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Principle:

Geneva Centre for Autism is committed to excellence in providing services to all clients including people with disabilities.

Policy:

Geneva Centre for Autism is committed to equal access to all services and is obligated to facilitate the implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians Act 2005 (AODA) and Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Accessibility Standards for Customer Service), as well as other regulations mandated by AODA and/or any related Acts regarding Accessibility. We will also ensure that privacy is respected.

Procedure:

The centre recognizes that people with disabilities achieve accessibility to the provision of services by the organization, consistent with the following principles:

1. Our services are provided in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.
2. The provision of services to people with disabilities are integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporary or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain or benefit from our services.
3. People with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from our programs and services.

Assistive Devices

We will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by parents, clients and general public with disabilities while accessing our services.

Service Animals

Service animals, such as, but not limited to guide dogs, hearing dogs, seizure response dogs, and certified service animals are permitted entry to all Geneva owned facilities unless other circumstances arise requiring the denial of access. Where such a case arises an alternate meeting format is arranged, i.e. teleconference or other assistive measures available to deliver services to ensure equality of outcome.

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Support Persons (as per AODA)

If a support person accompanies a person with a disability, the organization ensures that both parties are permitted to enter the premises together, and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person. The organization may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the organization's premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability, or the health and safety of others on the premises. Where fees for programs and services are advertised or promoted by the organization, advance notice of the amount payable, if any, in respect of the support person is provided.

Communication:

To ensure the best possible customer service, the centre encourages open two-way communication with all persons interacting with the organization to ensure the need for accommodation or assistance is met

The centre trains employees in how to interact and communicate with others guided by the principle of dignity, independence and equality;

- Persons who identify themselves as requiring alternative communication formats are offered alternative communication in a format that meets their needs as promptly as is feasible
 - Documents are provided in alternative formats that meet the needs of the person in a timely manner
 - If telephone communication is not suitable for the person's need, alternative forms of communication are offered.

Disruption of Services

If there is a disruption in a particular location or service used to allow a person with a disability to access services, the organization gives notice of the disruption to the public by posting the reason for the disruption, the anticipated duration of the disruption, and alternative facilities or services that may be available. This posting is placed in a conspicuous place on the premises of the organization, or by other reasonable methods according to the circumstances. If the disruption is anticipated, the organization provides a reasonable amount of advance notice of the disruption. If the disruption is unexpected, notice is provided as soon as possible.

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Staff Training:

All employees and volunteers will receive Accessible Customer Service Training. The organization keeps records of the training. The training is delivered in a variety of formats and is provided on an ongoing basis for employees, volunteers, and students in order to stay current with changes in policies, practices, and procedures.

The training includes:

1. The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard;
2. How to interact and communicate with persons in a manner that takes into account their disability;
3. How to provide services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of person's with disabilities
4. The process to provide feedback to the organization about the provision of services to persons with disabilities in any department and how the organization responds to feedback and takes action on any complaint;
5. How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide dog, service animal or a support person to access services;
6. How to use equipment or devices available on the organization's premises or provided by the organization that may help with the provision of services, and,
7. What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the organization's programs or services.

Feedback Process:

The organization provides a mechanism that allows clients, parents and the general public to provide feedback on the manner in which the organization provides programs and services to people with disabilities. The feedback process permits the person to provide feedback in person, by telephone, in writing, or by electronic or otherwise. The process details the organization's process for receiving and responding to feedback including timelines and contact information and this process is made available on the organization's website.