



GUELPH - WELLINGTON WOMEN IN CRISIS DIRECT SERVICE MANUAL

Section: Policies and Program Descriptions

Date: May 2011

Policy: Providing Service for Women and Children with Disabilities

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis meets the standards set by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis is committed to ensuring that women and children living with disabilities have equal access to our services. We will strive to deliver services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of all women and children.

2. Scope

This Statement of Policy applies to all agency representatives and Board Members of Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis.

3. Responsibility

All staff, managers, placement students, volunteers, service users, and Board Members of Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis will be responsible for ensuring that their behaviour is in accordance with the terms of the policy.

4. Procedure

Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis is committed to excellence in provision of services to all women and children including women and children living with disabilities. We will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

4.1 Communication and Interaction

- We will communicate with women and children living with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.
- We will train staff, managers, placement students and volunteer who communicate with service users on how to interact and communicate with women and children living with various types of disabilities.

4.2 Telephone Services

- We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to women and children using our services. We will train staff, managers, placement students and volunteers to communicate with service users with disabilities over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly. We will offer to communicate by other means of communication (e.g. email,



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TTY) if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication need or is not available.

4.3 Assistive Devices

- We are committed to accommodating the needs of women and children living with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our service
- We will also ensure that staff, managers, placement students and volunteers know how to use the following assistive devices available on the premises for our service users: TTY machines, elevators and wheelchair lifts.

5 Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

- Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis is committed to accommodating the needs of women and children living with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on those areas of our premises open to the public, unless the animal is excluded by another law (City of Guelph By-Laws (1978)-9876, (1985)-11952 & (1988)-12960) and Provincial Bill 132, August 29, 2005). We will also ensure that all staff, managers, placement students and volunteers are properly trained in how to interact with women and children accompanied by a service animal, as per the Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07
- To be considered a service animal under the 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 be prepared to show a letter from a doctor or nurse confirming that it is required for reasons relating to his or her disability. The letter need only explain that the animal is required because of a disability. The letter does not need to identify the disability, why the animal is needed or how it is used.
- Service animals must wear a rabies vaccination tag.
- Service animals need to be maintained on a leash, harness or other type of restraint while on G-W WIC property. However, exceptions are granted when the service animal needs to perform a task requiring it to travel beyond the length of the restraint or when the owner is unable to retain a service animal on a leash due to a disability.
- Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis is committed to accommodating the needs of women and children living with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. However, due to the nature of the work of G-W WIC, if there are safety concerns identified with any support person, alternative



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arrangements will be made to ensure that a support person will be made available and that service is provided.

- As per the Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07, a support person is an individual hired or chosen by a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services. The support person could be a paid personal support worker, a volunteer, a friend or a family member. He or she doesn't not necessarily need to have special training or qualifications.

6. Notice of Temporary Disruption

Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis will provide service users with notice in event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by women and children with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. The notice will be placed at all public entrances on relevant premises.

7. Training for Staff

Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis will provide appropriate and ongoing training to all staff, managers, placement students and volunteers.

Training will include the following:

- The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of our service delivery standard
- How to interact and communicate with women and children with various types of disabilities
- How to refer women with disabilities to appropriate service and other community supports
- How to interact with women and children with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or support person
- How to use the TTY, elevators, wheelchair lifts available on WIC premises or otherwise that may help with provision of service to women and children with disabilities



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- How to implement Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis policies, practices and procedures relating to services standard for women and children living with disabilities

8. **Feedback Process**

The ultimate goal of Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis is to meet the expectations of our service users while providing service to women and children with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated. Any community member, including members of G-W WIC, can provide feedback regarding the way in which Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis provides service to women and children with disabilities. Feedback can be made in writing, email and verbally. All feedback will be direct to the Assistant Executive Director. If a response is required and/or requested, a response can be expected within twenty-one (21) days.

Complaints will be addressed according to complaint categories already established in our agency's complaint management procedures. Please refer to the Direct Service Manual and see Program Manager to start the complaint process.

9. **Modifications of Policies**

We are committed to developing service provisions policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of women and children with disabilities.

10. **Questions about the Policy**

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to women and children with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by or referred to, the Assistant Executive Director of Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis.

www.AccessON.ca for specific detailed information about aspects of this policy. (see 'Definitions')



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Definitions:

Definition “disabilities” (from the OADA 2005):
“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 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*; (“handicap”)



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Appendix A:

Sample Document for Obtaining Feedback

Feedback Form

Dear Service User,

We strive to improve accessibility for women and children with disabilities who use our services. We would like to hear your comments, questions and suggestions about the provision of our service to women and children with disabilities.

Please contact the Assistant Executive Director in person, by mail or at 519-836-1110, or by email at feedback@gwwomenin crisis.org to share your comments.

Thank you,



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Appendix B

Sample Notice about Disruptions in Service

Sample 1

Dear Service User,

[Insert name of device, entrance/exit, or other method or service access will be out of service from [Insert Start Date] to [Insert End Date] for [insert reason for disruption, ie. Routine maintenance]. Alternate [insert alternative arrangements here] has been set up [insert location, with directions]. We regret an inconvenience this may cause. If you have questions or concerns, please call [Insert Program Manager name, contact phone number, and e-mail address].

Thank you,