

How to Have an Effective Meeting with your Service Provider

Setting up a meeting

- To set up a meeting with your Service Provider, **call the office to speak to the Manager**. Give the reason that you'd like to meet with them. Ask when they will be available to meet with you.
- You may work alone or with a friend, family, Centre for Independent Living in Toronto Independent Living Skills Coordinator, Lawyer or disability organization. If you get someone to accompany you to a meeting, it is courteous to inform the Service Provider who will be coming with you.

Preparation

- **Write a concise background on the issue, your concerns, and your proposed solutions.**
- If you get someone to accompany you to a meeting, **share** your relevant materials before the meeting.
- **Bring the materials** that the Service Provider can refer to later.
- **Be prepared to listen.**
- **Focus on how you can solve** the problem with the **Service Provider**.

At the meeting

- **Present your case** in a clear and concise way, stating the exact nature of your concern and precisely what you want the Service Provider to do about it.
- Focus on **one or two issues**.
- Insist on a **straight answer** to your questions.

- If the Service Provider agrees with you, **get it in writing and a timeline to put the solutions in place.**
- Even though you may be very passionate about your issue, and may disagree strongly with the Service Provider's stance, **have a calm and respectful dialogue.** Show that you are willing to work with them.
- Even if the Service Provider disagrees with you, **thank them** for the time and opportunity to meet.
- A meeting with a Service Provider usually lasts no more than an hour. If you have an agreed-upon time limit, stick to it.
- If no solution is reached, ask the Service Provider what is their complaints & appeals process. If there is no appeals process, then you may choose to speak to
 - Registered Professional Association
 - Program Supervisor of the Government Ministry with responsibility for that agency.
 - Disability organizations like Centre for Independent Living Toronto and/or The Anne Johnston Health Station
 - Third party Mediator or a Lawyer
 - City Councillor, Member of Provincial Parliament, and/or Federal Member of Parliament
 - Privacy commission (Provincial or Federal)
 - Ombudsman Ontario or Patient Ombudsman
 - Media

After the meeting

- Follow up. Write a letter thanking the Service Provider for meeting with you. In your letter, summarize any commitments that were made, and ask for an update on what has been done.
- Keep your allies informed and thank them too.