

Making Your Workplace Accessible

Outside

- clear passages and direct routes to building
- well marked signage - visible and clearly marked, watch for height of signage
- accessible parking
- smooth surfaces
- ramps
- plants - can be hazards
- accessible doors - 36"
- glass doors within a large glass facade is hard to see

Inside

- signage - mobility issue over-walk lighting
- counter tops
- chairs - waiting area
- free of obstacles
- stairs - handrails - both sides - end curves upward at ends to identify ending of stairs for persons with visual difficulties
- accessible washrooms -doors easy to open, handles, stall turning area, sink level, dryer level, etc.

Elevators

- clearly marked
- close proximity
- no obstacles
- height of buttons

Workstation

- area free of clutter and obstacles
- modified workstations - lowered desk, keyboard
- large screen, adaptive mouse - rotating ball for dexterity

- offer assistive devices;- telecommunication devices TDD
- computer software- Inspiration, WordQ, zoomtext, kurzweil, jaws
- Safety - low vision, or blind (sound alarm) and deaf, deafened or hard of hearing (flashing lights) - buddy system in place.
- advertise and promote services you offer

Communication

- all literature 16 font Arial
- offer electronic format and various other formats (large print, Braille etc)

General Guidelines

- offer your help but don't insist
- ask how to help and what to do
- respect person's determination of his/her own needs
- avoid making assumptions - ask
- convey message you are comfortable and not anxious when helping
- be precise and clear
- address person directly - not interpreter, attendant, companion
- don't be overly careful with words "see" what you mean etc.
- don't be afraid to ask someone to repeat something if you didn't understand
- don't touch without asking - equipment, dogs, wheelchairs
- don't shout and don't talk down
- wheelchair - sit at their level
- be patient
- relax and smile
- see the person for who they are, not the disability because they are as individual and unique as you are

QUICK TIPS ON DISABILITY ETIQUETTE

ASK BEFORE YOU HELP

Just because someone has a disability, don't assume they need help. If the setting is accessible, they can usually get around fine. Adults with disabilities want to be treated as independent people. Offer assistance only if the person appears to need it. If they do want help, ask how before you act.

BE SENSITIVE ABOUT PHYSICAL CONTACT

Some people with disabilities depend on their arms for balance. Grabbing them, even if your intention is to assist, could knock them off balance. Avoid patting a person on the head or touching their wheelchair, scooter or cane. People with disabilities consider their equipment part of their personal space.

INVISIBLE DISABILITIES

People with "hidden/non-visible" disabilities are often misunderstood and ignored by society. Recognize that 80% of all disabilities are non-visible on the surface. Sometimes you need to dig deeper to understand the challenges.

THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK

Always speak directly to the person with a disability, not to their companion, aide or sign language interpreter. Making small talk with a person who has a disability is great; just talk to them as you would with anyone else. Respect their privacy, if you ask about their disability, they may feel like you are treating them as a disability, not as a human being. Many people with disabilities are comfortable with children's natural curiosity and do not mind if a child asks them questions.

DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

People with disabilities are the best judge of what they can or cannot do. Don't make decisions for them about participating in any activity.

RESPOND GRACIOUSLY TO REQUESTS

When people who have a disability ask for an accommodation at your business, it is not a complaint. It shows they feel comfortable enough in your establishment to ask for what they need. If they get a positive response, they will probably come back again and tell their friends about the good service they received.

Taking the time to follow these simple tasks can make a HUGE difference!

Watch Your Language!

Guidelines for talking with and about a person with a disability

Avoid	How they harm	Examples - What's currently acceptable
<p>Using "The" before a type of disability – the blind, the learning disabled, etc.</p> <p>An exception: It is proper to refer to sign language users as "The Deaf" (upper case "D"). Those who do not use sign language are referred to as "the deaf" (lower case "d").</p>	<p>Groups people into a category - does not reflect individuality, equality or dignity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - person who is blind - person who has a learning disability
<p>Handicapped Invalid Crippled, Lame Physically Challenged Impaired Deformed Spastic</p>	<p>Negative connotations - "needs charity" "not valid" "inferior" "repulsiveness"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - person with a disability - person who has cerebral palsy - person with a mobility impairment - person who has spasms
<p>Suffers from Stricken by Afflicted by Victim of</p>	<p>Negative connotation - Having a disability is not synonymous with suffering and does not make a person a "victim"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - person with a disability - person who has cerebral palsy - person with arthritis
<p>Mental patient Psychotic Neurotic Crazy Demented Lunatic Maniac</p>	<p>Stigmatizing and offensive Reinforces negative stereotypes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - person with a mental health disability - person with schizophrenia - person with depression
<p>Mentally retarded Mongoloid Simple Feeble minded</p>	<p>Stigmatizing and offensive Reinforces negative stereotypes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - person with an intellectual disability
<p>Normal Healthy Whole</p>	<p>Implies that a person with a disability is not normal, healthy or whole.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - person without a disability
<p>Deaf and dumb Deaf-mute</p>	<p>Implies mental incapacitation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - person who is deaf - person who is hard of hearing
<p>Learning disabled Learning disordered Dyslexic</p>	<p>Implies they cannot learn</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - person with a learning disability
<p>Fit Attack</p>	<p>Reinforces negative stereotypes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - seizure