



Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities: Client Service Policy

Statement of Commitment

Breakthrough Autism strives to provide our products and services to all of our clients in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. We are committed to offering equal opportunity to access our products and services and to providing the benefit of the same services in a similar way to all clients including persons with disabilities.

Intent

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and applies to the provision of goods and services to the public or other third parties.

Application

This policy applies to:

- The products and services at premises operated by Breakthrough Autism or at locations where Breakthrough Autism provides products and services.
- To employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of Breakthrough Autism.

Definitions

Assistive Device – is a technical aid, communication device or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that clients require such as a wheelchair, walker or a personal oxygen tank that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

Disability – the term disability refers to:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, or malformation that a person is born with or that is caused by bodily injury or illness
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- a learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;



- a mental disorder; or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*, 1997.

Guide Dog – is a highly-trained working dog that has been trained at a specialized facility to provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people who are blind.

Service Animal/Service Dog – an animal is a service animal/service dog for a person with a disability if:

- it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- if the person provides a letter from a medical practitioner confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Support Person – a support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to products and services.

General Principles

A. The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

Breakthrough Autism will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity by:

- ensuring that all clients receive the same value and quality;
- allowing clients with disabilities to do things in their own ways, at their own pace when accessing products and services as long as this does not present a safety risk;
- using alternative methods when possible to ensure that clients with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place and in a similar manner;
- taking into account individual needs when providing products and services; and
- communicating in a manner that takes into account the client's disability.

For any client participating in one of Breakthrough Autism's programs, an individualized needs assessment will be conducted to determine how our products and services can be provided in an assessable manner in accordance with this policy.

B. Assistive Devices

Client's own assistive device(s):

Breakthrough Autism will ensure that our staff is trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by clients with disabilities while accessing our products or services.



In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access of products and services.

C. Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs

Breakthrough Autism welcomes the service animals of people with disabilities. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public. "No pet" policies do not apply to guide dogs, service animals and/or service dogs.

Care and Control of the Animal:

The client that is accompanied by a guide dog, service dog and/or service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all time.

Allergies:

If a health and safety concern presents itself for example in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, Breakthrough Autism will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

D. Support Persons

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that support person accompany them on the premises of Breakthrough Autism and/or when services are provided by Breakthrough Autism.

In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the client, prior to any conversation where confidential information might be discussed.

E. Notice of Disruptions in Service

Service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of Breakthrough Autism. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that clients with disabilities rely on to access or use Breakthrough Autism's products or services, reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice. In some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice may not be possible.

In the event that a notification needs to be posted the following information will be included unless it is not readily available or known:

- products or services that are disrupted or unavailable
- reason for the disruption
- anticipated duration



- a description of alternative services or options

Notifications Options:

When disruptions occur Breakthrough Autism will provide notice by:

- posting notices in conspicuous places including at the point of disruption, and at the main entrance;
- contacting clients with appointments;
- verbally notifying clients when they are making a reservation or appointment; or
- by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

F. Feedback Process

Breakthrough Autism shall provide clients with the opportunity to provide feedback on the service provided to clients with disabilities. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to all clients and notice of the process will be posted at our office and verbally communicated to clients. Feedback forms along with alternate methods of providing feedback such as verbally (in person or by telephone) or written (hand written, delivered, website or email), will be available upon request.

Submitting Feedback:

Clients can submit feedback to:

Executive Director
Nancy Marchese
416.901.8478
info@breakthroughautism.ca

Clients who wish to provide feedback by completing an onsite Client Feedback Form or verbally can do so to Breakthrough Autism, c/o Executive Director.

- ! Clients that provide formal feedback will receive acknowledgment of their feedback, along with any resulting actions based on concerns or complaints that were submitted.
- ! Feedback will be provided to the client within 7 days. If this is not possible, the client will be advised within 72 with an explanation as to the delay
- ! All feedback from clients, including any personal information they may provide such as phone number, will be maintained in a confidential file, maintained by the Executive Director



G. Training

Training will be provided to:

- a) all employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of Breakthrough Autism, and
- b) those who are involved in the development and approval of client service policies, practices and procedures.

Training Provisions:

Training will cover:

- ! A review of the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*
- ! A review of the requirements of the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*
- ! Instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various disabilities; use of assistive devices, guide dogs, service animals and service dogs, support persons; assisting persons with disabilities, and the policies contained within this document
- ! Specific instructions to employees on the above after they are assigned their specific duties.
- ! The Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities
- ! Ongoing instructions in connection with any changes to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.
- ! Instructions on how to use equipment or devices that are available at our premises or that we provide that may help people with disabilities
- ! Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing our services
- ! Review of Breakthrough Autism's policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible client service to clients with disabilities and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

Training Schedule:



Breakthrough Autism will provide training as soon as practicable. Training will be provided to new employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or act on our behalf. Additional training will also be provided in the event of changes to legislation, procedures and/or practices or in the event that any of the staffs' roles change.

Record of Training:

Breakthrough Autism will keep a record of training that includes the dates training was provided and the number of employees who attended the training.

H. Notice of Availability and Format of Documents

Breakthrough Autism shall notify clients by posting it on Breakthrough Autism's website that the documents related to the *Accessibility Standard for Customer Service* are available upon request and in a format that takes into account the client's disability.

Administration

If you have any questions or concerns about this policy or its related procedures please contact:

Executive Director
Nancy Marchese
416.901.8478
info@breakthroughautism.ca

This policy and its related procedures will be reviewed as required in the event of legislative changes.

Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities: Practices and Procedures

Statement of Commitment

Breakthrough Autism strives to provide our products and services to all of our business clients, guests, and other authorized visitors ("clients") in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. We are committed to offering equal



opportunity to access our products and services and to providing the benefit of the same services, in the same place and in a similar way to all clients including persons with disabilities.

Practices and Procedures

Procedures

It is the procedure for all designated Breakthrough Autism employees to inquire of all clients whether or not there are any special needs or requirements they have when they visit any Breakthrough Autism facility or when services are provided in the home of any client. Breakthrough Autism will obtain this information in advance of any visit. Where advance notice is not possible, Breakthrough Autism will determine any special needs or requirements at time of arrival.

Designated Breakthrough Autism employees will have current knowledge of external and internal access points to the building and the location of relevant facilities. Breakthrough Autism employees will also have knowledge of assistive devices which may be available on the premises or that a client may use when services are provided in the client's home.

Practices

In order to meet the needs of a client, Breakthrough Autism will utilize existing available methods, techniques or devices if available and suitable for the client, or alternatively will adapt or change a current practice or will simply ask the business guest what they need.

Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate the needs of the client, short of health and safety concerns which may place the guest or others at risk.

Communication Plans and Strategies

Breakthrough Autism will develop an approach to communication that is flexible and considerate of all clients. Designated employees will understand disabilities and how they may affect communication, will consider alternative approaches to make communication accessible, and will always ask the client what they need.

Types of Disabilities

Disabilities that may impact communication are as follows: vision, hearing, deaf/blindness, physical, speech or language, mental health, intellectual, developmental or learning.



Vision

To ensure effective communication with a client:

- Always ask the client how you may help them.
- Offer assistance, but wait for the person to accept it
- When guiding, walk slowly, and advise of upcoming obstacles, turns, etc,
- Offer to describe products and services
- If providing written material, offer to read it
- If you leave the client unattended, advise them of where you are going and when you will return

Hearing

There are varying degrees of hearing loss, so to ensure effective communication with a client, determine what capability they have (e.g. oral deaf people can speak and read lips). As well:

- Maintain eye contact
- Avoid covering your mouth with papers, etc
- Avoid talking while leading the guest
- In emergencies, assist the guest in recognizing and responding
- If you cannot “sign”, use a pen and paper to communicate back and forth
- Move to a quiet area for discussion when dealing with a person with a hearing aid

Deafness/Blindness

Deaf/blindness is a combination of hearing and vision loss that can range from partial to full in either sensory area. To ensure effective communication with a client:

- Ask what would make them most comfortable
- Communication may take them additional time and requires patience
- Always direct questions and comments to the client, even when accompanied by a support person
- Avoid sudden moves, or contact with the client which may catch them off guard, except in case of emergency

Physical Disabilities

These disabilities come in many forms – confinement to a wheelchair, loss of limb, and less visible disabilities such as heart or breathing conditions. To ensure effective communication with a client:



- Ask how you can help
- Pull up a chair and sit with the individual at their level
- Offer assistance if the client appears to be struggling or in distress
- Always ask before touching or moving an assistive device
- Ensure the environment is free of obstacle
- It is acceptable to offer a handshake to a client. Let them respond to your gesture

Speech or language

To ensure effective communication with a client:

- If you do not understand, ask them to repeat themselves
- Ask close ended questions to illicit a yes/no response
- Be patient while they respond
- Never interrupt or assume you know what they want

Mental Disabilities

You may not be aware of a mental disability when dealing with a guest. These individuals may face barrier such as increased anxiety, sudden mood swings, poor concentration and memory. To ensure effective communication with a client:

- Ask how you can help, be patient, and work with the client to find a solution

Intellectual, Learning and Developmental Disabilities

These disabilities include a range of disorders that affect verbal and non verbal information acquisition, retention, understanding and processing. To ensure effective communication with a client:

- Be prepared to explain and provide examples of information you give
- Be patient and verify your understanding
- Provide information in smaller segments
- Respond to any requests for assistance in completing forms etc
- Allow extra time to complete tasks

When speaking on the Phone

You may not be aware of a disability when dealing with a client on the phone. To ensure effective communication with a client:



- Speak normally, do not shout or interrupt
- Be patient
- Ask the client to repeat information if you don't understand
- If you cannot communicate effectively, consider making alternative arrangements such as written correspondence or a personal visit.

Use of Personal Assistive Devices

Clients with disabilities should not be prohibited from using personal assistive devices unless a safety issue is present

- Do not refuse to work with the device
- Do not stare at the device
- Never touch or move the device without asking permission
- Ensure adequate space for the device. Avoid blocking, or bumping into the device
- Offer assistance if the client is having difficulty using the device
- Keep walkways, entrances, parking lots free of ice, snow and debris
- For wheelchairs, make eye contact and pull up a chair for discussion

Assistive Devices and Safety Concerns

In cases where the assistive device may present a safety concern, Executive Director will assess the risk and determine alternate methods to provide service

Assistive Devices and Accessibility Concerns

The office area at Breakthrough Autism is fully accessible for clients in wheelchairs

Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs

Guide dogs, service animals or service dogs are permitted. The client is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all times. Remember, the animal is "working" and is not to be treated as a pet

- Never separate the client from the animal
- Do not talk to, touch, feed or otherwise distract the animal
- If you are unsure if the animal is in fact, providing a service to the client, ask. Typically service animals wear a marked harness or vest
- Provide water to the animal if the clients requests
- Politely advise other Breakthrough Autism staff or clients to avoid contact with the animal unless the client allows



Identifying a Guide Dog, Service Animal or Service Dog

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, you may request verification from the client. Verification may include a letter from a doctor or nurse, a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada, or a certificate of training from a recognized training school.

Handling Competing Needs and Rights

There may be situations where a service animal causes concern to other clients, such as in the event of allergies or religious beliefs. Reasonable effort must be taken to meet the needs of all parties. This may as simple as ensuring the parties are kept separate.

Allowing Clients with Support Persons

A client may have a support person to assist them. The support person can be a paid worker, a volunteer or even a family member or friend. They offer a wide range of services such as interpretation, speaking on behalf of the guest, note taking, guiding, transportation, personal care and communication.

It is important to focus your attention on the client, not the support person:

- If you are unsure of which is the client, ask
- Introduce yourself to both people
- Talk directly to the client, even if the support person is responding
- Do not have side conversations with the support person
- Ask the client how you can help and what they need
- Provide written materials to both the client and support person
- Never separate the two
- In cases where confidential information is being discussed or provided, consent should be obtained from the client. Consent can range from written to a gesture from the client, taking into account their disability

Providing Notice of Service Disruption

In the event that a service disruption exists, a Disruption in Service notice will be posted at the main entrance, and at the point of disruption. Where possible, clients will also be notified in advance of a scheduled visit.

Client Feedback Process



A Client Feedback Form has been designed for clients who wish to provide written feedback. This form is available in paper or electronic versions, and once completed, can be returned to the Executive Director. Clients may also provide feedback verbally, either in person, or by phone using the same template format.

The methods of feedback can be provided to the client to allow them the option to choose the most appropriate one that works best for them.

Any issues raised through client feedback will be addressed by Executive Director and reported back to the client.

Feedback Process

Clients can submit feedback to:

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Employee Training

Training will be provided to all Breakthrough Autism employees, (and as required in future, to any agents, contractors and other external company representatives) who deal with clients.

Training will cover:

- ! A review of the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*



- ! A review of the requirements of the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*
- ! Instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various disabilities; use of assistive devices, guide dogs, service animals and service dogs, support persons; assisting persons with disabilities, and the policies contained within this document
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Client Service Standards Employee Commitment

Policy Statement

Providing our clients with the highest quality of client service is a matter of great importance to us at Breakthrough Autism. Breakthrough Autism shall ensure that our services and office facilities are accessible to all clients, and will strive to promote equality, dignity and respect for everyone. Treating clients fairly is at the heart of our business, and we aim to make sure that they can enjoy the highest possible standards of service at all times.

Intent

At Breakthrough Autism we will:



- Greet our clients in a friendly manner, and provide them with quality service each and every visit;
- Provide friendly and knowledgeable services;
- Treat our clients fairly, with respect and with dignity;
- Treat our clients with patience and understanding;
- Respect a client's privacy and handle confidential information in an appropriate way;
- Take responsibility and be accountable for the accuracy and quality of our work;
- Act with integrity at all times.

Policy

Within Breakthrough Autism, we will deliver our products and services in a consistent manner using the following procedures:

Published Service Standards

- We will publish a copy of our Client Services Policy on our website. A copy of the policy will also be provided to any client registered in a program with us.
- We will monitor our performance against these standards
- We will also review our Client Service Standards and values following ongoing feedback from clients, our stakeholders and our staff

Inform the Client

- Information about our products and services will be accessible, accurate, and up to date. This information will contain relevant contact details including a telephone number, office address and e-mail address.
- We will take steps to make sure the information we provide is clear and straightforward so that it is easily understood.
- We will only use client information in a lawful and fair manner to protect privacy

Service Accessibility

- We will take all required steps to make sure our services and facilities are accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities. Breakthrough Autism will comply with all applicable customer service accessibility legislation requirements.

Consulting with Clients

- We will seek the views of our clients regarding the delivery of our services, the quality of our service and the standards of service they expect from us. We welcome client comments or suggestions on how we can improve the quality of our service.



- If a client wishes to make a comment or has a suggestion on how we can improve the quality of service, please provide the client with our Client Service Feedback Form , or refer them to the Executive Director to make a comment or suggestion.

Polite and Helpful Staff

- Breakthrough Autism staff members shall be polite and helpful, act with integrity and discretion and treat clients with respect at all times.
- Breakthrough Autism staff shall be provided with appropriate client service training to help them deliver our products and services in an efficient and professional manner.

Complaints Procedure

If a client is unhappy with the quality of service received, they may make a complaint:

- " In person to the Executive Director;
 - " By letter, fax, or e-mail, or
 - " By telephone, using verbal or texting, to the Executive Director
- We will fully and fairly investigate the complaint and offer the client a full explanation of the circumstances and take appropriate action.
 - We will record and monitor complaints about the quality of service and try to address concerns. We want to learn from complaints so that we can improve the quality of service we provide.