

Punjabi Community Health Services

ASPIRE

Section: Accessibility

Subject: Customer Service Policy and Procedures for People with Disabilities(AODA)

CARF Ref: ASPIRE- Section 1.L

Last Review/ Revision: March 2022

Next Review: March 2023

Scope: Personnel, Volunteers, Students, Persons Served and Other Stakeholders (as applicable)

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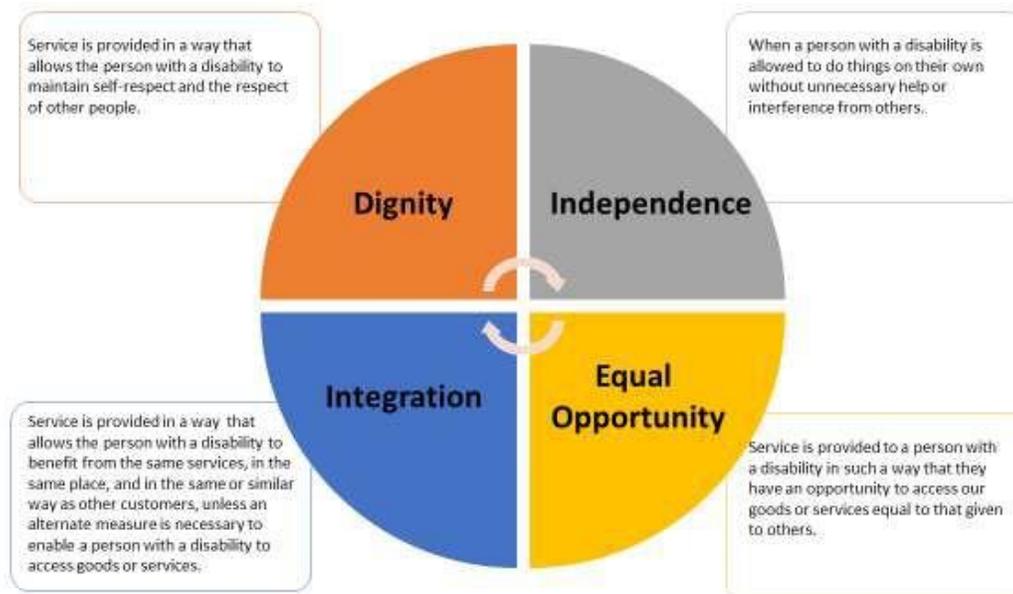
Approved By: Baldev Mutta, Chief Executive Officer

1.0 Our Mission

Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS) contributes to the success of families in our diverse communities by providing services in the areas of health, settlement and social services in a welcoming, accessible, compassionate, linguistically and culturally appropriate environment.

2.0 Our Commitment

In fulfilling our mission, PCHS will make all reasonable efforts to ensure our practices and procedures are consistent with the four **principles of customer services standards of dignity, independence, integration and equality of opportunity**. Below for ease of reference, the four principles have been defined as per the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)**.



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PCHS is committed to provide clients with services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disability. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in a similar way as our other clients.

3.0 Providing Services to people with disabilities

PCHS is committed to excellence in its provision of service to all members of the community including people with disabilities. To ensure this PCHS will, at a minimum, provide the following:

3.1 Communication

PCHS will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take in account their disabilities. PCHS will sensitise and train the staff, students and volunteers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities. An outline regarding possible ways of communicating with people with disabilities has been attached as **Appendix A**.

3.2 Telephone Services

PCHS is committed to providing fully accessible telephone service. We will train our staff to communicate with persons with disability over the telephone in simple language and to speak clearly and slowly (or in a manner that is best suited to the person's needs). In addition, we will offer to augment our communication through the use of **email, written notes** if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs.

3.3 Assistive devices

PCHS is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to benefit from our programs and services. **We** will train our staff, students and volunteers with assistive devices used by our clients while accessing our services. **We** will also ensure that staff, students and volunteers know how to use the wheelchair available on our premises.

4.0 Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

PCHS welcomes people with disabilities to be accompanied by their Service Animals and Support Persons

4.1 PCHS is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal to PCHS premises/programs which are open to the public and other third parties. **We** will also ensure that staff, students and volunteers dealing with the public are trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

If the service animal is excluded by law from PCHS premises or if we are unable to accommodate a person with a disability in our facility due to situations beyond

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our control, such as others who have allergies to animals, PCHS shall ensure that measures are available to permit the person with disability to access our goods and services through other means.

An outline regarding how to deal with service animals has been mentioned in ***Appendix A.***

- 4.2** PCHS is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. **Fees will not be charged for support persons by PCHS.** However, if under any circumstances PCHS needs to charge fees for the support person, prior advance notice will be given to the client with disability regarding the payment of fees for the support persons. In case the client wishes to hold private dialogue with their case manager/program coordinator without the support person, PCHS will respect and abide by the wishes of the client.

PCHS is aware of their obligations under **privacy and issues of confidentiality** or professional obligations. In such situations; a support person may need to agree to requirements of service just as the person with a disability does. As such group session or case counseling may require the support person to keep the group discussions confidential and sign a document confirming the same. Such cases will be reviewed on case by case basis by PCHS.

5.0 Notice of Temporary Disruption

PCHS will inform their clients and community about any planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services by displaying a notice at PCHS premises or communicating via telephone. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be placed at our entrances, reception counters as well as displayed on the notice boards for the clients. In addition, the PCHS reception and program staff will also verbally share it with clients/ community.

Refer to Appendix B for the outline of the notice of Temporary Disruption.

6.0 Training for Staff

PCHS will provide training to all staff, volunteers and others to effectively deal with persons with disabilities.

Training will include the following:

- 6.1** The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- 6.2** How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- 6.3** How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- 6.4** What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing PCHS's goods and services

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6.5 PCHS's policy and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

Staff will be trained on an ongoing basis when changes will be made in the policy and procedure.

7.0 Feedback Process

Feedback regarding the way PCHS provides services to people with disability is welcome and appreciated. Feedback can be shared to PCHS by either of the following methods:

E-mail – info@pchs4u.com

Feedback form – Available at PCHS reception desk (Brampton and Malton)
(You may seek help from reception desk in filling up the feedback form)

The feedback will be communicated to the Director of Operations. The Director of Operations will compile the feedback received and share the feedback with the Leadership Team. The received feedback will be reviewed by the Leadership Team and future course of action will be decided and communicated to the person who submitted the feedback within 10 working days.

In case the person does not disclose their name or contact number, PCHS will be unable to report to them regarding the progress of the feedback.

Formal complaints will be addressed according to PCHS Complaint procedures (*refer to the Client Bill of Rights, Responsibilities and Complaint Policy*)

8.0 Modifications to this or other policies

Any policy of PCHS that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

Appendix A: Communication with a Person with Disability

When a person with disability approaches you, please:

- Be respectful to the person with disability.
- Greet the person with disability and ask “How may I help you?”
- It is important that while communicating with a person with disability take in account their disability.
- Ask the person with disability on how they want you to communicate with them (either through support person, written notes etc.)
- Allow use of personal assistive devices
- Let them know that service animals, support persons are welcome.
- Inform them that support persons are welcome at no additional fee (in case a fee needs to be charged it will be program specific and will be communicated to the client beforehand)
- Tell them where the washroom and water facility is available
- In case, any of the accessible services (ramp, washroom or any other services) are under repair or temporarily out of service please do **ALL OF** the following:
 - ❖ Post a notice of disruption of services at the entrance and at the reception /Program area
 - ❖ Inform the person with disability verbally of the disruption of the service
- If a person/client is using an **assistive device** (wheelchair/scooter/etc.)
 - ❖ Do not touch their assistive devices without permission
 - ❖ Suggest parking spaces for the assistive devices.
 - ❖ If you have permission to move the wheelchair, do not leave in an awkward and dangerous way such as facing a wall or in the path of an opening door.
 - ❖ Consider sitting down so that you can make eye contact while speaking the client (in case of lengthy conversation)
- Be careful to share the information with the client/person and not the support person
- If the client/person has a **hearing loss**:
 - ❖ Make sure that the area is well lit for the client to read your lips
 - ❖ If the client is using a hearing aid
 - ensure that the background noise is not too loud
 - you can be heard
 - ❖ Speak in short sentences
 - ❖ Speak clearly
 - ❖ Ask if using a pen and paper will be easier for the client
- Clients/persons with **speech or language impairment** (Cerebral palsy)
 - ❖ Whenever possible, ask questions that can be answered yes or no
 - ❖ Be patient. Let the client finish their sentence

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- If the client/person has **vision loss** (may use guide dog/white cane)
 - ❖ Do not assume the client can't see you, at times they might have low vision
 - ❖ Introduce yourself and speak to the client directly
 - ❖ Ask if they want you to read any printed material (like agenda, meeting minutes) aloud to them.
 - ❖ Offer your elbow to guide them if needed
 - ❖ While giving directions be precise and descriptive

- If the client/person is using a **Service Animal**:
 - ❖ Do not mistake the service animal as a pet
 - ❖ Avoid touching or addressing the animal
 - ❖ If you are not sure the animal is a pet or service animal, please DO ASK.

- If the client/person has **severe arthritis or heart condition**, they may have difficulty walking longer distances

- If the client/person has **learning disabilities** (Dyslexia)
 - ❖ Be patient-clients may take a little longer to understand and respond to you

- If the client/person has **Intellectual /Developmental Disability** (Down syndrome)
 - ❖ Do not make assumptions about what the client can do
 - ❖ Use simple language
 - ❖ Provide one piece of information at a time

- If a client/person has **Mental Health Disabilities** (anxiety, mood swings, phobia)
 - ❖ Treat the client with the same respect and dignity that you will do with any other client
 - ❖ Be confident, calm and reassuring

Appendix B: Notice of Temporary Disruption



Notice of Disruption of Services

In order to serve you better, the *(name the accessible services)* is temporarily out of service due to *(reason for the disruption)*.

The service will be unavaible for *(duration)*.

**We regret for the inconvienece caused.
Kindly bear with us till the service is restored.
OR (Suggest an alternative option)**

**For more information you may contact our
Reception Desk !**

Appendix C: Notice for Feedback

Thank you for visiting **Punjabi Community Health Services**. In order to make our premises and services more accessible to people with disability, please provide your valuable feedback.

Your feedback will help us serve you better. You may share your feedback/comments either by:

- E-mail** – info@pchs4u.com
- Feedback form** – Available at PCHS reception desk (Brampton and Malton)
(You may seek help from reception desk in filing up the feedback form)

All the feedback will be communicated to the Director of Operations at PCHS.

PCHS will respond and communicate the follow-up of your feedback to you within 10 working days.

Thank You!

Appendix D: Customer Service Feedback Form (for person with disabilities)

Date: _____
(YYYY/MM/DD)

1. Please provide your contact Information if you want a reply:

Name:

Telephone No. _____ Email Id: _____

2. Did we provide you services in an accessible manner?

YES **NO**
If NO (please explain below)

3. What can we do to make the services more accessible to you?

(please attach extra sheet if you need more space to write)

Thank you for your valuable input!

You may seek help from reception desk in filling the feedback form.

Please submit your feedback at info@pchs4u.com or handover sealed envelopes at PCHS reception desk (Brampton or Malton office)

PCHS will respond and communicate the follow-up of your feedback to you within 10 working Days.