Accessibility Policy

1. Purpose

1.1. HELP recognises the prevalence and effects of sexual violence in our society and the importance of a trauma informed perspective. A trauma informed response encompasses a fundamental understanding of trauma and how it shapes an individual who has experienced it. The impact of trauma can be mitigated by developing a care practice and support system that is trauma-informed, prevention oriented, accessible and focused on improving mental health functioning for women, children, youth, and their families. HELP is committed to incorporating best practice in working towards the prevention of sexual violence.

2. Philosophy

2.1 HELP is committed to being accessible to its stakeholders. This requires an ongoing policy of intentional action to ensure that HELP is as accessible as possible in a number of areas.

2.2 HELP acknowledges that people with access issues are more likely to be targeted for sexual violence, and may have greater difficulty in identifying and accessing available services

3. Accessibility Strategy

3.1 Issues to Consider

3.1.1 Right to Access

3.1.2 People constrained by low socio-economic standing

3.1.3 People with low vision

3.1.4 Non-English speakers

3.1.5 People with impaired hearing

3.1.6 Mobility – e.g. physical mobility, and people with multiple dependents

3.1.7 Young women

3.1.8 Children

3.1.9 People constrained by lack of access to childcare

3.1.10 Cultural restraints

3.1.11 People with mental health challenges

3.1.12 People with learning disability

3.1.13 Neurodiversity

3.1.14 Older people

4. Communications

4.1 When producing communications (brochures, newsletters etc) it is important to consider how easy or difficulty it might be for service users to read or understand the information provided. To this end, communications should always be clear and consistent with each other. Providing a number of different options for accessing information about the agency is crucial for ensuring that HELP's textual environment is welcoming and thus that it achieves the broadest reach possible in the community.

4.2 The plain language service should be used to translate clinical information for brochures, and some information into language suitable for children.

5. Formatting Communications (also available as a checklist)

5.1. Ensure consistency in formatting of all outgoing communications – font, size, colour, composition

5.2. Font: 12pt Arial or other sans serif font

5.3. No italicised font

5.4. High shade/colour contrast on text

5.4.1. white text on solid colour background rather than two different shades of the same colour on top of one another

5.4.2. no text over textured background

5.4.3. no text over shade gradient

5.5. QR codes on brochures for quick website access/access to eg. Deafradio audio translations

5.6. Ensure brochure is available/updated online in pdf, word and html formats

5.7. Include large-print versions of brochures online

6. Website:

6.1. The website is one of the main portals for people to access information about HELP

6.2. All logos and graphics need to have alternative text – these are descriptions of the images to help access clients who are accessing the website through screen reading technology

6.3. Avoid having text over a background image; this makes it harder for people with low vision to read the words

6.4. Use common use icons to highlight e.g. a phone icon next to the contact number, or an envelope next to the email address

6.5. A site map is to be included for ease of site navigation

6.6. Accessible facilities and services need to be outlined to advise accessible clients what is and isn't available

6.7. Provide an option for adjusting font size and colour contrast according to preference

6.8. Brochures including translations into alternative languages should be available on the website. PDFs should also be available in either word or HTML versions for access through screen reading technology

6.9. Translations into NZSL should also be available

6.10. The International Symbol of Access (ISA) should be included with the Be.Welcome rating

7. Accessibility of Building and Environs

To ensure the comfort and safety of all of our visitors, it is important to ensure that the physical environment is accessible and free of avoidable hazards. Making sure that passage through the property is unobstructed, with clear and noticeable sign-posting where appropriate, will ensure that a broad range of people can access HELP.

8.   Building Mobility

8.1.   Mobility car park is easy to find and well sign-posted

8.2.   Mobility car park is clear of obstructions

8.3.   ISA symbol indicates mobility car park

8.4.   Mobility car park is at least 3500mm in width

8.5.   Access ramp is 1200mm wide with slip-resistant surface and hand rail on both sides

8.6.   Ground tactile indicators are installed around the entrance to assist those using a cane

8.7.   Lever door handles are installed on all doors (rather than round handles)

8.8.   Administration staff are to be made aware of visitors with access needs and are available to offer assistance. Client's need to be as independent as possible is to be respected when offering assistance

8.9.   Wherever possible, those with access needs are seen in rooms towards the front of the building, where access is clearest

8.10.   Building is well-lit

8.11.   Sign-posts are provided which indicate toilets, waiting room and group therapy room as appropriate

8.12.   A bell is installed at reception

8.13.   Large, visible ISA sign on toilet entrance

8.14.   Designated grassed area is provided for mobility dogs

9. Client Services

9.1. All support animals are welcome on premises (eg. Guide, hearing or mobility dogs etc.)

9.2. Staff are aware of who will be coming in for appointments and attend to any access needs

9.3. It is HELP's intention to have Interpreters available on site (following referral) where possible, and with client agreement. However, this may at times be constrained by financial or other considerations.

9.4. Register of key contacts is kept for those with issues, which includes:

8.4.1. mobility taxi numbers

8.4.2. disability information

8.4.3. interpreters

8.5. Staff are made aware of key contacts

8.6. Database includes information on access needs of clients

8.7. Lines of communication alternative to the helpline are provided; eg. email access to crisis service for clients with hearing impairments.

8.8 Service users are surveyed twice per year and a feedback box is available in the waiting room

9. Emergencies

9.1. All emergency exits are well sign-posted

9.2. All fire/smoke doors can stay open automatically during an emergency

9.3. Visitors with access needs are never left alone, so they will have support in case of emergency

9.4. Specific training is provided to staff on how to assist clients with access needs in case of emergency

9.5. Security gate allows for ease of travel

9.6 Fire alarms with visual indicators are installed for the benefit of those with hearing impairment