

Resource Handouts for Accessibility Seminar
Pastors, Church Administrators and Lay Leaders



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The information was formulated by Christian Horizons for use in churches.

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General tips on providing service to church attendees with disabilities

- If you're not sure what to do, ask the attendee, "May I help you?"
- People with disabilities know if they need help and how you can provide it.
- Speak directly to the person with a disability, not to his or her support person or companion.
- Avoid stereotypes and make no assumptions about what type of disability or disabilities the person has. Some disabilities are not visible and attendees are not required to give you information about any disabilities they may have.
- Take the time to get to know your attendee's needs and focus on meeting those needs just as you would with any other person.
- Be patient. People with some kinds of disabilities may take a little longer to understand and respond. A good start is to listen carefully.
- Make an effort to learn about appropriate language and terminology to use when referring to people with disabilities.
- If you cannot understand what an attendee is saying, politely ask them to repeat themselves.
- Don't touch or speak to service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Don't touch assistive devices, including wheelchairs, without permission.
- Consider offering assistive devices that can be used by people with various types of disabilities or offering alternate services.
- Consider including people with disabilities in the testing or evaluation of your communication services.

Talk about disabilities – CHOOSE THE RIGHT WORD

Words can influence and reinforce the public's perception of people with disabilities. They can create either a positive view of people with disabilities or an indifferent, negative depiction. Here are some general tips that can help make your communication and interactions with or about people with all types of disabilities more successful.

- Use disability or disabled, not handicap or handicapped.
- Never use terms such as retarded, dumb, psycho, moron or crippled. These words are very demeaning and disrespectful to people with disabilities.

- Remember to put people first. It is proper to say person with a disability, rather than disabled person.
- If you don't know someone or if you are not familiar with the disability, it's better to wait until the individual describes his/her situation to you, rather than to make your own assumptions. Many types of disabilities have similar characteristics and your assumptions may be wrong.
- The following preferred words and phrases will help you choose language that is neither demeaning nor hurtful. People with disabilities prefer these terms.

Please use...

- Person who has cerebral palsy.
- Person who has multiple sclerosis.
- Person who has arthritis, etc.
- Person with a disability.
- Seniors, older adults
- A person who has autism.
- A person who has a congenital disability.
- A person with a disability since birth.
- A person who is blind.
- A person with a vision disability.
- A person with vision loss.
- A person with a visual impairment.
- A person with low vision.
- A person with a brain injury.
- A person with a head injury.
- A person who uses a wheelchair.
- A person with a mental health disability.
- A person who has depression.

- A person with schizophrenia.
- A person with a mobility impairment or, more specifically, a person who walks with crutches.
- A person who uses a walker.
- A person who uses a mobility aid.
- A person with arthritis, etc.
- A person who is deaf (person with profound hearing loss who communicates using sign language.)
- A person who is deafened (deaf later in life.)
- A person who is hard of hearing (person with hearing loss who communicates primarily by speech.)
- A person with a hearing loss.
- When referring to the deaf community and their culture (whose preferred mode of communication is sign language) it is acceptable to use "the Deaf."
- A person who is deaf without speech.
- Person who is deaf-blind (person who has any combination of visual and auditory impairments.)
- Person who has epilepsy.
- The term handicapped may be used when referring to an environmental or attitudinal barrier as in "a person who is handicapped by a set of stairs leading to the entrance." Non-visible disability.
- A person with a learning disability or people with learning disabilities
- A person with an intellectual disability. A person with a developmental disability.
- A person who has a form of dwarfism. A person diagnosed with "Achondroplasia, SED, or what ever their specific diagnosis is", a form of dwarfism.
- Person with Down syndrome.
- Person who is able bodied. Specifically, a person who is sighted, a hearing person, a person who is ambulatory.
- Person with a physical disability.
- Person who has muscle spasms.

- A person with a speech impairment or impediment.

Tips on how to interact and communicate with church attendees who are deafened, oral deaf, hard of hearing or deaf

- People who have hearing loss may be Deaf, oral deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.
- People who are profoundly deaf may identify themselves as culturally Deaf or oral deaf. In Deaf culture, indicated by a capital “D,” the term is used to describe a person who has severe to profound hearing loss, with little or no hearing.
- Oral deaf is a term describing a person who was born deaf or became deaf before learning to speak, but is taught to speak and may not typically use American Sign Language.
- The term “deafened” describes a person who has lost their hearing slowly or suddenly in adulthood. The person may use speech with visual cues such as captioning or computerized note-taking, speech reading or sign language.
- The term “hard of hearing” describes a person who uses their residual hearing (hearing that remains) and speech to communicate. The person may supplement communication by speech reading, hearing aids, sign language and/or communication devices.

Types of assistance a church attendee might use:

- Hearing aid
- Paper and pen
- Personal amplification device (e.g., Pocket Talker)
- Phone amplifier
- Relay Service
- Teletypewriter (TTY)
- Hearing ear dog
- Support person such as a sign language interpreter.

General Tips

- Attract the attendee’s attention before speaking. Generally, the best way is by a gentle touch on the shoulder or with a gentle wave of your hand.

- Ask how you can help. Don't shout.
- Move to a well-lit area, if available, where the attendee can see your face.
- Don't put your hands in front of your face when speaking. Some people read lips.
- If necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier, for example, using a pen and paper.
- Be patient if you are using a pen and paper to communicate. American Sign Language may be your attendee's first language. It has its own grammatical rules and sentence structure.
- Look at and speak directly to the attendee. Address the attendee, not their interpreter or support person.



- Be clear and precise when giving directions, and repeat or rephrase if necessary. Confirm that the attendee understands you.
- If the person uses a hearing aid, reduce background noise or move to a quieter area, if possible, so the person can hear or concentrate better.
- Don't assume that the attendee knows sign language or reads lips.

Tips on how to interact and communicate with church attendees who are Deafblind

A person who is deafblind can neither see nor hear to some degree. This results in difficulties in accessing information and managing daily activities. Many people who are deafblind will be accompanied by an intervener, a professional who helps with communicating.

Types of assistance a church attendee might use:

- Braille
- Large print
- Print on paper (using black felt marker on non-glossy white paper or using portable white and black boards)
- Communication boards
- Hearing aid with built-in FM system
- Magnification equipment such as monocular or magnifier
- Teletypewriter (TTY)

- White cane
- Service animal
- Support person, such as an intervener.

General Tips

- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do. Some people who are deafblind have some sight or hearing, while others have neither.
- A person who is deafblind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with him or her or give you an assistance card or a note explaining how to communicate with him or her.
- Identify yourself to the intervener when you approach a church attendee who is deafblind, but then speak directly to the attendee as you normally would, not to the intervener.
- Don't touch or address service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Don't suddenly touch a person who is deafblind or touch them without permission.

Tips on how to interact and communicate with church attendees who have intellectual or developmental disabilities

People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may have difficulty doing many things most of us take for granted. These disabilities can mildly or profoundly limit the person's ability to learn, communicate, socialize and take care of their everyday needs. You may not know that someone has this type of disability unless you are told. As much as possible, treat people with an intellectual or developmental disability like anyone else. They may understand more than you think, and they will appreciate that you treat them with respect.



Speak to the person using simple words and short phrases

Types of assistance an attendee might use:

- Communication board
- Speech generating device
- Service animal
- Support person

General Tips

- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do.
- Use plain language and speak in short sentences.

- To confirm if the person understands what you have said, consider asking them to repeat the message back to you in his or her own words.
- If you cannot understand what is being said, simply ask again.
- Provide one piece of information at a time.
- Be supportive and patient.
- Speak directly to the person, not to their companion or support person.

Tips on how to interact and communicate with church attendees who have learning disabilities

The term “learning disability” describes a range of information processing disorders that can affect how a person acquires, organizes, expresses, retains, understands or uses verbal or non-verbal information. Examples include dyslexia (problems in reading and related language-based learning); dyscalculia (problems in mathematics); and dysgraphia (problems in writing and fine motor skills). It is important to know that having a learning disability does not mean a person is incapable of learning. Rather, it means they learn in a different way. Learning disabilities can result in different communication difficulties for people. They can be subtle, such as difficulty reading, or more pronounced. They can interfere with their ability to receive, express or process information. You may not know that a person has a learning disability unless you are told.

Types of assistance a person might use:

- Alternative technology for writing
- Scanning or reading technology
- Tape recorders, mini pocket recorders

General Tips

- When you know someone with a learning disability needs help, ask how you can help.
- Speak naturally, clearly, and directly to the person.
- Allow extra time if necessary - people may take a little longer to understand and respond.
- Remember to communicate in a way that takes into account the person’s disability.
- Be patient and be willing to explain something again, if needed.

Tips on how to interact and communicate with church attendees who have mental health disabilities

Mental health disabilities are not as visible as many other types of disabilities. You may not know that a person has a mental health disability unless you're informed of it.

Examples of mental health disabilities include schizophrenia, depression, phobias, as well as bipolar, anxiety and mood disorders.

A person with a mental health disability may have difficulty with one, several or none of these:

- Inability to think clearly
- Hallucinations (e.g., hearing voices, seeing or feeling things that aren't there)
- Depression or acute mood swings (e.g., from happy to depressed with no apparent reason for the change)
- Poor concentration
- Difficulty remembering
- Apparent lack of motivation.

If someone is experiencing difficulty controlling his or her symptoms, or is in a crisis, you may want to help out. Be calm and professional and ask them how you can best help.

Types of assistance a church attendee might use:

- Service animal
- Support person

General Tips

- Treat a person with a mental health disability with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
- Be patient.
- Be confident and reassuring. Listen carefully and work with the person to try to meet their needs.
- If someone appears to be in a crisis, ask him or her to tell you the best way to help.

Tips on how to interact and communicate with church attendees who have physical disabilities

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities, and not all require a wheelchair. People who have arthritis, heart or lung conditions or amputations may also have difficulty with moving, standing or sitting. It may be difficult to identify a person with a physical disability.

Types of assistance a person might use:

- Elevator
- Mobility device (i.e., wheelchair, scooter, walker, cane, crutches)
 - Support person.



General Tips

- Speak naturally and directly to attendee, not to his or her companion or support person.
- If you need to have a lengthy conversation with someone in a wheelchair or scooter, consider sitting so that you can make eye contact.
- Ask before you help. People with physical disabilities often have their own ways of doing things.
- Respect the person's personal space. Do not lean over him or her or on his or her assistive device.
- Don't move items or equipment, such as canes and walkers, out of the person's reach.
- Don't touch assistive devices without permission. If you have permission to move a person in a wheelchair, remember to:
 - Wait for and follow the person's instructions
 - Confirm that the person is ready to move
 - Describe what you're going to do before you do it
 - Avoid uneven ground and objects
 - Don't leave the person in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors.
- Let attendees know about accessible features in the immediate area (i.e., automatic doors, accessible washrooms, elevators, ramps, etc.).

Tips on how to interact and communicate with church attendees who have speech or language impairments

Some people have problems communicating because of their disability. Cerebral palsy, hearing loss or other conditions may make it difficult to pronounce words or may cause slurring or stuttering. They also may prevent the person from expressing themselves or prevent them from understanding written or spoken language. Some people who have severe difficulties may use communication boards or other assistive devices.

Types of assistance a church attendee might use:

- Communication board
- Paper and pen
- Speech generating device
- Support person.

General Tips

- Don't assume that because a person has one disability, they also have another. For example, if the person has difficulty speaking, it doesn't mean they have an intellectual or developmental disability as well.
- Ask the person to repeat the information if you don't understand.
- Ask questions that can be answered "yes" or "no" if possible.
- Try to allow enough time to communicate with a person as they may speak more slowly.
- Don't interrupt or finish a person's sentences. Wait for them to finish.

Tips on how to interact and communicate with church attendees who have vision loss

Vision loss reduces a person's ability to see clearly. Few people with vision loss are totally blind. Many have limited vision such as tunnel vision, where a person has a loss of peripheral or side vision, or a lack of central vision, which means they cannot see straight ahead. Some people can see the outline of objects while others can see the direction of light. Vision loss can restrict a church attendee's ability to read signs, locate landmarks or see hazards. Some of these people may use a guide dog or white cane, but others may not. Sometimes it may be difficult to tell if a person has vision loss.

Types of assistance a person might use:

- Braille
- Large print
- Magnification devices
- White cane
- Guide dog
- Support person such as a sighted guide.

General Tips

- Don't assume the individual can't see you.
- Don't touch a person without asking permission.
- Offer your elbow to guide the person. If he or she accepts, walk slowly, but wait for permission before doing so. Lead – don't pull.
- Identify landmarks or other details to orient the person to the environment around him or her.
- Don't touch or speak to service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Don't leave someone in the middle of a room. Show them to a chair, or guide them to a comfortable location.
- If you need to leave an attendee, let him or her know you are leaving and will be back.
- Identify yourself when you approach a church attendee and speak directly to him or her, even if he/she is accompanied by a companion.
- There is generally no need to raise your voice because the person does not necessarily have hearing loss. Say your name even if you know the person well as many voices sound similar.
- Be clear and precise when giving directions, e.g., two steps behind you, a metre to your left, etc. Don't use "over there" or point in the direction.
- If you're uncertain about how to provide directions, ask the person how to do so.
- Do not be afraid or embarrassed to use words such as "see", "read" and "look." People with vision loss also use these words.
- When providing printed information, offer to read or summarize it.

- Offer to describe information.

Tips for guiding a church attendee who has vision loss

- Ask first if the person wishes to be guided. If the answer is “yes,” offer your arm. Ask which arm is better. Walk at a normal pace. The person will walk about a step behind. Announce handrails, doors (to the right/left, push/pull to open, etc.) and describe the surrounding areas such as what is in an aisle.
- If you are guiding towards stairs:
 - Let the person know if they have to walk up or down
 - Approach the stairs head on, not at an angle and come to a full stop in front of the stairs
 - Lead or guide the person to the rail side to allow them to take hold of it
 - Let them find the first step and then start to climb or descend the stairs
 - Try to be one step ahead and announce the last step.
- If you are going through a narrow doorway or a passage, go first, after explaining the circumstances and describing the area.
- Upon entering a room, offer to describe the dimensions and the location of people and furniture.
- If the person wishes to sit, offer to guide him/her and place his/her hand on the back of the chair.
- Keep the person informed when others approach or leave.
- If you must leave the individual alone, do not leave them standing in the middle of the room, with nothing to hold onto. If they are not seated, guide them to a door, wall, or piece of furniture to stand next to. This will help the person to stay spatially oriented.
- Before opening the door for a person with vision loss, ask if they want you to open it. Indicate whether the door opens to the right or left and whether the door will be pushed or pulled. They may be using the door’s location as a reference point.

Guide dogs and service animals

What is a service animal?

Think of a service animal as an animal with a job to do for a person with a disability. Examples include guide dogs and animals trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure and lead them to safety.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 refers to the definition of “guide dog” under the Blind Persons’ Rights Act, which states that: a guide dog is a dog that has been trained as a guide for a blind person at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the Blind Persons’ Rights Act. The Ministry of the Attorney General may issue identification cards to identify a person who is blind and his or her guide

dog. The customer service standard requires you to let people with disabilities use their service animals on the parts of your premises open to the public or to third parties unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. Under the standard, an animal is a service animal if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability, or if the person has a letter from a physician or nurse verifying that the animal is required for reasons relating to his or her disability. If it is not obvious that the animal is a service animal, you are not required to allow the animal on your premises if the person does not have a letter from a physician or nurse, or an identification card from the Ministry of the Attorney General.

The following chart lists some types of service animals, key tasks they perform and those who use service animals.

User	Key Tasks	Service Animals
Person with autism or other developmental disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeps person from running into danger Heightened sensory stimulation help 	dog attached to person's waist belt
People with vision loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows directions of owner Alerts owner to changes in elevation 	Guide dog Seeing eye dog
People who are deaf, oral deaf, deafened or hard of hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alerts owner to sounds often by a nudge or pawing and leads him/her to the source of the sound May use a special signal to alert owner to fire alarm 	Hearing ear Hearing sound alert Hearing alert dog, cat or animal
People with mental health disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retrieves and prompts the person to take medication Retrieves or activates medical alert Leads person out of crowds 	Psychiatric service dog
People with physical disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pull wheelchairs Carry objects Pull items Turn handles Push buttons Balance support 	Service or mobility dog or animal Special skills dog or animal (e.g. small ponies, miniature horses)
People who have epilepsy or other seizure disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steers owner away from danger during seizure Activates medical alert Alert owner to an oncoming seizure 	Seizure response dog or animal

The standard doesn't require that service animals be formally trained, but most service animals in Ontario are trained at organizations in Canada or in the United States. Service animals are used in many countries around the world and so visitors to Ontario may also use service animals.

Tips on interacting with a person who uses a service animal

- Remember that a service animal is not a pet. It is a working animal.
- Avoid touching or addressing service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.

- Avoid making assumptions about the animal. Not all service animals wear special collars or harnesses. If you're not sure if the animal is a pet or a service animal, ask the person.
- Remember the church attendee is responsible for the care and supervision of their service animal. You are not expected to provide care or food for the animal. However, you could provide water for the animal if the church attendee requests it.

How do I serve a person if their animal is not allowed because of another law?

Where an animal is excluded by law from your premises, consider explaining why the animal is excluded. Explore or discuss with the person another way of providing services or programs. For example:

- Try to bring services to the person in a part of your premises where the animal is not restricted.
- Offer a safe location where the service animal can wait, if the person is able to be separated from the animal while attending the service, and offer assistance to the person with a disability while he or she is separated from the service animal.

Support persons

Who is a support person?

A support person is an individual hired or chosen to accompany a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods or services. Personal care needs may include, but are not limited to, assistance with eating or using the washroom. Medical needs may include, but are not limited to, monitoring someone's health conditions, providing injections and providing support when someone has moderate to severe seizures. The support person can be a paid personal support worker, volunteer, a friend or a family member. He or she does not necessarily need to have special training or qualifications.

Church attendees with disabilities must be allowed to use their support persons while accessing your church on the parts of the premises open to the public or third parties. If your church charges for admission, you are required to have a policy regarding what amount, if any, is charged for support persons. Advance notification of a fee, if any, is required.



Functions of support persons

The following chart contains some examples of functions performed by support persons:

Person with a Disability	Support Person Functions
Person who is deafblind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide • Provide transportation • Adaptive communication (tactile, Sign language, large print notes, two-handed manual signing)
Person who is Deaf, deafened, oral deaf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide sign language or oral interpretation services to translate conversation
Person with a learning disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help with complex communication or note taking
Person with an intellectual/developmental disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help with travel • Support daily activities • Prompt medication or complex tasks • Alert to dangerous situations
Person with a mental health disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help with communication tasks (e.g. completing complex forms) • Help in environments such as crowded, noisy settings or high stress situations such as interviews
Person with a physical disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide services related to traveling • Help with personal care (e.g. eating, toileting, etc.) • Monitor medical conditions
Person with a seizure disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in the event of a seizure to protect from falls or injury
Person with a speech impairment who uses an augmentative or alternative communication system (symbol board, electronic communication system)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To relay or interpret a person's communications
Person with vision loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To read or to guide

Tips on interacting with a church attendee who has a support person

- A church attendee with a disability might not introduce their support person. If you are not sure which person is the church attendee, take your lead from the person using or requesting your goods or services or simply ask.
- Once you have determined who the church attendee is, speak directly to them, not to their support person.
- Be familiar with your organization's policies, practices and procedures about providing accessible customer service.

Assistive devices

What is an assistive device?

An assistive device is a tool, technology or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities such as moving, communicating or lifting. It helps the person to maintain their independence at home, at work and in the community.

What are some commonly used assistive devices?

There are a variety of assistive devices that some people may use, depending on their disability. Many will be personal assistive devices, meaning they are owned and brought along by the individual, while others may be provided by your organization. The following are examples of some devices you may come across when serving people with disabilities:

Assistive Devices Utilized by people who have vision loss

- Digital audio player - enables people to listen to books, newsletters and other printed materials
- Magnifier - makes print and images larger and easier to read
- Portable global positioning systems (GPS) - helps orient people to get to specific destinations
- White cane - helps people find their way around obstacles

Assistive Devices Utilized by People who are Deaf, deafened, oral deaf, hard of hearing

- FM transmitter system or other amplification devices - boosts sound closest to the listener while reducing background noise
- Hearing aid - makes sound louder and clearer
- Teletypewriter (TTY) - helps people who are unable to speak or hear to communicate by phone. The person types their messages on the TTY keyboard and messages are sent using telephone lines to someone who has a TTY, or to an operator (Bell Relay Service) who passes the message to someone who doesn't have a TTY.

Assistive Devices Utilized by People who have physical disabilities

- Mobility device (e.g., a wheelchair, scooter, walker, cane, crutches) – helps people who have difficulty walking
- Personal oxygen tank - helps people breathe

Assistive Devices Utilized by People who have learning disabilities

- Electronic notebook or laptop computer - used to take notes and to communicate
- Personal data managers - stores, organizes and retrieves personal information
- Mini pocket recorders - records information for future playback

Assistive Devices Utilized by People who have intellectual/developmental disabilities

- Communication boards (e.g., a Bliss board) - used to pass on a message by pointing to symbols, words or pictures
- Speech generating devices (VOCA) - used to pass on a message using a device that “speaks” when a symbol, word or picture is pressed.

How do I interact with a church attendee who uses an assistive device?

- Many church attendees with disabilities will have their own personal assistive devices, such as wheelchairs, scooters or walkers. Don't touch or handle an assistive device without permission.
- If you have permission to move a person in a wheelchair remember to:
 - Wait for and follow the person's instructions.
 - Confirm that the church attendee is ready to move.
 - Describe what you are going to do before you do it.
 - Try to avoid uneven ground and objects.
 - Don't leave the person in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors.
 - Don't move items or equipment, such as canes and walkers, out of the person's reach.
 - Respect the person's personal space. Don't lean over him or her or on his or her assistive device.
 - Let the person know about accessible features in the immediate environment (e.g., automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.).

How to use a TTY

TTY (Teletypewriter) is a device that allows users to send typed messages across phone lines. Many people who are Deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, or who are deafblind may use TTYs to call other individuals.

This device generally has a keyboard and display that lets the user send and receive typed messages over telephone lines. People who are deafblind may use an additional large print or Braille display to read the typed messages.

A stand-alone TTY must communicate with another TTY. TTY users can directly call other TTY numbers or they can call a Relay Service. The Relay Service operator will receive the messages on a TTY and relay the messages, by standard phone, to a person who does not have a TTY. A standard phone user can also place a call through the Relay Service operator to a TTY user.

If your business or organization has a TTY, learn how to operate the device.

To make a TTY call:

1. Push the "ON" switch.
2. Push the DISPLAY switch if you wish to use the screen alone, or the PRINT switch if you want what is typed both on screen and in print.
3. Place the telephone receiver on the TTY's rubber receptacles. Make sure that the receiver is firmly in place and that the telephone's receiver cord is on the LEFT side of the TTY.
4. Check the telephone indicator light; if it is lit, you have the line.
5. Dial the number, and watch the telephone light; if it is flashing slowly, this indicates that the device on the other end is ringing.
6. When the person you are calling answers, you will see a phrase appear on the screen such as: "Hello, this is Richard GA." The "GA" stands for Go Ahead -- Don't forget to use "GA" whenever you have finished what you are saying, so that the other person will know it is his/her turn.
7. When you wish the call to end and you wish to advise the other person, type GA or SK ("Stop keying"). The person will respond by "SK" if he/she agrees. Be courteous - wait until the other person indicates "SK" before hanging up.

Note:

- The person who receives the call is always the one who starts typing first.
- Always switch the TTY "OFF" as soon as you have finished the call.

How to communicate using a Relay Service

1. Phone the Relay Service number (1-800-855-0511).
2. Tell the operator your name, the name of the person you are calling, and the number you wish to reach.
3. The operator will make the call for you. You speak to the operator as if you were talking directly to the person you are calling. For example, say "Hi, How are you doing?" Do not say: "Tell him I said hello."
4. Remember to say "Go Ahead" when you finish speaking, so the person on the other end will know it is their turn to speak.
5. If you normally speak very quickly, the operator may ask you to speak more slowly so your message can be typed while you are speaking. There will be brief silences as the operator types to the TTY user and the user replies.

You can find out more about this service at: www.bell.ca/specialneeds/

How to make buildings and spaces accessible

You may be able to make buildings, spaces, and products accessible using simple or low-cost solutions. The best solutions will follow the rules of universal design. This means designing products and environments that can be used by all people, as much as possible, without having to be modified.

Making Your Space Accessible

When assessing your premises for physical accessibility, there are a number of things to consider in developing your action plan:

- Do you own or lease your premises? This may affect how, when and at what cost accessibility changes can be made.
- Can your building accommodate physical changes?
- Can any necessary renovation work be done under normal maintenance activities, or regular update work?
- Do you need to hire an architect or engineer, or can a contractor do the job?
- What are your priorities based on your assessment?
- What are the simpler, immediate, lower-cost things you can do to improve accessibility?
- Remember to make your premises accessible to people with a wide range of disabilities, including physical, sensory, learning, developmental and mental health. This means paying attention to more than just ramps and accessible washrooms. It also means:
 - o lighting;
 - o audible alarm systems;
 - o signage with high contrast lettering;
 - o easy-to-find directories; and
 - o accessible parking.

The following checklist items will help you develop a plan to make your premises accessible:

Entrances

- Entrances are accessible to persons using wheelchairs or scooters;
- Canopies or other sheltering devices have adequate headroom;
- Revolving door openings move slowly and safely to accommodate people using mobility aids;
- If there is no accessible revolving door, an adjacent accessible door opens automatically, has power assisted door operators or can be easily opened with one hand;
- Mats are level with the floor and door thresholds are beveled so they do not create a tripping hazard; and
- People can easily find information, a reception counter, an accessible call bell or information phone for persons requiring assistance.

Elevators

- Elevator doorways are wide enough and stay open long enough to allow persons using wheelchairs to pass through easily;
- In accessible elevators, Braille signage and controls can be easily reached and a two-way emergency call system or telephone provided; and
- Audible signals announce floors and up/down direction of elevator cars.

Exteriors

- Accessible pedestrian route(s) or path(s) are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs, scooters, or other mobility devices;

- Curb cuts or ramps are wide enough for wheelchairs and scooters, have a non-slip finish and are kept clear of snow and ice in winter weather;
- Routes are not obstructed by poles, plants, bicycle racks, etc.;
- Accessible entrances are clearly marked with the International Symbol of Accessibility;
- Building and route signage is provided in large, high contrast lettering;
- Accessible passenger loading zone accommodates taxis, buses, or accessible vehicles;
- Awnings or canopies extending over exterior walkways have clear headroom;
- On exterior steps, forward edges are highly colour contrasted for easy visibility; and
- On both sides of ramps or exterior stairs, continuous handrails are a bright contrasting colour and have horizontal or vertical rails to prevent people from slipping through.

Fire and Life Safety

- A fire policy and fire safety plan are in place for the evacuation of people with disabilities;
- Main exit routes and exit doors are easily accessed and used by people using mobility aids;
- Exit instructions are printed in large text, and mounted in an accessible, highly visible location; and
- Fire alarms have both visual and audible signals.

General Layout and Services

- Queuing areas and serving aisles are wide enough for people using mobility aids including electric wheelchairs and scooters;
- Counters/tables in eating areas are accessible to and useable by people using wheelchairs or scooters;
- Public telephones, coat racks or display shelves are accessible to and useable by people with various disabilities e.g. wheelchair users, persons with low vision or hearing loss; and
- Appropriate lighting is installed to ensure that people with vision disabilities may clearly identify colours, patterns and signage.

Interiors

- Floor finishes have non-slip surfaces under wet and dry conditions;
- Open-concept, accessible routes are marked by bright colour or textural changes at floor level, to provide directional cues for people with vision disabilities;
- There are no protruding objects or tripping hazards in accessible routes, and if so, they are clearly marked with a bright colour, a cane-detectable floor finish, or a guard;
- Where floors are carpeted, the carpet is of firm, dense construction and easy for a wheelchair user to roll over without difficulty; and
- Thresholds are bevelled to accommodate different floor materials.

Parking Areas

- Accessible parking spaces are clearly marked with the International Symbol of Accessibility;
- In accessible underground parking areas, a call bell or two-way communication system is located near parking spaces reserved for persons who may require assistance;
- There is a safe, clearly marked, accessible pedestrian route from the designated parking area to an accessible building entrance or elevator lobby; and
- Accessible pedestrian route is made of firm, level material.

Public Washrooms

- An accessible stall is provided for each sex when integrated into regular washrooms or an accessible stand-alone unisex washroom is located nearby; and
- The following washroom features are accessible to people with a wide range of disabilities:
 - o grab bars;
 - o coat hooks;

- o flush controls;
- o wash basins;
- o toilet paper dispenser;
- o call button for emergencies;
- o mounted automatic hand-dryers or paper towel holders; and
- o lever-handled faucets or automatic faucet.

Signage and Information Systems

- Show the International Symbol of Accessibility;
- Display universal hearing disability symbols where equipment is available, e.g. TTY;
- Include Braille information;
- Include appropriate pictograms, wherever possible (e.g. on washroom doors);
- Include large high contrast text, clear, light-coloured lettering or symbols on a dark background, or dark characters on a light background; and
- Mount at a convenient height for both wheelchair users and people with vision disabilities.

Wall Finishes

- Walls in busy areas, corridors, ramps or staircases are finished in smooth, non-glossy, non-abrasive finishes;
- Colour of doors or door frames in hallways contrast with surrounding wall colours;
- Fire exit doors are consistently coloured throughout the building, so that they are easily distinguishable from other doors;
- Fire hose cabinets and fire extinguishers are in a highly contrasting colour;
- Wall mirrors are limited in size, to prevent visual confusion; and
- Mirrors that cover a wall (e.g. in a restaurant) are clearly marked for people with low vision.

How to make information accessible

Everyone has the right to access public information. If a person cannot access a public document because of a disability, they are being denied their right to access.

What are alternate formats?

Alternate formats are simply other ways of publishing information beyond traditional printing. Some of these formats can be used by everyone while others are designed to address specific user needs.

Why do we need to provide information in other formats?

Some people cannot read or use regular print because of their disability. This can include people who are blind, people who have low vision, an intellectual or other cognitive disability, and some people with physical disabilities who cannot hold publications or turn pages.

Other people cannot access or have difficulties accessing the Internet. Still others have difficulties watching or hearing video presentations.

Providing alternate formats will ensure that all clients can access your information. It's not only good for your business, it's required by law. The Ontario Human Rights Code establishes, in accordance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the principle of access by persons with disabilities to goods, services, facilities and employment.

The Code prohibits not only overt discrimination, but also practices that are discriminatory in their effect. Under the Code, refusing to comply with a request for information in an accessible format could be considered a discriminatory practice and could make you liable for complaint.

Accessibility requirements are a component of good communications planning. It is important to consider the communication needs of your whole audience when preparing your materials. Advanced planning and preparation of materials in multiple formats can greatly reduce the time required to respond to individual requests. This results in improved customer service, and makes particular sense when producing print or multimedia materials that are targeted at a population that is likely to have multiple format needs, such as seniors. Many seniors favour material in large print, and people with a hearing loss benefit from captioning on video presentations or video streaming.

Think about all the forms that sending and receiving information can take. There's electronic, verbal, audio, or written to name a few. How can you improve accessibility in communicating with clients, suppliers and the public?

Here are some of the alternatives available to help make information more accessible:

Alternative Formats

Large Print

Large print materials should be prepared with a font (print) size that is 16 to 20 points or larger. This can be created in-house by using word processing software, or can be outsourced to a vendor.

Electronic Text

Used with computer synthetic voice technology (screen reading software) that enables people who are blind, have low vision (such as seniors) or who have learning disabilities to hear a spoken translation of what others

see on the monitor. When an electronic form of a document is placed on a CD, it should be labelled in large, high-contrast print and Braille.

Braille

This is a tactile system of raised dots representing letters or a combination of letters of the alphabet utilized by people who are blind or deaf-blind. Braille is produced using Braille transcription software.

Audio Format

An alternative format for people with a vision, intellectual or developmental, or learning disability, and are unable to read print. Labels should be prepared in large, high-contrast print and Braille.

Captioning

Captioning translates the audio portion of a video presentation by way of subtitles, or captions, which usually appear on the bottom of the screen. Captioning may be closed or open. Closed captions can only be seen on a television screen that is equipped with a device called a closed caption decoder. Open captions are “burned on” a video and appear whenever the video is shown. Captioning makes television programs, films and other visual media with sound accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Windowing

Windowing enables people who are deaf to read by means of a sign language interpreter what others hear in a video presentation or broadcast. The interpreter appears in a corner or “window” in the screen translating spoken word to sign language. Windowing may include open or closed captioning.

Descriptive Video Service (DVS)

DVS provides descriptive narration of key visual elements – such as the action, characters, locations, costumes and sets – without interfering with dialog or sound effects, making television programs, films, home videos and other visual media accessible for people with vision disabilities.

Assistive Technologies

People with disabilities may use one or more of the following assistive technologies in communicating with others or in getting information:

- Speech input and synthesized speech output;
- Screen readers, screen magnifiers, screen projectors;
- Audio recorded information;
- Text telephones;
- Adjustable signal level and tone on audio devices;
- Volume control;
- Hands-free data entry and response selection;
- Intelligent word prediction software;
- Alternative pointing devices, such as mouth sticks;
- Keyboard controllers;
- Book holders and page turners;
- Touchscreens; and
- Standardized icons.

Telecommunications

Although many people who are deaf or hard of hearing use e-mail and pagers to give and receive information, TTY (teletypewriter), is still widely used. Those who use wireless messaging pager systems can send and

receive e-mail, TTY messages, faxes, text-to-speech and speech-to-text messages, and a text message to any one-way alphanumeric pager. More cellular phones are now compatible with TTY and hearing aids, and as they become less expensive and easier to use, their use will be more widespread.

Bell Canada Relay Service (BCRS) lets TTY users and hearing people talk to one another by phone with the help of specially trained BCRS operators. Users dictate to the operator the conversation, which is then relayed to the TTY phone. TTY conversation is then relayed to the regular phone user. This service is confidential and the only cost is any long-distance charges that would regularly apply. Local calls using this service are free.

The World Wide Web

Providing easy access to information through accessible websites benefits everyone, including:

- People with disabilities;
- Seniors;
- Those living in areas that do not have access to high-speed Internet;
- People who have difficulty reading and writing;
- People who speak English as a Second Language; and
- Tourists and people living in multilingual societies.

When you are designing your website, remember that some people use assistive technology to help them use the Internet.

The **World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)** is an international organization. One of its primary goals is to develop standards, protocols and guidelines to ensure that the benefits of web-based information are accessible to all people, whatever their hardware, software, network infrastructure, native language, culture, geographical location, or physical or mental ability.

More information on guidelines and suggestions for making websites accessible, appears on the World Wide Web Consortium's (WC3) website.

Website Testing

Is your website accessible? You can find out by contacting a company that specializes in creating websites that meet accessibility guidelines, or that sell software that can maintain a website's accessibility. These companies often let organizations test a few sample pages of their website free of charge. If you would like to better understand the difficulties that an inaccessible website can pose, visit the website of WebAIM for various simulations.

What is a Church Accessibility Committee?

A Church Accessibility Committee is a sub-committee of the church's Board of Directors. The committee has an appointed chair and functions under the same democratic guidelines as other Board sub-committees. It is responsible for overseeing, coordinating and sustaining all church efforts in providing equitable access for people with disabilities. Membership should include a diverse range of interests and knowledge, and should include individuals with an interest in accessibility, church attendees and family members of church attendees with disabilities, volunteers, staff and church Board members.

Role of the Committee

While not mandated under the 11 requirements of the standard, it is suggested that a Church Accessibility Committee is essential to the implementation and monitoring of the requirements within a church's organizational structure. The specific roles of the committee in this regard are as follows:

1. Draft policies, practices and procedures on providing programs and services to church attendees with disabilities and present them to the church Board for approval.
2. Review policies, practices and procedures annually to ensure they are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.
3. Assess the congregational need for specific assistive devices and negotiate with the church Board for provision of those devices.
4. Conduct weekly checks to ensure assistive devices are in good working order.
5. Instruct ushers and greeters on the use of assistive devices provided by the church.
6. Vet church communications/publications (e.g. weekly bulletins) to ensure they are accessible and provide information in alternative formats (e.g. large print) when necessary.
7. Ensure appropriate communication to church attendees with disabilities. This includes communication around the temporary disruption of accessible devices/services utilized as well as information about fees charged to support people who accompany a church attendee to events.
8. Coordinate annual accessibility training for all applicable church staff and volunteers.
9. Formalize a process for church attendees to provide feedback on the church's accessibility.
10. Formalize the committee's process for responding to feedback about accessibility from church attendees, document that process and make the document available to the congregation.

Role of the Chair

The Chair of the Church Accessibility Committee also takes on the role of Accessibility Officer. The Accessibility Officer coordinates and oversees all of the functions of the Accessibility Committee and is the liaison with the Church Board of Directors. It is the responsibility of the Chair to provide leadership in setting the strategy and policies for the committee and ensure that the committee fulfils its responsibilities.

Other responsibilities of the Chair include:

- Planning the annual cycle of meetings
- Setting agendas and chairing committee meetings
- Reporting to the church Board of Directors as a standing item on their monthly meeting agenda (either through a Board representative, a verbal report, or a written report)
- Monitoring that decisions made at meetings are implemented

- Preparing a strengths and needs assessment based on the committee's annual review of church policies, practices and procedures for review by the church Board of Directors
- Leading the process of appraising the annual accessibility goals

Role of Committee Members

Committee members are the church's champions of accessibility for people with disabilities and provide assistance to the Accessibility Officer by:

- Giving strategic direction on the implementation and monitoring of the 11 requirements of the standard by helping to set overall policy, define goals, set targets and evaluate performance
- Declaring any conflict of interest while carrying out duties
- Being collectively responsible for the actions of the committee
- Supporting the effective and efficient administration of accessibility initiatives
- Abiding by the church's policies and procedures
- Supporting staff, Board members and volunteers in accessibility training and performance
- Using knowledge, expertise or experience to help the committee reach sound decisions
- Attending meetings, and reading reports and minutes in advance of meetings
- Keeping up-to-date about the activities of the church and wider issues of accessibility and inclusion

How do you establish an Accessibility Committee?

The following actions are recommended:

1. The decision to establish an Accessibility Committee may come from Church Leadership, a Board member, or any interested member of the congregation. Ensure that there is a commitment from the Church Leader and Board to support the implementation of the 11 requirements of the standard.
2. Recruit people to join the committee. Membership should include individuals with disabilities or family members, professionals, people interested in inclusion and members of the professional staff and Board.
3. Designate a committee chairperson. The committee's chair may be selected by the Church Leadership, the Board or by the consensus of the Accessibility Committee. The chair of the committee will be the Accessibility Officer.
4. Conduct an environmental scan of the physical structure of the church, its programs and services. Consider all types of barriers: attitudinal, physical, systemic, informational, and technological.
5. Determine the needs of the congregation based on the results of the environmental scan. Taking into account the resources and staff available, select 3-5 goals for the first annual "Accessibility Plan" that are doable. The other gaps identified should be addressed in subsequent annual plans.
6. Establish Mission and Vision Statements to summarize the intent of the committee, help members focus as a group, and assist the congregation and Board of Directors in understanding the overall goals of the committee. Publicize these statements in bulletins, weekly programs, etc. The mission/vision statements should become part of the church's organizational mission/vision statements.
7. Establish Terms of Reference to determine roles, responsibilities, process and direction for the committee. They should include the following:
 - Purpose of the committee
 - Roles of the committee members
 - Decision-making procedures

- Reporting relationships
- Authority and accountability
- Resources
- Membership composition
- Meeting schedule

8. Evaluate the goals and objectives annually and set new goals for the coming year.

Sample Goals

- Increase understanding of and commitment to the traditional Christian moral mandate of treating each person with respect
- Enhance awareness of individual differences
- Remove physical and attitudinal barriers
- Post adequate accessibility signage
- Outreach to church members and prospective members

Sample Outreach Tips

- Write newsletter articles about accessibility
- Use the International Symbol of Accessibility on publications
- Place welcoming language in the church bulletin
- Offer large-print bulletins
- Provide special greeters and aides
- Give sermons and text studies on disability awareness using Christian values
- Involve people with disabilities

Sample Mission Statements

“To welcome and accommodate people with disabilities and their families, in our church and in the Christian community.”

“To raise awareness of the Accessibility Committee and guide the church in supporting meaningful inclusion for all its members.”

“To facilitate the accommodation and inclusion of individuals with disabilities so that everyone can participate together.”

“To provide the opportunity for full inclusion and participation of all people, regardless of physical, cognitive, emotional or behavioral ability in all areas of church life.”

Sample Vision Statements

“The Accessibility Committee will pursue its mission by

1. Identifying and supporting people with disabilities in the congregation.
2. Educating lay leaders, volunteers, staff and church attendees.

3. Facilitating change by working with the Board and staff and the community at large.”

“A church where all members share a sense of dignity and empathy within a framework of inclusion for all congregational activities.”

“The members and leadership of (Church Name) have committed to include people with disabilities as full and active participants in this Accessible Congregation where people with disabilities are valued as individuals, having been created in the image of God. We remove barriers of architecture, communications, and attitude that exclude people with disabilities from full and active participation. All people are encouraged to practice their faith and use their gifts in worship, service, study, and leadership.”

Sample Terms of Reference

Date Created/Revised:

Chair: Appointed or rotated by committee members annually/bi-annually

Staff support: Accessibility Officer or Program Director

Reporting Relationship: The Accessibility Officer reports to the church Board of Directors at their monthly meetings. The Officer will present an accessibility evaluation on the implementation of the accessibility policy and practices to the Board of Directors annually.

Purpose:

1. To ensure the church is a welcoming environment for people with disabilities
2. To develop and evaluate policies, procedures and action plans that will provide equitable customer service to people with disabilities.
3. To encourage church members to become more inclusive of people with disabilities
4. To share information, network and offer mutual support to other churches and faith communities who are working towards making their places of worship more accessible.
5. To train and/or provide training for staff, volunteers, ushers and Board members.

Authority:

Unless otherwise stated by the Executive Director or the Board, the committee has no direct authority for the allocation of financial or human resources of the church.

Meeting Schedule:

The committee will meet at least six times annually, with meetings scheduled by the Accessibility Officer as needed. The agenda for each meeting will be set in collaboration with the Chair and staff/member input.

Composition:

Membership will include: two or more church staff; Board members; church attendees with disabilities or their family members; and those who may have an interest or expertise in accessibility or inclusion.

Other Resources:

The committee may pursue additional human and financial resources to implement its projects as needed in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer, and with approval of the Executive Director of the church.

Specific Areas of Responsibility:

1. To review the barriers within the church that prevent people with disabilities from participating in religious and communal life.
2. To broaden diverse participation within the church.
3. To raise awareness of the issues of people with disabilities.

4. To proactively recruit volunteers to the committee, so that it reflects the diverse needs of people with disabilities.
5. To establish policies on providing accessible programs and services to church attendees with disabilities that are in compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07.
6. To monitor church programs and services to ensure that practices and procedures are consistent with governing policies.
7. To coordinate accessibility training and training materials for all relevant church staff and volunteers.
8. To utilize training resource materials in compliance with the legislation.
9. To ensure that assistive devices provided by the church are in good working order and that requests for assistive devices are met.
10. To create and document procedures for feedback on church accessibility; make these procedures available to church attendees, review feedback and respond to any complaints or concerns.