

DISCRIMINATORY REQUESTS FOR SERVICE

Policy

All service users (clients, groups or communities) have the right to expect professional, non-judgmental service that is sensitive and appropriate to their needs and consistent with Family Service Toronto's (FST) Equity and Inclusion policy. These values also guide the organization in dealing with a service request that is discriminatory towards our staff, students, volunteers or other clients.

Clients or referral sources who insist on being served by a certain type of provider or refuse certain types of providers (e.g., a person of a certain culture, race or sexual orientation) will be evaluated carefully. Requests will be reviewed and carefully considered on a case by case basis, taking into account the Ontario Human Rights Code and/or the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

FST recognizes that people can encounter systemic barriers to full access and participation in the broader community on the basis of their ability, ethnicity, gender, race and sexual orientation. These barriers may lead a client or referral source to make a specific request in order to allow for full access and participation. FST is committed to balancing the inequities and increasing access to services while still maintaining its values.

Scope

This policy applies to all FST programs, services and clients.

Limitations

FST's ability to respond to client requests may be limited by:

- available resources (e.g. personnel, financial):
- funding contracts that limits service to a particular community or group: or
- organizational policies and procedures.

Procedures

1. Requests for service by a potential client or referral source which seem to be discriminatory in nature will be reviewed carefully by the manager of the program where service is being requested.
2. When a service request is discriminatory, for example, the client or referral source will not accept an appointment with an employee from a different racial or ethnic background or sexual orientation, the request will not be honoured.
 - Staff will explain the refusal and FST's Equity and Inclusion policy in person and/or by written correspondence.



- If the client changes their mind and is open to service, staff will offer the first available appointment and encourage the potential client to meet with the assigned counsellor.
 - If the potential client or referral source continues to refuse the assigned counsellor (e.g., says they do not want someone with a foreign-sounding name), they will be deemed to have refused FST services.
3. A group that refuses to hold an activity in one of FST's meeting rooms unless guaranteed that another group will not be in the building at the same time, is told this cannot be done.
 4. At any point in service, client concerns about FST staff or practices will be handled using the established complaints protocol.
 5. At any point in service, FST employees, students or volunteers can involve their manager if they feel they are being affected by discrimination. A decision will then be made about the most appropriate outcome (e.g., termination of service, assignment to a new staff member).

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