



**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL
POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

SECTION:	GENERAL	NUMBER:	G-5
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ACCESSIBILITY

POLICY

Brantwood Community Services is committed to complying to all aspects of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and strives to provide accessible services in a welcoming manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities, including families, other caregivers, visitors and members of the public.

PROCEDURE

Brantwood will make every reasonable effort to ensure that policies and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity by:

Accessibility Plan

Brantwood Community Services will develop and maintain a multi-year Accessibility Plan and review and update it bi-annually. The Accessibility Plan will be posted on Brantwood's website and provided it in an accessible format upon request.

Use of Assistive Devices

Brantwood Community Services recognizes that some people use assistive devices (such as wheelchairs, mobility aids, hearing aids, etc) to access services. Brantwood Community Services will support people in the use of their assistive devices to obtain or receive services.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL

SECTION:	GENERAL	NUMBER:	G5	PAGE:	Page 2 of 6
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Communication

Brantwood will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability and in keeping with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

All verbal and written communication should seek to be inclusive and positive towards people with disabilities. Employees and volunteers will avoid phrases that demean people with disabilities (such as unfit, retarded, etc), avoid words such as “handicapped”, “crippled” and “wheelchair-bound” and will not refer to people by categories such as “the “disabled”. (i.e. See terminology reference chart found at the end of this policy).

To assist people with disabilities access Brantwood’s services, employees and volunteers should utilize the following guidelines:

- a. Treat people with disabilities with the same respect and consideration you offer everyone else.
- b. If you’re not sure what to do, ask the individual, “May I help you?”
- c. Ask before you offer to help; don’t just jump in. People often have their own way of doing things. Individuals with disabilities know if they need help and how you can provide it.
- d. If you don’t know someone, or if you are unfamiliar with the disability, it’s better to wait until the individual describes his or her situation to you, rather than to make your own assumptions. Many types of disabilities have similar characteristics and your assumptions may be wrong.
- e. Some disabilities are not visible. Take the time to get to know the individual’s needs.
- f. Speak normally, clearly and directly. Speak directly to a person with a disability, not to their interpreter or someone who is with them.
- g. Be patient; give the individual time to explain him or herself.
- h. Utilize the materials provided in training and the policy manual to assist you with individual/specific situations, techniques, best practices and alternative communication methods to assist with the provision of goods and services based on the needs of the person supported.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL

SECTION:	GENERAL	NUMBER:	G5	PAGE:	Page 3 of 6
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Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Brantwood Community Services shall provide or arrange for accessible format and communication supports for people with disabilities in a timely manner that takes into account each person's accessibility needs.

Brantwood will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

Accessible Website and Web Content

Brantwood Community Services' internet websites and web content conform to World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guides (WCAG) 2.0.

Procurement

Brantwood will incorporate accessibility features and/or criteria, where applicable, in its procurement policies and procedures.

Employment

Brantwood Community Service's Policy and Procedures are intended to build an inclusive and accessible work environment free from discrimination and harassment.

Service Animals

Brantwood Community Services recognizes that some people may require the use of guide dogs or other service animals to access services. People who are accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal will be permitted to enter Brantwood Community Services' premises and to keep the animal with them, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. If the animal is legally excluded from the premises, Brantwood Community Services will provide alternative measures to enable the person to obtain or receive services.

Support Persons

Brantwood Community Services recognizes that some people rely on support persons for assistance while accessing services and that these support people may accompany them on Brantwood Community Services premises. As well, people will have access to their support person while on the premises. In instances where Brantwood charges fees, the Agency clearly states the fee, if any, for any support persons.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL

SECTION:	GENERAL	NUMBER:	G5	PAGE:	Page 4 of 6
----------	---------	---------	----	-------	-------------

Disruptions to Service

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to Brantwood Community Services' facilities or services (e.g., temporary closure of a door, ramp, etc), Brantwood Community Services will provide notice of the disruption to the public including; the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services that may be available. Notice of such disruption will normally be posted on the physical premises by the Supervisor/designate and when necessary, may also be posted on Brantwood's website.

Employees shall inform their Supervisor/designate of any physical barriers, architectural barriers, information/communication barriers, technological barriers or a policy or practice that poses a barrier for people with disabilities.

Brantwood Community Services shall consider the impact on people with disabilities when planning new initiatives, when purchasing new equipment or technology, or undergoing facility repairs or renovations.

Confidentiality of Information

Personal information regarding a person's disability cannot be released without the consent of the person and must be managed in a manner that is consistent with the Freedom of Information Guidelines, Personal Information Protection Guidelines and Brantwood's Policies and Procedures (Policy #'s).

Orientation & Training

Brantwood will provide training to all employees and volunteers on the requirements of the Accessibility Standards.

The training will also include:

How to interact and communicate with people, who have various types of disabilities, including those who use assistive devices, service animals or support persons.

How to use any equipment or devices available at Brantwood Community Services that may help with the provision of services to people who have a disability; and, what to do if a person who has a disability is having difficulty accessing Brantwood's services.

Training will be done on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures. New employees will be trained upon commencement of employment. Human Resources will keep a record of all training.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL

SECTION:	GENERAL	NUMBER:	G5	PAGE:	Page 5 of 6
----------	---------	---------	----	-------	-------------

Feedback/Comments/Complaints

Feedback or complaints regarding Brantwood Community Services' Accessibility Standards for Customer Service can be made directly in a method that the person communicates (verbally, sign language, assistive technology, etc) or in writing to any Staff member providing service or a Manager. Staff receiving the complaint or feedback will note the person's name, their contact information and the nature of the feedback. All feedback will be forwarded to the Manager/Director for review and follow up. The person providing the feedback will receive acknowledgement of their feedback and any resulting action taken. Complaints and feedback may be also be provided through the Agency's website (www.brantwood.ca).

Copies of this Policy

Brantwood Community Services shall make available copies of this policy, as well as the Complaints' Procedure, on the Agency website or by requesting a copy from the Agency. Brantwood Community Services recognizes that people who have a disability use methods other than standard print to access information. Brantwood Community Services shall make every effort to provide this policy, or the information contained in the policy, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL

SECTION:	GENERAL	NUMBER:	G5	PAGE:	Page 6 of 6
----------	---------	---------	----	-------	-------------

Language and Terminology Reference Chart

Some suggestions for choosing the right words and putting the person first!

Do

- Disability
- “Person(s) with a...” or “People with a...” or “Person who experiences...”
- Intellectual disability or developmental disability
- “Person living with...” or “person born with...”
- “Person who is/has”
Blind, partial vision, low vision, vision loss: be specific
- “Person who is/has”
Deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, hearing loss: be specific
- Person who does not communicate with words
- Person who uses a wheelchair
- Person with a mobility or physical disability
- Person who has a mental health issue

Don't

- Handicap, handicapped, invalid or impediment
- The disabled
- Mental retardation, mentally retarded, retarded, mentally challenged, idiot, imbecile, moron, simple, mongoloid
- Suffering, afflicted, victim, stricken
- Visually impaired, the blind
- Deaf (avoid generalizing; try to find preferred term from “do” list)
- Deaf, mute, dumb
- Confined, bound, stuck
- Crippled, cripple, lame, physically challenged
- Insane, lunatic, maniac, mental, neurotic, psychotic, psycho, deviant, crazy; the negative list is too long