

RIDEAU COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES		NUMBER: GEN 222
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COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Policy

Rideau Community Health Services (RCHS) is committed to effectively communicating with people with disabilities.

Procedure

We ensure that RCHS will do this by:

- Giving consideration to individual disabilities when communicating.
- Educating staff, students, volunteers, and others about providing effective ways of communicating with people with disabilities
- Using appropriate language when referring to people with disabilities and taking action when unacceptable terms are used.
- Soliciting feedback about our communications from clients, consumers, experts, and others.
- Keeping current with communication technology and standards for people with disabilities.

RCHS will develop and enforce communication criteria that provide a range of options to make all communication more accessible to people with disabilities. We will do this by

- Adopting current best practices whenever possible
- Educating staff, students, and volunteers about best methods to use when communicating with individuals having disabilities

When possible, RCHS will provide aids that are used to help people with a disability communicate for use within RCHS (e.g., text readers, amplifiers, screen magnifiers, and interpretation). See policy GEN 135 - Communications and GEN 216 - Accessibility for further information.

Staff, students and volunteers will communicate with clients over the telephone and in person in clear and plain language.

When possible, RCHS will offer alternative formats for communication in order to address the needs of people with disabilities (e.g. large print, Braille, etc.).

Definitions

Assistive Communications Devices

Assistive communication devices can be software or aids that are used to help people with a disability communicate. Examples of assistive communication devices are: text readers, amplifiers, screen magnifiers, captioning and interpretation.

Communication

A process of providing, sending, receiving, and understanding information. Communication is a two-way exchange.

Disability

The definition of "disability" can be found under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005.

Formats

Describe medium used such as CD, electronic or paper.

Standard

Means the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

Application

This policy applies to:

- All staff, volunteers, students, contractors, consultants and others working on behalf of RCHS and who communicate with clients, consumers and the public.
- Staff, board members, volunteers and others who are involved in developing policies and procedures regarding the standard

Limitations

This policy does not cover:

- Internal communications
- Communications that are from third parties which we forward to others.
- Communications that are under copyright and cannot be altered by our organization.

Associated Policies

GEN 140 Bulletin Boards and Promotional Displays

GEN 135 Communications

GEN 216 Accessibility