



ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

2022

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Philosophy Statement

Mind Forward Brain Injury Services Ontario believes that access to services should be designed to maintain the dignity, privacy, independence and self-determination of the residents, staff, visitors, and family members. These can best be achieved through a comprehensive program of services designed for the persons who have an acquired brain injury in our care.

Vision Statement: An inclusive brain injury community rooted in connections, possibilities and hope for all.

Mission Statement: Mind Forward exists so there can be the highest quality of life for individuals in Peel, Halton and Dufferin whose lives are touched by Acquired Brain Injury.

Values:

Respect: We value people for who they are. We show regard for all and learn from their words and actions.

Empathy: We strive to understand the feelings and circumstances of one another and act with compassion.

Collaboration: We welcome all perspectives with an open mind and without prejudice to accomplish our collective goals.

Integrity: We strive to do the right thing, in a reliable way, under all circumstances.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity: We embrace the diversity of our staff and clients and endeavor to lead and create an equitable and inclusive environment so all feel welcome.

Excellence: We put forth a sincere and consistent effort of always trying to do better.

Mind Forward 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 be vigilant in providing an environment conducive to the highest quality of living.

Mind Forward 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 plan identifies 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.

Accessible Customer Service: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07

In 2019 Mind Forward submitted the five year 2020 to 2025 Accessibility Plan to the Ontario Government, in compliance with the AODA 2005.

Situation Analysis

Architecture:

Our primary office building is a frame and brick construction located in Mississauga which are three levels. The upper level is staff offices; the main level and bottom level are accessible by elevator and primarily for day services and client access.

The residential sites consist of five (5) homes, three (3) of which are in different apartment buildings, with two (2) of these residential sites being on the first level of the apartment buildings. There are three Assisted Living homes in Mississauga [TRSL, Britannia and Windsor Hill]. One home is located in Oakville [Mind Forward West], one home is situated in Brampton [Conover].

All buildings and residential sites provide ground floor access. 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.

Mind Forward has 3 Day Program partnerships in Halton and Central West (Orangeville and Brampton). Halton has a partnership with St. Luke's Recreational Centre which is fully accessible for clients; accessible washrooms, ramps and an elevator. Central West locations are Tweedsmuir Presbyterian Church in Orangeville, fully accessible, and St. Paul's United Church in Brampton which is also fully accessible.

Environment:

The exterior of each of the sites, including the Head Office Day Program location, 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 monthly across all service streams in compliance with applicable regulations.

Attitudes:

Mind Forward Brain Injury Services serves persons from the age of 16 years through to senior years. Our Agency does not discriminate in admissions policy based upon race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, culture, disability, gender or sex. Mind Forward has created an EDI [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion] Committee, comprising a variety of staff who represent both front line staff and Leadership personnel. The EDI Committee has created values and guiding principles: "Equity, Inclusion, Diversity, Collaboration, Transparency, Education, Reflection and Awareness". Staff receives regular training on the Client Bill of Rights, Client Confidentiality, Mind Forward Code of Ethics and Principles We Work By.

Routine training is provided to staff regarding issues effecting the ABI population served. Counseling services are offered regularly to families and caregivers.

All service recipients are encouraged to interact and participate in group and individualized programs. The Mind Forward Day Services conducts numerous activities and programs, on a daily and weekend basis, throughout Peel, Halton and Dufferin. There are also Psychosocial Groups, which includes anger management, depression support, Substance Use and Brain Injury (SUBI), men's and a women's peer mentoring groups brain injury education and many more (facilitated by a Psycho Social Group leader). A client-driven newsletter and printed materials are produced throughout the year, which contribute to increased morale and positive attitudes.

Finances:

Mind Forward 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 service recipients to manage their finances is based on individual needs and abilities. Often, many of the service recipients receive support external to our Agency for managing their financial requirements through a Public Guardian, Substitute Decision Maker, family members or Caregivers. Our agency has a Director of Finance whom also assists with financial needs following financial regulations in a Not for Profit agency.

Employment:

Mind Forward is an Equal Opportunity Employer, is inclusive and equitable. Mind Forward 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:

We continue to make improvements to our website, as technology advances over the next five years. Mind Forward 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 [PROG 18 Accessible Customer Service].

There is a feature which communicates a disruption in service if there are situations such as closure of programs due to weather conditions.

Mind Forward's website has the following accessible features; for example, many font sizes and various background colours, which makes the site more accessible to persons who have visual impairments. Also, the website has updates daily, with the addition of zoom links, for virtual day program groups. All Mind Forward clients are welcome to join all virtual groups, such as, Games, Arts and Crafts, Sports Talk, Jumpstart and many more groups.

Mind Forward has purchased Chrome Books which are part of a program to give digital access to clients, these are Assistive devices available throughout the Mind Forward community.

Residents of the Assisted Living homes have routine access to computers and internet services.

Daily newspapers are available in the residences for general use and assist clients to be engaged and knowledgeable of current events.

Transportation:

Mind Forward service recipients access the Region of Peel using Transhelp, and Halton accesses Care-A-Van, for various transportation needs, including recreational trips, transport to medical appointments, transport to airport and GO train stations. Also, service recipients are able to access the local transit buses for Mississauga, Oakville (Halton) and Brampton (Peel and Dufferin), which are also wheelchair accessible. The service recipients access various accessible taxi's across Peel, Halton and Dufferin.

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. Service recipients have the option to access various accessible taxi's in these regions.

The SIL Client Program Facilitators assist service recipients who have shopping needs, such as groceries, banking and medical appointments.

Barrier Identification

Mind Forward Brain Injury Services Client Advocacy Group, came together to discuss and identify barriers relating to Architecture, Environment, Attitudes, Communication and Employment

Architecture:

Mind Forward remains willing to investigate and provide corrective action, as appropriate, for instances of architectural barriers, including space access and barriers related to unique health conditions. These barriers can be a universal need, or an individual need.

1. A third accessible washroom on the downstairs level [Day Program] has been created during major renovations in 2020.
2. Two large rooms have been created for Day Services use on the main floor.

Environment: barriers

1. Currently, Door Openers are being installed for two washrooms in MH Day Services downstairs.
2. Automatic door openers are in process to be installed for two washrooms on the main floor.
3. Hand rails have been installed beside toilets in the day services washrooms.

Attitude: Barriers

1. There are occasions that some of our service recipients still experience attitudinal barriers with members of society; our staff members continue to educate and empower clients on their equal rights in society.
2. Mind Forward has created an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee with staff members who have diverse back grounds. The learnings from the EDI Committee will also have a focus on equity, diversity and inclusion of all Mind Forward clients.

3. Mind Forward continues to train all staff on Ontario's Accessibility Regulations 429/07, and on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities.

Finances: Barriers

Mind Forward have several clients currently receiving financial support through various means, such as, insurance companies, Ontario Disability (ODSP), WSIB, and pensions. Case Managers and Team Leaders will continue to support all clients through these financial systems throughout the next five year Accessibility Plan 2020 – 2025:

1. Employment versus financial support they receive from the Government.
2. Navigating financial assistance and advocacy, as these systems are complex.
3. Continue to advocate when 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

Managers actively participate in return-to-work programs, yet there are financial restraints on the type and frequency of accommodations that can be provided, therefore we currently have to prioritize accommodation needs.

Communication: (Barriers)

1. We continue to make improvements to our website, as technology advances over the next five years. Our agency website is now accessible for clients to access and participate in all virtual day program groups, which has greatly enhanced accessibility for clients and caregivers.
2. Adding an automatic phone directory to the Head Office main phone number is in process.
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. Clients have access to a Feedback Form in which they can request alternative modes of communication PROG 18 Accessible Customer Services.

Transportation: (Barriers)

Mind Forward remains willing to investigate and provide corrective action, as appropriate, instances of barriers, including barriers related to ongoing changes in transportation needs.

1. There continues to be a 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 continue to advocate to the municipalities to improve their cross boundary transportation systems.

2. Clients residing in the Central West region, north of Brampton, continue to have a lack of public or supportive transportation. Our Agency continues to advocate for an increase in transportation for service recipients who are unable to drive. Until this is possible, the Mind Forward Day Services team in Orangeville continue to offer special events in various parts of the community which are more easily accessible.

Mind Forward Brain Injury 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 service recipients and their families.

Our Client Bill of Rights states:

As a client receiving services from Mind Forward, 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 affection 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:

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