

**Warton Salvation Army**  
**ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE GUIDE**  
**INTRODUCTION**

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 was passed by the Ontario Legislature with the goal of improving accessibility across Ontario for people with disabilities.

**TIP: If you're not sure about the best approach, always start with "How may I help you?"**

Here are some tips for how to interact/communicate with people who have various disabilities:

**Communication with Persons with Disabilities**

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities. Only some people with physical disabilities use a wheelchair. Someone with a spinal cord injury may use crutches, while someone with severe arthritis or a heart condition may have difficulty walking longer distances.

- If you need to have a lengthy conversation with a person who uses a wheelchair or scooter, consider sitting so you can make eye contact at the same level.
- Ask before you help. Offer assistance but don't insist.
- Don't touch items, such as canes or wheelchairs, without permission.

**Persons who have hearing loss**

- Attract the person's attention before speaking. Try a gentle touch on the shoulder or wave of your hand.
- Make sure you are in a well-lit area where they can see your face and read your lips.
- Do not cover or have anything in your mouth when speaking.
- Ask one question at a time.
- Speak naturally, with normal expression and at a normal pace.
- If the patron uses a hearing aid, reduce background noise or move the patron to a quieter area.
- If necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier (for example, using pen and paper).

**Persons who have vision loss**

- Don't assume the person cannot see you. Many people who have low vision still have some sight.
- Identify yourself when you approach and speak directly to the patron.
- Ask the patron if they would like you to read any printed material,
- When providing directions or instructions, be precise and descriptive.
- Offer your elbow to guide them, if needed.
- Don't leave without saying goodbye

### **Persons who are deaf-blind**

A person who is deaf-blind may have some degree of both hearing and vision loss. He/she may be accompanied by an intervenor, a professional support person who helps with communication.

- A person who is deaf-blind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them, perhaps with an assistance card or a note.
- Speak directly to the person, not to the intervenor.
- Do not leave without saying goodbye.

### **Persons with speech impairments**

Cerebral palsy, hearing loss or other conditions may make it difficult for a person to pronounce words or may cause slurring.

- Don't assume that a person with speech impairment has another disability.
- Be patient. Don't interrupt or finish the person's sentences.
- Give whatever time they need to get their point across.
- Tell the client if you don't understand what they are trying to say.
- Ask the client to repeat the message, tell you in a different way, or write it down.
- Whenever possible, ask questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no".

### **Persons who use assistive devices**

An assistive device is a tool or technology that helps a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities. Devices include things such as wheelchairs, walkers, hearing aids, white canes, or personal oxygen tanks.

- Allow clients to keep and use their assistive devices as needed.
- Don't touch or handle any assistive device without permission.
- Don't move assistive devices, such as canes and walkers, out of the person's reach.
- Let them know about accessible features in the immediate environment that are appropriate to their needs, for example accessible toilets.

### **Persons with Service Animals**

Service animals are permitted and unrestricted at the facility and in all areas of our office that members of the public are permitted to enter. If it is not readily apparent that an animal is a service animal, you may ask the person with the service animal to provide verification of the animal's duty.

- The client is responsible for the care and supervision of the service animal.
- Don't talk to, touch, or make eye contact with the service animal; it is working and has to pay attention at all times.

### **Persons who have learning disabilities**

Includes a variety of disorders, such as dyslexia, that affect how a person takes in or retains information. This disability may become apparent when a client has difficulty reading material or understanding the information you are providing.

- Be patient – patrons with some learning disabilities may take a little longer to process information, to understand and to respond.
- Speak normally, clearly and directly to them.

- Provide information in a way that works for the client. For example, some people with learning disabilities find written words difficult to understand, while others may have a problem with numbers.

### **Persons who have intellectual/developmental disabilities**

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

- Don't make assumptions about what the patron can and cannot do.
- Use plain language.
- Provide one piece of information at a time: step-by-step instruction.
- Use concrete examples and simple concepts.
- Be prepared to repeat and rephrase your sentences.
- Ask the person to repeat back to you what they have heard

### **Persons who have mental health needs**

Mental health needs can affect a person's ability to think clearly, concentrate or remember things. For example, some people may experience anxiety due to mood swings, phobias, or panic disorder.

- Treat the client with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
- Don't be confrontational.
- Be confident, calm and reassuring.
- Do not judge or "talk down" to the patron.
- If a patron appears to be in crisis, ask them to tell you the best way to help

### **Persons who are accompanied by a support person**

We welcome all support persons who have been hired or chosen by the client with a disability to accompany them. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises. A support person can be a paid professional, a volunteer, a family member or a friend. A support person might help the patron with a range of tasks from communicating, to helping with mobility, personal care or medical needs.

- Speak directly to the patron, not to the support person, unless requested otherwise by the patron.

**ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE GUIDE  
TRAINING REGISTRATION**

Thank you for taking the time to read and understand this important information. Your efforts will help us better serve all clients and friends of the Wiaraton Salvation Army.

We will retain your record of training in our files and make a note of your successful completion of the Accessible Customer Service Training.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_