

Training will include the following:

- a) A review of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of its customers service standards.
 - b) How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability.
 - c) How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animals or the assistance of a support person.
 - d) How to use equipment or devices available on the FELRC's premises that may help with the provision of goods and services to a person with a disability.
 - e) What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the providers goods and services.
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Feedback process:

FERLC

People with physical disabilities

Only some people with physical disabilities use a wheelchair. Someone with a spinal cord injury may use crutches while someone with severe arthritis or a heart condition may have difficulty walking longer distances.

Suggestions:

- If you need to have a lengthy conversation with someone who uses a wheelchair or scooter, consider sitting so you can make eye contact at the same level.
- Do not touch items or equipment (e.g., canes, wheelchairs) without permission.
- if you have permission to move a person's wheelchair, don't leave them in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position, such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors

People with vision loss

Vision loss can restrict someone's ability to read, locate landmarks or see hazards. Some customers may use a guide dog or a white cane, while others may not.

Suggestions:

- when you know someone has vision loss, don't assume the individual can't see you; many people who have low vision still have some sight
- identify yourself when you approach and speak directly to the customer
- ask if they would like you to read any printed material out loud to them (e.g., a menu or schedule of fees).
- when providing directions or instructions, be precise and descriptive
- offer your elbow to guide them if needed

People with hearing loss

People who have hearing loss may be deaf, deafened or hard of hearing. They may also be oral deaf – unable to hear, but prefer to talk instead of using sign language. These terms are used to describe different levels of hearing and/or the way a person's hearing was diminished or lost.

Suggestions:

- once a customer has identified themselves as having hearing loss, make sure you are in a well-lit area where they can see your face and read your lips
- as needed, attract the customer's attention before speaking; try a gentle touch on the shoulder or wave of your hand
- if your customer uses a hearing aid, reduce background noise or move to a quieter area
- if necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier (e.g., using a pen and paper)

People who are deaf blind

A person who is deaf blind may have some degree of both hearing and vision loss. Many people who are deaf blind will be accompanied by an intervener, a professional support person who helps with communication.

Suggestions:

- a customer who is deaf blind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them, perhaps with an assistance card or a note
- speak directly to your customer, not to the intervener

People with speech or language impairments

Cerebral palsy, hearing loss or other conditions may make it difficult for a person to pronounce words or may cause slurring. Some people who have severe difficulties may use a communication board or other assistive devices.

Suggestions:

- don't assume that a person with a speech impairment also has another disability
- whenever possible, ask questions that can be answered with "yes" or a "no"
- be patient; don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences

People who have learning disabilities

The term "learning disabilities" refers to a variety of disorders. One example is dyslexia, which affects how a person takes in or retains information. This disability may become apparent when a person has difficulty reading material or understanding the information you are providing.

Suggestions:

- be patient – people with some learning disabilities may take a little longer to process information, to understand and to respond
- try to provide information in a way that takes into account the customer's disability; for example, some people with learning disabilities find written words difficult to understand, while others may have problems with numbers and math

People who have intellectual/developmental disabilities

Developmental or intellectual disabilities, such as Down Syndrome, can limit a person's ability to learn, communicate, do every day physical activities and live independently. You may not know that someone has this disability unless you are told.

Suggestions:

- don't make assumptions about what a person can do
- don't make assumptions about what a person can do
- use plain language
- provide one piece of information at a time

People who have mental health disabilities

Mental health issues can affect a person's ability to think clearly, concentrate or remember things. Mental health disability is a broad term for many disorders that can range in severity. For

example, some customers may experience anxiety due to hallucinations, mood swings, phobias or panic disorder.

Suggestions:

- if you sense or know that a customer has a mental health disability be sure to treat them with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else
- be confident, calm and reassuring
- if a customer appears to be in crisis, ask them to tell you the best way to help.

People who use assistive devices

An assistive device is a piece of equipment a person with a disability uses to help them with daily living (e.g., a wheelchair, screen reader, hearing aid, cane or walker, an oxygen tank).

Suggestions:

- don't touch or handle any assistive device without permission
- don't move assistive devices or equipment (e.g., canes, walkers) out of your customer's reach
- let your customers know about accessible features in the immediate environment that are appropriate to their needs (e.g. public phones with TTY service, accessible washrooms)

If your organization offers any equipment or devices for customers with disabilities, make sure you and your staff know how to use them. It could be helpful to have instruction manuals handy or an instruction sheet posted where the device is located or stored.

Some examples of assistive devices that your organization might offer include:

- lift, which raises or lowers people who use mobility devices
- accessible interactive kiosk, which might offer information or services in braille or through audio headsets
- wheelchairs

People who use service animals

There are various types of service animals who support people with various types of disabilities. People with vision loss may use a guide dog. Hearing alert animals help people who are deaf, deafened, oral deaf, or hard of hearing. Other service animals are trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure.

The law requires you to allow service animals on the parts of your premises that are open to the public. In cases where the law prohibits them (e.g.: a service animal would not be allowed in the kitchen of a cooking school), provide another way for the person to access your goods and services.

Suggestions:

- avoid touching or addressing a service animal (it is not a pet, it is a working animal)
- if you're not sure if the animal is a pet or a service animal, ask your customer

People with a support person

A support person, such as an intervenor, may accompany some people with disabilities. A support person can be a personal support worker, a volunteer, a family member or a friend. A support person might help your customer with a variety of things, such as communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs.

Welcome support people to your workplace or business. They are permitted in any part of your premises that is open to the public. If your organization is one that charges admission, such as a movie theatre or bowling alley, provide notice, in advance, about what admission fee will be charged for a support person.

Suggestions:

- if you're not sure which person is the customer, take your lead from the person using or requesting your goods or services, or simply ask
- speak directly to your customer, not to their support person
- People accessing goods or services
- If you notice that your customer is having difficulty accessing your goods or services, a good starting point is to simply ask "How can I help you?"
- Your customers are your best source for information about their needs. A solution can be simple and they will likely appreciate your attention and consideration.

Additional accessibility laws

Your organization may have to meet additional accessibility requirements. Keep track of the past and future deadlines to comply with accessibility laws, and find out when you have to file accessibility compliance reports.

Updated:

Barriers to accessibility

Barriers to accessibility are obstacles that make it difficult — sometimes impossible — for people with disabilities to do the things most of us take for granted, like shopping, working or taking public transit.

For example, a clothing store with a no-refund or return policy creates a barrier if the fitting rooms are not wheelchair accessible and a person can't try on the clothes before purchasing them. Providing exemptions to this policy removes the barrier.

A dance studio offers their class schedule in paper format at the front desk. When a customer with low vision asks for the schedule in braille, the manager explains that it is not available in braille, but is available in an accessible format on the studio's website. This works for the customer because she has a screen reader at home that reads content displayed on the website.

The law requires your organization to identify those barriers, and remove them, in order to provide customer service that is more accessible to people who have disabilities.