Accessibility Plan

Thrive Group

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Introduction

Thrive Group is committed to promoting accessibility with the identification and removal of barriers for the persons served, employees, and other stakeholders. A key priority for Thrive Group is to create a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion where all stakeholders can contribute while feeling safe, valued and respected.

This is done by ensuring equal access and participation for all individuals that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. This commitment extends to those who receive services through a Thrive Group organization and their families, those who seek employment opportunities at Thrive Group, and the public who may be inquiring about our services. Thrive Group is an equal opportunity employer dedicated to accommodating employees, students and volunteers who have disabilities.

Thrive Group's commitment to accessibility and our policies and practices related to accessibility are guided by several external resources, including but not limited to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), Senior Friendly Care Framework (sfCare), CARF Accreditation standards, the Canadian Social Determinants of Health and Health Inequalities (SDoH) and Thrive Group's vision, mission, and values. All of these are the fundamental basis for the identification and resolution of barriers to service delivery and building a culture of inclusion, equity and diversity.

Our Mission

Thrive Group provides a spectrum of integrated services to support and care for individuals to live as independently as possible. By bringing together like-minded organizations we will:

- Develop and deliver quality services that are responsive and innovative
- Enhance collaborative approaches to service provision
- Inform government directives and influence health care system transformation, and
- Create efficiencies and reduce duplication.

Our Vision

Building a community of quality and responsive services in a highly integrated and transformed health care system.

Definitions

Accessibility

Accessibility Services Canada defines accessibility as "the design of products, devices, services, or environments for people who experience disabilities. Ontario has laws to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, including the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the Ontario Human Rights Code, and the Ontario Building Code."

Accessibility means giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in everyday life. The Ontario Human Rights Commission reports that 15.4% of Ontarians aged 15 and over report having a disability. Planning is crucial for good access now and in the future. (ohrc.on.ca)

Disability

The AODA uses the Ontario Human Rights Code definition of "disability" which is:

1. Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device

2. A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability

3. A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language

4. A mental disorder, or

5. An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 ("handicap") https://aoda.ca/guide-to-the-act/#words

Wellness

Employee wellness touches all facets of the organization, including our Human Resources policies and practices, health and safety, leadership, organizational culture, teamwork, and the overall employee experience. Thrive Group's approach to employee wellness is centred around nine dimensions of Employee Wellness:

- Physical
- Spiritual
- Intellectual
- Emotional
- Cultural
- Financial
- Mental
- Social
- Environmental

**Thrive Group's Commitment to Wellness policy*

Social determinants of health

Refer to a specific group of social and economic factors within the broader determinants of health. These relate to an individual's place in society, such as income, education, employment and social isolation. By addressing the social determinants of health, we can reduce the risk of further impairment or disability and promote the maximum participation of all stakeholders.
https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/population-health/what-determines-health.html

Barriers to Accessibility

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA) was put into place to break down barriers and obstacles which keep people with disabilities from easily managing basic activities that are fundamental to their daily lives. *"The purpose of the AODA is to develop, implement and enforce standards for accessibility related to goods,*

services, facilities, employment, accommodation, and buildings. The target date for reaching this goal is no later than January 1, 2025." (aoda.ca)

Under the Act, five standards were developed to help alleviate barriers for people with disabilities. CARF standards identify areas of barriers that align with and expand upon the Act. The standards include:

Standards under AODA	CARF Barriers
Customer Service	Attitudes Community Integration
Information and Communications	Communication Technology
Employment	Employment Finances
Transportation	Transportation
Built Environment	Architecture Environment

Thrive Group and its member organizations are committed to the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers for all stakeholders, and comply with AODA standards and reporting requirements.

Accessibility requirements as per the AODA

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act include the following standards:

The Customer Service Standard:

- How to interact and communicate with customers who have disabilities,
- How to serve a customer if their service animal is not allowed because of another law, and disruptions in service
- How to support persons with assistive devices both personal and shared

Built Environment Standards:

- How to identify and address physical and structural barriers in the physical environment

Transportation Standards:

- How to build, support and maintain accessible transportation for employees and persons served

Employment Standards:

- How to support persons with disabilities to secure and maintain employment within Thrive Group

Information and Communication Standards:

- How to provide or arrange accessible formats and communication supports when providing information to people with disabilities, upon request.

Feedback and evaluation process:

- Ensuring that processes for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible to people with disabilities.

Each organization's Accessibility Action Plan identifies barriers to accessibility as outlined in CARF standards. (See Appendices)

Thrive Group is not only committed to reducing and eliminating barriers related to disabilities, but we're committed to fostering a work environment where employees feel physically and psychologically safe, a sense of belonging, and are included. All employees are provided access to live training and e-learnings related to several equity, diversity and inclusivity topics, and leaders have participated in further training related to being an inclusive leader. As an organization we know that a diverse workforce is what helps us to achieve our mission and aligns with our values. We want all employees to know that their voice is heard, and we recognize that for this to happen, works needs to be done to reduce barriers.

Thrive Group's EDI Council is made up of representatives from across the organization and guides the organization's work. The mandate of the council is to:

- Assist leaders and staff to build and strengthen inclusive workplaces across all Thrive Group locations and programs where everyone feels supported and valued.
- To promote awareness, educate, and transfer knowledge to internal stakeholders, including staff, students, volunteers, and third-party contractors, about EDI principles and best practices;
- To research, organize, and implement programs and projects to highlight and empower the spirit of EDI across the Thrive Group community
  Provide support to respective staff and leadership teams to research, analyze and make recommendations for revision to existing Policies and Procedures to reflect fundamental EDI principles;
- Remain current regarding EDI matters and best practices and act as the internal body of EDI experts.

Additional Practices Related to Accessibility

Additional practices conducted by Thrive Group that relate to accessibility include:

- Each organization will review and update their accessibility plan annually.
- Annual review of the physical environment is included in the workplace violence prevention program.
- Monthly review of the physical environment during health and safety inspections.
- Client, Resident and Family Councils serve as advocacy groups.
- AODA training involving a review of common barriers and engaging in discussion with new employees.
- Arrangements can be made for staff to attend appointments with clients and residents to assist with communication support and transfer assistance as required.
- Resident and client care plans are designed to be flexible to accommodate changing needs.
- Offices are arranged to be accessible to residents, clients, and visitors.
- Each program/site location is continually working to provide accessibility enhancements as barriers are identified (i.e., door openers) for residents, clients, visitors, and employees.
- Feedback from surveys including resident and client satisfaction surveys, annual employee engagement survey, and stakeholder surveys to identify any barriers that have been brought forward.
- Thrive Group's Return to Work and Accommodation policy outlines the process for submitting an

accommodation request and how the organization supports such requests.

Addressing Barriers at Thrive Group

Assistive Devices/Technology

Assistive devices are adaptive and rehabilitation devices that aid people with disabilities. Assistive technology includes but is not limited to: electronic medical records, communication devices for residents and clients, eBook readers, screen reading software for computers, adaptive telephones, wander guard equipment, sensors for doors, adaptive mouse devices for using computers, and voice recognition software.

We will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with the various assistive devices available to them, that we provide, and that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods or services. We will also engage actively with our residents and clients to facilitate and support the use of their personal assistive devices in service delivery.

Persons Served (resident/client) need for assistive technology is assessed individually. Supports may include but are not limited to:

1. Automatic door openers
2. Augmentative communication devices including word boards, dedicated voice output systems and laptop/desk top computers
3. Signalling devices such as large button call bells
4. Powered mobility systems, including scooters and power wheelchairs, including tilt, power actuated leg rests; may include joystick, switch access, chin control, voice recognition or proximity switch
5. Adapted telephones
6. Electronic gaming modules to promote physical activity
7. Skill based training for individual computer system
8. Wander strips and signs to alert to potentially unsuitable or unsafe areas.

Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities

Thrive Group will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services, or facilities, where it is feasible to do so. If it is not possible, the organization is responsible for providing an explanation as to why upon request.

Communication

We will communicate with a person in a manner that considers their disability. As part of our recruitment

process, and indicated on our job postings and website, we notify candidates that Thrive Group welcomes and encourages applications from people with disabilities, and that accommodations are available on request for candidates taking part in all aspects of the selection process.

Throughout an employee's service at a Thrive Group organization, upon request, information regarding emergency plans and procedures will be provided in a format that best meets the needs of the employee. Upon transfer to another program/site, this information would be reviewed and revised with the employee as necessary. This also includes individualized workplace emergency response information, if deemed necessary.

Through the admissions process and care conferencing, we are committed to ensuring that we are communicating with clients and residents that best meet their needs. This may include alternating the use of verbal or written communication, adjusting the speed and volume of oral communication, and the use of alternative formats as identified by the resident or client. Requirements for augmentative or alternative communication will be documented. Thrive Group websites follow current AODA requirements. More information regarding Thrive Group's website specifications can be found in the Technology Plan.

Service Animals

Thrive Group welcomes service animals to our locations. Service animals are allowed on our premises in areas that are open to the public except where excluded by law. Allowances for service animals are included in the care planning process.

Serving a customer when their service animal is not allowed due to law:
Where an animal is excluded by law from our premises, employees will explain why the animal is excluded. Exploration or discussion with customers regarding other methods of providing goods or services will be conducted. For example:

- Bring goods or services to the person in a part of the premises where the animal is not restricted.
- Offer a safe location where the animal can wait if the person is able to be separated from the animal while obtaining the service and offer assistance to the person with a disability while they are separated from the service animal.
- An example of an area where service animals are prohibited from entering is the kitchen area.

Support Persons

A person providing support to a person served with a disability, or a frail senior is welcome to accompany them on our premises.

Disruptions in Service

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities, Thrive Group will notify customers promptly. A clearly communicated notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, the anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. The communication will be placed in a conspicuous place on the premises of the affected program, or by other reasonable methods dictated by the circumstances and customer needs. If the disruption is anticipated, we will provide a reasonable amount of advance notice of the disruption. If the disruption is unexpected, notice will be provided as soon as possible.

Training

Thrive Group provides training to all employees, volunteers and others including third parties who provide services to the public on our behalf. Training will also be provided to people involved in the development of policies, plans, practices, and procedures related to the provision of our goods and services. This training will be provided to staff upon hire by way of our e-learning platform, and accessible customer service handbook. Training will include but is not limited to:

Accessibility Act:

- An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, as well as the requirements of the customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation, and built environments standards.

Customer Service Standard:

- How to interact and communicate with people with diverse 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.

Integrated Standard (Employment, Transportation and Communication):

- How to use several types of equipment (e.g., mechanical lifts, augmentative communication devices, bath lifts, etc.) available that may help with providing goods or services to people with disabilities;
- How to use common equipment such as hospital beds and other personal equipment;
- All staff receive general training on accessibility standard requirements and the Ontario Human Rights Code regardless of their level of contact with clients and the public.
- Role specific training appropriate to job duties.
- Scope of responsibility and accountability.

Built Environments Standard:

- Training on the identification and removal of physical barriers in the physical environment.

Resident & Client Specific Training:

- Training as required if a resident/client has augmentative communication needs or specialty devices (i.e., Client specific mobility devices);
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Thrive Group's services.

Staff will also be trained on the contents of our Accessibility Plan and when changes are made to our accessibility plan.

Feedback Process

Both the public and any stakeholder can provide feedback on the accessibility of the provision of goods and services through:

- Telephone: 289-309-8477 (follow user prompts)
- By mail addressed to:
    - Thrive Group
    - 565 Sanatorium Road, Hamilton, ON
    - L9C 7N4
- By email: info@thrivegroup.ca

All feedback, including complaints, will be forwarded to the Administrator/Executive Director, CEO or designate. Customers can expect a response within 3 business days.

More information about Thrive Group's accessibility practices can be found in our Accessible Customer Service policy, and Accessible Employment policy.

Notice of Availability:

Thrive Group will notify both the public and our residents and clients that our policies related to accessibility are available upon request through our website and at our individual locations.

Participation in The Senior Friendly Care (sfCare) Framework:

Thrive Group's services are also guided by the Senior Friendly Care (sfCare) Framework which was developed by the Regional Geriatric Program of Toronto, in collaboration with provincial stakeholders.

"The goal of senior friendly care is to achieve the best possible health outcomes for older adults. the sfCare Framework provides the foundation for achieving this goal through guiding principles and defining statements which are intended to foster improvements in care across the system and inspire greater collaboration between older adults and their caregivers, care providers, and organizations."

The sfCare Framework includes seven guiding principles and five domains:

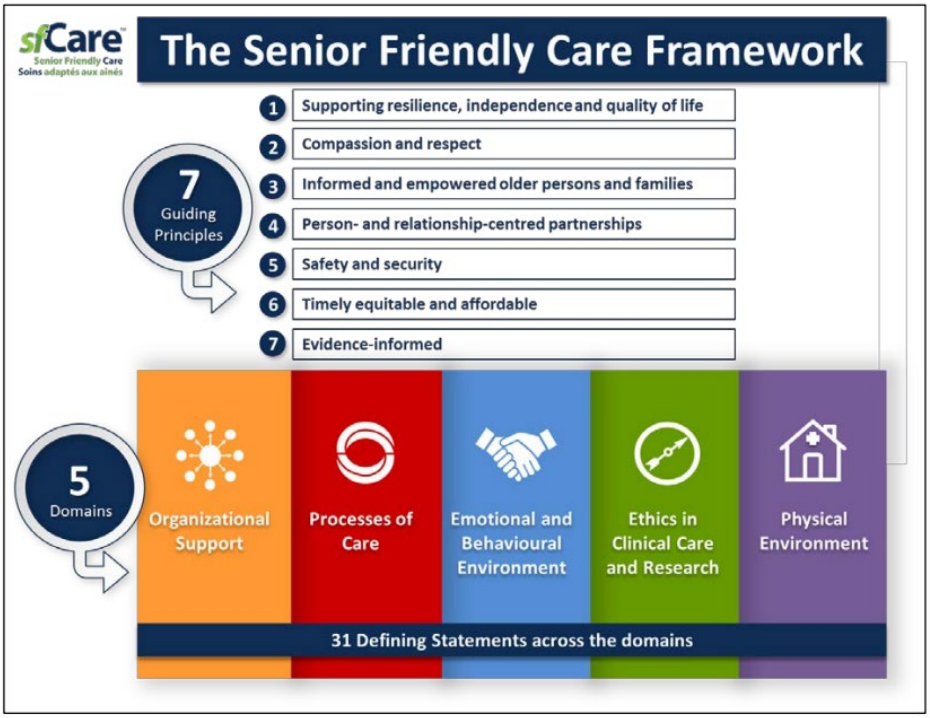

Figure 3 The Senior Friendly Care Framework

Thrive Group organizations are committed to senior friendly care as seen through our Mission Vision and Values. The way we prioritize our Culture of Excellence in Service to ensure the guiding principles of our work align with those of the SFCare framework confirms our commitment to those we serve.

Areas aligning with sfCare include: Care Conferences with stakeholders, client and resident centred care plans, comprehensive admission and discharge planning, Client, Caregiver Quality Council, Family and Resident Councils etc.

Active membership and participation at many local and provincial tables including OHT's, Access and Flow/ Barriers to Discharge, Age friendly community council. Seniors at Risk Community Collaborative and various Community of Practice and Action tables to advance the work of sfCare are all examples of our dedication to the provincial sfCare framework.

Thrive Group's Accessibility Plan will be posted on Thrive Group's website and made available in accessible formats that meet the individual's needs, upon request. Each Thrive Group organization has its own Accessibility Action Plan which is reviewed annually, and will be made available upon request.

Appendices

Thrive Group Action Plan
St. Peter's Action Plan
Idlewyld Manor Action Plan
Community Services Action Plan