

## **ACCESSIBILITY: INTERACTING WITH AND PROVIDING SERVICE TO CLIENTS WHO HAVE LEARNING DISABILITIES**

### **POLICY:**

Pembroke Regional Hospital (PRH) is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of all person with disabilities in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards O. Reg. 191/11 under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005*.

### **PREAMBLE:**

The term “learning disability” describes a range of information processing disorders that can affect how a person acquires, organizes, expresses, retains, understands, or uses verbal or non-verbal information. Examples include dyslexia (problems in reading and related language-based learning), dyscalculia (problems in mathematics), and dysgraphia (problems in writing and fine motor skills).

It is important to know that having a learning disability does not mean a person is incapable of learning. Rather, it means they learn in a different way.

Learning disabilities can result in different communication difficulties for people. They can be subtle, such as difficulty reading, or more pronounced. They can interfere with your client’s ability to receive, express, or process information. You may not know that a person has a learning disability unless you are told.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

#### **Assistive Devices:**

An assistive device is a tool, technology, or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities such as moving, communicating, or lifting. It helps the person to maintain his/her independence at home, at work, and in the community. The following assistive devices may be used by persons who have learning disabilities:

- Alternative technology for writing
- Calculator
- Scanning or reading technology
- Electronic notebook or laptop computer – used to take notes and to communicate
- Personal data managers – stores, organizes, and retrieves personal information
- Mini pocket recorders – records information for future playback
- Tape recorders, mini pocket recorders

### **GUIDELINES:**

- When you know someone with a learning disability needs help, ask how you can help
- Speak naturally, clearly, and directly to your client
- Allow extra time if necessary – people may take a little longer to understand and respond
- Remember to communicate in a way that takes into account the client’s disability
- Be patient and be willing to explain something again if needed

### **REFERENCES:**

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07. *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).