



POLICY

Policy Number: L.3 (Program) and I.18 (HR)

Category: Services to Youth and HR - Miscellaneous

Reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors: June 2023

Next review date: June 2025

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities AODA

Definition:

The Roberts/Smart Centre considers “customer” to include: all youth served, families of youth served, families served, prospective youth and families requesting or waiting for service, other service providers and partners in the community.

Our Mission:

The Roberts/Smart Centre is a tertiary provider and provincial leader in the delivery of inclusive, community-based, individualized treatment and clinical services in both official languages to improve the lives of youth and their families from across Ontario living with complex mental health and behavioural needs.

We are committed to our plan of providing a barrier-free environment for all stakeholders, including our youth and their families, employees, volunteers, job applicant, and any visitors who may enter our premises, access our information or use our services. As an organization, we respect and uphold the requirements set forth under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005), and its associated standards and regulations.

RSC understands that we have a responsibility for ensuring a safe, dignified and welcoming environment for everyone. We are committed to ensuring our organization’s compliance by incorporating accessibility legislation into our policies, procedures, equipment requirements, training and best practices. We will review these policies and practices and/or compliance reports annually, as organizational changes occur, or in anticipation of compliance deadlines.

RSC and all employees are committed to ensuring that the youth and families served are provided with all information, during the service period, in the formats that best suits their needs.

Providing an accessible and barrier-free environment is a shared effort, and as an organization, RSC is committed to working with the necessary parties to make accessibility for all a reality.

Customer Service Policy Statement

Our Commitment:

In fulfilling our mission, the Roberts/Smart Centre strives at all times to provide its services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving

people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

1. Providing Services to People with Disabilities

The Roberts/Smart Centre is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

2. Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

We will train staff who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities. This could include providing an interpreter or learning to address the customer directly if the person is accompanied by a support person.

This policy will be available internally in the RSC HR and Corporate Manual as well as on our website. It will be made available in the format requested by a customer.

3. Telephone Services

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

We will offer to communicate with customers by TTY or email if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

4. Assistive Devices

We are committed to serving people 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 customers with disabilities while accessing our services.

We are able to accommodate wheelchairs and other devices at our main administrative campus location. Our live-in locations and private school are not wheelchair accessible. Our Secure program is able to offer a meeting location that is wheelchair accessible for the families of youth and for other service providers.

5. Billing

We are committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our customers. For this reason, invoices will be provided in the following formats upon request: hard copy, large format or by email. We will answer any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or email.

Information provided to customer of RSC will be provided in a format that is accessible, upon request from the customer or a representative of the customer. Some examples of accessible formats for all RSC documentation, including this policy and the Accessibility plan are HTML and structured Microsoft Word files. RSC will always ask the person requesting the information which format would best suit their needs and provide this if possible. Requests for information will be provided within 5 days of the requests. All requests must be acknowledged and RSC will work directly with the person requesting the information to ensure their needs are met if possible.

RSC has accessed external resources, such as interpreters, physicians, occupational therapists and counsellors, when requested and when needed. RSC employees will ensure that all information provided to the youth and families served is understood, easily accessible and meets the needs of the youth and the families.

Use of Service Animals and Support Persons:

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. We will also ensure that all staff, volunteers and others 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 the Roberts/Smart Centre'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.

Fees will not be charged for support persons for admission to Roberts/Smart Centre's premises. However, support persons must sign an Oath of Confidentiality on entering any of the Roberts/Smart Centre's premises.

Service/Support Animals within Live-in Treatment Programs:

The Roberts/Smart Centre is not able to allow youth who live in the treatment homes to keep a pet on the premises. This is for the protection of the animal and of the youth and their family. Unfortunately, some youth have mental health issues that may lead to harm to themselves, others and pets. RSC is not able to guarantee the safety of the pet at all times nor able to care for pets. **The Roberts/Smart Centre recognizes that a Service Animal, or Support Animal, is not considered a pet.**

The Roberts/Smart Centre will consider, individually, all requests from youth, their parents/guardians and child service agencies representing the youth, regarding animals that have been designated as a Service Animal or Support Animal for that youth.

Prior to the consideration of allowing a Service/Support animal in one of the Live-in Treatment programs, the following criteria must be met:

1. The animal must be trained so that it is always in control and accepts the commands of the youth. This training must be from a recognized association that trains animals to be Service/Support animals. Proof must be given and kept on the youth's file.
2. The animal must be a member of this association with the association providing proof of insurance for liability in the event that the animal harms the youth, any other youth in the care of RSC, any staff employed by RSC, any volunteer working with RSC, any contractor or visitor who may come into contact with the animal on the property of RSC or in the course of providing service for RSC.
3. If the animal is not part of a recognized association, the training must have been delivered by a recognized association that trains Service/Support animals, with proof provided to RSC. In the event that the association does not provide insurance coverage, the legal guardian of the youth must show proof of liability insurance that covers the animal in the event of any harm to any persons described in #2 above.
4. The animal must have all immunizations up-to-date with proof provided to RSC.
5. The animal must be on a non-raw diet.
6. The youth must be able to provide all care to the animal. This includes being able to walk, feed, clean up after and any other care required. If the youth is unable to provide this care, the animal may not stay on RSC property except when accompanied by the youth's family/guardian, during a visit.

7. Should there be any medical reasons that the animal may not enter RSC property, the animal will only be allowed to visit outside of the RSC property. Medical reasons could include, but are not limited to, allergies and recognized phobias. Medical proof may be required if this would limit the ability for the youth to have their Service/Support animal.
8. Should there be a history of mistreatment to any animals, or a history of an inability to care for the animal, the Service/Support animal will not be allowed to stay on RSC premises.
9. Should the status of the youth in care change, where the animal was previously allowed to stay on the premises, but can no longer be cared for by the youth due to their mental health issues, the animal will not be allowed to continue to stay on the premises. This will be reviewed at each Plan of Care or as the need arises.

Once these criteria have been reviewed by the treatment team with the youth and the family/guardian, the individual case will be reviewed to determine if this accommodation can be safely allowed.

Notice of Temporary Disruption:

The Roberts/Smart Centre will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or 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 placed at the public entrance on our relevant premises and on our website if the disruption will relate to.

Training for Staff:

The Roberts/Smart Centre will provide training to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures. Individuals in the following positions will be trained: Board Members, Executive Director, Managers, Support staff, Coordinators, Clinicians, Teachers, all front-line Youth Counsellors (full-time and part-time), Students and Volunteers.

This training will be provided to new staff commencing their duties. Training will include the following:

- The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard including all applicable requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)
- 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 TTY
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the Roberts/Smart Centre's services
- The Roberts/Smart Centre's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard

Applicable staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

All training provided to employees and volunteers will take into account accessibility requirements/requests of the participants. RSC will always consider the best option for its employees (accessibility, relevance to field, etc.) when choosing external providers of mandatory training programs.

Feedback Process:

The ultimate goal of the Roberts/Smart Centre is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way that Roberts/Smart Centre provides services to people with disabilities can be made by email at info@rsc-crs.com. All feedback will be directed to a RSC Manager. Customers can expect to hear back within 5 business days.

RSC also requests and receives feedback directly, from service partners, employees and others involved in a youth's care, during a youth's intake procedure, journey through RSC services and discharge planning, including communication with outside partners who will be providing additional services to youth and families once a youth is discharged from RSC.

Modifications to This or Other Policies:

We are committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities. Any policy of the Roberts/Smart Centre that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

Questions about This Policy:

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers 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, a RSC Manager.