

WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

XYZ United Church Accessibility for Persons with Disability Policy

This document contains a policy outline that meet the requirements of the Customer Service Standard and other items that are good practices. It also includes training material in various formats.

Table of Contents

BACKGROUND	3
HELPFUL LINKS.....	3
ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY POLICY	4
OUR MISSION	4
OUR COMMITMENT.....	4
COMPONENTS OF THE POLICY.....	4
COMMUNICATION	4
TELEPHONE SERVICES.....	4
ASSISTIVE DEVICES	4
ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE.....	5
USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS AND SUPPORT PERSONS	5
NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTION	6
TRAINING FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS.....	6
FEEDBACK PROCESS	6
MODIFICATIONS TO THIS OR OTHER POLICIES.....	7
<i>Questions about This Policy.....</i>	<i>7</i>
APPENDIX A - DEFINITIONS	8
APPENDIX B - NOTICE OF THE FEEDBACK PROCESS	9
APPENDIX C - ACCESSIBILITY FEEDBACK FORM.....	10
APPENDIX E – TRAINING GUIDELINES	12
GENERAL	12
ENCOUNTERING A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY	12
USING WORDS THAT RESPECT THE PERSON	12
HOW TO WELCOME PEOPLE WITH VISION DISABILITIES	14
HOW TO WELCOME PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING.....	15
HOW TO WELCOME PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF AND BLIND.....	16
<i>How to welcome people with physical disabilities.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>How to welcome people with speech or language impairments.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>How to welcome people with mental health disabilities.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>How to welcome people with intellectual or developmental disabilities</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>How to welcome people with learning disabilities.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>How to talk to people with disabilities on the phone</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Assistive Devices</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Guide dogs and other service animals.....</i>	<i>19</i>
APPENDIX F – TRAINING RECORD.....	20
APPENDIX G – AWARENESS QUIZ (TRUE OR FALSE).....	21
BULLETIN INSERTS FOR SUNDAY MORNING ACCESSIBILITY TRAINING.....	24

Background

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (the AODA) is a provincial act with the purpose of developing, implementing, and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises. Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 429/07 entitled, "Accessibility Standards for Customer Service" establishes accessibility standards specific to customer service and the provision of goods and services to the public. The Regulation applies to Church communities.

Helpful Links

[AODA Timeline for Private & Nonprofit Organizations:](#)

[Accessibility rules for businesses and non-profits](#)

[Accessing Accessibility Under the Building Code, the AODA and the OHRC](#)

Note: A CoF is a non-profit (usually under 20 employees) and does not need to make their building physically accessible by 2025. Under Ontario's Building Code, it is grandfathered. The exception is if you do a new construction or redevelopment (renovation).

[AODA: Frequently Asked Questions](#)

The [AODA](#) and a [Guide to the AODA](#)

An [Integrated Guide](#)

[Accessibility Services Canada: AODA training](#)

[Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation: A Training Booklet for Small Private and Not-for-Profit Organizations](#)

[20 tips for more accessible communications](#)

XYZ United Church

Accessibility for Persons with Disability Policy

Approved By	
Date of Approval	
Updated	

Our Mission

The Mission of XYZ United Church is:

Our Commitment

In fulfilling our mission, XYZ United Church strives at all times to provide its programs, goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our programs, goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in a similar way as other participants in as much as we are able.

COMPONENTS OF THE POLICY

Communication

- We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.
 - All speaking will use audio amplification (microphone).
- We will provide publications in formats that are accessible for people with disabilities.
- We will train staff and volunteers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

Telephone Services

- We will train office staff/volunteers to communicate with participants over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.
- We will offer to communicate with participants by email, written letter or verbally if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs, or is not available.

Assistive Devices

- We are committed to serving people who use assistive devices to participate in and benefit from our programs, goods and services.

- We will ensure that people are permitted to use their own personal assistive devices to access the sanctuary for worship and other applicable programs, goods and services.
- We will familiarize ushers and other staff/volunteers with the various assistive devices that may be used by participants with disabilities while accessing our programs, goods and services.
- XYZ United Church will provide assistive devices it deems necessary for accessing worship and other applicable programs, goods and services.
 - Ushers and other staff/volunteers will be trained on how to use the assistive devices available on our premises:
- Upon a participant's request, we will make every effort to provide the requested assistive device and/or service and to cover relevant financial expenses, upon approval from the governing body.

Accessibility Committee

- We are committed to establishing an Accessibility Committee to oversee all issues relating to accessibility in consultation with the governing body. The Accessibility Committee will comprise one representative from each church in the Pastoral Charge. The Session will appoint one person who is designated as the Accessibility coordinator. The names of these persons will be listed in the bulletins and published in the Annual reports and posted on Church bulletin boards. They will oversee the accessibility policy, action the feedback process, and inform the Session.
- Accessibility Committee membership will be comprised of champions of accessibility for people with disabilities, including congregants with disabilities or family members, congregants professionally or personally interested in accessibility, members of the Board, and members of the staff (including maintenance staff).
- The Accessibility Committee will have several roles:
 - The committee will review the policy annually to ensure that it is kept current with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 and make recommendations to the Official Board as necessary.
 - The committee will monitor our programs, goods and services to ensure that practices and procedures are consistent with our governing policies.
 - The committee will coordinate accessibility training and training materials for all relevant staff and volunteers.
 - The committee will ensure that assistive devices provided by our church are in good working order and that requests for assistive devices are met, as per approval from the Official Board.
 - The committee will review and respond to feedback, complaints, or concerns on accessibility in accordance with the approved procedures.

Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

- We are committed to welcoming people who are accompanied by a service animal on parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties provided the public has access to the premises and such access is not excluded by law.
- We will ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with participants are trained on how to interact with people who are accompanied by a service animal.

- We are committed to welcoming people who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter XYZ United Church premises with his or her support person.
- Fees will not be charged for paid support persons (i.e. PSW) accompanying a participant to any church function.

Notice of Temporary Disruption

XYZ United Church will provide participants with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, the anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. The notice will be delivered to participants by means of email, written letter or verbally except for unanticipated circumstances.

Training for Staff and Volunteers

XYZ United Church Accessibility Committee will be responsible for coordinating training for all employees, volunteers and others who deal with participants or other third parties on our behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of accessibility policies, practices and procedures.

Individuals holding the following positions will be trained:

- All paid staff,
- those in elected positions,
- ushers,
- greeters

Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of the XYZ United Church is to meet and surpass expectations while serving participants with disabilities.

Comments on our programs, goods and services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated. The procedure for comments may be found in Notice of Feedback Process ([Appendix B](#))

- Feedback regarding the way XYZ United Church provides programs, goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by in person, in writing, or email, so long as the information on the Feedback Form ([Appendix C](#)) is included and the person making the feedback clearly identified.
- All feedback will be directed to the particular church Accessibility Coordinator who will fill out a Record of Participant Feedback Form ([Appendix D](#)) and bring the concern to Session.
- Participants can expect to hear back within 30 days.
- Confidentiality will be respected.

Comments will be addressed according to the procedures outlined by the Accessibility Policy. Comment procedures will be documented by the Accessibility Committee and made available to the congregation.

Modifications to this or Other Policies

We are committed to developing accessibility policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

- No changes, therefore, will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities or their families.
- Any policy of XYZ United Church that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

Questions about This Policy

This policy seeks to achieve service excellence to participants with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or its purpose, an explanation or reply will be provided by the particular church Accessibility Committee member.

Amendments to this policy made be made from time to time, with approval by the Official Board, so as to comply with Ontario Regulation 429/07.

APPENDIX A - DEFINITIONS

Accessible: Accessible means obtainable, usable, readable, audible, visible, understandable, clear, able to be entered and exited, flexible, etc. To be accessible to all people, a variety of accessibility plans are necessary. Ensuring inclusive practices will ensure that all goods and services can be accessed by a larger audience.

Alternate Formats: Refers to alternate ways to provide goods and services. This may be through forms of communication such as speech or writing, or methods such as in person or over the phone. Other examples are large print, electronic text (Word or html), Braille, sign language interpretation, communication devices, media caption, etc.

Assistive Devices: Equipment that people with disabilities utilize to assist in their daily lives at home, work, school, etc. Such devices could be a walker, scooter, cane, magnification or specialized learning software, communication board, etc.

Assistive Technology: Equipment or software such as screen reading, audio recording and voice recognition which people with disabilities use to obtain information and communicate with others.

Disability: Under the AODA, the definition of “disability” is the same as the definition in the Ontario Human Rights Code:

- (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 and received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Service Animal: Service Animal defines “an animal for a person with disability”. In this policy, a service animal is any animal used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to the disability or where the person provides a letter from a physician confirming that they require the animal for reasons relating to their disability; or where the person provides a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada or a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

Support Person: Someone who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist them. Their assistance may include, but is not limited to, communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services.

APPENDIX B - NOTICE OF THE FEEDBACK PROCESS

Dear Valued Participant,

We strive to improve accessibility for our participants with disabilities. We would like to hear your comments, questions and suggestions about the provision of our programs, goods and services to people with disabilities. Participant feedback forms are available in the pew or through the church office.

Please call *Phone number* or e-mail _____ to share your comments, or request a copy of our accessibility policy. You can also leave your feedback form in the collection plate.

Thank you,

XYZ United Church
Accessibility Committee

APPENDIX C - ACCESSIBILITY FEEDBACK FORM

Thank you for attending our Church. We value all people and strive to meet everyone's needs.

Please provide your full name: _____

Please tell us the Church or function, date, and time you attended:

Did we respond to your needs today? Yes No

Were our programs/service provided to you in an accessible manner?

Yes Somewhat (please explain below) No (please explain below)

Was our church accessible for you (Circle one)?

Yes (please explain below) Somewhat (please explain below) No

Please add any other comments you may have:

Contact information (optional)*:

(*Any information you provide will only be used for the purpose of a response to this Feedback Form)

Thank you,
XYZ United Church
Accessibility Committee

XYZ United Church
Address

APPENDIX D - Record of Participant Feedback

Date feedback received:

Name of participant:

Contact information (if appropriate)*:

(* Information provided is only be used for the purpose of a response to the Feedback Form)

Details:

Follow-up:

Action to be taken:

Accessibility Coordinator: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX E – TRAINING GUIDELINES

General

The following basic training guide shall be read by volunteers and staff within XYZ United Church identified in this policy and others who will interact with people with disabilities. The guideline may be used in conjunction with other training material provided by the Church or the Province of Ontario in fulfillment of Regulation 429/07. The Ontario Government publishes training tools on official provincial websites related to the Accessibility Act.

Encountering a Person with a Disability

The best advice is to say WELCOME and then start every conversation with this question: HOW CAN I/WE HELP YOU?

Using Words That Respect the Person

The words we use can create either a positive view of people with disabilities or a negative depiction. Here are some general tips to follow when talking to or about people with disabilities.

- Say "disability" not "handicap".
- Put people first. "Person with a disability" puts the focus on the person, not the disability. For specific disabilities, say "person with epilepsy" or "person who uses a wheelchair". Don't use 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.
- If you're not familiar with the disability, don't make assumptions. Wait until the person describes their situation to you. Many types of disabilities have similar characteristics. Your assumptions may be wrong.
- Here are some words and phrases to use and to avoid:

Don't use	Use
The aged The elderly	Seniors
Autistic	A person with autism A person with Autism Spectrum Disorder
Birth defect Congenital defect Deformity	A person who has a congenital disability A person with a disability since birth
The blind The visually impaired	A person who is blind A person with vision loss
Brain damaged	A person with a brain injury A person with an acquired brain injury

Confined to a wheelchair	A person who uses a wheelchair bound
Crazy Insane Lunatic Psycho Mental Mental patient Maniac Neurotic Psychotic Unsound mind Schizophrenic	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
Cripple Crippled Lame Physically challenged	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
The deaf The hearing impaired	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) If you are talking about the Deaf community and their culture (<i>whose preferred way of communication is sign language</i>), you can use "the Deaf"
Deaf and dumb Deaf mute	A person who is deaf and does not talk
The deaf-blind	A person who is deaf blind (for example, a person who has any combination of vision and hearing loss)
Epileptic	A person who has epilepsy
Fits Spells Attacks	A person who has seizures
The handicapped Invalid; Patient The disabled	Person with a disability
Hidden disability Invisible disability	Non-visible disability

Learning disabled Learning disordered Dyslexic	A person with a learning disability or people with learning disabilities
Mentally retarded Idiot; Simple Retarded Feeble-minded Imbecile	A person with an intellectual disability A person with a developmental disability
Midget Dwarf	A little person A person of short stature A person who has a form of dwarfism
Mongoloid Mongolism Downs	A person with Down Syndrome A person with an intellectual or developmental disability
Normal	A person without a disability A person who is not disabled Specifically, a person who is sighted, a hearing person, a person who is ambulatory
Spastic	A person who has muscle spasms
Stutterer	A person who stutters A person with a communication disorder

How to welcome people with vision disabilities

Vision disabilities reduce a person'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 a person's abilities to:

- read signs
- locate landmarks, or
- see hazards.

It may be difficult to tell if a person has a vision disability. Some people with vision disabilities use a service animal or a white cane. Others may not.

Tips for guiding a participant 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 participant 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 your participant 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 participant 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.

How to welcome people 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. Some people who are Deaf or hard of hearing may use assistive devices to communicate.

Tips on welcoming people who are Deaf or hard of hearing:

- Always ask how you can help. Don't shout.
- Attract the person'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 the person can see your face.
- Look at and speak directly to the person. Address them, 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) or Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ).
- If the person uses a hearing aid, try to speak in a quiet area. Background noise can be distracting.

How to welcome people who are deaf and 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 may guide and interpret for their client.

Here are some tips on serving participants 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 person who is deaf-blind will probably tell you how to communicate with them by giving you an assistance card or a note.
- Speak directly to the person as you normally would, not to the intervener.
- When you approach a person who is deaf-blind, make sure you identify yourself to the intervener.
- 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.

How to welcome people 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 welcoming people who have physical disabilities:

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

How to welcome people with speech or language impairments

Some people have problems communicating. It could be due to cerebral palsy, hearing loss, or another condition that makes it difficult to pronounce words, causes slurring or stuttering, or prevents someone from expressing themselves or understanding written or spoken language.

Some people who have severe difficulties may use communication boards or other assistive devices.

Here are some tips on welcoming people with speech or language impairments:

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

How to welcome people with mental health disabilities

People with mental health disabilities look like anyone else. You won't know that a person has a mental health disability unless you're informed of it. Usually it will not affect how you interact with the person. 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 the person tell you how you can best help.

Here are some tips on welcoming people 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 the person to meet their needs.
- If someone appears to be in a crisis, ask them to tell you the best way to help.

How to welcome people 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 their ability to learn. You may not be able to know that someone has this disability unless you are told, or you notice the way they act, ask questions or use body language.

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 your treating them with respect.

Here are some tips on welcoming people 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 the person 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 the person, not to their companion or attendant.

How to welcome people with learning disabilities

Learning disabilities can cause many different communication difficulties for people. The difficulties can vary in degree, but they all can interfere with a person'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 how people act, ask questions or use body language.

Here are some tips on welcoming people 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 the person.
- 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. The person will let you know how to best provide service in a way that works for them.

How to talk to people with disabilities on the phone

Here are some tips on talking to people with disabilities on the phone:

- Speak normally, clearly and directly.
- Don't worry about how their voice sounds. Concentrate on what's being said.
- Be patient, don't interrupt and don't finish their sentences. Give the person time to explain.
- Don't try to guess what the person is trying to say. If you don't understand, don't pretend, just ask again.
- If you're not certain what the person said, just repeat or rephrase what you've heard.
- If the person is using an interpreter or a TTY line, just speak normally to the person, not to the interpreter.
- If the person has great difficulty communicating, make arrangements to call back when it's convenient to speak with someone else.

Assistive Devices

Many people with disabilities will have their own personal assistive devices. Don't touch or handle an assistive device without permission.

Examples of personal assistive devices:

- wheelchairs - scooters - walker
- amplification devices that boost sound for listeners who are hard-of-hearing without reducing background noise -- hearing aids
- oxygen tanks
- electronic notebooks or laptop computers - personal data managers
- communication boards used to communicate using symbols, words or pictures

- speech-generating devices that “speak” when a symbol, word or picture is pressed

Moving personal assistive devices. Ask permission before moving anything.

- wait for and follow the person’s instructions;
- confirm the person is ready to move;
- describe what you are going to do before you do it;
- avoid uneven ground and objects that create bumpy and unsafe ride; and
- practice consideration and safety – don’t leave the person in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors.
- Do not move items or equipment, such as canes and walkers, out of reach.
- Respect your participant’s personal space. Do not lean over them or on their assistive device.
- Let your participant know about accessible features in the immediate environment (automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.).

Guide dogs and other service animals

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

Service Animal	Key Tasks	Users
Autism assistance or service dog	Keeps a child from running into danger and provides assistance when sensory stimulus is heightened. Dog is attached to the child’s waist by a belt and a leash held by an adult	People with autism or other developmental/intellectual disabilities
Guide dog, dog guide or seeing eye dog	Follows directions of owner, alerts owner to changes in elevation (e.g., curbs, stairs) and obstacles	People with vision loss

An excellent online video resource through YouTube is found at this link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bARpvRDwiGc&feature=related>

APPENDIX G – AWARENESS QUIZ (TRUE OR FALSE)

Purpose: This quiz will help you to evaluate any misconceptions you may have about people with disabilities.

1. A positive attitude is important when meeting or helping a person with a disability.
2. Generally, people see the disability first and the person second.
3. All disabilities are caused by a disease or are inherited.
4. People with mobility impairments do not care about how they look, and they cannot shop the way other people do.
5. Someone who uses a power wheelchair cannot drive a motor vehicle.
6. If you notice someone is wearing a hearing aid, speak loudly so they can hear you.
7. When guiding a person who has vision loss, you should always take them by the arm
8. Someone who is severely physically disabled cannot do anything alone.
9. A person who is Deaf cannot use the phone
10. A person can have a disability and not be held back by it.
11. People who have vision loss have a better sense of hearing.
12. You should avoid using expressions such as “look”, “see” and “watch out” when talking to someone with vision loss.
13. The majority of people who are Deaf or hard of hearing can speechread (lipread).
14. If you see someone who uses a wheelchair having trouble, you should give them a push.
15. Over one million Canadians have some kind of disability that makes it difficult for them to read conventional print.
16. When a person with a disability is in your church, you should always provide extra attention.
17. Guide dogs see colours and read signs.
18. People who are Deaf or hard of hearing see better than everyone else.
19. People who are Deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing cannot talk at all.
20. People who use wheelchairs are paralysed
21. Mental health disability is a rare, untreatable disorder.
22. People with learning disabilities cannot be productive.
23. Intellectual disability is the same as a mental health disability.
24. About one in seven Ontarians has a disability.
25. Forty-seven percent of Ontarians over the age of 65 have disabilities.

Answers to Awareness Quiz

1. **True** – Barriers are broken down in part through open, positive attitudes – when people are accepted for themselves
2. **True** – A disability is just one characteristic of the individual, but the disability is often seen before the person.
3. **False** – Some disabilities are the result of a disease, some are inherited, while others are the result of an accident.
4. **False** – People with disabilities have different interests and enjoy different activities like anyone else.
5. **False** – There are many modifications available for vehicles to allow people with disabilities to drive, including people in power wheelchairs.
6. **False** – It is important to look directly at someone who is hard of hearing and speak clearly. Shouting may only create sound distortions when amplified through a hearing aid.
7. **False** – People who have vision loss may prefer to take your arm when you are guiding them. Ask if they need your assistance first.
8. **False** – There are many helpful aids for people with physical disabilities which may help them to be more independent.
9. **False** – There are different systems that allow someone who is Deaf to use the telephone, such as the Teletypewriter (TTY) or a relay system.
10. **True** – Barriers in the lived environment and/or other people negative attitudes are the only handicaps for people with disabilities.
11. **False** – Generally people with vision loss have no better sense of hearing than anyone else, though some people with vision loss learn to use their sense more efficiently.
12. **False** – There is no need to use special language around people who have vision loss. They use the same expressions as anyone else.
13. **True** – Most people who are Deaf or hard of hearing can speechread, but they don't all do it very well. Most of them can understand about 25% of what is being said. People who excel at speechreading can understand approximately 45-50% of what is being said.
14. **False** – Try to respect the person's independence by asking if your assistance is needed first.
15. **True** – It is estimated that one million Canadians have some kind of disability that makes it difficult or impossible for them to read conventional print. An increasing number of senior citizens are becoming part of this group.
16. **False** – People with disabilities may need some special attention, but it should not be assumed in every case. Every person wants to be treated with dignity, so consider discretely asking each person if help is needed. You don't always know who has a disability and who doesn't.

17. **False** – Guide dogs do not see the colours of traffic lights, and do not read the signs on washroom doors. The owner decides when to cross the street by listening to the traffic flow.
18. **False** – Generally, people who are Deaf or hard of hearing have no better sense of seeing than anyone else, but they may concentrate more on what they are seeing.
19. **False** – People who are Deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing may choose not to speak because they are unsure of pronunciation, or they may know that their voice sounds different, but most can make sounds, and can probably speak some words.
20. **False** – Not everyone who uses a wheelchair is paralysed. People might use a wheelchair if they have arthritic spines or sore legs, severe asthma or a heart condition that limits the ability to walk.
21. **False** – Many types of mental health disabilities are treatable and not necessarily permanent.
22. **False** – Many people develop ways to work with, or around, their particular type of learning disability. Repeated practice can help a person with a learning disability to perform some tasks with less difficulty.
23. **False** – Unlike mental health disability, intellectual disability is a limitation affecting intellectual capacity, not emotional equilibrium. Moreover, intellectual disability is a permanent condition that cannot be medically treated or cured
24. **True** – According to the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) 2006 from Statistics Canada, about 1.85 million Ontarians (one in seven) have a disability.
25. **True** – According to the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) 2006 from Statistics Canada, about 47 percent of Ontarians over the age of 65 have disabilities.

Bulletin inserts for Sunday morning accessibility training

Our Commitment

In fulfilling our mission, XYZ United Church strives at all times to provide its programs, goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our programs, goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in a similar way as other participants in as much as we are able.

Encountering a Person with a Disability

The best advice is to say WELCOME and then start every conversation with this question: HOW CAN I/WE HELP YOU?

Using Words that Respect the Person

The words we use can create either a positive view of people with disabilities or a negative depiction. Here are some general tips to follow when talking to or about people with disabilities.

- Say "disability" not "handicap".
- Put people first. "Person with a disability" puts the focus on the person, not the disability. For specific disabilities, say "person with epilepsy" or "person who uses a wheelchair". Don't use 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.
- If you're not familiar with the disability, don't make assumptions. Wait until the person describes their situation to you. Many types of disabilities have similar characteristics. Your assumptions may be wrong.

Some Components of the Policy

Communication

- We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.
 - All speaking will use audio amplification (microphone). (updated Nov. 23, 2011)
- We will provide publications in formats that are accessible for people with disabilities.
- We will train staff and volunteers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

Telephone Services

Badjeros United Church provides a cell phone for emergency use. There is no phone service available in Maxwell or Victoria Memorial United Churches.

- We will train office staff/volunteers to communicate with participants over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.
- We will offer to communicate with participants by email, written letter or verbally if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs, or is not available.

Assistive devices

- We are committed to serving people who use assistive devices to participate in and benefit from our programs.
- People are permitted to use their own personal assistive devices to access the sanctuary for worship and other applicable programs.
- Familiarize staff/volunteers with the various assistive devices that may be used by participants with disabilities.
- Upon a participant's request, we will make every effort to provide the requested assistive device and/or service and to cover relevant financial expenses, upon approval from the Board.

Accessibility

Accessibility is not about ramps or automatic door openers. It's about understanding that people with disabilities may have different needs. It can be as easy as asking "How can I help?" and making small changes to how you serve customers with disabilities.

Understanding Disabilities

When you hear the word "disability", what pops into your mind?

Do you think of a person who uses a wheelchair? Or a person with a service animal?

There are many kinds and degrees of disabilities. Being hard of hearing is different from being deaf. Having low vision is different from being legally blind.

A disability can happen to anyone at any time. Some people are born with a disability. For others, the disability happens because of an illness or an accident. Sometimes it's because the person is getting older.

Let's take a look at various types of disabilities:

- visual
- hearing
- deaf-blind
- physical
- speech or language
- mental health
- intellectual or developmental
- learning

Understanding Barriers to Accessibility

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

When we think of barriers to accessibility, most of us think of physical barriers — like a person who uses a wheelchair not being able to enter a public building because there is no ramp.

The fact is there are many kinds of barriers. Some are visible. Many are invisible.

Barriers to Accessibility

Type of Barriers	Examples
Attitudinal barriers are those that discriminate against people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• thinking that people with disabilities are inferior• assuming that a person who has a speech impairment can't understand you
Information or communications barriers happen when a person can't easily understand information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• print is too small to read• websites that can't be accessed by people who are not able to use a mouse• signs that are not clear or easily understood.
Technology barriers occur when a technology can't be modified to support various assistive devices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a website that doesn't support screen-reading software
Organizational barriers are an organization's policies, practices or procedures that discriminate against people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a hiring process that is not open to people with disabilities
Architectural and Physical barriers are features of buildings or spaces that cause problems for people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• hallways and doorways that are too narrow for a person using a wheelchair, electric scooter or walker• counters that are too high for a person of short stature• poor lighting for people with low vision• doorknobs that are difficult for people with arthritis to grasp• parking spaces that are too narrow for a driver who uses a wheelchair• telephones that are not equipped with telecommunications devices for people who are Deaf, deafened or hard of hearing

Common Myths about people with disabilities and the Reality

Myth	Reality
<p>People with disabilities are inferior to "normal" people and their lives are very different.</p>	<p>What is "normal"? We all have different abilities, talents, interests and personalities — you name it!</p> <p>People with disabilities go to school, get married, work, have families, play, do laundry, go shopping, eat out, travel, volunteer, vote, pay taxes, laugh, cry, plan and dream — just like everyone else. People with disabilities are us!</p>
<p>We need to feel sorry for people with disabilities.</p>	<p>That's patronizing. People with disabilities don't need pity. They need access to opportunities.</p>
<p>People with disabilities are brave and courageous.</p>	<p>Adjusting to a disability requires adapting to a lifestyle, not bravery and courage.</p>
<p>It's not a good idea to hire people with disabilities. They have a higher turnover rate and they take sick days more often.</p>	<p>Many studies show that employees with disabilities are often more productive, dependable and loyal than their co-workers without disabilities and that staff retention is 72% higher among persons with disabilities. When business hires people with disabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the pool of potential employees becomes larger • staff retention rates increase • absenteeism decreases.
<p>You have to be careful when you're talking to a person with a disability, because they are easily offended if you use the wrong word.</p>	<p>You just need to be as polite and respectful as you would when speaking to anyone. If you're not sure what to say or do, it's okay to ask.</p>
<p>It's difficult serving customers with disabilities.</p>	<p>Customers with disabilities have the same preferences, perceptions, attitudes, habits, and needs as customers without disabilities, and they are looking for the same quality of products and services.</p> <p>Everyone, regardless of ability, deserves to be treated with the same dignity and respect.</p>

Visual disabilities

Visual disabilities reduce a person's ability to see clearly.

There are many degrees of vision loss. Few people with vision loss are totally blind. Many have limited vision.

Vision loss can restrict a person's ability to:

- read signs
- locate landmarks
- see hazards.

People with vision loss may use a guide dog or a white cane. Others may not. You may not always be able to tell if a person has vision loss.

Using words

Don't say	Say
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the blind• the visually impaired	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a person who is blind• a person with vision loss

Tips on how to interact with people with vision loss

- Identify yourself when you approach the person and speak directly to them.
- Speak normally and clearly.
- Never touch the person 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 person can't see you.
- Don't leave the person 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 the person to the environment around them.
- Don't walk away without saying good-bye.
- Be patient. Things may take a little longer.

Hearing loss

There are many degrees of hearing loss.

People who have hearing loss may be:

- deaf (a person with profound hearing loss)
- deafened (a person who has become deaf later in life)
- hard of hearing (a person who has some hearing loss)

Using words

Don't say	Say
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the deaf• the hearing impaired	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a person who is deaf• a person who is deafened• a person who is hard of hearing

People with profound hearing loss may communicate using sign language. Other people may use assistive devices, such as hearing aids, to communicate.

Tips on how to interact with people with hearing loss

- Always ask how you can help. Don't shout.
- Attract the person'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 the person can see your face.
- Look at and speak directly to the person. Address them, 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) or Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ).
- If the person uses a hearing aid, try to speak in a quiet area. Background noise can be distracting.

Deaf-blind

An person who is deaf-blind has a combined loss of vision and hearing. This makes it difficult for people to access information.

Most people who are deaf-blind are accompanied by an

intervener, a professional who helps with communicating.

Using words

Don't say	Say
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• deaf and dumb• deaf mute• the deaf-blind	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a person who is deaf-blind

Tips on how to interact with people 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 person who is deaf-blind will probably give you a card or a note explaining how to communicate with them.
- Speak directly to the person as you normally would, not to the intervenor.
- When you approach a person who is deaf-blind, make sure you identify yourself to the intervenor.
- 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.

Physical Disabilities

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities. Not all physical disabilities 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.

Using words

Don't say	Say
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the cripple• crippled• lame• physically challenged• confined to a wheelchair• wheelchair bound	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a person who with a disability• a person with a physical disability• a person with arthritis• a person who uses a wheelchair (or a walker or a scooter)

Tips on how to interact with people with physical disabilities

- Speak normally and directly to your customer. Don't speak to the person who is with them.
- People with physical disabilities often have their own ways of doing things. Ask before you help.
- Be patient. People will tell you what they need.
- Don't touch assistive devices, including wheelchairs, unless it's an emergency.
- Tell the person about accessible features in the surrounding area (automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.).
- Remove obstacles and rearrange furniture so they have clear passage.

Speech or language disabilities

Some people have problems communicating. It could be due to cerebral palsy, hearing loss or another condition that:

- makes it difficult to pronounce words
- causes slurring or stuttering
- prevents someone from expressing themselves or understanding written or spoken language.

Using words

Don't say	Say
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• stutterer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a person who stutters• a person with a communication disorder

Some people who have severe difficulties may use communication boards or other assistive devices.

Tips on how to interact with people with speech or language disabilities

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

Mental health disabilities

Mental health disabilities are not as visible as many other types of disabilities.

Some people with mental health disabilities may have:

- hallucinations (hearing voices or seeing things that aren't there)
- difficulty concentrating or remembering
- acute mood swings.

Other people may not show any signs. You won't know that a person has a mental health disability unless you are told.

Here are some examples of mental health disabilities:

- schizophrenia
- depression
- phobias
- bipolar, anxiety and mood disorders.

Using words

Don't say	Say
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• crazy• insane• lunatic• psycho• mental• mental patient• maniac• neurotic• psychotic• unsound mind• schizophrenic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a person with a mental illness• a person with a mental disorder• a person with a mood disorder (for example, a person with bipolar disorder)• a person with a personality disorder (for example, a person with an antisocial personality disorder)• a person with an anxiety disorder (for example, a person with obsessive-compulsive disorder)• a person with schizophrenia

Tips on how to interact with people 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 the person to meet their needs.
- If someone appears to be in a crisis, ask them to tell you the best way to help.

Intellectual or Developmental disabilities

Using words

People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may find it hard to do many things most of us take for granted.

These disabilities can mildly or profoundly limit their ability to learn, socialize and take care of their everyday needs.

You may not be able to know that someone has this disability unless you are told, or you notice the way they act, ask questions or use body language.

Don't say	Say
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• mentally retarded• idiot• simple• retarded• feeble-minded• imbecile• mongoloid• mongolism• Downs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a person with an intellectual disability• a person with a developmental disability• a person with Down Syndrome

Tips on how to interact with people 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 the person 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 the person, not to their companion or attendant.

Learning disabilities

Learning disabilities are information processing disorders. They can affect how a person acquires, organizes, expresses, retains, understands or uses verbal or non-verbal information.

Here are some examples:

- dyslexia (problems in reading)
- dyscalculia (problems in mathematics)
- dysgraphia (problems in writing and fine motor skills).

People with learning difficulties may have problems communicating.

You may not know that a person has a learning disability unless you are told.

Tips on how to interact with people who have 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 the person.
- 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. The person will let you know how to best provide service in a way that works for them.

Using words

Don't say	Say
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• learning disabled• learning disordered• dyslexic• autistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a person with a learning disability or people with learning disabilities• a person with dyslexia• a person with autism• a person with Autism Spectrum Disorder