videos.aspx)

The following links contain additional videos that are recommended to broaden understanding:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPzq3on2qiA>

<http://www.youtube.com/user/accessontario>

## Appendix B: Barriers and Solutions

Possible Barriers	Possible Solutions
<b>Vision loss</b>	
Staff are not aware of the need to describe goods or services when a person cannot read a sign.	Make it standard practice to describe to clients the goods or services offered if they are unable to view them due to vision loss
<b>Deaf, deafened, oral deaf or hard of hearing</b>	
Telephone services not accessible for clients who are Deaf, deafened, oral deaf or hard of hearing	Incorporate use of TTY and Relay services in your telephone service policies.  Ensure staff are trained in, and practice using, TTY and Relay services.
Staff are not aware of the need to paraphrase or repeat more slowly what is said to clients when the client has not understood the message.	Establish the practice of paraphrasing and repeating communications more clearly to clients upon request or using other means such as passing notes back and forth.
Speaking to clients with hands covering the mouth which does not allow for lip reading	Establish the practice of speaking clearly and making sure that nothing is covering the mouth and that you are facing them when communicating with clients who lip-read.
Loud music and poor acoustics, making hearing difficult for people using hearing aids	Establish the practice of having pen and paper available and communicate through note-writing.
<b>Intellectual/Developmental disability</b>	
Use of complicated or technical language in client service	Establish the practice of using plain language and avoid technical language when communicating.
Ignoring clients who are more reserved or afraid to ask for help	Establish the practice of building in extra time to deal with clients who need it and adjust the availability of other staff to help out as needed.
<b>Learning disability</b>	
Providing complicated documents to clients without explanation or opportunity to discuss or ask questions	Establish the practice of discussing and explaining any documentation provided to clients.
Employees who are not flexible in offering alternative communication strategies or adequate time in providing service	Make it a standard procedure to break up lengthy conversations into a series of shorter ones. This may assist clients who need additional time to process certain types of information.

CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION, SIMCOE COUNTY BRANCH  
ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

<b>Mental health Difficulties</b>	
Negative stereotypes about people with mental health disabilities resulting in disrespectful or impatient treatment.	Add a training component to the regular training that staff receive on the needs of people with mental health difficulties. Make it a standard procedure to break up lengthy conversations into a series of shorter ones and speak more slowly so that some clients will not feel overwhelmed with the information. This may help to prevent anxiety in some clients.
<b>Physical disability</b>	
Failure of staff to offer assistance when some services require particular agility and/or motor skills	Develop a policy that requires staff to assist clients in handling or reaching goods when requested.
Failure of staff to set aside convenient seating (close to rest rooms or exits)	Establish the practice of setting aside convenient seating for people with physical disabilities.
<b>Speech impairment</b>	
Verbal speech is the only form of communication used to interact with clients.	Develop a policy that requires staff to have pen and paper on hand and communicate through note-writing when requested to do so.

**ORGANIZATION - Accessibility**

**Section: 10.08**

**Subject: Monitoring and Feedback on Accessible**

**Page: 1 of 1**

**Revision Date: JAN/17**

**Review Date: JAN/18**

---

CMHA invites feedback to improve its client accessibility standards, under the legislation, and to permit a timely response to solve problems that may arise from time to time despite the best intentions of staff, volunteers and students.

A range of methods to solicit feedback will be made available to ensure optimum access to the feedback process by people with disabilities. These methods will include:

- A brief feedback form available at all sites – see draft form on next page
- An email address posted at all sites
- Access via our website
- Verbal feedback in person or by telephone
- Send by fax
- Client Satisfaction Survey

The feedback form and a drop box will be prominently positioned in the reception area at each site.

Feedback can be provided anonymously or self identified.

1. A specific complaint from someone who self identifies will receive an individual response from the staff (Manager or designate) responsible for the program or site involved within two business days.

Information will be provided as to who to contact if a response is not received within the time stated.

2. All anonymous feedback and suggestions ideas will be reviewed by the Manager, Safety, Security and Facilities Management and Site Manager. Responses or any actions that will be taken to respond to trends or unique situations. The Manager and Program Director will be responsible for ensuring the feedback is responded to or reviewed as noted.

**Training required:**

- Direction on how to respond to someone making a verbal complaint.
- Direction on how to record verbal feedback received and who to report it to.

To be provided by the Program Manager or Designate.



CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION, SIMCOE COUNTY BRANCH  
ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

---

**ORGANIZATION - Accessibility**

**Section: 10.09**

**Subject: Provision of Documentation**

**Page: 1 of 1**

**Revision Date: JAN/17**

**Review Date: JAN/18**

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The policies defining CMHA's Accessibility Standards are available to anyone upon request. They are posted on our website and made available in alternate formats when the need is identified. If an alternate format is requested we will engage with the client with a disability and seek to agree on an acceptable format that takes into account the person's disability. The time required to provide an alternate format will be determined at the time of request and confirmed with the person requesting the format.

Notice of this policy will be posted at all program sites and also on our website.

CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION, SIMCOE COUNTY BRANCH  
ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

---

**ORGANIZATION - Accessibility**

**Section: 10.10**

**Subject: Emergency Evacuation**

**Page: 1 of 1**

**Revision Date: JAN/17**

**Review Date: JAN/18**

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Every staff is to receive training on emergency evacuation procedures that includes the assisting of people with disabilities.

The training will be part of regular emergency/fire drill procedures overseen and scheduled by the Health & Safety Committee.