

Daya Counselling Centre Policy & Procedure Manual

Subject: **Accessibility Standards for Customer Service**

Section: D - 1

Page(s): 4

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Preamble:

Management of Daya Counselling Centre is committed to providing service that is accessible to all clients based on the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity.

Every employee/counsellor is expected to uphold this policy and the supporting protocols and procedures.

Management pledges to address all incidents of barriers to accessibility in a fair and timely manner.

Definitions

The term “**workplace**” is understood to include any location where Daya Counselling Centre business or activities are conducted.

The term “**disability**” means,

- 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 co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impairment, 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, or
- 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;

The definition includes disabilities of different severity, visible as well as non-visible disabilities, and disabilities the effects of which may come and go.

Policy and Procedures:

Every employee and counsellor will become familiar with the agency policy and the following protocols and procedures.

Use of assistive devices

Where an individual requires an assistive device to benefit from/participate in service at Daya Counselling Centre, this device will be accommodated whenever possible.

When/if such a device cannot be accommodated, every reasonable effort will be made to offer alternate assistance or to refer the individual to services which can accommodate this need.

Use of service animals and support persons

Where an individual requires a service animal and/or support persons to access service at Daya Counselling Centre, this/these will be accommodated.

No client will be prevented from having access to or using his or her service animal while accessing services at Daya Counselling Centre. Service animals are any animals used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; this need/use may be readily apparent or if necessary, confirmed in a letter from a physician or nurse.

Participation of support persons in counselling sessions will be at the joint discretion of the client and counsellor. The client will not be prevented from having access to their support person while on the premises of Daya Counselling Centre.

Where the support person is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or of others, the counsellor may require that the support person be present during counselling sessions.

Where the client declines to have their support person attend sessions (and no reasons of health or safety require the presence of the support person), the support person will be invited to wait in the agency waiting room for the duration of the session.

There is no fee charged by Daya Counselling Centre related to the presence of a support person during activities at Daya Counselling Centre.

Notice of temporary disruptions

Employees and counsellors will make every reasonable effort to communicate in advance to clients if there is a barrier to accessibility that is known to cause an issue to the client (e.g., construction in neighbourhood, transit strike, etc.).

Counsellors will pre-arrange the preferred method of contact with the client for notification of accessibility disruptions.

When disruptions are planned or anticipated, notice will be posted conspicuously at Daya Counselling Centre (e.g. on front door, at reception desk, in waiting room).

Penalties for non-attendance or late cancellation of sessions are waived when reasons of accessibility are cited (e.g., Paratransit did not pick up as scheduled, construction blocked accessible point of entry, etc.).

Training

All employees and volunteers who deal with the public on behalf of Daya Counselling Centre shall receive training on accessible customer service. Training shall utilize the *Guide to Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*.

Training will be provided to each person at hire (or onboarding for interns/students).

Training will be updated as needed when there are changes in policies, practices, and procedures governing the provision of services to persons with disabilities.

Communication

When communicating with a person with a disability, employees, interns, volunteers, and counsellors shall do so in a manner that respects the person's disability. Guidelines for communicating with people who have various types of disabilities are provided in the *Accessibility Training Manual for Customer Service*.

Feedback process

Feedback about how services are delivered to people with disabilities is invited, responded to, documented, and tracked.

Feedback is collected by phone, TTY, e-mail (info@dayacounselling.on.ca) or in person at Daya Counselling Centre. In addition, a feedback form is made available in the waiting room.

All feedback will be reviewed and acted upon by the Executive Director as appropriate.

Reporting accessibility issues

Employees and counsellors will be responsible to report to the Executive Director any known barriers to accessibility which they observe or which are reported to them by a client.

The Executive Director is responsible to address issues of accessibility.

Monitoring

The Executive Director is responsible for reviewing this Policy annually and recommending amendments to ensure on-going compliance with regulated accessibility standards and legislated obligations.

Documentation

These policies and procedures are available upon verbal or written request and provided to individuals in an appropriate format. Notice of availability of this document is provided in the waiting room and on the website.

Format of documents

Communication with an individual takes the disability into consideration. Clients may state their preference for verbal communication (telephone or in person), written communication (including large-font versions of existing documents), or electronic formats.