

Canadian Anglican Cursillo

Accommodating Special Needs on a Cursillo Weekend



“Show proper respect to everyone, love the fellowship of believers...” (1 Peter 2:17)

On occasion, a team member or candidate for a Cursillo weekend presents with a special need which must be addressed in order for the person to be able to fully participate in all weekend activities.

Considerations When Persons Become Sick During a Cursillo Weekend

When considering a person’s participation on a Cursillo weekend, it is important to determine whether they are able to engage (with or without assistance) in the essentials of the three day Cursillo weekend. On occasion, candidates or Team members may become sick *during* the weekend and need to return home or, in severe cases, seek medical attention. In such cases where candidate(s) miss large essential elements of the weekend (such as talks or meditations), it is advisable for a decision to be made as to whether the person is able to complete the weekend or if it is better for the person to leave the weekend and reapply when they are well enough to complete the weekend fully.

Special Needs

"Special Needs" is an umbrella term underneath which a staggering array of diagnoses can be placed. Persons with special needs have restricted or no ability to perform one or more natural activities of daily living such as seeing, hearing, walking or self-care. They may have mild learning disabilities or profound cognitive impairment; food allergies or terminal illness; developmental delays that catch up quickly or remain entrenched; occasional panic attacks or serious psychiatric problems. (Webster)

The universal call to holiness leads Christians to recognize that the body of Christ is not whole when some members are not invited to full participation. The Canadian Anglican Cursillo Secretariat (CACS) supports the inclusion of persons with restricted capability to perform some or all of the tasks of daily life within the Cursillo movement, on a Weekend and through their Fourth Day. Persons with disabilities may require diverse special accommodations for their activities of daily living within their private lives. Public Cursillo events and activities (Ultreyas, Servant Community Events, Weekends, etc.) should strive to be inclusive and able to accommodate the needs of persons with special needs.

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Some Considerations when Accommodating Persons with Special Needs during a Cursillo Weekend

While most public facilities now have access ramps, elevators and wheelchair-access bathrooms, consideration needs to be given as to whether the requisite resources to accommodate overnight stay for persons with the specific needs presented will be readily available throughout the three day Weekend:

- ***Food***
 - Is the kitchen crew notified in advance and able to accommodate special dietary requirements?
 - Can the meal and snack times be adjusted to accommodate the dietary needs of individuals?
 - Can individuals bring in their own food?
 - Are there storage facilities for individuals to store their own food?

- ***Facility Accommodations***
 - Are the public rooms (conference room, dining room, chapel, etc) and facilities adequate for the needs of the persons with special needs?
 - Are the private rooms (sleeping facilities) adequate for the needs of the persons with special needs?
 - Can the facility accommodate for persons with hearing and visual disabilities?
 - Can persons with walkers and/or wheelchairs be accommodated?
 - Can persons requiring assistance by guide animals be accommodated?

- ***Scheduling***
 - Can the schedule be adjusted to allow for extra time for persons with special needs to move / be transported from one activity to another (e.g. from discussion following a talk to dinner downstairs)?
 - Can requisite rest periods be accommodated?

- ***Caregivers***
 - If a Candidate with special needs requires a Caregiver's assistance for activities of daily living, can the Caregiver accompany the Candidate during the Weekend to support the Candidate?
 - Is the Caregiver in the above situation also a Candidate on the Weekend?
 - Can the person with special needs or the Caregiver have ready access to a telephone, if necessary?
 - Who will bear the cost of the accommodation and meals of the Caregiver?

- ***Weekend Preparation***
 - Are there extra considerations that need to be made in preparing Team members and Weekend activities?
 - Are there special considerations for Candidate table assignments?
 - How can accommodating for persons with special needs be addressed without compromising the attention deserved by all Candidates?

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- Are the role responsibilities of the Sponsor and Clergy any different for Candidates with special needs?
- Is there a place on the Weekend Application form inquiring about any Candidate special needs?
- If there is to be an animal present on the weekend, is there a process for alerting Candidates with animal allergies?

Medications

- For those on a strict schedule for receiving medications, can these be accommodated into the Cursillo Weekend timetable?
- Is there provision for storage of medications requiring refrigeration?

By considering and attending to the needs of all Cursillo Weekend participants, we are better able to meet Christ's call to love and serve God and others.