

	<b>POLICY</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b> Human Resources	<b>Page:</b> 1 of 3
<b>SUBJECT :</b> Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act -Communication	
Last reviewed: July 31, 2025	<b>ISSUING AUTHORITY:</b> Professional Practice
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## Communication

At Braemar, we are committed to providing respectful, inclusive, and accessible communication with residents, families, and visitors. We communicate in a variety of ways, including in person, by telephone, in writing, and electronically.

We aim to communicate effectively with all individuals, including people with disabilities, and will provide information in alternative formats or communication supports upon request, as required under the AODA.

### **General Guidelines for Accessible Communication:**

Disabilities are diverse and may not always be visible. Staff should approach each interaction with sensitivity, flexibility, and respect.

### **Follow the PACTT principles:**

#### **Pay Attention**

- Offer full attention without assumptions.
- Adjust body position if needed to allow eye-level interaction.
- Address the person directly, not their support person.

#### **Ask “How May I Help You?”**

- Respect the person’s preferred method of communication.
- Understand available tools and supports at Braemar.

#### **Communicate Clearly and Patiently**

- Speak at a normal pace, using clear language.
- Offer information one step at a time; rephrase if needed.
- Use alternative communication methods if required (e.g. writing, visuals, gestures).
- Be patient—some interactions may take longer.

#### **Treat with Respect**

- Use people-first language (e.g. “person with a disability,” not “the disabled”).
- Preserve dignity, independence, and equality in every interaction.  
Think Accessibility
- Be aware of environmental features (e.g. ramps, accessible washrooms).
- Remove physical and communication barriers wherever possible.

## **Interacting with Individuals with Different Disabilities**

### **a. Physical Disabilities**

- Always ask before offering assistance.
- Respect personal space (e.g. mobility aids).
- Ensure spaces are free of obstacles.
- If standing behind a counter, consider coming around to interact at eye level.

### **b. Hearing Loss or Deafness**

- Get the person's attention before speaking.
- Reduce background noise and ensure good lighting.
- Speak clearly; do not cover your mouth.
- Offer written communication as needed.
- Speak to the person, not their interpreter.

### **c. Vision Loss**

- Identify yourself when approaching.
- Offer assistance but wait for acceptance.
- Provide directions clearly and verbally.
- Ask about preferred formats (e.g. large print, audio, Braille).
- Don't leave without saying you're leaving.

### **d. Deaf blindness**

- Ask how to best communicate.
- Respect communication aids or intervener support.
- Never touch without permission.
- Be patient and clear.

### **e. Speech or Language Disabilities**

- Don't finish sentences or guess words.
- Ask for clarification if needed—don't pretend to understand.
- Use yes/no questions when appropriate.
- Respect communication devices or boards.

### **f. Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities**

- Use plain language and short, simple sentences.
- Give one instruction at a time.
- Check for understanding by asking questions like, "Does that make sense?"

### **g. Learning Disabilities**

Offer information in multiple formats.

- Allow extra time for reading, responding, or tasks.
- Be willing to repeat or re-explain.

### **h. Mental Health Disabilities**

- Be supportive and respectful.
- Minimize stress; offer quiet environments when possible.
- Refer individuals to appropriate services if safety or wellness is a concern.

## **Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

Upon request, we will provide or arrange for accessible formats and communication supports:

- In a timely manner
- At no additional cost
- In consultation with the individual making the request

Examples include: large print, electronic text, Braille, captioning, or communication boards.

### **Feedback Process**

Braemar welcomes feedback from residents, families, and visitors regarding the accessibility of our services. Feedback can be provided:

- In person
- By phone
- In writing or email
- Through an alternative format or communication support as requested

We will ensure all feedback processes are accessible, and responses will be provided in a format that considers the individual's accessibility needs.

### **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)**

**Customer Service Standard (O. Reg. 429/07) and IASR (O. Reg. 191/11)**