



TOWNSHIP OF NIPISSING

RESOLUTION

DATE: June 8, 2021

NUMBER: R2021-133

Moved by *Kirby*

Seconded by *Scott*

That we approve an updated Accessibility Policy for the Township of Nipissing.

For Against

PIPER
KIRKEY
MARCHANT
MOORE
SCOTT

Carried ✓

Mayor: Tom Piper

Accessibility Policy

Policy Statement

The Township of Nipissing is committed to providing equal treatment to people with disabilities with respect to the use and benefit of Municipal services, programs, goods and facilities in a manner that respects their dignity and that is equitable in relation to the broader public. This commitment extends to residents, visitors and employees with visible or non-visible disabilities.

Purpose

This policy is intended to provide the overarching framework to guide the review and development of other Township of Nipissing policies, standards, procedures, By-laws and guidelines to comply with the standards developed under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11. (the AODA).

Application

This Policy applies to all Municipal employees, volunteers, and to any individual or organization that provides goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties on behalf of the Township, in accordance with the legislation.

Principles

Municipal services, programs, goods and facilities are to be available to people with disabilities in a manner that:

- Is free from discrimination
- Accessible Formats and Communication Supports
- Seeks to provide integrated services
- Provides an opportunity equitable to other to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services, and;
- Takes into consideration a person's disability

Policy Requirements

General Standards

The Township of Nipissing is designated a public sector organization under the AODA and is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities.

Establishment of Accessibility Plans and Policies

The Township shall produce a multi-year Accessibility Plan. The plan will be posted on the Township's website and shall be made available in an accessible format and with communication supports, upon request. Progress on the plan will be provided annually to the Township of Nipissing Council. The Accessibility Policy and Multi-Year Plan shall be reviewed and, if necessary, updated at least once every five (5) years in consultation with persons with disabilities.

The Township of Nipissing maintains policies governing how the Township shall meet its requirements under the AODA, and the Township will provide policies in an accessible format, upon request.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Except as otherwise provided by the AODA, the Township of Nipissing shall, upon request, and in consultation with the person making the request, provide or make arrangements to provide accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities. Accessible formats and communication supports shall be provided in a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other person, in accordance with the Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Procedures. (See Appendix A)

This does not apply to products and product labels, unconvertible information or communications and information that the Township does not control directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship. If it is determined that information or communications are convertible, the department shall provide the person requesting the information or communication with:

- a. an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible;
- b. a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

When procuring goods, services or facilities, the Township shall incorporate accessibility criteria and features, unless it is not feasible (practicable). If not practicable, the Township shall provide an explanation, upon request.

Training

All Municipal employees, volunteers, and third parties providing goods and services to members of the public on the Township's behalf, as well as those who develop the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties will receive accessibility training.

This training shall include:

- A review of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) and instruction about the following matters:
 - How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability;
 - How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person;
 - How to use equipment or devices available on the provider's premises or otherwise provided by the provider that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability;
 - What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the provider's goods or services; and
- A review of the requirements of the accessibility standards referred to in the ADA Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11) and on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities.

The training provided shall be appropriate to the duties of the employee, volunteer or third party. Training shall take place as soon as is practicable and upon completion, the Township shall keep a record of the training provided including the dates on which accessibility training took place.

In addition, the Township will offer updates to employees and volunteers when changes or updates are made to existing standards and regulations. Staff will be offered either online training, hardcopy or e-copy summary, and/or small in-house training sessions, depending on the scope of the information to be disseminated. This method of updating shall also apply to changes to the final policy.

Feedback

Feedback on how services were delivered to people with disabilities shall be invited, forwarded to the appropriate personnel, responded to, documented and tracked. Feedback shall be collected by phone, by e-mail and in person or by providing or arranging for provision of accessible formats and communication supports, upon request. Feedback shall be accepted in accessible formats and with other communication supports as required.

Documentation

Documentation that describes this Policy and each of its requirements shall be maintained on the Township's website nipissingtownship.com and provided to individuals, upon request, in the appropriate format or communication support.

Customer Service Standards

Assistive Devices

Municipal employees, volunteers, and third-party contractors shall accommodate the use of personal assistive devices including but not limited to, wheelchairs, canes, walkers, scooters and Braille display boards. Assistive devices shall be kept in good working order and the public shall be informed of their availability.

Service Animals

Municipal employees, volunteers, and third-party contractors shall accommodate the use of service animals by people with disabilities who are accessing Township services or goods unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law, such as food preparation areas as prohibited by Food Premises, R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 562 under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.H.7.

Where a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the Township will ensure that other measures are available to the person with a disability to obtain goods and services.

Support Persons

Where a person with a disability accessing Township goods or services is accompanied by a support person, Municipal employees, volunteers and third party contractors shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and shall ensure that the person with a disability can access the support person accompanying a person with a disability.

The Township may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, after consulting with the person and determining that:

- a) A support person is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises, and
- b) There is no reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises.

Notice of Service Disruption

In the event that there is a temporary service disruption in the availability of facilities, services or goods used by persons with disabilities, the Township shall give notice to the public of the reason for the disruption, the date(s) of disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available. Such notice may be provided by a variety of methods, depending on the circumstances, and may include postings in conspicuous places at the affected premises, other Township facilities, and the Township's website (www.nipissingtownship.com), as well

as by other means such as a website that will ensure that the notice reaches those persons potentially affected by the temporary disruption.

Information and Communication Support Standards

Communication

When communicating with a person with a disability, Municipal employees, volunteers and third party contractors shall do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability. Guidelines for communicating with people who have various types of disabilities are provided in appendix B of the Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Procedures.

Terminology

When referring to people with disabilities, Municipal employees, volunteers and third party contractors shall use terminology that adheres to guidelines provided in the Township of Nipissing's Accessibility Training for Customer Service. (Appendix B)

Accessible Websites and Web Content

Internet websites and web content controlled directly by the Township of Nipissing or through a contractual relationship that allows for modification of the product shall conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, at Level A and AA in accordance with the schedule set out in the AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards.

Emergency Procedures, Plans and Information

The Township shall provide all existing public emergency procedures, plans and public safety information, upon request in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports in a timely manner.

Employment Standards

Recruitment

The Township of Nipissing shall post information about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment process. Job applicants who are individually selected for an interview and/or testing shall be notified that accommodations for material to be used in the process are available, upon request. The Township shall consult with any applicant who requests an accommodation in a manner that takes into account the applicant's disability. Successful applicants shall be notified about the Township's policies for accommodating employees with disabilities as part of their offer of employment.

Employee Supports

The Township will inform employees of the policies used to support employees with disabilities, including policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability. The Township will provide information to new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment and provide updated information to all employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employee

Upon an employee's request, the Township shall consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for:

- a. Information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and
- b. Information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.

The Township will consult with the employee making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

Workplace Emergency Response Information

If an employee's disability is such that workplace emergency response information is necessary and the Township is aware of the need for accommodation, this information shall be provided to employees as soon as possible/practicable. In addition, this information shall be provided, with the employee's consent, to the person designated to provide assistance. The information shall undergo review when the employee moves to a different location, when the employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed and when the Township reviews its general emergency response plan.

Documented Individual Accommodation Plans

A written process for the development and maintenance of documented individual accommodation plans shall be developed for employees with disabilities. If requested, these plans shall include information regarding accessible formats and communications supports. If requested, the plans shall include individualized workplace emergency response information.

The process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans shall include the following elements:

- Once it is identified that an individual accommodation plan is required and agreed to by the employee with a disability, the Township shall may request health provider information from the employee and authorization to contact the health provider or medical/other expert to assist if accommodation can be achieved and, if so, how it can be best accomplished. The Township will cover any expense related to this consultation.
- An employee with a disability may request at any time for the participation of a representative from the Township in the development of the accommodation plan.
- All employee personal information shall be secured in the Clerk's office within the individual's personnel file. All personnel files are kept in a locked cabinet with access provided to only the Clerk or designate in relation to immediate need of the information.
- An individual accommodation plan will be reviewed and updated, if required, annually at the time of the employee's performance appraisal, usually on the anniversary date of hire.
- In the event that an individual accommodation plan is denied, a meeting will take place between the CAO-Clerk, employee with a disability, a Township representative as requested by the employee if applicable and the reasons for the denial will be discussed and provided to the employee in a written or accessible format as required.
- A complete copy of an individual accommodation plan shall be provided to the employee with a disability in a format that takes into account the employee's accessibility needs due to a disability. Updated versions of the plan will be provided as required.
- Individual accommodation plans must:
 - If requested, include any information regarding accessible formats and communications supports provided
 - If required, include individualized workplace emergency response information; and
 - Identify any other accommodation that is to be provided.

Return to Work Process

The Township shall have in place a documented return to work process for employees returning to work due to disability and requiring disability-related accommodations. This return to work process shall outline the steps that the Township shall take to facilitate the return to work.

Starting the Return-to-Work Plan:

Return to work plans will be created by the CAO-Clerk, Department Manager, employee with a disability requiring accommodation on their return to work and may include at the employee's request or Township request, the employee's health care provider(s);

volunteers from the Township staff; and Health and Safety Professionals. Once a plan is created and agreed upon by the Township and employee, a signed copy of the plan will be filed in the employee's personnel file.

Where an employee is on a leave of absence due to a disability requiring an accommodation plan upon return to work, the CAO-Clerk will request permission to remain in contact with the employee during their absence in order to remain current on:

- Proposed date or time frame of an employee's return to work.
- Any job tasks that may need to be performed differently upon returning to work.
- What types of accommodations the employee may require.

Communication between the employee with a disability and the CAO-Clerk, Department Manager and any other individuals included in the process will remain paramount to the process to ensure that all necessary accommodations are provided when possible. The employee has the most knowledge about their own needs and what accommodations will best meet those needs. At other times, the Township may ask the employee whether accommodation would help them perform job tasks.

During the creation of a return to work plan, the employee is not required to discuss the details of their disability. The employee and the CAO-Clerk will discuss the work tasks required in the employee's job description and the employee shall inform the Township of tasks that will require accommodation in order to continue to be completed.

Where general changes to a workplace can be achieved to accommodate an employee's disability such as removal of barriers, visual aids or the creation of space for a service animal, the Township shall make these changes as soon as practicable.

Where individual accommodation plans are required, they will be created.

Performance Management and Career Development and Redeployment

The Township shall take into account the accessibility needs of its employees with disabilities as well as any individual accommodation plans when providing career development, performance management and when considering redeployment.

Built Environment Standards

The Township shall comply with the AODA Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for The Built Environment) when undertaking new construction and redevelopment of public spaces in the following areas:

- Recreational trails and beach access routes;
- Outdoor public use eating areas;

- Outdoor play spaces;
- Exterior paths of travel;
- Accessible Parking;
- Obtaining Services; and
- Maintenance of accessible elements.

The Township shall ensure that the Municipal Accessible Design Standards reflect the AODA Built Environment Standards.

Responsibilities

The Township of Nipissing is responsible for reviewing this Policy annually and recommending amendments to ensure on-going compliance with regulated accessibility standards and legislated obligations.

- Supervisors and managers shall ensure that they and their staff are familiar with and comply with this Policy.

Monitoring/Contraventions

The Failure to comply with the AODA regulations can result in administrative penalties.

Supervisors and managers shall monitor current practices to ensure compliance.

Failure to comply with this Policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Legislative Administrative Authorities

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11
 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, O. Reg. 429/07
 Integrated Accessibility Standards, O. Reg. 191/11
 Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H. 19

Definitions

Accessible Formats – may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, Braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

Communication Supports – may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

Disability – is defined, per Section 2 of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11 and the Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H. 19, as follows:

- a. "any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b. A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
- c. A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language.
- d. A mental disorder, or
- e. An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997."

Service Animals – are defined, per Section 4(9) of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, O. Reg. 429/07, as follows:

"an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability:

- (a) If it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- (b) If the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability."

Support Person – is defined, per Section 4(8) Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, O. Reg. 429/07, as follows:

"a support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services."

Unconvertible – information or communications are unconvertible if it is not technically feasible to convert the information or communications or the technology to convert the information or communications is not readily available

- Accommodations, Disability-related
- Disability
- Personal Support Workers
- Service Animals
- Support Person

Enquiries

For additional information please contact the Township Office at 705-724-2144 or e-mail: admin@nipissingtownship.com

Appendices:

Appendix A: Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Procedure

Appendix B: Accessibility Training for Customer Service Guidelines

Adoption Date:

Appendix A

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Procedure

Approved By: Council

Approval Date:

Effective Date:

Application

The procedure applies to Municipal employees, volunteers and other persons or organizations that provide goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties on behalf of the Township, in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Regulations developed under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005, S.O.2005, c.11. and in support of the Township of Nipissing Accessibility Policy.

The procedures apply to all materials and communications produced by the Township of Nipissing for the release to the public whether produced in house or on behalf of the Township (i.e., consultant reports). It does not apply to unconvertible information and information that the Township does not control directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship.

Each publication should be produced in such a way to reduce barriers in the original document. Adaptation to another format can be accommodated easily and quickly when is considered during the development.

Procedure Description

Notification

The Township will advise the public of the availability of accessible formats and communications supports.

Processing Requests

Request for an accessible format or communication support can be received by stop in person by phone or by electronic formats such as emails or service requests upon receipt of a request. Well completely online request (appendix a) which is forwarded to the township for record-keeping purposes the request is to be responded to by the appropriate operational staff.

All Municipal staff shall upon request and in consultation with the person making the request provide or make arrangements to provide accessible formats and communication support for persons with disabilities. accessible formats and Communications support shall be provided in a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs and at the cost that is no more than regular cost charged to other persons.

Time frame

The time frame for the conversion process of a document into an accessible format, or the provision of a communication support can vary depending on media chosen, the size, complexity, quality of source documents, and the number of documents to be converted. documents shall be returned in a timely manner depending on the factors previously noted.

if a document being requested is the subject of a public consultation or has a set timeframe for public comment, the timeframe for a document conversion and distribution must be taken into consideration.

Cost of conversion

When a member of the public request a municipal document in an accessible format or information with a communication support, the department of origin is responsible for the cost of the conversion, materials and the distribution of information. if the materials are directly related to the work of an Advisory Committee, cost will be the responsibility of the Clerk's Department.

Once the appropriate format or support is determined with the requestor, staff shall provide or arrange for the provisions of the accessible formats and or communication support for persons with disabilities.

If a staff member determines that information is unconvertible, they shall, in consultation with their manager, provide the person requesting the information or communication with:

- (a) A written explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and,
- (b) A summary of the unconvertible information or communication.

The Township office is available for consultation to help determine if information can be converted.

Monitoring/Contraventions

Supervisors and managers shall monitor current practices to ensure compliance. Failure to comply with the AODA regulations and result in Provincial administrative penalties and failure to comply with this procedure may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

References

Township of Nipissing Accessibility Policy
Human Resource Policy
Legislative and Administrative Authorities
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11
Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, O. Reg. 429/07
Integrated Accessibility Standards, O. Reg. 191/11
Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19

Responsibilities

Municipal office is responsible for:

- collecting information about request from departments;
- monitoring compliance with this procedure on an annual basis.

Administrators are responsible for:

- Creating and maintaining service free from discrimination towards persons with disabilities;
- Budgeting for the costs associated with accessible formats and communication supports of materials originating from their departments;

Monitoring situations where request for accessible formats and communication supports have not been provided and determine ways to make the information more convertible in the future.

Managers and supervisors are responsible for:

- Creating and maintaining service free from discrimination towards persons with disabilities.
- Ensuring employees are aware of this procedure and are logging request that are received by their department through an online form;
- Tracking costs associated with requests;
- Ensuring employees are providing residents with the requested accessible format and communications support;
- Ensuring that staff provide residents with an explanation as to why information or communications are unconvertible; and,

- Overseeing the provision of a summary of the convertible information or communication support to the resident.

Definitions

Accessible formats- may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille and other formats unusable by persons with disabilities.

Common accessible formats

Some of the most common accessible formats are (but not limited to):

- HTML or electronic text version on line that meet the WCAG 2.0 level A or AA;
- Text saved as a word document
- Large text;
- Plain language versions;
- Braille

Common communication supports are (but not limited to):

- Verbal explanation of written document
- Video captioning, transcripts
- Sign language interpretation
- See attached Guidelines for Communicating with People who have Disabilities (Appendix B) for more information.

Communications - mean interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent or received.

Communication supports - include but are not limited to captioning, alternative and argumentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other support that facilitate effective communications.

Conversation ready - means an electronic or digital format that facilitates conversation into an accessible format.

Electronic text - an electronic text means of presentation of information in order to enable various computer programs to convert the information into a "readable" format. electronic text where all illustrations are graphical information is explained fully in text

Information - includes data, facts and knowledge that exist in any format, including text, audio, digital or images and that conveys meaning. the information and communication standards do not apply to the following:

- products and product labels
- uncomfortable information or communications

- information that the municipality does not controlled directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship.

Unconvertible - is not technically possible to convert the information or communications; or the technology to convert the information or communications is not available.

Enquiries

For additional information please contact the Township of Nipissing at (705) 724-2144 or email: admin@nipissingtownship.com

Appendix B

Accessibility Training for Customer Service Guidelines

Guidelines for communicating with people who have disabilities

The following information is provided by the ministry of community and Social Services (Province of Ontario)

Deaf, Oral Deaf, Deafened and Hard-of-Hearing

People who are experienced hearing loss may be deaf, oral deaf deafened and hard-of-hearing. People experiencing hearing loss may use assistive devices, like hearing aids special telephones, sign language, interpreters, various amplifiers or a pen and paper. They may also read lips or prefer to communicate through email, texting, or a TTY (available through 311 operators).

TTYL stands for typewriter, a type of telephone that allows callers to send typed messages to each other across phone lines.

TTY users can directly call TTY numbers or they can connect with a Relay Service. A standard phone user can also place a call to a TTY user through the Relay operator. You give the operator your name, the number of the person you are calling, and the number you wish to reach. Using the relay service locally is free. For long distance, any standard long-distance charges would apply.

Here are suggested ways to best communicate with a person who has hearing loss:

- Attract the customer's attention before speaking for example try a gentle touch on the shoulder.
- Don't Shout.
- Make sure you were in a well-lit place where the customer can see your face.
- If a person uses a hearing aid reduce background noise or move to a quieter area.

Vision Loss

Did you know that few people who are blind have no vision? According to Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), nine out of ten people who use their services have some degree of vision.

Three million Canadians have difficulties reading conventional text.

Vision Loss can restrict someone's ability to read signs, locate land markers, or see hazards. Some customers may use a guide dog or white cane; others may not. Some customers simply need to view written materials like documents, receipts, menus, brochures, instructions, or labels in large print, or with the help of magnifier. Many also

use readers which read information to them from an accessible document or an accessible website.

- Do not assume that the individual can't see you.
- Identify yourself when you approach your customer and speak directly to him or her.
- Offer your elbow to guide the person if they accept, walk slowly but wait for permission before doing so.
- Identify land markers or other details to orient your customer to the environment around them.
- If you are giving directions or providing any information, be precise and descriptive. For example, if you're approaching a door, stairs or an obstacle, say so.
- Do not leave your customer in the middle of a room guide them to a chair or comfortable location. do not walk away without saying goodbye and let them know what to expect next.
- Offer to communicate pertinent information through email or links to website where they can find more information.

Deaf blind

A person who is deaf blind cannot see or hear to some degree. many people who are deaf blind will be accompanied by an intervenor, a professional who is helping them with communicating.

Intervenor are trained in special sign language that involves touching the hands of the client in a two hand, manual alphabet or finger spelling.

Keep these suggestions in mind when you serve a customer who is deafblind:

- speak directly to your customer and not to the intervenor.
- identify yourself to the intervenor when you approach a customer who is deafblind.
- 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.

Learning Disabilities

a learning disability refers to a variety of disorders that affect how a person acquires, retains, or takes in information. People with learning disabilities just learn differently. learning disabilities can affect people from all backgrounds and are not caused by culture, language or lack of motivation.

learning disabilities are specific impairments that can result in problem with reading and language-based learning (dyslexia) problems with mathematics(dyscalculia) or problems with writing and fine motor skills (dysgraphia)

this disability may become apparent in your customer service interaction when the person has difficulty reading materials or taking in and processing the information you are providing.

Some Tips:

- Take some time - people with some learning disabilities may take a little longer to process, understand and respond.
- provide information in a way that works for your customer. For example, keep a pen and paper handy that way you can explain, and then review and repeat information using your notes.
- if you are discussing confidential information, consider giving the notes to your customer or offering to destroy them.
- be prepared to explain any materials you provided for your customers

Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

Intellectual or developmental disabilities can mildly or profoundly limit a person's ability to learn, communicate, do every day physical activities and live independently.

You may not be able to know that someone has this disability unless you are told, or you notice the way a person acts, ask questions or uses body language. However, they may understand you more than you realize.

An example of a developmental disability would be Down Syndrome

Here's some guidance:

- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do.
- Use plain language make sure your customer understands what you've said you can be direct and ask do you understand this.
- Provide one piece of information at a time you can break down the information into simpler concepts without aggravating speech or gestures or being patronizing.
- You may want to ask if the following information is needed to be repeated.

Mental Health Disabilities

The important thing to remember when communicating with a person who has mental health disabilities is to focus on completing the transaction in a calm, patient way and meeting customer's needs. mental health issues can affect a person's ability to think clearly, concentrate or remember. mental health disability is a broad classification for many disorders that can range in severity. Customers may experience anxiety due to phobias or panic disorders. Hallucinations, mood swings, and a deep lack of motivation maybe signs of a mental health disability. a person may have clinical depression or bipolar disorder.

The major barrier for people with mental health disability is stigma associated with it and the lack of understanding.

Here are some suggestions:

- Be confident reassuring as with all customers listen carefully and focus on meeting the customer's needs.
- If the person appears to be in crisis, just ask them to tell you the best way to help.
- If a customer appears to show signs of a mental health disability it may be helpful to keep in mind is that a customer's reactions are not connected to you personally as a service provider.
- The customer may simply be showing symptoms of mental health.
- Did you know one in five people in Ontario will experience a mental health issue at some point.

Speech or Language Disabilities

Some customers may have problems communicating because of their disability. Cerebral palsy, stuttering, hearing loss or other conditions may make it difficult for a person to pronounce words or may cause slurring or stuttering. a person with this type of disability may use a communications board or other assistive devices.

A few pointers...

- Do not assume that just because a person has a disability, they also have another.
- Give your customer whatever time they need to get their point across. if appropriate offer to move to more comfortable location.
- Ask questions that can be answered yes or no if possible.
- Do not interrupt or finish your customer sentences. give them time to finish.

Physical Disabilities

Physical disabilities can result from many different situations, for an example cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, heart or lung conditions or amputation.

Here's some tips:

- A person with a physical disability may not need assistance to verbally communicate, but may need other types of assistance to be served.
- Ask before you help. people with physical disabilities often have their own ways of doing things.
- They may ask you to assist with reaching items for them or securing paperwork in a bag for them.
- Inform your customer of accessible features in the immediate environment respect your customers personal space do not lean over them or an assistive device.
- Do not move items or equipment such as canes or Walker's out of a person's reach.
- If you have permission to move a person in a wheelchair, remember to make sure your customer is ready to be moved and that you describe what you were doing beforehand. don't leave the individual in an awkward dangerous or undignified position such as facing a wall or in a path of opening doors.

Ways to make information accessible

keeping your text as clear and as easy to read as possible is not only beneficial for the client with learning disabilities and low literacy skills, it improves comprehension for all clients that will make adaptation to other Formats easier. all technical terms and acronyms should be fully explained.

American Sign Language (ASL) and French Sign Language (LSQ): ALS and LSQ uses hand shapes, positions, facial expressions and body movements to convey meaning to people who are deaf deafened and hard-of-hearing.

Large Print: the minimum suggested font size is point size 12 however someone with low vision may request up to 48 Point font in order to read the information.

Braille: a tactic system of raised dots representing letters. it is used by people who are blind or deaf blind and is produced using Braille transcription software.

Transcription: the conversation of speech into a written or electronic text document.

Verbal or Written Descriptions: verbal or written explanation of a document or picture.

Reading Software for Websites (BrowseAloud): are free software available online that reads web pages out loud. it can help anyone who has difficulty reading online, including people with mild visual impairments, low literacy, English as a second language, or learning disabilities such as dyslexia.

Screen Reader Software: screen reader uses a speech synthesizer to read text from computer screen or convert it to Braille. for readers to work, the information must be formatted properly (in a structured electronic file) for the screen reader to recognize it.

Captioning: the provision of words, in a written format, that accompanies spoken words in a video. it usually appears at the bottom of the screen.

Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) is an audible format for people who have trouble with print including limited vision and learning disabilities like dyslexia. Daisy digital talking books are like audiobooks, but include navigation features to help the reader skip forward or back through the material.

Structured Electronic Files: include information about how elements of the document are formatted like titles section headings Etc. these files can be created by using "Styles" in most standard word processing programs. documents created as structured electronic files are easier to convert to accessible formats (including Braille, Daisy and web pages) and allow screen readers to navigate the information effectively.

Tactile Signage: tactile means "understood through sense of touch". Characters and pictograms are raised 0.8 to 1.5 mm above the surface, and have grade 1 Braille located directly below the associated pictograph or large text.