



**Accessibility
Standard
for
Customer Service**

Information & Procedures Document

Sutherland-Chan School of Massage Therapy

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Table of Contents

Background & Definitions	Page 2
<u>Employee Training</u>	Page 3
Obligations	
Training Session Content	
Staff & Faculty Training Procedures	
<u>General Accommodation Policy</u>	Page 4
Library	
Service Animals	
Support People	
Assistive Devices	
<u>Applicants with Disabilities</u>	Page 6
Assistive Devices	
Service Animals	
Support Persons	
<u>Students with Disabilities</u>	Page 7
Service Animals	
Support Persons	
Assistive Devices	
<u>Employees with Disabilities</u>	Page 8
Expectations and Obligations	
Accommodation Plan Development	
Emergency Response Information	
<u>Clinic Patients with Disabilities</u>	Page 10
Assistive Devices	
Service Animals	
Support Persons	
<u>Interacting with People with Disabilities</u>	Page 11
General Communication	
Talking Over the Phone	
Visual Disabilities	
Hearing Disabilities	
Deafblind	
Speech/Language Disabilities	
Learning Disabilities	
Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities	
Mental Health Disabilities	
<u>Appropriate Language and Terminology</u>	Page 16
<u>Customer Feedback</u>	Page 16

Background

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was passed into legislation in 2005. Under the Act, the Ontario government is putting accessibility standards in place for customer service, employment, information and communication, and transportation and environment.

To provide accessible customer service, organizations must to have an accessibility plan and train employees on accessible customer service.

The S-C Accessibility Standard for Customer Service document is available at Clinic Reception, on our website, and by request to the School Administrator, Andrew Lewarne, at: andrew@sutherland-chan.com, 416-924-1107 ext. 16. It is also available in large text format.

Sutherland-Chan has always done its best to be accessible to people with disabilities. Although the AODA requires us to be fully accessible, from time to time we may encounter situations in which the provisions we have in place do not specifically meet an individual's needs. It is our expectation that all employees will do their best to identify and provide alternate solutions ('workarounds') so that people with disabilities have barrier-free access.

Sutherland-Chan School of Massage Therapy provides educational and training resources, student records and program information in an accessible format through our provision of digital note packages for all students.

Definitions

Severe Allergy

An allergy that could result in an anaphylactic or other response that could be life-threatening; or any other allergy that could result in a reaction which could seriously impact the allergic individual's health and safety.

Applicant

A person who has expressed interest in attending the school but has not received acceptance from the school.

Student

A person is considered to be a student once they have returned a signed contract and has made an initial tuition deposit.

1. Employee Training

New employees are trained during their orientation. Although the AODA specifies the content of the training sessions, the school is allowed to tailor the training sessions to meet the different needs of the staff and faculty.

Training Obligations

- New employees must be trained soon after they are hired.
- We must offer refresher training if our plan changes.
- We must provide training annually and when substantial policy changes are made.

Training Content and Expectations

Training sessions must include:

- an overview of the AODA
- the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
- how to interact and communicate with people with different kinds of disabilities
- how to interact with people with disabilities who use assistive devices, or who require a service animal or support person
- how to use equipment or devices available at the school that may help people with disabilities to access our services
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing our services

Training Process for Employees

- New employees are trained as part of their orientation.
- Employees are notified immediately by email of any changes to accommodation policies.
- Training related to any policy changes is scheduled in a timely manner.
- All employees are given the Information & Procedures document.

Staff Training – Procedure

- Annual training sessions are offered during the break between the September and January terms.
- New staff is trained by the School Administrator and by the individual department manager (for specifics related to the department).
- Refreshers (for plan changes/employee updates) are scheduled as needed and in a timely manner.

Faculty Training – Procedure

- New faculty are trained by the Education Services Coordinator (ESC)
- Refreshers (for plan changes) are scheduled as needed.
- Annual training for faculty is provided during the June All Faculty meeting.

2. General Accommodation Policy and Procedure

Library

Sutherland-Chan School of Massage Therapy provides accessible or conversion ready formats of print, digital or multimedia resources or materials for a person with a disability, upon request. All students have access to digital note packages for all courses and information is provided to all students on where to access further digital resources upon request.

Service Animals

Service animals can be used to assist those with vision loss, hearing loss, or are trained to alert a person to an oncoming seizure or diabetic de-stabilization. The school is committed to welcoming service animals accompanying people with disabilities.

The school negotiates in good faith with any person requiring a service animal to determine the most appropriate accommodations. Should a situation arise which affects the safety of another person at the school (e.g., severe allergy to the service animal), the school will negotiate with all involved to find the most appropriate solution.

General Information – People Who Use Service Animals

A service animal is not a pet – it is a working animal.

Do not touch or address the animal.

If you are not sure if it is a pet or service animal, ask the person.

Service animals are allowed in areas open to the public.

Support People

People with disabilities may require assistance from support people. Support people can be volunteers, personal support workers, family members, or friends who help with a variety of things including communication, mobility, personal care and/or medical needs.

The school is committed to welcoming support people who accompany people with disabilities. This includes people supporting applicants, clinic patients, students, employees, and those visiting the school. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to their support person.

General Information – People with Disabilities Who Have a Support Person

Speak directly to the person who needs the assistance not the support person.

Fees are not charged for support persons for admission to any Sutherland-Chan School of Massage Therapy function including:

- Sutherland-Chan Student and Specialty Clinics
- school events (e.g., fundraisers, sporting events, graduation)

Information about accommodations for support people is provided to the person when they contact the school.

Assistive Devices

The school is accessible to most assistive devices. Our accessible features are:

- wheelchair access doors leading to student clinic reception;
- wheelchair access ramp and door leading to building main lobby
- accessible washroom off student clinic reception
- magnifying glass and reading glasses at reception; and
- stepping stools for getting on and off massage tables

In the absence of a required assistive device school employees are trained to make every reasonable effort to meet the person's needs. This includes but is not limited to:

- opening washroom doors
- assisting with completion of forms
- making telephone calls

General Information – People with Disabilities Who Require Assistive Devices

Speak naturally and directly to the person, not to their companion or support person.

If you need to have a lengthy conversation with someone in a wheelchair or scooter, consider sitting so that you can make eye contact.

Ask before you help. People with physical disabilities often have their own ways of doing things.

Don't touch assistive devices or equipment without permission.

If you have permission to move a person in a wheelchair, remember to:

- wait for and follow the person's instructions
- confirm that your customer is ready to move
- describe what you're going to do before you do it
- avoid uneven ground and objects
- make sure not to leave the person in an awkward, dangerous, or undignified position such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors

Don't move assistive devices or equipment out of a person's reach.

Let the person know about the accessible features in the immediate environment (e.g., automatic doors, accessible washrooms, elevators, ramps).

In situations where an assistive device is not available, the school will provide a workaround. For example, we do not have visual fire alarms but we included in our emergency and evacuation policy that fire wardens are to check the washrooms for those who may not be able to hear the alarm.

If Support Systems Aren't Available

If a situation arises in which support systems are not available (e.g., the elevator is not working), the school will notify those affected in a timely manner. In discussion with the person affected, if a reasonable workaround is possible, arrangements will be made.

Support System Not Available – Procedure

The school maintains a list of facilities and services.

The school has a template notice available and adaptable to different situations.

The template includes: the reason for the disruption, how long the service is unavailable, and a description of alternative services (if available).

If a situation arises in which accessible facilities or services aren't available (e.g., the elevator), the school will post a notice at the front door of the building, on our website, and at Clinic Reception.

Information will also be added to the school's outgoing voicemail message (for clinic).

The school will notify clinic patients who rely on those facilities/services as soon as possible.

3. Applicants with Disabilities

Assistive Devices

General accommodation policy and procedure (pp. 4-6) is followed for all applicants who present with and use an assistive device.

Service Animals

General accommodation policy and procedure is followed for all applicants who require a service animal.

Service Animals - Information Sessions – Procedure

When an individual arrives at an Information Session with a service animal, all those in attendance are quickly surveyed for any severe allergies to the service animal.

If a severe allergy is identified, all relevant factors and options will be considered in trying to find a solution that meets the needs of both the individual with a service animal and the individual(s) with the severe allergy. When considering solutions, the possibility of offering the individual with the service animal a private session and tour should be considered.

Service Animals – Applicants – Procedure

Admissions ask all applicants whether or not they use a service animal and whether or not they have a severe allergy to service animals.

In cases where a service animal is required for an applicant, all relevant factors and options will be considered in trying to find a solution that meets the needs of both the applicant with a service animal and any subsequent applicant with a severe allergy to the service animal. When considering solutions, the possibility of offering any subsequent applicant with a severe allergy to the service animal an alternate enrolment date should be considered.

In cases where an applicant identifies a severe allergy to a service animal, and a subsequent applicant with that service animal applies, all relevant factors and options will be considered in trying to find a solution that meets the needs of both the applicant with a service animal and the applicant with a severe allergy to the service animal. When considering solutions, the possibility of offering any subsequent applicant with a service animal an alternate enrolment date should be considered.

If an employee of the school has such an allergy, then in general, we must prioritize the health of employees, but endeavour to provide workarounds whenever possible. When considering workarounds, the possibility of referring an applicant to another school should be considered.

Support Persons

General accommodation policy and procedure is followed for all applicants who require a support person.

4. Students with Disabilities

General Policy

The school negotiates in good faith with any student who has a disability, uses an assistive device, requires a service animal, and/or has a support person to determine the appropriate

accommodations. If an accommodation is not available, the school will negotiate and provide appropriate workarounds to help meet the needs of the student.

The school reviews and updates a student's overall accommodation needs each term and as needed (i.e., changes in disability status or in available accommodations).

Sutherland-Chan School of Massage Therapy provides educational and training resources, student records and program information in an accessible format through our provision of digital note packages for all students.

Service Animals

General accommodation policy and procedure (pp. 4-6) is followed for all students who require a service animal. Agreements are negotiated and in place for situations in which a service animal may not be allowed or appropriate (e.g., certain hospital settings, the residence of a senior with a severe allergy).

Support Persons

General accommodation policy and procedure (pp. 4-6) is followed for all students who require a support person. Agreements will be negotiated and in place for special situations (e.g., written and OP testing, clinics).

Assistive Devices

General accommodation policy and procedure (pp. 4-6) is followed for all students who use an assistive device.

Emergency Response Information

Emergency Response Information – Procedure

Individualized school-related emergency response information is provided in a timely manner to students who have a disability, and with the student's consent, to any person designated by the school to provide assistance to the student.

This information is reviewed in Emergency Response Team (ERT) meetings.

A review meeting will be scheduled should substantial changes be made to ERT procedure or to Emergency Response Information.

5. Employees with Disabilities

Expectations and Obligations

The school's accessibility plan as it applies to employees with disabilities includes:

- timely and appropriate communication of the supports available
- the provision of suitable accommodations, in consultation with the applicant/employee
- the provision of accessible formats and communication supports where available
- individualized accommodation plans and workplace emergency response information

The school reviews and updates an employee's overall accommodation needs annually and as needed (i.e., changes in duties or job location, in disability status, in available accommodations).

Hiring – Procedure

Employees and the public are notified about the school's accommodations for applicants with disabilities – this is accomplished via the AODA training of employees, the notices posted in public and accessible view, and the Sutherland-Chan website.

Any materials or processes related to a hiring/selection process are made accessible – any employee with a disability is consulted to determine the suitable accommodation. Should an accommodation not be available, a suitable workaround will be negotiated.

New employees are informed of the school's policies for supporting employees with disabilities as part of their orientation.

Where an employee with a disability requests it, the school will consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for general school information and information needed to perform their job.

Accommodation Plan Development

The school maintains and annually reviews individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities. An accommodation plan includes the process for its development, information about accessible formats and communication supports provided, individualized workplace emergency response information, return to work processes, and any other accommodations that are to be provided.

Accommodation Plan Development – Procedure

In the development of an employee's Accommodation Plan, Sutherland-Chan adheres to the requirements as outlined in the AODA Part III sections 27 and 28. In general:

- the employee with a disability participates in the development of the plan

- any discrepancies identified during the development of the plan are negotiated in good faith
- the plan is documented and kept in the employee's personnel file

Emergency Response Information – Procedure

Individualized workplace emergency response information is provided (in a timely manner) to employees who have a disability, and with the employee's consent, any person designated by the employer to provide assistance to the employee.

This information is reviewed in Emergency Response Team (ERT) meetings.

A review meeting will be scheduled should substantial changes be made to ERT procedure or to Emergency Response Information.

6. Clinic Patients with Disabilities

Assistive Devices

General accommodation policy and procedure (pp. 4-6) is followed for all clinic patients who present with and use an assistive device.

Service Animals

General accommodation policy and procedure (pp. 4-6) is followed for all clinic patients who require a service animal.

Service Animal Not Required At All Times – Procedure

If a patient identifies that they have a service animal but does not require its presence during a massage treatment, a designated area (e.g., Practice/Study Room) is provided for the service animal and the animal is accommodated as per the owner's requests and instructions.

Service Animal Required At All Times – General Procedure

If a patient with a service animal calls in to book an appointment, the clinic instructor, student therapists, and all patients already booked for that particular appointment time in that clinic are contacted to ensure that there are no severe allergies.

All future patients wanting to book for that particular appointment time in that particular clinic are surveyed to ensure that there are no severe allergies.

If there is a service animal on site, the school will post notification at the entrance to student clinic and the entrance to relevant classrooms hallway (i.e. Hydro, Room 2 and 3).

If a patient wanting to book has a severe allergy, all relevant factors and options will be considered in trying to find a solution that meets the needs of both the patient with a service

animal and patients with a severe allergy. When considering solutions, the possibility of offering a patient with a severe allergy with alternate dates and times should be considered.

Service Animal Required At All Times – Last Minute Booking Procedure

If a patient with a service animal arrives at clinic reception to see if they could get an appointment at that time or on that day, we will do our best within reason to survey all other patients scheduled for that time period for any allergies to the service animal.

If a severe allergy is identified, all relevant factors and options will be considered in trying to find a solution that meets the needs of both the patient with a service animal and the individual with the severe allergy. When considering solutions, the possibility of offering the patient with the service animal with alternate dates and times for treatment should be considered.

Support Persons

General accommodation policy and procedure (pp. 4-6) is followed for all clinic patients who require a support person.

Clinic Patient Booking – Procedure for Patient with a Support Person

Booked Appointment

When a patient calls in to book an appointment, reception staff asks whether they requires assistance from a support person.

In cases where a support person would be required, reception will ask if the support person will need to be with the patient in the treatment room or if they can wait in the reception area while the person receives their treatment.

If the support person is required in the room, reception will note it on the clinic patient booking sheet so that appropriate space and seating arrangements can be provided.

7. Interacting with People with Disabilities

General Communication

Maintain open lines of communication – ask the person if and how you can assist him/her.

Recognize that there are disabilities that aren't obvious (e.g., heart condition and inability to walk long distances).

Put people first – it is proper to say “person with a disability,” rather than “disabled person.”

If you're not sure what to do, ask your customer. "May I help you?" People with disabilities know if they need help and how you can provide it.

Avoid stereotypes and make no assumptions about what type of disability or disabilities the person has. Some disabilities are not visible and people are not required to give you information about any disabilities they may have.

Be patient and listen carefully. People with some kinds of disabilities may take a little longer to understand and respond.

If you cannot understand what someone is saying, politely ask him/her to repeat.

Tips for Talking to People with Disabilities over the Phone

- Speak naturally, clearly and directly.
- Don't worry about how the person's voice sounds. Concentrate on what they are saying.
- Don't interrupt or finish the person's sentences. Give him or her the time to explain or respond.
- If you don't understand, simply ask again, or repeat or rephrase what you heard and ask if you have understood correctly.
- If an interpreter or a Relay Service is being used, speak naturally to the person, not to the interpreter.
- If you encounter a situation where, after numerous attempts, you and the person cannot communicate with each other due to the person's disability, consider making alternate arrangements.

Vision Loss

There are many degrees of vision loss. Few people with vision loss are totally blind – many have limited vision. Vision loss can restrict a person's ability to:

- read signs
- locate landmarks
- see hazards

People with vision loss may use a guide dog or a white cane. Others may not. You may not always be able to tell that a person has vision loss.

Tips on How to Interact with People with Vision Loss

- Identify yourself when you approach the person and speak directly to him/her. Say your name even if you know the person well as many voices sound similar.
- There is generally no need to raise your voice because the person does not necessarily have hearing loss.

- Don't assume the person can't see you.
- Speak normally and clearly.
- Never touch the person without asking permission, unless it's an emergency.
- If you offer assistance, wait until you receive permission.
- Offer your elbow to guide the person. If he or she accepts, walk slowly, but wait for permission before doing so. Lead – don't pull.
- Identify landmarks or other details to orient the person to the environment (e.g., if you are approaching a door or an obstacle, say so). Be clear and precise when giving directions (e.g., two steps behind you, a metre to your left). Don't use "over there" or point in a direction.
- If you're uncertain about how to provide directions, ask the person how to do so.
- Don't touch or address service animals — they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Do not be afraid or embarrassed to use words such as "see", "read" and "look." People with vision loss also use these words.
- Provide the option to read material out loud to the person.
- Offer to describe information. For example, verbally itemize the bill or explain what the specials are or what is on the menu.
- Don't leave the person in the middle of a room. Show him/her to a chair, or guide the person to a comfortable location.
- Don't walk away without saying good-bye.
- Be patient. Things may take a little longer.

Hearing Loss

This includes people who are Deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, oral deaf (unable to hear but prefers to talk rather than use sign language).

People who are profoundly deaf may identify themselves as culturally Deaf or oral deaf.

In Deaf culture, indicated by a capital "D," the term is used to describe a person who has severe to profound hearing loss.

"Deafened" describes a person who has lost their hearing slowly or suddenly in adulthood. "Hard of hearing" describes a person who uses residual hearing (hearing that remains) and speech to communicate.

Tips on How to Interact with People with Hearing Loss

- Attract the customer's attention before speaking. Generally, the best way is by a gentle touch on the shoulder or with a gentle wave of your hand.
- Ask how you can help. Don't shout. Don't assume that the customer knows sign language or reads lips.
- Do your best to have the communication in a quiet well-lit area so the person can see your face and read your lips.

- If the person uses a hearing aid, reduce background noise or move to a quiet area.
- If needed, ask if another method of communication would be easier (e.g., pen and paper).
- Clinic Reception keeps a pad of paper and pens specifically for this use.
- Be patient if you are using a pen and paper to communicate. American Sign Language may be your customer's first language. It has its own grammatical rules and sentence structure.
- Look at and speak directly to the person with hearing loss, not an interpreter or support person.
- Be clear and precise when giving directions, and repeat or rephrase if necessary. Confirm that your customer understands you.

Deafblind

A person who is deafblind has significant hearing and vision loss.

The person will likely explain to you how to communicate, perhaps with an assistance card or a note.

Many are accompanied by an intervener (a professional support person who helps with communication).

Speak directly to the person, not to the intervener.

Tips on How to Interact with People who are Deafblind

- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do. Some people who are deafblind have some sight or hearing, while others have neither.
- Attract the customer's attention before speaking. Generally, the best way is by a gentle touch on the shoulder or with a gentle wave of your hand.
- Identify yourself to the intervener when you approach your customer who is deafblind, but then speak directly to your customer as you normally would, not to the intervener.
- Don't touch or address service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Don't suddenly touch a person who is deafblind or touch without permission.

Speech/Language Impairments

Certain health conditions (e.g., cerebral palsy) or hearing loss may make it difficult for a person to pronounce words.

Tips on How to Interact with People Who Have a Speech/Language Impairment

- Don't assume a person with a speech impairment has another disability.
- When possible, ask questions that can be answered with "no" or "yes."
- Don't interrupt or finish a person's sentences.

People with Learning Disabilities

“Learning disabilities” includes a wide variety of disorders.

The disability may not be obvious until someone tries to read or understand the information you provide.

Tips on How to Interact with People Who Have a Learning Disability

- Be patient – their processing of information may take longer.
- Try to provide information in a way that takes into account the person’s disability (for example, if a person has difficulty reading information consider moving to a quieter area and read the information to him/her).

People with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

These disabilities (e.g., Down Syndrome, Alzheimer’s dementia) can limit a person’s ability to learn, communicate, and/or perform activities of daily living.

The disability may not be obvious until you are told.

Tips on How to Interact with People Who Have an Intellectual/Developmental Disability

- Don’t make assumptions about what a person can do (or not do).
- Use plain language.
- Provide one piece of information at a time.

Mental Health Disabilities

Mental health disabilities are not as visible as many other types of disabilities.

It is a broad term for many mental health diagnoses (e.g., anxiety disorders, depression disorders, eating disorders, etc.) and includes mood (anxiety and/or depression) disorders which can involve elements such as panic attacks, phobias, etc.

Mental health issues can affect a person’s ability to think clearly, concentrate or remember things.

Tips on How to Interact with People Who Have a Mental Health Disability

- Treat a person with a mental health disability with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
- Be patient, confident and reassuring. Listen carefully and work with your customer to try to meet their needs.
- If someone is in crisis, ask him/her how you can best help.

8. Appropriate Language and Terminology

Do	Don't
Disability	Handicap, invalid, impediment
"Person(s) with a..." or "People with a..."	The disabled
Intellectual disability or developmental disability	Mental retardation (or any variations of), mentally challenged, simple
"Person living with..." or "Person born with..."	Suffering, afflicted, victim, stricken
Blind, partial vision, low vision, vision loss (be specific)	The blind
Deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, hearing loss (be specific)	Generalize (use the specifics on the 'do' list)
Person who does not speak	Deaf, mute, dumb
Person in a wheelchair	Confined, bound, stuck
Person with a mobility or physical disability	Crippled, lame, physically challenged
Mental health disability	Insane, mental, neurotic, psychotic, etc...

9. We Invite Customers to Provide Feedback

We collect comments from our customers with disabilities.

We provide a variety of ways for customers to give us feedback including:

- to Clinic Reception Staff
- email to the School Administrator
- through the website

Options for providing feedback are available in accessible formats.

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