

Policy Name and Number:	8.7 Discriminatory Requests for Service
Source:	Best practice
Date Last Reviewed:	November 17, 2021
Approval or Last Revision:	November 12, 2025
Approved By:	Senior Leadership Team

POLICY

All service users (clients, groups or communities) have the right to expect professional, non-judgmental service that is sensitive, inclusive and appropriate to their needs in alignment with Family Service Toronto's (FST) Equity and Inclusion policy. These same values guide FST in responding to requests for service that appear to be discriminatory towards our personnel (employees, students, volunteers) or other clients.

Requests in which a client or referral source seeks or refuses service from a provider based on personal characteristics (e.g., race, culture, age, gender identity, sexual orientation) will be evaluated carefully on a case-by-case basis. Consideration will be guided by the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, and FST's organizational values.

Some requests may reflect attempts to overcome barriers and ensure equitable access. FST is committed to balancing inequities and increasing access for clients while maintaining its values and the psychological health, safety, and well-being of personnel.

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, funding)
- contractual obligations that limit service to a particular community or group
- 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. The manager will consult with the Director, Clinical Services, and where appropriate, the Chief Operating Officer and/or the Executive Director.

3. When a service request is discriminatory, for example, the client or referral source will not accept an appointment with personnel from a different racial or ethnic background or sexual orientation, the request will not be honoured.
 - 3.1 Personnel will explain the refusal and FST's Equity and Inclusion policy in person and/or by written correspondence.
 - 3.2 If the client changes their mind and is open to service, personnel will offer the first available appointment and encourage the potential client to meet with the assigned counsellor.
 - 3.3 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 or accent, or has a specific racial identity), they will be deemed to have refused FST services.
4. Groups that attempt to impose discriminatory conditions (e.g., requiring exclusive use of a meeting space to avoid sharing the building with another group) will be informed that such conditions cannot be accommodated. At any point in service, client and/or service user concerns about FST personnel or practices will be handled using the established complaints protocol.
5. At any point in service, FST personnel 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., outreach by manager to discuss issue, termination of service, assignment to another personnel member).