

Topic: Accessibility in the Library

6.2 Training Procedures

Board Motion Number:	21.054
Date of Original Board Motion Number:	December 21, 2009
Date of Current Issue:	May 25, 2021
Date of Next Review:	2025
Attachments:	Appendices A - F

Signature of Board Chairperson (and Date):

Purpose

The North Kawartha Public Library will provide training to its board members, staff and volunteers on how to provide customer service to people with disabilities and will keep a record of when training was provided and the individuals who received the training.

Index

Talk About Disabilities – Choose the Right Word Pg. 3

Communicating with People with Disabilities Procedure Pg. 6

What You Need to Know About Customers with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities Pg. 8

What You Need to Know About Customers Who Have Learning Disabilities Pg. 9

What You Need to Know About Customers with Mental Health Disabilities Pg. 10

What You Need to Know About Customers with Speech or Language Impairments Pg. 11

What You Need to Know About Customers Who Are Deaf – Blind Pg. 12

What You Need to Know About Customers with Vision Disabilities Pg. 13

What You Need to Know About Customers Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing Pg. 14

Appendices

Appendix A – Accessible Customer Request and Feedback Procedure

Appendix B – Notice and Provision of Documents in Accessible Formats Procedure

Appendix C – Notice of Temporary Disruptions Procedure

Appendix D – Service Animals for People with Disabilities

Appendix E – Support Persons for People with Disabilities

Appendix F – Assistive Devices and Services for People with Disabilities

Talk About Disabilities - Choose the Right Word

Words can influence and reinforce perceptions of people with disabilities. They can create either a positive view of people with disabilities or an indifferent, negative depiction.

Here are some tips that can help make your communication with or about people with disabilities more successful:

1. Use “disability” not “handicap.”
2. Put people first. “Person with a disability” puts the focus on the person instead of their disability.
3. For specific disabilities, say “person with epilepsy” or “person who uses a wheelchair.”
4. Avoid statements that make it seem like a person with a disability should be pitied such as “victim of,” “suffers with,” or “stricken with” a particular illness or disability.
5. If you’re not familiar with the disability, wait until the individual describes their situation to you, instead of making 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.

Instead of Aged (the), or the elderly, please use,

- Seniors

Instead of Autistic, please use,

- A person with Autism.
A person with Autism spectrum Disorder

Instead of birth defect, congenital defect, or deformity, please use,

- A person who has a congenital disability.
- A person with a disability since birth.

Instead of Blind (the), or visually impaired (the), please use,

- A person with vision loss.
- A person who is blind.
- A person with low vision.

Instead of brain damaged, please use,

- A person with a brain injury.
- A person with an acquired brain injury
- Confined to a wheelchair, or wheelchair bound

- A person who uses a wheelchair.

Instead of crazy, insane, lunatic, psycho, mental, mental patient, maniac, neurotic, psychotic, unsound mind, or schizophrenic, please use,

- A person with a mental illness.
- A person with a mental disorder.
- A person with a mood disorder (for example, a person with depression, a person with bipolar disorder).
- A person with a personality disorder (for example, a person antisocial personality disorder).
- A person with an anxiety disorder (for example a person with obsessive-compulsive disorder).
- A person with an eating disorder (for example a person with anorexia nervosa, a person with bulimia).
- A person with schizophrenia.

Instead of cripple, crippled, lame, or physically challenged, please use,

- A person with a disability.
- A person with a physical disability..
- A person with a spinal cord injury.
- A person who uses a walker.
- A person who uses a mobility aid.
- A person with arthritis.

Instead of deaf (the), or hearing impaired (the), please use,

- A person who is Deaf (for example, a person with profound hearing loss.).
- A person who is deafened (for example, a person who has become deaf later in life).
- A person who is hard of hearing (for example, person with 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."

Instead of deaf and dumb, or deaf mute, please use,

- A person who is deaf.

Instead of deaf-blind (the), please use,

- Person who is deaf-blind (for example, a person who has any combination of vision and hearing loss).

Instead of epileptic, please use

- Person who has epilepsy.

Instead of fits, spells, or attacks, please use,

- Seizures.

Instead of handicapped (the), invalid, patient, or the disabled, please use,

- Person with a disability.

Instead of hidden disability, or invisible disability, please use,

- Non-visible disability

Instead of learning disabled, learning disordered, or dyslexic, please use,

- A person with a learning disability or people with learning disabilities

Instead of, mentally retarded, idiot, simple, retarded, feeble minded, or imbecile, please use,

- A person with an intellectual disability.
- A person with a developmental disability.

Instead of midget, or dwarf, please use

- A little person.
- A person of short stature.
- A person who has a form of dwarfism

Instead of mongoloid, mongolism, or downs, please use,

- Person with Down Syndrome.
- A person with an intellectual or developmental disability.

Instead of normal, please use

- A person without a disability.
- Person who is not disabled.
- Specifically, a person who is sighted, a hearing person, or a person who is ambulatory.

Instead of spastic, please use

- Person who has muscle spasms.

Instead of stutterer, please use,

- A person who stutters.
- A person with a communication disorder.

Communicating with People with Disabilities Procedure

Staff of the North Kawartha Public Library will provide customer service to everyone in accordance with the four basic principles from the Accessible Customer Service Standard Policy: Dignity, Independence, Integration and Equal Opportunity.

Procedures/Practice:

The following steps shall be taken into consideration when providing accessible customer service.

1. Ask the person with the disability how you can help. Listen to the answer and act accordingly.
2. When speaking with someone in the office or on the phone, speak clearly and precisely. Do not mumble or speak too fast.
3. Offer a variety of methods of communication. This may include:
 - a. paper and a pen to write notes
 - b. copies of documents in large print
 - c. a private office to discuss issues away from other people
 - d. availability of staff of either gender depending on who the person may be more comfortable with.
4. If the person with a disability has an interpreter or support person with them, do not speak to the interpreter or support person, speak directly to the person with the disability.
5. All staff should have a clear understanding of the nature and scope of the accessible services the Library offers.
6. Ask before you help anyone and do not touch equipment or service animals without permission first.
7. Always face the person you are talking to and keep your hands or other objects away from your mouth so that a person can read your lips.
8. Do not assume what a person can or cannot do, always ask how you can help.
9. Understand that communication may take some time – be patient.
10. Be prepared to explain and provide examples regarding information.

11. If you cannot understand what is being said, do not pretend to understand, ask the person to repeat themselves.
12. Provide one piece of information at a time.
13. Give the person your full attention. Do not interrupt or finish their sentences.
14. Verify your understanding of the situation or request.
15. Allow extra time to complete tasks if necessary.
16. Try to reduce stress and anxiety in situations.
17. If you are unable to communicate clearly with a person with a disability, ask a co-worker for help. Another person may interpret the situation differently and be able to help the customer.
18. If you are experiencing communication issues and have run out of options to help, inform the customer that you are unable to currently help them, but ask if you can reschedule a meeting and perhaps make arrangements to have an interpreter available or any other equipment to aid the flow of communication.

What You Need to Know About Customers with 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 one's ability to learn. You may not be able to know that someone has this disability unless you are told, or you notice the way people act, ask questions or use body language.

As much as possible, treat your customers with an intellectual or developmental disability like anyone else. They may understand more than you think, and they will appreciate you treating them with respect. Here are some tips on serving customers who have an intellectual or developmental disability:

- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do.
- Use plain language and speak in short sentences.
- Make sure your customer understands what you've said.
- If you can't understand what's being said, don't pretend. Just ask again.
- Provide one piece of information at a time.
- Be supportive and patient.
- Speak directly to your customer, not to their companion or attendant.

What You Need to Know About Customers Who Have Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities can result in a host of different communications difficulties for people. They can be subtle, as in having difficulty reading, or more pronounced, but they can interfere with your customer's ability to receive, express or process information. You may not be able to know that someone has one of these disabilities unless you are told, or you notice the way people act, ask questions or use body language.

Here are some tips on serving customers with learning disabilities:

- Patience and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.
- When you know that someone with a learning disability needs help, ask how you can best help.
- Speak normally and clearly, and directly to your customer.
- Take some time — people with some kinds of learning disabilities may take a little longer to understand and respond.
- Try to find ways to provide information in a way that works best for them. For example, have a paper and pen handy.
- If you're dealing with a child, be patient, encouraging and supportive.
- Be courteous and patient and your customer will let you know how to best provide service in a way that works for them.

What You Need to Know About Customers with Mental Health Disabilities

People with mental health disabilities look like anyone else. You won't know that your customer has a mental health disability unless you're informed of it. And usually it will not affect your customer service at all.

But if someone is experiencing difficulty in controlling their symptoms or is in a crisis, you may need to help out. Be calm and professional and let your customer tell you how you can best help.

Here are some tips on serving customers who have mental health disabilities:

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

What You Need to Know About Customers with Speech or Language Impairments

Some people have problems communicating. It could be the result of cerebral palsy, hearing loss, or another condition that makes it difficult to pronounce words, causes slurring or stuttering, or not being able to express oneself or understand written or spoken language. Some people who have severe difficulties may use communication boards or other assistive devices.

Here are some tips on serving customers with speech or language impairments:

- Just because a person has one disability doesn't mean they have another. For example, if a customer has difficulty speaking; don't assume they have an intellectual or developmental disability as well.
- If you don't understand, ask your customer to repeat the information.
- If you are able, ask questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no'.
- Be patient and polite, and give your customer whatever time he/she needs to get his/her point across.
- Don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences. Wait for them to finish.
- Patience, respect and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.

What You Need to Know About Customers Who Are Deaf-Blind

A person who is deaf-blind cannot see or hear to some extent. This results in greater difficulties in accessing information and managing daily activities. Most people who are deaf-blind will be accompanied by an intervener, a professional who helps with communicating.

Interveners are trained in special sign language that involves touching the hands of the client in a two-hand, manual alphabet or finger spelling, and may guide and interpret for their client.

Here are some tips on serving customers who are deaf-blind:

- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do. Some people who are deaf-blind have some sight or hearing, while others have neither.
- A customer who is deaf-blind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them or give you an assistance card or a note explaining how to communicate with them.
- Speak directly to your customer as you normally would, not to the intervener.
- Identify yourself to the intervener when you approach your customer who is deaf-blind.
- Don't touch or address service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.

Never touch a person who is deaf-blind suddenly or without permission unless it's an emergency.

What You Need to Know About Customers with Vision Disabilities

Vision disabilities reduce one's ability to see clearly. Very few people 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 can see the outline of objects while others can see the direction of light. Vision disabilities can restrict your customers' abilities to read signs, locate landmarks or see hazards. In some cases, it may be difficult to tell if a person has a vision disability. Others may use a guide dog or white cane.

Here are some tips on serving customers who have vision disabilities:

- Identify yourself when you approach your customer and speak directly to them.
- Speak normally and clearly.
- Never touch your customer without asking permission, unless it's an emergency.
- If you offer assistance, wait until you receive permission.
- Offer your arm (the elbow) to guide the person and walk slowly.
- Don't touch or address service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- If you're giving directions or verbal information, be precise and clear. For example, if you're approaching a door or an obstacle, say so.
- Don't just assume the individual can't see you.
- Don't leave your customer in the middle of a room. Show them to a chair, or guide them to a comfortable location.
- Identify landmarks or other details to orient your customer to the environment around them.
- Don't walk away without saying good-bye.

Be patient. Things may take a little longer.

What You Need to Know About Customers Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

People who have hearing loss may be deaf or hard of hearing. Like other disabilities, hearing loss has a wide variety of degrees. Remember, customers who are deaf or hard of hearing may require assistive devices when communicating. Here are some tips on serving customers who are deaf or hard of hearing:

- Always ask how you can help. Don't shout.
- Attract the customer's attention before speaking. The best way is a gentle touch on the shoulder or gently waving your hand.
- Make sure you are in a well-lighted area where your customer can see your face.
- Look at and speak directly to your customer. Address your customer, not their interpreter.
- If necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier, for example a pen and paper.
- Don't put your hands in front of your face when speaking.
- Be clear and precise when giving directions, and repeat or rephrase if necessary. Make sure you have been understood.
- Don't touch or address service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Any personal (e.g., financial) matters should be discussed in a private room to avoid other people overhearing.
- Be patient. Communication for people who are deaf may be different because their first language may not be English. It may be American Sign Language (ASL).

If the person uses a hearing aid, try to speak in an area with few competing sounds.

What You Need to Know About Customers with 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.

Here are some tips on serving customers who have physical disabilities:

- Speak normally and directly to your customer. Don't speak to someone who is with them.
- People with physical disabilities often have their own ways of doing things. Ask before you help.
- Be patient. Customers will identify their needs to you.
- Don't touch assistive devices, including wheelchairs, unnecessarily unless it's an emergency.
- Provide your customer with information about accessible features of the immediate environment (automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.).
- Remove obstacles and rearrange furniture to ensure clear passage.