FRED DOUGLAS SOCIETY

Uniting Health, Heart and Home

FRED DOUGLAS SOCIETY INC. POLICY	
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Accessible Customer Service	20.60.10
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Fred Douglas Society aims to provide barrier-free access to all services and programs, and to provide reasonable accommodation when barriers are identified. Fred Douglas Society will work to meet the communication needs of all residents and stakeholders, let residents, stakeholders know when accessible features and services are not available, and to make activities and events accessible. Fred Douglas Society will always allow assistive devices, welcome support people and service animals, encourage and respond promptly to feedback from our residents, stakeholders, volunteers and staff, and provide regular accessible customer service training for all volunteers and staff.

Fred Douglas Society will meet communication needs by offering to communicate in different ways, such as writing things down, reading things out loud, and taking extra time to explain things. We accommodate the use of assistive devices, such as wheelchairs, or walkers etc. We welcome support people and allow service animals on our premises. We maintain our accessibility features. We let the public know when and why an accessibility feature is temporarily unavailable by putting up signs and actively provide reasonable alternative options. We welcome and actively seek feedback on the accessibility of sites and services. We provide the required training on accessible customer service during the onboarding process for new staff and volunteers. We keep a written record of accessibility and training policies and training sessions. We let the public know that our accessibility policies are available on request. All this information is provided in accordance with the Manitoba Accessibility Standard for Customer Service.

Summary of Accessibility Training for staff and volunteers

What is Accessibility?

- Accessibility is creating an environment that provides residents and visitors with disabilities or medical conditions the opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of Fred Douglas Society.

The following tips will help you remove barriers our residents, visitors and families may face to live or visit at Fred Douglas Society. We will outline how to:

- Provide service by removing attitudinal and communication barriers for residents and visitors with disabilities;
- help persons with service animals;
- help residents and visitors who use assistive devices, like wheelchairs or communications boards
- help residents and visitors who are accompanied by a support person

How do we start accommodating?

Your residents and visitors are your best source of information about their needs! A solution can be simple, and as long as you ask, the individual resident or visitor will likely appreciate your attention and consideration.

- If you notice that a resident or visitor is having difficulty, a good starting point is to simply ask: How can I help you?

General Guidelines to Follow

- Do not make assumptions
- Every person's disability is different. Ask questions if you are not sure what someone needs.
- Focus on removing the barrier, not identifying the disability.
- Do not ask "What is your disability?"
- Describe and address people with disabilities appropriately.
- Use respectful language that emphasizes the person rather than the disability. (Example: "person who has epilepsy" rather than "epileptic", "afflicted with" or "suffers from". Use "person with a disability" rather than "The Disabled" or "Handi-capped".
- Be patient
- People with disabilities may need more time to express themselves or to move about.

Accessibility concerns you may encounter with a support person present

See below for some barriers you may encounter at your Fred Douglas Society facility where a support worker might be involved. Note: The support person does not necessarily require special training or qualifications and may be a paid personal support worker, a volunteer, a family member/spouse or friend of the person with a disability.

How to interact with a Support Person

Some people with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person who assists with mobility, personal care or medical needs. The Accessibility Standard for Visitor Service requires that you welcome support people to your business, and into our programming.

TIPS:

- Welcome support people to your workplace or place of business.
- Speak directly to your visitor, not to the support person. Do not assume the individual with a support person will not understand.
- When you know that a person brings a support person, plan for their presence. Remember to make space for two seats or ensure that an interpreter has site lines to do their work.

Visitors who have Language Barriers

What is a language barrier?

A language barrier is when there is a barrier to communication between people who are unable to speak a common language. Example staff not being able to speak Tagalog or Punjabi with a resident or visitor who only speaks their native language. Fred Douglas will ensure the appropriate resources are put into place to assist with any type of language barrier such as keeping our language simple, not using technical language, and having access to interpreters for the visitor or residents

Visitors who have Mobility Barriers

What is a mobility barrier?

Mobility barriers affect people with amputations, paralysis, cerebral palsy, stroke, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, arthritis, spinal cord injury, and other disabilities or health conditions. Assistive devices they may use could include:

- A wheelchair, crutches, canes, scooters, or walkers.
- Some may use no supports at all
- Note: The Customer Service Standard requires that staff and volunteers be familiar with what devices are available and can either provide access and assistance or know whom to contact for help. Examples of devices that are available at Fred Douglas Society facilities include wheelchairs, walkers and professional grade magnifiers.

TIPS:

- Do not touch wheelchairs, crutches or other technical aids without permission.
- When asked to help by pushing someone in a wheelchair, do not leave the person in an awkward place such as facing a wall, or in the path of opening doors or crowded corridors.
- Do not move mobility devices out of a visitor's reach.
- Organize the space so that there is room for wheelchairs, scooters and walkers.
- For longer conversations, consider inviting everyone to sit
- Bring out more hands-on materials for the person to touch and feel for them to have a similarly rich experience

Visitors who have Visual Communication Barriers

What is a visual communication barrier?

Visual Communication barriers affect visitors who are blind or have a visual impairment, which may need to be accommodated in programming and safety when orienteering the site.

Assistive devices they may use include:

- A cane, a service dog, or nothing at all.

TIPS

- If you realize someone has a visual impairment, assume they can see you.
- Identify yourself as you approach and speak directly to the individual.
- Ask if you can offer any assistance, such as reading printed material aloud.
- Be precise and descriptive when providing directions or instructions.
- Offer your elbow or shoulder to guide them if needed. Relax and walk at a normal pace.
- Let the person know when approaching a narrow opening, a bend in the trail, or stairs.
- Always give individuals the opportunity to tell you what they need.
- Bring out more hands-on materials for the individuals to touch and feel to give them a rich experience

A person who is accompanied by a service animal:

- Service animals are protected by the Human Rights Code and have the right to be wherever the public has access. Do not request that the owner leave the animal in a different location. The owner is responsible for maintaining control over the animal at all times. Remember to avoid petting or talking to service animals. If you are uncertain if an animal is a service animal, it is okay to ask the owner for clarification.

Visitors who have Auditory Communication Barriers

What is an Auditory communication barrier?

Auditory communication barriers affect people who are hard of hearing, deafened or Deaf and result when there are no alternatives to spoken communication. Hard of hearing or deaf people may have difficulty in hearing but can still talk. Deaf people often communicate through (ASL) American Sign Language. You can help remove barriers by following these tips.

TIPS:

- Once a person has identified themselves as having a hearing loss, make sure you are facing them and speak clearly at a normal pace.
- Do not shout.
- If necessary, move to a well-lit area away from the window, or to a quieter area.
- If they appear unsure, ask if another form of communication would be helpful, such as using a pad of paper and pen.
- If needed, attract a person's attention before speaking. For example, use a gentle touch or a wave.
- If a visitor is completely deaf, they will have a Support person with them, but try to learn a little bit of sign language before they arrive if you know that's how they communicate. It will make them feel welcomed and become a good learning opportunity for the rest of the group.

Nearly 1 in 6 Manitobans are disabled by barriers where they work, live or play. You can probably think of several persons in your own circle of family, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances that live with disabilities. We must work to remove barriers to ensure our programs and services are accessible to all. Open communication to see what works for them is important.

Training will include The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, the Accessible Customer Service Standard Regulation and the Human Rights Code. In addition to training staff and volunteers during the hiring process, ongoing training will be provided when there is a change to this policy or practice.

What to do if accessibility feature(s) are unavailable?

If any of our accessibility features (ramps, door openers, elevators etc.) are not available for use, Fred Douglas Society will make it known to the residents, staff and visitors and will provide a timeline as to when it should be available for use again.

Obtaining a copy of the policy

Any individual can request a copy of this policy which will be provided to the individual taking into account any barrier which the individual may have. The individual will have to provide the

organization with an understanding of what manner they will need the policy presented to them. There will be no cost associated with receiving a copy of the policy to anyone who requests a copy.

What to do if you have questions, concerns or general feedback.

If you have questions, concerns or general feedback to provide regarding our Accessibility Policy or services please feel free to contact our Fred Douglas Society Accessibility Representatives below:

Leonora De Lino
Director of Care
Fred Douglas Lodge
Phone: 204-586-8541 x 107
Email: ldelino@freddouglas.ca
1275 Burrows Ave
Winnipeg MB R2X 0B8

Tammy Henwood
Director of Human Resources
Fred Douglas Society
Phone: 204-586-8541 x 154
Email: thenwood@freddouglas.ca
1275 Burrows Ave
Winnipeg MB R2X 0B8

Once the concern/question/feedback is received actions will be taken regarding the documentation received. One of the Accessibility Representatives will document the process taken regarding the feedback and will provide feedback to your concern/question/feedback within 20 working days of receipt of the concern/question/feedback. Documentation will be kept and will be available if requested.

This information is provided in accordance with the Accessibility for Manitobans Act and Customer Service Standard Regulation

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act seeks to improve the health, independence and well-being of persons disabled by barriers. The purpose of the Act is to achieve accessibility by preventing and removing barriers that disabled people. For more information, please see http://www.accessibilitymb.ca/pdf/accessibility_for_manitobans_act.pdf.

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act complements the Human Rights Code which seeks to recognize the individual worth and dignity of every member of the human family, and that this principle underlies the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For more information, please see http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/h175e.php.