youthab.

Support. Empower. Connect.

Accessibility

Youth Habilitation Quinte Inc. (Youthab) strives at all times to provide its services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of individuals with disabilities. We are also committed to giving individuals with disabilities the same opportunity to access service by allowing them to benefit from the same service, in the same place and in a similar way as other individuals.

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and placement students of Youthab, in all departments, and all others dealing with the public on behalf of Youthab.

Definition:

As per the **Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001**, the term "disability" is stated as:

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 coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impairment, muteness or speech impediment, or reliance on a service 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").

Procedure:

Youthab is committed to excellence in serving all clients including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. We will ensure that our websites and brochures are written in plain English/French.

We will train staff who communicate with clients on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities through web based tools or other devices.

Telephone Services

We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our clients. We will train staff to communicate with clients over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

We will offer to communicate with individuals by e-mail, Bell Relay, texting or the TTY if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

Interpreting Services

We will arrange for interpreting services (sign language and spoken language) to provide two-way communication between deaf/hard of hearing clients and Youthab staff.

Assistive Devices

We are committed to serving individuals with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our services. We will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by clients with disabilities while accessing our services.

We will also ensure that all staff know how to use the assistive devices available on our premises for clients.

Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal in the parts of our premises that are open to the public. We will also ensure that all staff, placement students or volunteers dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter Youthab's premises with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises.

Notice of Temporary Disruption

Youthab will provide clients with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or to services usually used by people 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 posted at all public entrances and reception areas on the premises. In addition, the telephone message at each site will indicate the temporary service disruption.

Training for Staff

Youthab will provide training to all employees, placement students and volunteers who deal with the public or other third parties on the premises. The training will be provided during a new employee's, placement student's, volunteer's orientation.

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer (client) 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 who require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.
- How to use a TTY or the Bell Relay system and how to increase the text size on computer screens.
- Youthab's policies, practices and procedures relating to the client service standard as it pertains to people with disabilities.
- Staff will be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to internal policies, practices and procedures that may have an impact on servicing and interaction with persons with disabilities.

Training for new hires will be provided during their orientation to the agency.

As part of the orientation process, new staff, placement students and volunteers will sign the Accessibility policy sign off sheet indicating that they understand and agree to abide by the Accessibility policy. A signed copy will be retained in the employee's, placement student's and volunteer's personnel file.

We are committed to developing client service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to the policy before considering the impact of people with disabilities.

Any policy of Youthab's that does not respect and promote dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of Youthab is to meet and surpass client expectations while serving clients with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are solicited, welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way Youthab provides goods and services to people with disabilities can

be made verbally in person, or by completing the Accessibility Feedback Form and sent by e-email, facsimile, or regular mail. All feedback will be directed to the Administration & Community Services Manager or designate. Clients can expect a response within thirty (30) business days.

Complaints will be address according to procedures already established in Youthab's complaint policies and procedures.

Questions about Youthab's Accessibility Plan

Youthab's Accessibility Plan exists to achieve service excellence to clients with disabilities and complies with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001. If anyone has a question about this plan, or if the purpose of the plan is not understood, an explanation should be provided by, or referred to, the Executive Director or designate of Youthab.

Review and Monitoring Process

Youthab is committed to the continued improvement of access to all Youthab premises and services for all those with disabilities; and the provision of quality service to those with disabilities. The plan will be reviewed and monitored on an annual basis to identify and remove barriers identified and will reinforce Youthab's commitment to remove all barriers under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Communication about Youth Habilitation's Accessibility Plan

This plan will be available on Youthab's websites. It will be made available to all persons for review and perusal.

Conclusion

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act requires communities to prepare an annual Accessibility Plan. This plan establishes a benchmark and strategy for Youthab to become a barrier free community.