

March 2021

BEHAVIOURAL HEALTH FOUNDATION ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The Behavioural Health Foundation continues to identify and remove barriers to services including customer service, architectural, environmental, attitudinal, financial, employment, communication, technology, transportation, community integration and other barriers that challenge persons served, personnel and other stakeholders.

The purpose of this plan is to identify potential barriers using input from persons served, personnel and other stakeholders, and to address those barriers to BHF treatment services in a timely manner when appropriate and feasible.

References related to this plan:

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act
The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
CARF Behavioural Health Standards Manuals, 2020
The Behavioural Health Foundation Policy and Procedures Manual
Stakeholders Surveys
Consumer-Based Program Evaluations
Staff Satisfaction Surveys
Staff and Resident Exit Questionnaires
Family Satisfaction Surveys

Procedure:

Input regarding barriers to services is gathered formally twice-annually from persons served as well as informally on an on-going basis. Personnel are encouraged to bring forth to management potential or existing barriers on an on-going basis and are specifically asked for input in staff satisfaction surveys. Barriers identified by other stakeholders are also duly noted. Management produces an Accessibility Plan at a minimum once annually based on the input of persons served, personnel and other stakeholders and presents it to the Board of Directors for review, revision and approval.

ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES

In the May and November 2020 Consumer-Based Program Evaluations, the waiting list and waiting times continue to be the most frequently cited barriers to BHF services. This is especially the case this past year due to the COVID-19 pandemic when BHF reduced bed capacity by one third to provide more physical distancing within the population. Wait lists are BHF's number one accessibility issue; they exist due to the high demand for services and the limited number of overall beds (architectural barrier). Not only are waiting lists an issue at BHF, they are present at almost every adult addiction treatment program in the province.

Waiting List Info

Average Number of People on Waiting List at Month End

| | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 |
|--------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Addiction Treatment Services | | | | | |
| Men | 20 | 10 | 19 | 23 | 42 |
| Women | 47 | 12 | 22 | 38 | 45 |
| Children | 20 | 17 | 19 | 15 | 26 |
| Breezy Point (women's program) | | | | | |
| Women | 23 | 9 | 8 | 10 | 26 |
| Children | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |

Average Number of Days on the Waiting List For Persons Admitted to the Program

| | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 |
|--------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Addiction Treatment Services | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 24 | 27 | 25 | 38 |
| Women | 73 | 62 | 33 | 19 | 31 |
| Children | 36 | 50 | 41 | 27 | 12 |
| Breezy Point (women's program) | | | | | |
| Women | 52 | 63 | 32 | 22 | 40 |
| Children | 7 | 11 | 37 | 0 | 2 |

Progress Noted: As the above information illustrates, there was an increase in the number of people waiting for BHF services in fiscal year 2019-20, and an increase in the number of days waiting to enter. In July 2019 the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living announced the funding of 4 additional beds at the Breezy Point women's program. BHF filled those beds immediately and operated at full capacity until the pandemic in 2020 when capacity was reduced by one third to allow for safer physical space.

BHF continues to provide intake and outreach services not only in St. Norbert but also at the River Point Centre in downtown Winnipeg. The two staff there screen clients for BHF programs, promote BHF services, and do group work with graduates of the programs.

Action Plans (Accessibility)

Timelines

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| a. Continue to keep government departments and other stakeholders informed about the high demand for services and advocate for more treatment beds for adults. | a. On-going |
| b. Work to gradually and safely resume use of all treatment beds as pandemic conditions allow. | b. June 2021 |

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

BHF is committed to complying with the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service under the Accessibility for Manitobans Act. In establishing the following policies, BHF has taken steps to identify and remove existing barriers. When this is not possible, we seek to provide alternate ways for people to access services. “Customers” at BHF are the adults and families participating in our treatment programs, their visitors, referring workers, members of the public seeking information about BHF and its programs, and adults attending the on-site St. Norbert Adult Education Centre. Notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic and strict visitor policies, the following remains in place.

BHF acknowledges the right of persons with disabilities to access addictions treatment and services. However, BHF’s residential programs require one to be able to negotiate the facility in order to achieve maximum benefit from program participation. When a person wishes to enter BHF programs, screening is completed to ensure program/client compatibility. If the assessment shows that the client is unable to participate in BHF programming due to disabilities, a referral will be made to the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. This Crown Corporation has the Provincial Mandate under the Addictions Foundation Act of Manitoba to provide substance abuse treatment to all Manitobans and as such will be able to ensure provision of required services.

Visiting and meeting areas in BHF’s residential facilities are accessible as are the on-site St. Norbert Adult Education Centre and BHF’s Outreach Services at the River Point Centre.

This policy applies to all BHF employees, student practicum placements, and volunteers.

1. Communication

BHF will communicate with our customers in a way that takes into account the nature of any communication barrier. Communication may be in person, by phone, through mail or email. Staff will ask how they may be of help, for instance by offering a chair, a quiet space, printed materials in easy to use fonts and colour contrast, oral information, use of pen and paper, taking time to explain. Access Offer signage (How can we help? We can offer service in different ways.) will be displayed at the facility.

2. Assistive Devices

BHF welcomes the use of assistive devices such as wheelchairs, walkers, and communication or hearing devices. Hallways are kept clear; devices are not touched or moved without permission of their owners. Staff receive training, including the use of assistive devices available on-site (automatic doors, telephones compatible with hearing aids, TASKalfa Multifunctional Document Device).

3. Support Persons

BHF welcomes support persons to assist its customers. The nature and duration of the support for residential treatment program participants must be discussed in advance with the program Director.

Employees must indicate upon employment whether or not they require or would like assistance available immediately in the case of an emergency workplace evacuation. Any employee indicating this need will have a written plan developed with the help of their supervisor or appropriate Director and that plan will be placed in their personnel file and a copy (with the staff member's consent) provided to all staff requiring the information.

4. Service Animals

BHF is committed to meeting the requirements of the Human Rights Code (Manitoba) by allowing service animals trained to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. Service animals must be controlled at all times.

5. Maintain Barrier-free Access

BHF will maintain barrier-free access to our services by ensuring that the facilities are maintained as intended. This includes maintaining the entrance ways free of snow and ice, ensuring the ramps are not blocked in any way, and removing clutter from hallways.

6. Notice of Temporary Disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption of services or facilities affecting customers affected by disabilities, BHF will promptly post notices at the entrances and on its website and will inform phone receptionists to alert callers. This includes when assistive devices are under repair or when environmental issues occur, such as the use of odorous chemicals that may pose a barrier to sensitive persons.

7. Feedback Process

BHF welcomes and will respond promptly to feedback on accessibility issues. BHF documents actions taken in response to feedback and will make that information available upon request.

8. Training

BHF will ensure all staff are trained on accessibility issues, including an overview of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act reflecting the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity and the goal of removing barriers or seeking alternate ways to access services.

OTHER ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES

1. Architectural Barriers: Reasonable accommodations are made for persons experiencing disabilities of all types.

Potential Barrier: Lack of an elevator restricts persons in wheelchairs and those with other mobility issues to the main floors of the two main buildings in St. Norbert. Although there are no staff members who are wheelchair bound, staff could be accommodated by moving them to a main floor office, if necessary.

BHF has not experienced any difficulties referring persons to facilities that can accommodate persons with physical disabilities. There were no such referrals in 2019-20.

The application for financial assistance for architectural drawings, as noted in a previous Accessibility Plan, was denied.

Action Plan (Architectural):

Timelines

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| a. Continue to monitor number of inquiries for services for persons who are wheelchair bound. An increase in referrals would require further action including seeking other funding avenues. | a. Ongoing |
| b. Refer all persons who are physically unable to negotiate the facilities to the provincially mandated agency for services. | b. Ongoing |
| c. Continue to offer counseling services on the main floor of BHF facilities and at the River Point Centre to those persons unable to reside in BHF facilities. | c. On-going |

2. Environmental Barriers: All facilities meet provincial health and safety requirements.

There are no known barriers at this time.

3. Attitudinal Barriers: BHF is represented at local community events and conferences as well as representation at various public and governmental committees. The purpose of such representation is to educate the public and have input on government policy as it relates to persons served. We also acknowledge that we cannot be all things to all people. BHF continues to strive to serve a diverse population.

There are no known barriers at this time.

4. Financial Barriers: BHF relies heavily on private grants and annual government funding for its operations. Significant staff time is expended applying for grants.

Progress Noted: The BHF Selkirk facilities were sold in December 2020 after being on the market for four years. The sale of this property provides BHF with financial security as long as other funding remains somewhat constant. In 2020 BHF received significant grants for COVID relief, including wage subsidies.

5. Employment Barriers: BHF continues to employ an Employment Development Counselor to assist program participants with employment barriers. Funding for teaching staff for the St. Norbert Education Centre is secure, ensuring that residents/students are provided the assistance they require to further their educational status, hence improving access to better jobs.

BHF adheres to non-discriminatory employment practices and adheres to and/or exceeds Manitoba Employment Standards. Reasonable accommodation is highly important and BHF strives to make the workplace suitable for all employees.

During the 2019–2020 fiscal year there were a number of employees on disability/medical leave. BHF encourages employees on leave to return on gradual return to work plans to accommodate their health needs.

Progress Noted: While BHF continues to struggle with the ability to pay competitive salaries and recruit trained Indigenous persons, wage increases were provided in July 2020 and Continuous Service Awards were provided to staff who worked throughout the pandemic. A 2% wage increase is budgeted for the next fiscal year.

Action Plan:

Continue to recruit qualified persons for employment at BHF emphasizing good benefits and a great work environment.

Timelines:

On-going

6. Communication Barriers: There have been no barriers cited since the previous Accessibility Plan regarding language, hearing, speech and lack of telephone access. Should these arise for any person attempting to access services, steps will be taken immediately to mitigate barriers on an individual basis. BHF presently has two employees who are hearing impaired.

7. Technology Barriers: The BHF website allows Application for Admission forms to be completed on-line and forwarded to BHF electronically. BHF moved to the use of Microsoft Teams and Zoom for virtual meetings due to the pandemic. There are no known barriers in this area at the present time.

8. Transportation Barriers:

Progress Noted: Due to the risky nature of the use of city buses during the pandemic, BHF increased staffing patterns to ensure drivers are available to transport residents to appointments, shopping, court, etc. BHF will make use of Handi-Transit services for any client who may benefit from such service.

There are no known barriers in this area at the present time.

9. Community Integration: BHF must continue to strengthen its outreach services for residents of its programs as it is apparent that residents typically do well while residing at BHF, but experience difficulty with independent living. Known barriers include a lack of resources in some rural communities. BHF must continue to encourage residents to make use of BHF outreach services for advice and support at the BHF St. Norbert facilities as well as the River Point Centre, in addition to using the BHF transitional housing.

There are no other known barriers at this time.