



BrightLife
Enhancement Services
Holistic approach to healthcare

Brightlife Enhancement Services

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN



Accessibility Plan

Introduction

Brightlife Enhancement Services is committed to having all of its services comply with every aspect of this formal accessibility plan. Since Brightlife Enhancement Services formed, both the management and the leadership of the organization have diligently worked to ensure that its facilities and services conform to all required Federal, State, and Local regulations in an ongoing effort to provide accessible, healthy and safe environments for the populations served, employees and all other stakeholders.

The purpose of developing, implementing, and maintaining a formal Accessibility Plan is to summarize the many accessibility accomplishments made to date and to outline objectives and timelines for each program to achieve organizational expectations as far as any unresolved accessibility issues are concerned. The plan allows for staff training and feedback from multiple sources including those populations receiving services and the communities where services are provided. The plan concludes with a schedule of activities for the upcoming year. It was developed with input from the persons served, personnel, organizational leadership, and other key stakeholders.

Brightlife Enhancement Services Philosophy on Accessibility

Brightlife Enhancement Services is committed to providing an organizational climate that accommodates the needs of all patients, families, employees, and other stakeholders. Central to this commitment is the removal of architectural, attitudinal, environmental, employment, financial, and other barriers that may impede full access. The organization also works to “*build bridges*” to increase inroads into its various programs and services, when and as necessary.

The internal and external assessments of accessibility of Brightlife Enhancement Services programs and services have confirmed that all sites are located near or adjacent to public transportation routes, that the days and hours of operation are conducive for all patients, that accommodations are in place for patients with special needs (i.e., sight, hearing and mobility impaired individuals) and that the organization’s website is available to a broad audience. The Accessibility Plan corresponds to Brightlife Enhancement Services internal evaluations requiring the removal of barriers using various tools including but not limited to: quality improvement inspections, internal reports, and feedback received from various stakeholders. Both the governance and the management authority have reviewed and approved this accessibility plan.

Barrier-Identification Methodologies

AHS will continue to use, the following methods to identify, remove, and prevent barriers:

Method	Description
Identified Barriers	Review and incorporate into the plan any barriers as identified by clients, families, staff and volunteers.
Conduct surveys	Survey clients, their families, staff and other stakeholders to identify barriers and present suggestions for resolutions.
Conduct focus groups	Hold focus group sessions with staff, with clients and client families, and with other members of the clients' support teams to identify barriers e.g. during person focused planning sessions.
Conduct accessibility audit	Perform a review and audit of facilities and community resources utilizing available audit tools.
Consult professional services	Enlist professional services where appropriate, in matters of architectural design, occupation health, sensitivity training, etc.

Barriers identified

On an ongoing basis AHS uses several of the methods noted above to gather information and identify existing barriers within AHS and the community. Surveys will be conducted with clients, families, staff, and other stakeholders, which provide valuable input to this identification process. An inventory of existing barriers is established and reviewed based on assessments of the following variables:

- Architecture
- Finances
- Technology
- Environment
- Employment
- Transportation
- Attitudes
- Communication
- Community Integration
- Other

Accessibility Plan - Key Areas

I. Employment

Brightlife Enhancement Services is committed to providing equal opportunity in employment to all persons without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender veteran status, age, marital status, or disability.



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- A. Recruitment and hiring procedures will be accomplished in accordance with the Human Resources policy and procedure manual revised in December 2010.
- B. Reasonable accommodations for disabled employees will be made in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). These accommodations may include, but are not limited to, assigning work location to a fully accessible facility, modified work duties and schedules, and altering furniture and equipment.

II. Client Services

Brightlife Enhancement Services is committed to providing services to all clients regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, color, religion, veterans' status, mental status, age national origin or disability. In order to ensure that services can be provided to all clients, the following areas have been designated to accommodate specific disability status:

A. Mobility Impaired

1. Services

Transportation to Appointments

Medical appointments will be arranged through Medicaid Transportation Services. The client will incur no additional fees for this service. Brightlife Enhancement Services will provide transportation if needed.

B. Hearing Impaired

Hearing impaired clients can receive treatment at the facility. If a client is hearing impaired, a thorough assessment will be made, and care provided on the basis of identified needs. If the client utilizes sign language to communicate, signing services will be arranged as needed and required.

The hearing-impaired client must be oriented at the time of admission to the location of the fire alarms and the flashing lights that signal that the alarm has been activated and given instructions either in writing or through an interpreter of the procedure to follow. Staff assigned to this client will have the responsibility of escorting the client to a safe location in the event of a fire alarm or other disaster.



C. Visually Impaired

If a blind client or a partially sighted client is admitted, a nursing assessment will be completed which includes a determination of needs. In the event of a fire alarm, or other disaster, the client will be oriented to the procedure for alarms. A “buddy” system as described above has been established.

If the blind or partially sighted client is admitted with a Seeing Eye dog, the dog will remain with the client, and care will be provided for the dog.

Services for blind clients are coordinated through Community Support Services for the Blind Services. A rehabilitation instructor from the Division of Blind Services will provide basic services including orientation to the facility, white canes and access to the Talking Books Library, among others. Division of Rehabilitation Services can be provided by contacting DORS located in Owings Mills, Maryland and asking for the counselor of the day who will provide assistance. If a client demonstrates a mental disability or multiple handicaps, a needs assessment will be done, and care based on these needs.

The only treatment requirement that would be difficult for a sight-impaired client is completing required reading. The counselor will address this problem by one of the following:

- a. Having assignments read to the client by their parent or guardian.
- b. Audio recordings of reading assignments and then providing the client with the means to listen to them or substituting audio recordings for reading materials.
- c. The facility is adequately equipped with the means to play audio recordings.

Mobility restrictions of the sight-impaired client will be managed through the “buddy” system. A client will be assigned to ensure that the sight-impaired client is lead through the building and provided access as required to clinic areas.

D. Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Clients or potential clients with LEP are not asked to provide their own interpreters. Interpreter services will be contacted, and an interpreter



arranged at no additional cost to the client or family. To respond to the growing population of Spanish speaking persons, Brightlife Enhancement Services will contact Department of Social Services who have designated counselors who are fluent in Spanish and other languages to serve these clients.

- E. Arrangements for any of the above accommodations should be made with the knowledge of the component supervisor.

III. SERVICE ACCESS

Providing accessible services is highly valued by Brightlife Enhancement Services and its staff. Special attention is paid to the following areas:

- ✘ **Accessibility/Architectural Barriers** - Services are provided to all citizens in need, living within its service areas, regardless of age, gender, race, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or inability to pay. Facilities are accessible to physically challenged clients, and auxiliary aids are made available when needed and as appropriate. Reasonable accommodations are made for all disabilities. Architectural barriers have been addressed and Brightlife Enhancement Services is seeking out funding to make its facilities more easily accessible by the persons served.
- ✘ **Attitudinal Barriers** - Brightlife Enhancement Services continually seeks to reduce the stigma associated with persons who are receiving services and to promote their inclusion within the various recovery and general communities whenever and wherever possible. To facilitate this process, cultural competency and ethics training are designed and conducted in a manner that assists all employees and managers in recognizing and eliminating attitudinal barriers to services and employment. When supervision activities identify potential attitudes with an employee that could adversely impact service delivery, the employee is counseled and encouraged to seek assistance in making the necessary and required adjustments. Finally, educational sessions are routinely provided to patients to assist them in the elimination of attitudinal barriers in receiving assistance. The organization has identified the need for more cultural competency training for all personnel.

The organization also conducts and participates in community education activities designed to reduce the stigma associated with substance use and mental health disorders and HIV-AIDS. Additionally, all staff members have received training to eliminate any internal stigma that might exist towards



persons receiving treatment. This training is routine and ongoing and is considered to be essential for all new employees at all levels of the organization.

Finally, the admission and exclusionary criteria for each of the organization's programs are reviewed at least annually to determine if they can be reduced or otherwise adjusted to increase and improve access to services. Outcomes data are reviewed as a part of this process to determine where and how adjustments can be made.

- ✘ **Employment:** Brightlife Enhancement Services recruits, hires and retains a diverse team of personnel to meet the needs of the persons served. See the cultural diversity plan for specific methods. Brightlife Enhancement Services also assists persons served in obtaining employment. Vocational services are provided as needed and appropriate either directly or by referral.
- ✘ **Geography/Transportation/Environmental/Outreach** - Services are provided in geographical areas accessible to the citizens of the communities where services are provided. Brightlife Enhancement Services assists persons served with special needs to access community Medicaid transportation services... Transportation is provided to some programs.
- ✘ **Culture/Attitudinal/Communication** - Culture includes the variety of lifestyles our clients, staff and community reflect. Agency staff reflects the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of our clients. Interpreters for other languages are available through local community resources. Cultural appropriateness training is mandatory for all staff to enhance their ability to work with and understand the special needs of different populations.
- ✘ **Age Groups** - Services are provided to clients of all ages. A continuum of care is provided for adolescents and juvenile justice offenders.
- ✘ **Gender** - Pregnant and post-partum women receive specialized intervention services and case management; Otherwise, men and women are treated equally and have access to the full continuum of care.
- ✘ **Time/Access to Services** - Staff are available 24 hours daily. Day/night and outpatient services are provided during extended business hours, Monday through Friday, when needed. Screenings and admissions are completed within 72 hours of the initial call.



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- ✘ **Liaisons** - Clients who have special systems needs (e.g. criminal justice, juvenile justice, civil court, educational, vocational, social, medical services, etc.) have liaison and advocacy services made available them when and as indicated. Some clients also have limited case management services made available to them.

- ✘ **Special Services and Special Populations** - The following specialized services are offered as needed:
 - Medical services
 - HIV/AIDS education, counseling, testing, and case management
 - Educational services
 - Vocational services
 - Medical prenatal clinic services are arranged through Prince George County Health Clinics.
 - Juvenile justice programs
 - Adolescent psychological evaluations and mental health assessments.
 - Mental health/psychiatric services for dually diagnosed clients.
 - Family services are provided to individuals significantly related to clients.
 - Specialized outreach prevention is provided for at risk minority adolescents

- ✘ **Financial** - Services are accessible on a sliding scale based on an individual's ability to pay. Inability to pay is not a barrier to treatment. The sliding fee scale is reviewed and adjusted as needed by the organization's leadership.

Community Integration - Community integration provides opportunities for the community participation of the individuals. Brightlife Enhancement Services defines the scope of these services based on the identified needs and desires of the individuals. Our individuals may participate in a variety of community life experiences that may include but are not limited to: leisure or recreational activities, communication activities, spiritual activities, cultural activities, vocational pursuits, development of work, attitudes, employment activities, volunteerism, educational and training activities, and development of living skills.

Technology - Brightlife Enhancement Services recognizes that with the providing of services in different locations that there is a need to address and utilize technology to convey direct care and administrative information to and for the individuals, stakeholders and staff members. The organization will choose an Electronic Medical Record after it receives its accreditation from CARF and certification from COMAR.



OTHER AREAS:

In addition to the above specific accessibility goals and objectives, Brightlife Enhancement Services is involved in many ongoing activities and procedures that enhance the accessibility of persons served, employees, and members of the community. Examples include personnel policies (affirmative action/EOE, exit interview process), ongoing outreach activities in all program areas, the utilization of consumer feedback/input processes such as satisfaction surveys, psychosocial assessments, and individual planning, participation in consumer advocacy groups, outcome studies, cultural competency education, and a multitude of other activities that directly facilitate the enhancement of accessibility.

Brightlife Enhancement Services management or quality improvement team develops and approves a revised Accessibility Plan each year. The plan is reviewed and approved by the management team and/or CEO and the Corporate Compliance Officer, and is made available to persons served, employees, and stakeholders.

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