



Communication Disabilities Access Canada

Making Organizations Accessible for People with Communication Disabilities

The following is a transcript of audio segments for slides in this Course.

Slide 2

Welcome.

This webinar is for you if you want learn how to make their services accessible for individuals, who have communication disabilities, that are not caused primarily by significant hearing loss.

On completion of the webinar and a short quiz, you will receive a certificate of attendance.

Please feel free to send us any questions you have using the help tab in the upper right side of your screen.

We hope you enjoy this webinar.

Slide 3 – About this Webinar

You will learn about:

- People who have communication disabilities
- Ways that people communicate
- You will get suggestions from people who have communication disabilities on ways to improve accessibility to your services.
- You will also learn about the Communication Assistance Database where you may be able to find assistants who can support people communicating when they use your services.

Finally, you will learn about the communication access symbol – what it means and how to display it.

Slide 4 - Resources

Before you start, we recommend that you download the resources here as we will be referring to them throughout the webinar.

Slide 9 – Ways that people communicate.

Ways that people communicate include:

- Speech, although it may be slurred and difficult to understand
- Body language and facial expressions
- Gestures, such as waving to say goodbye
- Pointing or looking at objects
- Adapted signs
- Writing, typing or drawing, spelling on a letter board
- Pointing to pictures, symbols or written words in a communication book or display
- Using a communication device that speaks out their messages

Slide 10 – It takes two to communicate

Although people may have ways to communicate, that is not enough to ensure that they can communicate effectively when using your services. They need someone who knows how to communicate with them, how to ask questions in ways they can answer and someone who gives them the time they need to communicate their messages. That someone is you. Let's hear from our instructors about their experiences and their recommendations for things you can do to improve communication accessibility. Our instructors are Sam Savona, Anne Abbott and Farrah Sattaur.

Slide 12 – Communication Barriers

Individuals with communication disabilities often report that people:

- Ignore them
- Talk about them like they do not exist
- Talk to the person that's with them
- Underestimate their abilities
- Assume that they can't make their own decisions
- Do not give them the time or the opportunity to communicate what they want to say
- Do not know how they communicate, and
- Often restrict their communication to only answering yes and no questions

Slide 14 – Reflections: Meeting a person

131 Barber Greene Road, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M3C 3Y5 Telephone: 416.444.9532 Email: admin@cdacanada.com
Information: www.cdacanada.com

CDAC is a Registered Charity 87160 1712 RR0001

When you meet a person who has a communication disability, do you:

- Approach them and make eye contact, smile and say hello
- Talk respectfully in a normal, tone and volume. You don't need to shout, talk slowly or in a childish manner.
- Take time to communicate. Be patient –people who have communication disabilities take longer to communicate their messages than people who can speak
- Talk directly to the person, not to the person with them and never speak about the person as if they are not there.

Slide 16 – Reflections: Communicating

When communicating, do you:

- Ask the person how they communicate, if it is not obvious – people usually have written instructions or will tell you using their communication device.
- People use a variety of ways to communicate. Watch and respond to the person's body language, gestures, pointing to objects, items on a communication display
- Give extra time for communication – this might mean adding an extra 10-15 minutes to an appointment.
- Avoid overusing yes and no questions - let the person communicate using their speech, display or device
- Ask permission to guess if you think you know what the person is communicating – most people prefer you to wait and let them finish their message
- Tell the person if you don't understand their message – it's more respectful than pretending. Say "I didn't understand that..." the person may repeat the message or communicate it in a different way
- Use everyday language if person has difficulty understanding – avoid jargon and terminology – speak in short clear sentences and slow down if you are a fast talker.

Slide 18 – Reflections: Telephone

Do you:

- Give the time to communicate with a person who has unclear speech or uses a device over the telephone
- Give alternate options for telephone services such as in-person meetings, text, email, Skype, and social media
- Put a procedure in place with the person to authorize and identify their communication assistant over the telephone

Slide 20 – Reflections: Written communication

When providing written information, do you:

- Read, explain documents, if requested (not everyone needs this support, however, some people may ask you to do this)
- Ask if the person needs you to take notes, write down instructions or appointments (this is important for people who cannot quickly or easily write)
- Offer to assist people filling in forms and / or provide an electronic version of the form
- Give information in different formats such plain language, large print or electronic copies
- Provide an accessible website that complies with accessibility standards
- Accept alternate signatures such as an X, a stamp or an authorized signer.

Slide 22 –Reflections: Meetings

When hosting appointments, meetings and public forums, do you:

- Provide agenda ahead of time – this gives people time to prepare their messages if they use a communication device.
- Offer communication assistance if requested – if it's a public event, add communication assistance to your list of accessibility features so that people can request this type of assistance in addition to attendant services, sign language, captioning, communication assistance.
- If the person does not have a communication assistant, you can help them search for someone who could provide this support and pay for this service.

Slide 23 – Finding a person to assist with communication

- Some people may need assistance to effectively communicate with you when using your services. They may be able bring a person with them to do this. However, in some situations, a person may not have someone to assist them. In these situations, they may need you to find a communication assistant for them.
- In these situations, you can use CDAC communication assistance database. It is online at <http://www.cdacanada.com/communication-assistance-database/>
- This link is in your resources.
- Assistants listed in the database:
 - Attended an online training by CDAC on ways to assist people communicating with people in their communities (this course provided them with an overview of their role in supporting communication)

- Assist people communicating in general non-critical communication situations (meetings, appointments)
- Agree to follow a code of ethics and practice which can be viewed on the database.
- The interlink is in your resources. It is <http://www.cdacanada.com/communication-assistance-database/>

Slide 24 – Communication Assistance Database

Just as important as know what a communication assistant can do, it is important to know what they cannot do. They cannot:

- Conduct communication assessments, recommend communication methods or devices or provide therapy or teach people how to communicate – these clinical services are provided by regulated speech language pathologists and augmentative communication clinicians.
- They do not assist people communicating with police, legal and justice professionals. In these situations, a communication intermediary is required. A Communication Intermediary is a Speech language pathologist with additional training from CDAC to work in these settings. Use the database to get more information and to find a communication intermediary.
- Assist in financial situations, unless known and authorized by the person with a disability

CDAC does not:

- Regulate, monitor, endorse, accredit or pay for communication assistants on the database

Slide 27 –Communication Access Symbol

Our new symbol includes ears for listening. You can download the communication access symbol from our resources. Put it in your window or reception desk to welcome people who have communication disabilities.

Slide 29.

Thank you for taking this webinar. We hope you got good ideas on ways to make your services accessible for people with communication disabilities.

The golden rule is to ask the person if there is anything you can do to make communication go smoothly.

For a summary and to assess your organization's accessibility for communication, please use the Communication Access Checklist in your resources.

If you want a certificate of attendance, please complete the feedback form on the next slide and then test your understanding of communication access by taking a short quiz.

For more information and videos please go to our e-learning resources at <http://www.communication-access.org/>

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