



CLIENT HANDBOOK

Transitional Living & Residential Services

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Toby Harris
CEO

Aaron Willmott
Director: Client Services

WELCOME TO TRAVERSE INDEPENDENCE

Our goal at Traverse Independence is to support clients to be as independent as possible. This support comes in many shapes and forms and is unique to each client, just as each client is unique to us. We believe strongly in including family and caregivers in the planning, should that be something the client has requested. Client safety, privacy, individualized care planning, transition and independence are of utmost importance to us, and we strive to ensure that all clients feel supported and work towards short term and long-term goals. The CEO (Chief Executive Officer) at Traverse, Toby Harris, comes with a long history of independent living having started off her career working as a front line staff. The team that makes the organization great consists of front line PSW (Personal Support Worker) staff, site coordinators, department managers and a Director, Aaron Willmott, who also comes with a background of front-line experience.

The board of directors is passionately committed to the mission of Traverse and reviews it regularly to ensure it is still valid. They work every year to make sure our strategic plan is current and supports this incredible vision.

We wish you all the best at Traverse Independence. May your journey to becoming independent be supported and successful.

MISSION

We maximize our clients' ability to live independently by providing support services for adults with a physical disability or brain injury.

VISION

Supporting people to traverse the distance to independence.

VALUES





DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Traverse Independence provides an atmosphere free from barriers to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion. We celebrate and welcome the diversity of everyone involved with our organization. It is the policy of Traverse Independence to foster an environment that respects people's diversity, dignity, ideas, and beliefs thereby ensuring equity and diversity in employment and service delivery. We demonstrate our commitment to this by providing a supportive work environment and a corporate culture that welcomes and encourages equality and inclusion for all.

We make sure our offices, facilities, and housing buildings are accessible to anyone, we follow all the Ontario accessibility laws (AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act)) and our plan is on our website.

Our employees work in your home, which is their place of work. As such, clients are expected to treat the staff equally with dignity and respect and celebrate the diversity of those employed by Traverse Independence. Lack of respect and abuse of staff is not tolerated.

ACCOMMODATION

When you start your interactions with Traverse, we will ask you how you prefer to get information. The options will be email, Canada Post mail or a worker can read information to you (so long as it is not confidential).

While we cannot guarantee that we can provide services in your native language, we will work on your behalf to find an interpreter if necessary.

We will work to honour your spiritual and religious beliefs, routines and requests and staff can assist you to access community-based services that support you in these areas.

Any other areas of accommodation can be discussed with the supervisor of the program, and we will make every effort to support your needs and requests.

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

The Tagge Street Group Home and the Day Program are drug and alcohol-free zones.

When it comes to substance use disorders, Traverse has moved from an abstinence-based approach to a harm reduction model. Harm reduction is an evidence-based, client-centered approach that seeks to reduce the health and social harms associated with addiction and substance use, without necessarily requiring people who use substances to abstain.

Not everyone is willing or able to enter treatment. In this case, harm reduction programs work to:

- reduce risks.
- improve health.
- connect people with other key health and social services.



BEING A CLIENT OF TRAVERSE

CLIENT BILL OF RIGHTS

You have the right to:

- Be treated with courtesy, respect, and dignity.
- Be treated as an individual.
- Be informed about services in the agency and the community.
- Participate in the planning of your service.
- Say yes or no to service.
- Voice your concerns.
- Review your client file.

THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

You have the right to privacy. This right shall be recognized and protected to the greatest extent possible. All information about you is considered personal and confidential and will be used to plan the services you need. You must sign a Release of Information Form before anyone at Traverse Independence can discuss your personal information with, for example, your doctor or a family member.

We celebrate many special occasions where we take pictures. Of course, your privacy is especially important, so we always ask your written permission to use your picture publicly. We have a Facebook site that you may be interested in following along with other social media such as Instagram and Twitter. This is where we may post your picture, or on our website and in our brochures, but only with your permission.

Privacy in your home is important to us. While Traverse Independence staff may have a key to your apartment/home, they will only enter at scheduled times or if you request that they visit. We will not allow anyone into your apartment, in your absence without prior consent. If you are expecting visitors and they contact the office to be allowed into the building, we will only do so if you have first asked us to allow them in.

CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Treat all employees with respect and dignity.
- Ensure that your workplace environment is free of harassment and abuse.
- Follow all the “house rules” for the site you are living in.
- Maintain a safe work environment for employees, free of hazards.
- Report client safety incidents
- Cooperate with reasonable requests by the organization.
- Participate in the orientation and training of employees.
- Attending your client care planning meetings.
- Participate in evaluation of employees and the program as requested.
- Direct your own care to the greatest degree possible.

- Notify Traverse Independence of any changes required to your care plan.
- Provide timely notice if you are moving, requiring a schedule change or if you are canceling services.
- Notify Traverse Independence of any changes that may change your eligibility for service.

PERSON CENTERED CARE

It is important that you know you have the right to put forth opinions on the services we deliver and to be aware of our quality improvements. The following framework is a basis for those conversations. We are committed to asking your opinion regularly through face-to-face meetings, surveys, and email requests. We also have a Client/Caregiver committee where you can put forth your ideas, concerns and quality suggestions should you choose to join.

Core principles of the framework are based on our strategic plan and our values, which were developed by staff and clients: CARES (Compassion, Accountability, Respect, Excellence and Support) – Compassion, Accountability, Respect, Excellence and Support.



HOW DO WE WORK WITH YOU TO DESIGN PLANS?

You and your caregiver/family will work with our team to develop your care plan including goals and objectives. Attendants are available 24 hours per day, 7 days a week in our residential settings. What employees help you with depends on your care plan. In the community and in our residential settings, one-to-one services will be scheduled for a community facilitator to assist you with specific goals. The community facilitator will arrive at your home or housing unit at a pre-arranged time.

WHO DECIDES ON THE PLAN?

At any given time, you can meet with the service coordinator and/or manager to discuss changes to your service. The resulting agreement is your formal contract with Traverse Independence. You will get a copy of this agreement along with your schedule.

WHAT ABOUT CHANGES?

Any changes or concerns related to the schedule or services should be directed to the service coordinator. Twenty-four hours' notice is preferred for basic schedule changes, so we can accommodate your request. Without this length of notice, due to other routines or commitments we may not be able to make a change. The exception to this is an emergency.

ENGAGEMENT/INVOLVEMENT

There are many opportunities for family and/or caregivers to be involved starting with the assessment, working through the planning and finally the transition to the site. If the family member is not a decision maker, or the client does not want them to be involved, we will keep all information private.

QUALITY

We have a client/caregiver committee that meets regularly and can bring issues and concerns forward, along with ideas and solutions. The work of the committee is reported to the CEO and the Board of Directors as part of the quality system. Also, in our residential settings surveys are used to get a sense of how individual staff are doing to offer feedback to them when in their review and coaching meetings. If you are interested in sitting on the client/caregiver committee please contact Aaron Willmott, Director of Client Services as a.willmott@travind.ca.

DECISION MAKING

Clients have the right to make decisions on their own. This could be around the plan, medication and/or finances along with day-to-day activities and routines. If you need someone to make decisions on your behalf, we can work with you to request a power of attorney, substitute decision maker, or public guardian. If you are using a substitute decision maker, we will need a copy of your paperwork.

CLIENT SAFETY

This is one of our top priorities. So, what does that mean?

We may ask you to say your name and birth date right before employees start your service. This may seem strange, but we are just practicing good standards and making sure, you get the right care at the right time.

We will work with you to make sure you get the right medications, at the right time.

Therefore, this means that, while in our housing program, our employees will store your medications and give them to you until you can do so safely by yourself. We will work with you on this goal of independent medication before you transition to an independent setting such as your own home.

We practice a harm reduction model for clients who have a substance use disorder. This means that we will work you to link with our partner agencies such as Stonehenge to develop a solid plan around harm reduction, safer supply, medical supports, outreach, opioid antagonist therapy (methadone, suboxone, etc.) and anything else needed to ensure a harm reduction model is in place.

We will help you keep your environment safe/clean, and staff will always practice good hand hygiene in your unit.

We will try to keep you safe from abuse, so you need to report anything you see, hear, or feel that does not seem right. You should encourage your family or caregivers to do the same. We want to hear about everything.

We will assess your risk of taking a fall. If it seems like this might be an issue, we will work with you to put in place a falls prevention program, which may include things like exercise, conditioning, health food choices.

You have a role in client safety! Traverse has a client safety incident management system so this means we encourage everyone, including you, to report safety incidents. We rank them as harm, no-harm and near miss incidents. We use these reports to help us make system improvements as we analyze them throughout the year with the help of the Client Safety Committee.

If you want to file a client safety incident report, please contact the service coordinator or the manager of your program. These reports are confidential. You can do this report verbally or on our incident report form, whichever is easiest for you.

EMERGENCIES

We have a plan that covers what will happen in an emergency such as a flood, power outage, fire or even a pandemic. We will keep you and your family informed and let you know what you can expect should an unexpected event occur. We learned a lot during COVID, and all those learnings have been put into policy.

INTAKE, ASSESSMENT AND TRANSITIONS

As a client in our housing program, you may need to participate in standardized assessments. These tools help us to get accurate information on your skills, abilities, and challenges along with assisting you to decide what services you would like to start with. Tests may be administered at intake, and some are done annually. These help us to work with you to plan the best services possible and to better understand your needs.

After the intake and assessment phase, in transitional living we will use the information we gathered to put together some basic observations on strengths and challenges, which we will use to create your plan with you. We can also refer to additional services such as the ABI (Acquired Brain Injury) Intensive Case Coordination program, mental health and addictions supports, housing waiting lists and many other things. The first four to twelve weeks of service will be an assessment phase in transitional living where we continue to gather information to relay back to you on your skills and strengths.

Once the assessment phase is complete, your service coordinator or community facilitator will meet with you and your caregiver and/or family member if you have one to work on your ongoing plan. Together we will design a plan that summarizes your goals and objectives. You will sign your plan to show that you agree to it.

YOUR CLIENT FILE

We will regularly enter information in the electronic client file in the form of case notes. Reports summarizing progress and assessments are also part of the file. If you or your caregiver wish to see your client file, you may do so by submitting a verbal (which will be documented) or written request to the manager of your program. If you want your file corrected because you think something is not accurate, you can request a change to the information. We have a policy about this that you can request at any time.

SERIOUS OCCURRENCE/SIGNIFICANT INCIDENT

If something happens to you that is unwanted such as a serious occurrence or significant incident, that information will be documented in an incident report. We use these reports to document what happened, make sure we take the right action to support you and finally we use them to trend information so we can prevent such things from happening again. We also have a policy on immediate disclosure in the case of a serious occurrence or significant accident/injury so we will contact your designated caregiver or substitute decision maker.

CARE PLAN

In Supportive Housing, annual care planning meetings will take place for each client to review the service plan, goals, and care needs. This meeting is open to anyone the client chooses to have in attendance. A RAI CHA assessment may be completed as well.



RESEARCH

On occasion, we may collaborate with research projects. Every project is approved by the board of directors and overseen by the CEO. We always adhere to the rules and ethics of the research facility. You may choose to participate or may choose not to. Participation is not a requirement for Traverse Independence clients.

RELATIONSHIPS

Harassment and Abuse

Harassment and abuse are serious matters and must be dealt with promptly. Traverse Independence will support everyone to deal with any situation of harassment or abuse. As a client, if you suffer from harassment or abuse you must tell someone. The best person to tell is your service coordinator or manager as quickly as possible. All information will remain confidential. If you are not comfortable talking to them about what happened, then the following guidelines might assist:

- Talk to someone you trust. This might be a member of your family, a friend, a minister, a counselor or therapist, an attendant, the life skills facilitator/community facilitator, the service coordinator, or the program manager. You can also call a crisis hotline or sexual assault center.
- Do not let your fears stop you from speaking out. Fear of retaliation, intimidation, embarrassment, or feelings of guilt may persuade you not to make a complaint. However, harassment and abuse will continue if not dealt with properly. Therefore, it is important to register a complaint.
- Ask for help if you need it and take things one step at a time.

YOUR RIGHT TO FILE A COMPLAINT

You or your caregiver have the right to file a formal complaint at any time. You can do this by speaking directly with the service coordinator or manager of the program. It is their responsibility to respond quickly to your complaint and to share a copy of our complaint policy with you.

They will meet with you to discuss your concerns and will work with you to develop a plan to improve the situation where necessary. This will be done privately, and you should not feel worried about complaining.

If you feel that you are being treated differently because you complained, or if someone harasses you over it, report that right away to the program manager.

If you are still not happy you can contact the Health Services Appeal and Review Board (HSARB), which is an independent body that will look at your concerns.

24-HOUR ON CALL

Staff have access to a 24/7 system that connects them with a manager in our residential settings. This system is used for oversight during an emergency or in a demanding situation. If you are feeling the need to speak to a manager after hours, you may ask the staff to contact the on-call supervisor on your behalf or you may leave them a message

YOUR RIGHT AND YOUR STAFF'S RIGHT TO BE SAFE

Traverse Independence has an obligation to protect the client's health and safety but also the health and safety of the people who work with you – the staff.

Personal Protective Equipment (gloves, masks, gowns)

Our employees must wear personal protective equipment when they are providing personal care. This includes situations where they think they might be exposed to bodily fluids such as urine. Changes in your health may require the purchase of additional personal protective equipment, such as gowns and masks. Failure to supply the necessary equipment may affect our staff's ability to provide services.

In some of the programs you are responsible for keeping a supply of gloves, and any other items that staff may require, in your home, otherwise our employees will not be able to complete your service as planned. The service coordinator will discuss this with you individually.



Client Equipment

The employee will inspect all equipment used by an employee during routines. Clients will be responsible for repairing equipment, and staff will not use any equipment found in disrepair until it can be repaired. Clients are responsible for ensuring that maintenance inspections are completed annually on all equipment, by an approved vendor.

Lifts and Transfers

Traverse Independence has extremely strict rules on how we lift (mechanical lift) or how we transfer. Sometimes we request a professional to come in and review the lift or transfer because we want to be sure it is safe. We may also ask our more experienced staff to train less experienced staff.

There will be times that we ask for a change in the way we are doing something to keep everyone safe. You have the choice of making the change or not, but if you choose not to, and it is deemed unsafe, we will not be able to continue providing that specific service.

Stepping Stools

Our staff must use stepping stools. They are not to use chairs, for example to reach certain areas in your home. You must supply a step stool or ladder with at least two steps for staff to do tasks out of arm's reach if you are in your own private home.

Smoking/Vaping – Tobacco and Marijuana

Our environment is smoke free. This means clients and visitors are not allowed to smoke in their apartment. Where smoking is permitted outdoors, you must ensure you smoke ONLY in designated smoking areas.

Some apartments where the clients have lived for a long-time permit smoking. If you have one of those units, you are not allowed to smoke while our employees are in the same room as you and you must purchase and use an air purifier. If you choose to smoke, please ensure you have extinguished the cigarette 30 minutes before the employee's arrival.

Employees can request that you open a window if they feel the environment is too smoke filled. If they then still feel the environment is too smoky, they may request to provide the service later. Clients are encouraged to purchase air purifiers if they choose to smoke in their apartment.

Likewise, employees are not allowed to smoke in your home.

Weapons

Traverse Independence is vitally interested in the ongoing health and safety of our employees, clients, visitors, and guests. Traverse Independence has adopted a weapons policy to ensure that we minimize the threat of injuries associated with weapons on our premises. As such, possession of a weapon is prohibited while on company premises and anywhere else that company business is conducted such as the staff office, hallways, or common areas. If you have a registered firearm, you must discuss that with the program manager before moving into the residential program, as firearms are prohibited.

VISITORS

Overnight guests are allowed in our residential settings, but please inform staff if you plan to stay overnight. Employees are not responsible for taking care of house guests.

In our transitional living sites (Stanley and Fergusson Place) all visitors must sign in at the staff office.

PET CARE

Pet care must be negotiated in advance to getting a pet. Pet owners must provide proof of vaccinations each year and vaccinations must be kept up to date. Please be aware that several of our employees have allergies, so should you get a cat or dog it may affect your services. Please note that pet ownership is not permitted at the Tagge Street site.

PROPERTY DAMAGE

Our employees provide many hours of service to you and in doing so have to handle some of your personal items, for instance a cooking utensil or a hairbrush. We expect staff to be careful and respectful in your home but sometimes things get broken accidentally.

If this happens, please report it to your service coordinator right away. Traverse Independence cannot replace items. This is a risk you take while receiving service. If an item is important to you, do not let staff use it or caution them to be extra careful. In the case of laundry, you must provide instructions for exceptional care items as staff cannot be responsible for special laundry items without instruction.

DAMAGE TO TRAVERSE INDEPENDENCE PROPERTY

We understand that accidents happen. Should something get damaged in your unit, please report it to your service coordinator right away as you may be considered responsible for damages.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

For more information about all our programs and services please visit the Traverse Independence web site at www.traverseindependence.ca

FOR EMERGENCY SUPPORT

AGENCY	CONTACT INFORMATION
Here 24/7 Crisis line and intake for mental health and addictions services	Phone: 1-844-437-3247
ARCH Disability Law Centre	Phone: 416-482-8255 TTY: 416-482-1254 Internet: www.archdisabilitylaw.ca http://www.archlegalclinic.ca/
KW Sexual Assault Support Centre	Phone: 519-571-0121 Crisis Line: 519-741-8633 Email: kwsasc@web.net
Waterloo Regional Police Services	Non-emergency phone: 519-653-7700
Health Services Appeal and Review Board (HSARB)	Phone: 416-327-8512

CONTACT INFORMATION

NAME AND TITLE	LOCATION	PHONE NUMBER
Toby Harris Chief Executive Officer (senior leader)	1-1382 Weber St. E. Kitchener, ON N2A 1C4	226-444-1277
Aaron Willmott Director of Client Services (senior leader)	1-1382 Weber St. E. Kitchener, ON N2A 1C4	226-444-3955
Alyssa Nelson Manager of Human Resources (senior leader)	1-1382 Weber St. E. Kitchener, ON N2A 1C4	226-444-3933
Jim Izzard Manager of Transitional Living	78 Stanley Ave, Kitchener, ON N2K 2B2	519-575-8135
Jim Izzard Manager of Transitional Living	165 Gordon Street – Apt. 118 Fergus, ON N1M 0A7	519-575-8135
Sabrina Jesso Manager of Residential Services	20 Union Lane, Apt. 209 Kitchener, ON N2H 6T2	519-588-6241
Sabrina Jesso Manager of Residential Services	695 Strasburg Road, LL007 Kitchener, ON N2E 4A2	519-588-6241
Sabrina Jesso Manager of Residential Services	120 Tagge Street Kitchener, ON N2K 3V9	519-588-6241
Karen Liphard Manager of Community Services	The Opportunity Centre 450 Westheights Drive #18A Kitchener, ON N2N 2B9	226-749-4104
Karen Liphard Manager of Community Services	Outreach 450 Westheights Drive #18A Kitchener, ON N2N 2B9	226-749-4104
Ashley Chessell Intake Coordinator	1-1382 Weber St. E. Kitchener, ON N2A 1C4	226-444-3935
Dan Holisek ABI Intensive Case Coordinator	1-1382 Weber St. E. Kitchener, ON N2A 1C4	519-580-9206