



Haldimand-Norfolk

**REACH**

*supporting children, families, communities*

# **Your Rights and Responsibilities**

**Haldimand-Norfolk Resource,  
Education And Counselling Help**

## **Welcome to Haldimand-Norfolk REACH**

We are an agency that provides a variety of services to promote and support the well-being of people who live in our communities.

### **You have certain rights when you receive our services.**

You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect; to be in a safe and secure environment; and to complain about our services. You also have rights that are guaranteed under "Acts of Legislation" which include:

- Child, Youth and Family Services Act
- Child Care and Early Years Act
- Social Inclusion Act
- The Youth Criminal Justice Act
- Personal Health Information Protection Act

These "Acts" have been written by the provincial government to make sure that you and your family's best interests and well-being are protected by law.

**With these rights also come responsibilities.** This helps to ensure that you will have the best possible service and that we can continue to help the people who need our services.

**This booklet outlines your rights and responsibilities before, during, and after you receive our services.** If there is anything you don't understand after reading this

**Please note that R.E.A.C.H. is a strict scent free workplace as we have employees with severe sensitivities.**

## **Requesting Service – Consent & Permission**

With the exception of some justice programs, all services provided by our agency are **voluntary**. This means we need your written consent to provide you with services. If you are a parent or guardian, you will be asked to give your consent for a child who is in your care and has not reached an age where he/she can provide consent.

In some of our justice programs, you may have been ordered by the police, courts or probation to participate in a program. Your consent to participate will still be requested. If you choose not to consent, we will let whoever ordered you to participate know of your decision. They may discuss their expectations further with you.

If you are twelve years of age or older, you do not need permission from your parents to receive **child counselling services**. However, other services may require your parent or guardian's consent if you are under age 16. We will talk with you about involving your parents/guardian in the services you receive.

You also have the right to refuse some services once you are twelve. However, we hope you would have a discussion with us before making this decision so that together we can talk about what the decision may mean for you.

A parent/guardian can be:

- Both parents, where both have custody.
- One parent, where just that parent has custody.
- Another person who has custody.

## **When Service Begins**

When you begin to receive service you will be informed of your rights and responsibilities. You may receive written information or the worker with whom you are working may talk with you. It is important that you understand this information. Be sure to ask any questions that you may have about your rights.

## **When Service Begins** *continued*

Together, you and your worker will decide **when to meet**. Keeping your appointments is an important responsibility. If you need to cancel or change an appointment, call us as soon as possible.

Your worker will also talk with you about **where to meet**. Depending on the service, you may meet in your home, in a private office, or another location. We try to offer meetings in places that are convenient for you.

You will be asked if there is anything that we need to consider when working with you, such as language, cultural beliefs or holidays, etc. Please let us know about any of these and we will plan with you and do our best to meet your needs.

REACH is committed to providing services that are safe for you, the worker and the community. This is a responsibility that both you and your worker share. In the event that there are concerns about safety during a meeting, the worker will talk with you about how to stay safe. REACH does not permit staff to use any kind of physical discipline. Staff may use physical restraints only if properly trained to do so and only to prevent immediate harm. No weapons or items that could cause harm are allowed at any REACH facilities or appointments.

## **Record Keeping**



Your information will be stored in an agency wide database. Only workers who are involved with your service are permitted to see your information. If you are involved in more than one REACH program, your information will only be shared with your informed and written consent.

The general purpose of keeping your information in a file is to ensure that we keep track of your involvement with our agency; keep all your information together; know about any other services with which you have been involved, and how helpful these services have been. Having this information helps us plan while you are in service. For this reason, we also keep notes of each contact with you, from the first time you call to the time we finish our work together. Different programs have different rules about how long files are kept. We hope you will ask your worker about the rules for your program.

## Sharing Information from your Record

When you meet with a REACH worker for the first time they will ask about any other REACH programs you are currently involved with or have been in the past. A discussion will occur with you about sharing information between REACH programs. What and with whom you want to share is up to you. At REACH, we believe that most often services work best for people when everyone works together toward a common goal. Only people who are directly involved with your service will look at your files.

Sometimes, other people want to see what is in your file. For example, a doctor who is treating you may need more details on your background or emotional well-being. Parents may also ask to see what is in their file.

In most situations, if you are **12 years of age or older**, your consent is required in order for us to share information from your file. If you are younger than 12 years of age, and you are able to understand and appreciate the risks and benefits of consenting to sharing your information, we will ask your permission to share your information with anyone who doesn't work in our agency. But, before you consent you have a right to know:

- Precisely what information will be shared;
- The purpose of sharing this information;
- With whom the information will be shared;
- Whether this will mean the person can then share it with other people;
- And, for how long your consent to share this information will last.

You also might want to know what is in your own file – that is your right. A REACH worker will discuss what is in the file with you. We may, however, leave things out if we think they will cause you, or others harm. There may be things in your file that are incorrect. You have the right to have these things corrected by your worker and ask to see the corrected information. You have a right to ask for a copy of our Privacy Policy that explains all of this in detail. Please talk with your REACH worker if you have any questions about this.

## Confidentiality

You have the right to have your information kept confidential. There are times however, when we may need to share information without your consent, since safety for you and others always comes first. This may happen when there is:

- Suspicions that a **child may be in need of protection (past or present)**. By law, under Section 125 (1) of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, that information must be reported to the Children's Aid Society.
- Suspicions that an **adult with a developmental disability is in need of protection**. By law this information must be reported to the police.
- Clear and present **danger of harm to another**. This may include informing the intended person or the police.
- **Suicidal thought or intent**. This may include informing parents/guardians, other support persons and/or your physician.
- A **subpoena of your records** by a criminal or family court of law.



## Questions?

We can help!

Please call if there is anything you do not understand.

## Using Text and Email

We know that using text or email is sometimes a more convenient and efficient way to communicate. However, we ask that you please talk with your worker about our agency guidelines, and the risks and benefits for using text and email to communicate with us. H-N REACH **cannot** guarantee the confidentiality of texts or emails. We will ask you to sign a consent form that indicates you understand this.

**Note:** Please do not use text or email if you are in crisis and need urgent help. Call the **Child and Youth Crisis Service at 1-866-327-3224** (children and youth up to 18 and their families) or **CAST at 1-866-487-2278** (youth over 16 years and adults).

## **Right to File a Complaint**

Another important right to remember before, during, and after you are receiving services is the right to complain. Our agency has a process which allows you to make a complaint and work toward a resolution. We encourage you to read more about this right and the procedures to follow if you have any concerns. If you wish a copy of the complaint procedure you may ask your REACH worker or the receptionist for one. The complaint form is also available on our website. The Privacy Statement you receive also has information about how to file a complaint if you feel that your personal health information has been shared without your consent.

## **Special Rights and Responsibilities**

In addition to those outlined in this brochure, each program may have special rights and responsibilities. Please be sure to read all pamphlets and materials provided to you by the specific program/service in which you participate. If you are unsure about anything, please ask your REACH worker.

## **In Closing**

Just as you have a right to begin receiving services from our agency, you also have the right to stop receiving services. You can do this by withdrawing your consent to receive services **at any time**, from the first time you call to the time we finish our work together. We keep your file in accordance with the Personal Health Information Protection Act legislation and our agency policies on Privacy and the Creation, Maintenance and Destruction of Records. You can review these policies if you wish.

It is your responsibility to let us know if you feel you no longer need our services. If you wish, we can work with you to find services that can better meet your needs. In some situations, we can provide follow-up supports for a time after you complete your work with REACH.

Thank you for taking the time to read about your rights and responsibilities. We look forward to working with you now that you know All About Your Rights!



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### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Haldimand-Norfolk REACH promotes and supports social inclusion and community well-being by providing coordinated access, planning, programs and services for children, families, and communities.

**Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario  
Bell Trinity Square  
483 Bay Street, 10th Floor, South Tower  
Toronto, ON M5G 2C9  
1-800-263-1830**

**The Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth  
401 Bay Street, Suite 2200  
Toronto, ON M7A 0A6  
1-800-263-2841**

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