

Advanced Rehabilitation Centres (ARC) is committed to achieving the highest levels of service to all clients/patients with or without disabilities. In order to fulfill this commitment, ARC Team Leaders will provide and maintain an environment focused on accessible customer service in compliance with statutory requirements through the development, implementation, training, and maintenance of appropriate standards, policies, and procedures.

1.0 PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Ensure that ARC is compliant with the statutory requirements of The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA, 2005), The Accessibility Standard for Customer Service (2008), and any other appropriate legislation.
- Establish policies, practices, and procedures for providing goods and services to individuals with disabilities.
- Use reasonable effort to ensure the policies, practices, and procedures are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity
- Provide people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services, and benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in a similar way as other patients.
- Develop a work environment where team members are encouraged, educated, and supported in providing the best possible service to individuals with disabilities.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) – passed in 2005; law passed by the Ontario legislature which allows the government to develop specific standards / regulations of accessibility and enforce them

The Accessibility Standard for Customer Service – in effect as of January 1, 2008; applies to all people or organizations in Ontario (private, non-profit, and public sectors) that provide goods or services directly to the public or through another organization, and have one or more team members

Disability (under the AODA, Section 2)

- (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 impediment, 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

Assistive device – a tool, technology or other mechanism that enables an individual with a disability to perform everyday tasks and activities (e.g. moving, communicating, or lifting); can include wheelchairs, hearing aids, white canes, speech amplification devices, etc.

Support person – can be a personal support worker, a volunteer, a family member, or a friend; may help patient with a variety of tasks, such as communicating, mobility, personal care, and / or medical needs.

3.0 CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Assistive Devices

- Team members are to be trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by clients / patients (e.g. cane, crutches, wheelchair, etc.).
- Team members will not touch any assistive device without permission.
- Team members will be careful not to place any assistive device out of reach of the individual.
- Team members will be cognizant not to place any individual in a wheelchair in an awkward or dangerous position, e.g. in the path of opening doors
- Team members will inform individuals of accessible devices / services when appropriate, e.g. location of accessible washrooms

3.2 Communication

- Team members will communicate with people with disabilities in a method that takes into consideration their disability; team members will inquire about the preferred method of communication if necessary.
- Team members will be trained on how to communicate and interact with patients who have various types of disabilities.
- Team members will communicate at eye level when appropriate.
- Information regarding the disabilities of our patients will be kept private and confidential.
- Clients / patients with disabilities will be encouraged to request assistance with communication from any team member according to their needs. This includes but is not limited to: printing of documents in larger print, verbally reading document, moving to same side of desk to assist with the transmission of documents / forms.

3.3 Service Animals

- Disabled individuals who require service animals will be welcomed into the facilities.
- Service animals are permitted in any area of premises that is open to the public.
- In the rare case that the health and safety of another individual is seriously compromised by the presence of a service animal, the manager / supervisor will analyze all potential options for safely allowing the service animal.
- Team members will remember that a service animal is not a pet, but rather a working animal, and will avoid touching or addressing them without permission.
- If a team member is not sure if the animal is a pet or a service animal, the team member will ask the patient.

3.4 Support Persons

- A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on the premises.
- Team members will speak to the client / patient directly, rather than the support person.

3.5 Notice of Temporary Disruption

- In the event of a planned disruption to services or facilities for clients / patients with disabilities, ARC will provide notification a reasonable time in advance.
- In the event of an unplanned disruption to services or facilities for clients / patients with disabilities, ARC will provide notification as soon as possible.
- 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.

3.6 Training for Team members

- ARC will provide training to team members, volunteers, and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf.
- Training will be provided to new team members in an orientation package.
- Training will include the following:
 - An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard.
 - ARC's plan related to the customer service standard.
 - 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 available on-site or otherwise that may assist in providing goods or services to people with disabilities.
 - What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing ARC's services.
- A record of training, including team member names and date of training, will be maintained by ARC.
- Team members will also be trained when changes are made to this policy.

3.7 Communication of Policy

- ARC's Accessible Customer Service Policy is available upon request from the administration staff; document will be located on the Z drive.
- Policy will be provided in accessible formats whenever possible, e.g. large print, verbally communicated by team member, etc.

3.8. Feedback Process

- Customers who have questions about this policy or wish to provide feedback on the way ARC provides services to clients / patients with disabilities can do so using a feedback form found on the ARC website.
- All feedback will be directed to the operation manager.
- Clients / patients can expect a response to their complaint within 7 days. Complaints will be addressed according to ARC's regular complaint management procedures.
- Clients / patients may indicate their preferred method of communication at the time of filing the complaint.

3.9 Modification to Current or Other Policies

- Any policy of ARC that does not respect and promote the dignity, independence, integration, and equality of opportunity of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

4.0 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Manager/Team Leader

- Provide training to all team members, volunteers, and 3rd party contractors regarding ARC's policies, practices, and procedures for providing goods and services to individuals with disabilities.
- Ensure that ARC's policies, practices, and procedures are being implemented within the workplace.
- Address any concerns and / or complaints from clients / patients or team members regarding the accessibility of services at ARC

4.2 Team members

- Attend training on providing accessible services to individuals with disabilities.
- Be aware of the above considerations (3.1 - 3.9), and follow procedure when appropriate, when performing workplace responsibilities involving clients / patients with disabilities of any nature.
- Exercise patience and consideration when interacting with individuals with disabilities.
- Offer assistance to any individual who appears to be having difficulty.
- Inform manager / team leader if they perceive that a client / patient's needs are not being met by current policies