

Peel Halton Dufferin Acquired Brain Injury Services

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

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Philosophy Statement

Our Agency, the Peel Halton Dufferin Acquired Brain Injury Services, believes that access to services should be assured in a manner designed to maintain the dignity, privacy, independence and self-determination of the residents, staff, visitors, and family members.

PHD ABIS believes that maintaining the highest quality of life and services for our clients, including physical, emotional, and spiritual, can best be achieved through a comprehensive program of services designed for the persons who have an acquired brain injury whom we serve.

PHD ABIS believes that providing an appropriate environment requires persons to be able to access services and programs either independently, or with the support of staff. As such, our Agency is committed to identifying and removing barriers to services and programs. We are committed to working with interested stakeholders in determining appropriate action once barriers have been identified, and to being ever vigilant in providing an environment conducive to the highest quality of living.

PHD ABIS is committed to maintaining an Accessibility Plan designed to identify and provide corrective action to best assure access to services and programs within the community. Our Agency holds that such a plan should seek to identify barriers including, but not strictly limited to architecture, environment, attitudes, finances, employment, communications, and transportation. Our Organization is committed to annually updating the status of plan elements and revising the entire plan on a five year cycle.

Situation Analysis

Architecture:

Our Head office building is a frame and brick construction located in Mississauga, and our secondary day program is a one level building in Orangeville. The residential sites consist of six (6) homes, three (3) of which are in different buildings, with two (2) of these residential sites being on the first level of the apartment buildings.

All buildings and residential sites provide ground floor access without stairs. The Head Office building provides an elevator service to the lower floor, one of the residential homes has an outside elevator, and two of the residential homes have fully accessible ramps into the homes. Residents are provided housing in a variety of levels of care. All residential bedrooms are fully accessible. Residents provide their own furnishings for their bedrooms. A number of these residential bedrooms and bathrooms have various types of assistive aids, such as overhead lifts, which are often funded by the Ministry of Health. Units feature a variety of safety and comfort amenities, such as grab bars and accessible showers.

Environment:

The exterior of each of the sites, including the Head Office and the Orangeville Day Program locations, provides accessible sidewalks. Exterior lighting is located at all building entrances, apartment patios/balconies, parking areas, and the community access road. Interior spaces feature a variety of lighting sources, with clear exit signs at all the doorways. Noise levels in the community remain low, except for one residential home which is located on a major street in Mississauga.

Parking for persons with disabilities are available at all the sites. Walking paths have been paved for the safety and accessibility of residents, including walkers and mobility aids (wheelchairs).

Fire drills are conducted routinely across all service streams in compliance with applicable regulations. All sites have Fire Plans posted with Emergency evacuation plans, appropriate evacuation lights, and mag lock doors for safety.

Attitudes:

Peel Halton Dufferin Acquired Brain Injury Services serves persons from the age of 16 years through senior years. Our Agency does not discriminate in admissions policy based upon race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, culture, disability, gender or sex. Routine training is provided to staff regarding issues effecting the ABI population served. Counseling services are offered regularly to families and caregivers.

All clients are encouraged to interact and participate in group and individualized programs. The PHD ABI Day Services conducts numerous activities and programs, on a daily and weekend basis. There are also Psychosocial Adjustment Groups, which includes anger management, depression support, Substance Use and Brain Injury (SUBI), men's and a women's peer mentoring groups (facilitated by a group leader), brain injury education and many more. A client-driven newsletter and printed materials are produced throughout the year, which contribute to increased morale and positive attitudes. Staff receives regular training on the Client Bill of Rights and Client Confidentiality.

Finances:

Peel Halton Dufferin Acquired Brain Injury Services provides support to our service recipients in all aspects of daily living, in both our residential and outreach services. The level of financial support given to our clients to manage their finances is based on individual needs and abilities. Often, many of the clients receive support external to our Agency for managing their financial requirements through a Public Guardian or family members.

Our agency has a Director of Finance whom also assists with financial needs for all our service recipients,

Employment:

PHD ABIS is an Equal Opportunity Employer, is inclusive and equitable. The Peel Halton Dufferin Acquired Brain Injury Services does not discriminate in employment practices regardless of age, sex, gender, disability, religion, ethnicity,

race, or national origin. Our Agency provides training and advancement opportunities for employees at all levels of the organization.

Communication:

The Peel Halton Dufferin Acquired Brain Injury Services supports communication functions in a variety of areas:

WEBSITE:

- Our website and web content is accessible according to the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.
- We provide accessible formats and communications supports at no additional cost when a person with a disability asks for them.
- We have a feedback process accessible by providing accessible formats and communications supports when requested.
- We make public emergency information accessible when requested

In 2014, PHD ABIS underwent a website redesign with the support of two external consultants. Some of the key features promoting accessibility includes a Browse Aloud program (which features Text-To-Talk options, magnification, over 70 language options, Web Page Simplifier, MP3 Generation, Screen Mask option), responsive design for interface display, various font size options (PHD ABIS has developed a new website, which has the following accessible features; such as two font sizes, and background colours that makes the site more accessible to persons who have visual impairments. Also, the website will have updates for what is happening in the Day Program, and a feature which will communicate a disruption in service if there are situations such as closure of programs due to weather conditions. Assistive devices are available throughout the community.

Residents have routine access to computer and internet services. Also, many of our service recipients have a personal email address, and under the Canadian Anti-

Spam Law/Legislation, have given permission to be communicated with via their personal email. Daily newspapers are available in the residences for general use. Newspapers are delivered to the various residential homes, and all service recipients are able to be aware of current affairs, entertainment and other topics of interest.

Transportation:

Peel Halton Dufferin clients access the Region of Peel/Halton Transhelp Vans for various needs including recreational trips, transports to medical appointments, transports to airport and GO train stations.

Also, clients are able to access the local transit buses for Mississauga, Oakville (Halton) and Brampton (Peel and Dufferin), which are also wheelchair accessible. The clients access various accessible taxis across Peel, Halton and Dufferin, and are able to use taxi scripts, which is a savings of 25% per trip for each person.

If a client has a cognitive impairment and is unable to access public transportation independently, the Supportive Independent Living (SIL) team will provide transit training for a structured amount of time in order to increase a service recipients access to the greater community. Clients also have the option to access various accessible taxis in the region.

For clients residing in the Central West region, north of Brampton, there is an evident lack of public or supportive transportation. Our Agency continues to advocate for an increase in transportation for clients who are unable to drive. Until this is possible, the PHD ABI Day Services team in Orangeville continues to offer Special Events in various parts of the community in an attempt to increase accessibility.

Barrier Identification

Peel Halton Dufferin Acquired Brain Injury Services has an extremely active Client Advocacy Group, who came together on October 7, 2014 to discuss and identify barriers relating to Architecture, Environment, Attitudes, Communication and Employment. The members identified a number of barriers, which are included in this five year Accessibility Plan for PHD ABIS.

Architecture:

A number of barriers have been identified. Although the PHD ABI Services provides appropriate access to all areas for persons with various disabilities, the need for PHD ABI Services remains willing to investigate and provide corrective action, as appropriate, for instances of barriers, including space access and barriers related to unique health conditions. These barriers can be a universal need, or an individual need.

1. At our Mississauga Head Office, the Day Program door requires automatic openers. Also for exists and for all washrooms in all sites.
2. The TRSL residential home requires wider bedroom and bathroom doors to enable persons using mobility aids to be able to access these rooms more accessibility. Peel Living is responsible for this home, therefore a request shall be made on behalf of our service recipients who reside in this home.
3. The Head Office site requires a third accessible washroom on the downstairs level, which will be utilized by all service recipients.

Environment: barriers

Our Organization has identified the following environmental barriers;

1. lighting is needed to illuminate the exterior exits on the back pathway of our Mississauga Head Office
2. Access to the back path at our Mississauga Head Office.
3. Door Openers as required on all doors that require accessibility.
4. Improved Accessible toilets at the residential PHD ABIS West [Oakville] location.

Attitude: Barriers

The Mission Statement for PHD ABIS states that we exist to provide the highest quality of life possible for those persons in the regions of Peel, Halton and Dufferin country, whose lives have been touched by an acquired brain injury.

1. There are occasions that some of our service recipients still experience attitudinal barriers with members of society, and may also experience bad customer service in community settings.
2. Over the course of the next year all staff members will be educated in the **Health Equity Impact Assessment**, which will increase awareness and sensitivity to any issues of disparity, and will also improve any attitudinal barriers regarding diversity.
3. We will continue to train all staff on Ontario's accessibility laws and on the Human Rights code as it relates to people with disabilities.

Finances: Barriers

The community has several residents currently receiving financial support through the Ontario Disability Support Program, Insurance Companies, Long Term Disability or CPP [Canadian Pension Plan].

1. When a person with a disability gains employment then the wage they earn may significantly affect the amount of financial support they receive from the Government.
2. When a person with a disability requires financial assistance and advocacy, it can be difficult to find the right aid/person to help navigate financial systems, such as, who to contact at the ODSP office.
3. A person with a disability may not receive enough financial support monthly to live comfortably, and often may live below the poverty line

Employment: (Barriers)

Our agency remains willing to investigate and provide corrective action, as appropriate, instances of barriers, including barriers related to employment matters.

1. We will continue to follow our Return to Work policy, which develops individual accommodation plans for employees that have been absent due to a disability.
2. We will ensure the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities are taken into account by using performance management and career development.

Communication: (Barriers)

PHD ABIS has worked extensively to make great progress in the domain of communication, however, our agency remains willing to investigate and provide corrective action, as appropriate, instances of barriers, including barriers to effective and appropriate communication.

1. We will continue to make improvements to our new website, as technology advances over the next five years.
2. An automatic phone directory will be inputted onto the Head Office main phone number, which will have names alphabetically spelled by touch tone, to easily direct our service recipients to the person whom they are attempting to make phone contact with.
3. We are committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities, and we will continue to consult with our service recipients to determine their information and communication needs.
4. We will continue to take steps to ensure our existing feedback processes are accessible to our service recipients.

Transportation: (Barriers)

1. Our Orangeville Day Program location has very limited access to public transportation, we will continue to advocate for improved means of transportation for the service recipients.
2. There is a great need for the accessible transportation systems in all three regions of Peel, Halton and Dufferin to transport people into these regions, without having to transfer buses. We will advocate to the municipalities to improve their transportation systems.
3. We will advocate for all taxis to increase the amount of accessible taxis in each region

PHD ABI Services feels that the unique challenges related to working with people who have an acquired brain injury requires that all staff have a very empathic attitude towards all clients and their families.

Our *Mission Statement* states PHD ABIS exists so there will be the highest quality of life possible for those persons in the regions of Peel, Halton, and Dufferin Country whose lives are touched by an Acquired Brain Injury.

Our Client Bill of Rights states:

As a client receiving services from PHD ABIS, you can expect that you will:

- Be treated with courtesy and respect, free from mental, physical and financial abuse.
- Be treated in a way that respects your dignity and privacy, and that promotes your autonomy.
- Be treated in a way that recognizes your individuality and is sensitive to your needs and preferences, including preferences based on ethnic, spiritual, linguistic, familial and cultural factors.
- Receive information about the community services provided to you and be told who will be providing the community services.
- Be entitled to give or refuse consent to the provision of community services.
- Be entitled to participate in, raise concerns about, or recommend changes in connection with community services provided to you.
- Be entitled to raise concerns about policies and decisions that affect your interest to: PHD ABIS, government officials or any other person, without fear of interference, coercion, discrimination or reprisal.
- Be informed of the laws, rules, and policies affecting the operation of PHD ABIS and be informed, in writing, of the procedures for initiating complaints about the service provider.
- Have your records kept confidential and in accordance with the law.

Our Client Confidentiality Rights states:

PHD ABIS is committed to providing each individual that we serve with fully confidential health care. All clients of PHD ABIS have their health information protected under the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA).

For More Information

For more information on this accessibility plan,

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