

Chapter:	Client Services General	Policy Number	CG1106
Policy title:	Accessible Communications		
Developed:	December 2011		
Revised:	November 2014, February 2022, May 2023		
Approved:	May 2023		
References:	Integrated Accessibility Standards https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/110191 How to make information accessible https://aoda.ca/how-to-make-information-accessible/		
Policy references:	Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy CG1104		
Approved by:	Tara Groves-Taylor, Chief Executive Officer		

Accessible Communications

Policy

1. Community Healthcaring Kitchener-Waterloo (the Health Centre) is committed to communicating effectively with all people. The Health Centre will communicate and provide information regarding its services and facilities in an accessible manner, upon request.
2. When communicating with individuals, Health Centre staff, students and volunteers, the Health Centre will do so in a manner that considers differing abilities.
3. The Health Centre will notify clients and members of the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports in a variety of ways.
4. The Health Centre will, upon request, provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for people with differing abilities. Health Centre staff, students and volunteers will consult with the person making the request, to determine their specific accessibility needs. Once these are determined, the Health Centre will decide on the most appropriate accessible format or communication supports, given the needs of the person and the Health Centre's capability to deliver.
5. The Health Centre generally provides information and resources at no cost. In any case, where there is a fee charged, no additional fee will be applied for accessible formats or communication supports.
6. The Health Centre will provide alternative formats or communication supports in a timely manner. For greater clarity, the Health Centre is not required to have all types of formats or supports on hand or in stock. In some cases, the information or communication may be available quickly; in other cases, additional time may be required due to the availability of the requested format, the complexity and amount of information being provided and the resources and internal capacity of the Health Centre.

7. This policy applies only to information and communications that the Health Centre controls directly or indirectly through its contractual relationships. The policy does not apply to information that the Health Centre shares on behalf of another organization.

Procedures

1. The Health Centre will notify clients and the public that they may request accessible formats and communication supports through several mechanisms, including:
 - Verbal notification when appropriate;
 - Signage in prominent locations throughout the Health Centre facility;
 - On the Health Centre website;
 - Messaging on the waiting room television;
 - In the new client orientation package
 - In promotional materials for programs and events.

Training will be provided to staff, board members, students and volunteers regarding effective means of communicating, including the use of appropriate language and processes for soliciting feedback.

e.g. How to make information accessible <https://aoda.ca/how-to-make-information-accessible/>.

2. When consulting with persons regarding their communication needs, a range of options should be considered, such as:
 - Reading written information aloud to the person directly;
 - Accessible electronic formats such as HTML and MS Word
 - Alternate formats such as large print type and Braille
 - Assistive communication devices such as amplifiers and screen magnification
 - Sign language interpretation
 - Text transcription of visual and audio material
 - Captioning or audio description
 - Augmentative and alternative communication methods and strategies such as the use of letter, word, or picture boards.
 - Repeating, clarifying, and restating information.
3. Health Centre staff, students and volunteers should incorporate “plain language” principles in its communications, including telephone and in-person.