



HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES

Section: Standards of Conduct	Subject: AODA - Accessibility Standard for Customer Service	Policy #: 3.3
Nature: Operational Policy AODA, 2005	Authority: Chief Executive Officer	Accreditation: Non-Mandatory
Implementation Date: 11/11	Revision Dates: 08/14, 03/15, 01/16, 01/19	Last Review Date: 01/19
Related Policies: ISP 4.26 Pets and Service Animals		

POLICY:

Purpose

The goal of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005 (the “Act”) is to create a more accessible Ontario, by identifying, and to the extent possible, preventing, and eliminating barriers experienced by persons with a disability. The Act requires employers to ensure that its policies, practices, and procedures are consistent with the core principles of dignity, equality of opportunity, integration and independence.

The Customer Service Standard is primarily about removing attitudinal and systemic barriers. In fulfilling our mission, Griffin Centre strives at all times to provide its services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. 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 the same place and in a similar way as other people.

Application

The policy applies to all persons who, on behalf of Griffin Centre, deal with clients, members of the public or other third parties. This includes our employees, volunteers, students, and contracted services.

Core Principles of the Policy

We endeavor to ensure that the Policy and related practices and procedures are consistent with the following four (4) core principles:

- **Dignity** - Persons with a disability must be treated as valued persons as deserving of service as any other person;
- **Equality of Opportunity** - Persons with a disability should be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from our services;
- **Integration** - Wherever possible, persons with a disability should benefit from our services in the same place and in the same or similar manner as any other customer. In circumstances where integration does not serve the needs of the person with a disability, services will, to the extent possible, be provided in another way that takes into account the person’s individual needs;
- **Independence** – Services must be provided in a way that respects the independence of persons with a disability. To this end, we will always be willing to assist a person with a disability but will not do so without the express permission of the person.

PROCEDURE:

Griffin Centre is committed to excellence in serving all persons including people with disabilities. The Centre is dedicated to providing accessible services in the following categories to better assist all current and future clients and their families to access services at Griffin Centre:

- **Assistive Devices:** Assistive devices are used to assist people in performing a particular task or tasks or to aid that person in activities of daily living. Persons with a disability are permitted, where possible, to use their own assistive device when on our premises for the purposes of obtaining, using or benefiting from our services. If there is a physical, technological or other type of barrier that prevents the use of an assistive device on our premises we will first endeavour to remove that barrier. If we are not able to remove the barrier we will ask the

person how they can be accommodated and what alternative methods of service would be more accessible to them. We will make best efforts to provide an alternative means of assistance to the person with a disability. We will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by clients or family members with disabilities while accessing our services.

- **Communication:** We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. We will train staff who communicate with clients, family members and partner agencies on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- **Service Animals:** An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability:
 - if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to their disability; or
 - if the person provides a letter from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Persons with a disability may enter premises owned and/or operated by Griffin Centre accompanied by a service animal, and keep the service animal with them, if the public has access to such premises (i.e. Head Office only) and the service animal is not otherwise excluded by law (for example, in areas of food preparation).

If a client or parent/guardian/caregiver wish to bring their service animal to any of our residential or day/school programs the Centre will require 24 hours notice. If a service animal must be excluded, we explain to the individual why this is the case and explore alternative ways to meet the individual's needs. Such ways could include providing services to the person in a part of the premises where the animal is not excluded, or offering a safe location for the animal to wait while the client or family member obtains service.

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, Griffin Centre may ask the person with a disability for a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to their disability.

Staff will receive training on how to interact with persons with a disability accompanied by a service animal.

- **Support Persons:** A person who accompanies a person with a disability to assist with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services is called a support person. A person with a disability may enter premises owned and/or operated by Griffin Centre with a support person and have access to the support person while on the premises.

Griffin Centre may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person where it is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises. Before making a decision, Griffin Centre must:

- consult with the person with the disability to understand their needs;
- consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence;
- determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises

Staff will receive training on how to interact with persons with a disability who are accompanied by a support person. If there is an admission fee or fare associated with the presence of a support person, it will be waived.

- **Notice of Temporary Disruption:** In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services and/or the service locations for people with disabilities, Griffin Centre will notify all persons promptly. This clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be placed on the Centre website, at Head Office reception and at the location where the disruption is occurring. A template of the Service Disruption Notice can be found on the shared network drive (Z:).

- **Training for Staff:** Griffin Centre provides training to all employees, students, volunteers, Board members and consultants within the first two months of their start date. If a student, volunteer, Board member or consultant new to Griffin Centre has received the training through another organization within the previous 6 months, they may be excused from Griffin Centre training upon submission of a certificate or similar documentation.

Training includes:

- An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, subsequent updates to the legislation, and the requirements of the customer service standard;
- Griffin Centre's accessible customer service policy;
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
- How to use equipment or devices that may help in providing goods or services to people with disabilities;
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing Griffin Centre's services.

Staff will also be trained when changes are made to this accessible customer service plan. Documentation of training completion will be kept in the Human Resources file for the employee, student, volunteer or consultant. Records of the training provided, the dates on which the training is provided and the number of individuals to whom the training is provided are maintained in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

- **Feedback Process:** Griffin Centre welcomes and appreciates feedback regarding this policy and its implementation. Anyone who wishes to provide feedback on the way Griffin Centre provides goods and services to families, clients and persons with disabilities may do so in the following ways:

- In person at the Reception desk at Head Office;
- By telephone at 416-222-1153. Ask for the Director, Human Resources;
- In writing to: Director, Human Resources, Griffin Centre, 1126 Finch Avenue West, North York, Ontario, M3J 3J6;
- By fax: (416) 222-1321 to the attention of the Director, Human Resources;
- Electronically by sending an email to: info@griffincentre.org;
- By completing Griffin Centre's Accessibility Feedback Form which may be found at Reception at Head Office and on the Centre's website.

All feedback will be directed to Human Resources and the Chief Operating Officer. Those who provided feedback may expect to hear back within 72 hours of leaving their feedback, provided that the feedback has not been given anonymously. Griffin Centre will arrange for accessible formats and communication supports, to the extent that the agency is able to, upon request.

Modifications to this or Other Policies

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

Documentation to be Made Available

This policy, and related practices and protocols, shall be made available to any member of the public upon request. Notification of same shall be posted on Griffin Centre's website and at a conspicuous place at each premise to which this policy applies.

Forms Referenced in this Policy: Service Disruption Notice; Accessibility Feedback Form