

SECTION: Human Resources**POLICY: HR 16****REVISED: July 2011****PAGE: 1 of 3**

CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

PREAMBLE

Contact Brant is committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity of access to our services and in a similar way that these services are available to all others we serve. Contact Brant will abide by the provisions of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, as well as the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation (AODA regulation 429/07). Contact Brant is committed to providing services to clients, families, the public, and staff that are free of barriers and biases. (Also see Confidentiality Policy; Complaints Policy)

Following are definitions of the four principles of customer service, as well as a description of assistive devices:

- 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 customers, 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 your goods or services equal to that given to others.
- Assistive devices are used by people with disabilities to help with daily living and include a broad range of products such as wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, oxygen tanks, portable chalk boards and electronic communication devices that people may bring to the premises.

POLICY

Contact Brant will provide an environment in its facilities that reflects and values diversity, dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

Staff and volunteers' conduct will demonstrate that we value diversity, dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for our clients, families, the public, staff and volunteers.

PROCEDURE

1. Employees and volunteers will welcome all members of the community to our facilities and provide service that respects the diversity, dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity of people, including those with disabilities.
 - 1.1 Employees and volunteers will ensure that wheelchair accessibility signage is maintained and visible.
 - 1.2 Employees and volunteers will ensure that the facilities' accessibility elements, including the elevator and wheelchair accessible door, are functioning, and will ensure they are knowledgeable on how to operate these accessibility elements.
 - 1.3 The Chief Executive Officer will ensure any parts of the facilities that are not open to the public are marked "Employees Only".
 - 1.4 When services that are normally provided to a person with a disability are temporarily unavailable, such as access to an elevator, the Administrative Assistant will post a notice at all entrances to Contact Brant and on the website. The notice will include the reason for the disruption, its duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. All efforts will be made to accommodate the person in another location within the building, or other community site, when services are temporarily unavailable.
2. Employees and volunteers will allow people to use their personal assistive devices to access our services, and will make every attempt to ensure that assistive measures are made available, including but not limited to staff assistance, sign language interpretation, and oral interpretation.
3. Employees and volunteers will ensure communication with a person with a disability is in a manner that is respectful and takes into account the person's disability.
 - 3.1 Employees and volunteers will change the method of communication to meet an individual's need and flexibly provide services such as in person, by phone and online.
 - 3.2 Employees and volunteers will ensure that any requested documents made available to people with disabilities, are either in a format that takes into account the person's disability, or supports are provided to ensure the person is able to understand and use the documents.
4. Employees and volunteers will allow people with disabilities to bring their service animals into the Contact Brant facilities. To be considered a service animal under the Accessibility Standard, it must either be readily apparent that the animal is being used because of a person's disability or the person with a disability must provide a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that it is required because of his or her disability.
 - 4.1 When serving a customer who has a service animal, employees and volunteers must be prepared to respond to special situations, such as other customers having an allergy or great fear of animals, by discussing the situation with all customers and making every effort to meet the needs of both individuals and put alternative arrangements in place to provide the services required by a person with a disability.

5. Employees and volunteers will welcome people to bring their support persons with them if so desired by the individual with a disability. Employees will secure consent of the individual/guardian regarding disclosures made in the presence of the support person.
6. The Chief Executive Officer will ensure appropriate training is available for employees and volunteers, including the Board of Directors, regarding responsiveness to the needs of a person with disabilities. Employees and volunteers will ensure they have received appropriate training from Contact Brant on how to serve people with disabilities.
7. Employees and volunteers will encourage client feedback including suggestions and complaints.
 - a. After each intake, the Resource Coordinator will request that the client complete the Performance Measurement Survey.
 - b. Staff will inform clients that that feedback is appreciated and that we try to always provide the people we serve with the best possible service. They will inform client that feedback can be given in person, by phone, in writing, by email, by fax, or any other means. People will be informed that they are always welcome to bring a friend or family member with them for support.
 - c. Employees and volunteers will follow the Feedback and Complaints Policy and distribute the Feedback and Complaints brochure.
8. Employees and volunteers will take all reasonable efforts to respect the independence and dignity of persons with disabilities in the organization of facilities and services, as well as when planning a new initiative or when purchasing new equipment or technology.
9. Employees and volunteers will inform the Chief Executive Officer of any physical barriers, architectural barriers, information/communication barriers, technological barriers, or a policy or practice that pose barriers for people with disabilities.
 - 9.1 The Chief Executive Officer will address these barriers in a timely manner, and inform the Board of Contact Brant of any identified barriers as well as recommended solutions.

Information on Interacting with People Using Assistive Devices

Users of Contact Brant services and facilities may have disabilities and may use personal assistive devices. Examples of assistive devices include:

- Wheelchair, scooter, walker, cane
- Hearing aids or amplification device
- Oxygen tanks
- Electronic notebooks or laptop computers
- Personal data managers
- Communication boards using symbols, words or pictures
- Speech-generating device that 'speaks' when a symbol, word or picture is pressed

A key point to remember is not to touch or handle an assistive device without permission.

Moving personal assistive devices:

- Ask to move a person in a wheelchair and confirm that the person is ready to move
- Wait for and follow the person's instructions
- Describe what you are going to do/where you are going before you do it
- Avoid uneven ground and objects that create a bumpy and 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 or 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 immediate environment (e.g., automatic doors, accessible washrooms, elevator)

Communicating with people with disabilities:

- Speak as you would to anyone, talking directly to the person with disabilities and making eye contact
- Adjust your communication only according to the person's specific needs for accommodation, which may include speaking slower, speaking a bit louder, simplifying communication, pausing sufficiently to allow the person to reply, informing the person directly if you require assistance yourself with their form of communication, inquiring if an interpreter is required