



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 let us know when you have a concern about our services. You also have rights that are guaranteed under “Acts of Legislation” and include:

- Child, Youth and Family Services Act
- Child Care and Early Years Act
- Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities 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 booklet, please be sure to discuss it with the person you are working with at H-N REACH.

**Please note that the Agency endeavours to provide a Scent-Free environment for the safety and comfort of all. Please refrain from the use of scented products when attending any of our sites and/or programs.**

## 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. In many programs, as a parent or guardian you will be asked to give your consent for a child who is in your care and does not have the capacity to 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.

In Child and Youth Mental Health counselling/psychotherapy programs it is important to note that a child/youth can provide direct consent regardless of age if they:

- Have the capacity to understand what the service involves;
- Are aware of the benefits of consenting to service;
- Are aware of the risks of consenting to service.

A capable child/youth also has the right to decide who will be given access to their personal health information, including parents/guardians.

A parent/guardian can be:

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

This information will be discussed with you, and you will have an opportunity to ask questions during the orientation to service.

## **When Service Begins**

You will be informed of your rights and responsibilities when you begin service and throughout your service experience. It is important that you understand this information and ask any questions that you may have about your rights.

Some of the decisions that we will make together includes:

- When to meet.

Keeping your appointments is an important responsibility. If you need to cancel or change an appointment, let us know as soon as possible.

- Where to meet.

Depending on the service, you may meet in your home, in a private office, virtually 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.

H-N REACH is committed to providing services that are safe. Safety is a responsibility that we share. In the event that there are concerns about safety we will make a plan together.

H-N 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 H-N REACH facilities or appointments.

## **Record Keeping**

Your information will be stored in an agency wide database. Only employees who are involved with your service are permitted to see your information. If you are involved in more than one H-N 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 with you 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.

## Sharing Information From Your Record

When you meet with a H-N REACH employee for the first we will ask about any other H-N REACH programs you are currently involved with or have been in the past. Sharing information between H-N REACH programs will only occur with your consent. What and with whom you want to share is up to you.

We will also ask about any other services you are involved with outside of H-N REACH. Sharing information between H-N REACH and another service or person will only occur with your consent. What and with whom you want to share is up to you.

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.

There are times however, when we may need to share information without your consent, since safety for you and others always comes first. See the **Confidentiality** section for more details.

You have a right to know what is in your file. We will discuss what is in your 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 your file corrected and ask to see the corrected information.

You will receive a copy of our Privacy Statement when you begin service and our Privacy Policy is also available to you and is on our website. Please speak with a H-N REACH employee 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.
- To file a **Serious Occurrence Report** with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services or the Ministry of Health.
- A **report to or investigation by a regulatory college** about the conduct of an H-N REACH employee.
- A **legal requirement** to share your information.

## Using Text and Email

We know that using text or email is sometimes a more convenient and efficient way to communicate. H-N REACH **cannot** guarantee the confidentiality of texts or emails. We will ask you to sign a consent form that indicates you understand the risks and benefits for using text and email to communicate.

Please do not use text or email if you are in crisis and need urgent help.

## Right to Share a Concern

Although we try to ensure excellence in the work that we do, you may have a concern about services. We would appreciate hearing from you about your experience and work with you to resolve the concern.

It is important for you to know that there are a number of steps that you can take if you need to share a concern or make a formal complaint.

First, try to speak with the person you are working with to resolve the problem. Most concerns can be resolved at this level.

However, if you are:

- uncomfortable or unable to speak directly with the person; or
- you are still concerned that the situation hasn't improved

then, you may wish to take the next step and speak with the employee's direct supervisor.

We encourage you to read more about this right and the procedures to follow if you need to share a concern or make a formal complaint. A copy of the complaint procedure is available on our website and in waiting rooms.

## In Closing

It is your responsibility to let us know if you feel you no longer need our services. You can withdraw your consent to receive services **at any time**, from the first time you call to the time we finish our work together. At your request, we will work with you to find services that meet your current needs.

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.



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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.

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