

Physical

Physical disabilities include a range of functional limitations from minor difficulties in moving or coordinating one part of the body, through muscle weakness, tremors, and paralysis. Physical disabilities can be congenital such as Muscular Dystrophy; or acquired, such as tendonitis. A physical disability may affect an individual's ability to:

- Perform manual tasks such as holding a pen, turning a key or gripping a door knob
- Move around independently
- Control the speed or coordination of movements
- Reach, pull or manipulate objects
- Have strength or endurance



Tips for Customer Service:

- Wheelchairs and other mobility devices are part of a person's personal space, don't touch, move or lean on them.
- Keep ramps and corridors free of clutter
- If a counter is too high or wide, step around it to provide service
- Provide seating for those that cannot stand in line



Hearing



Hearing loss can cause problems in distinguishing certain frequencies, sounds or words. A person who is deaf, deafened or hard of hearing may be unable to:

- Use a public telephone
- Understand speech in noisy environments
- Pronounce words clearly enough to be understood by strangers

Tips for Customer Service:

- Deaf people may use a sign language interpreter to communicate. Always direct your attention to the Deaf person not the Interpreter.
- If necessary, write notes back and forth to share information.
- Face the person and keep your hands and other objects away from your face and mouth.
- Don't shout
- Speak clearly



Vision

Vision disabilities range from slightly reduced visual acuity to total blindness. Vision loss can result in:

- Difficulty reading or seeing faces
- Difficulty maneuvering in unfamiliar places
- Inability to differentiate colours or distances
- A narrow field of vision
- The need for bright light or contrast
- Night blindness



Tips for Customer Service:

- Verbally identify yourself before making physical contact
- If the person uses a service animal do not touch or approach the animal, it is working.
- Verbally describe the setting, form, and location as necessary
- Offer your arm to guide the person. Do not grab or pull.

Speech



Speech disabilities involve the partial or total loss of the ability to speak. Typical disabilities include problems with:

- Pronunciation
- Pitch and loudness
- Hoarseness or breathiness
- Stuttering or slurring

Tips for Customer Service:

- If possible communicate in a quiet environment.
- Give the person your full attention. Don't interrupt or finish their sentences.
- Ask them to repeat as necessary or to write their message.



Deaf-Blindness



Deaf-Blindness is a combination of hearing and vision loss. The result for a person who is deaf-blind is significant difficulty accessing information and performing daily activities.

Deaf-blindness interferes with communication, learning, orientation and mobility. People who are deaf-blind communicate using various sign language systems, Braille, telephone devices, communication boards and any combination thereof.

Many people who are deaf-blind use the services of an Intervener who relay information and facilitate auditory and visual information and act as sighted guides. The Intervener will sign on the individuals hand.

Tips for Customer Service:

- Direct your attention to your customer not the Intervener.
- Understand that communication can take some time, please be patient.



Mental Health



Mental Health disabilities include a range of disorders however there are three main types of mental health disability:

- Anxiety
- Mood
- Behavioral

People with mental health disabilities may seem edgy or irritated; act aggressively; be perceived as pushy or abrupt; be unable to make a decision; start laughing or get angry for no apparent reason.

Tips for Customer Service:

- Treat each person as an individual. Ask what would make him/her the most comfortable and respect his/her needs to the maximum extent possible.
- Try to reduce stress and anxiety in situations.
- Stay calm and courteous, even if the customer exhibits unusual behavior, focus on the service they need and how you can help.
- Take client away from situation, noise and distractions to facilitate one on one service.



Learning

Learning disabilities include a range of disorders that effect verbal and non-verbal information acquisition, retention, understanding and processing. People with a learning disability have average or above average intelligence, but take in and process information and express knowledge in different ways. Learning disabilities can result in difficulties in reading, problem solving, time management, way finding and processing information.



Tips for Customer Service:

- Learning disabilities are generally invisible and ability to function varies greatly. Respond to any requests for verbal information, assistance in filling in forms and so on with courtesy.
- Allow extra time to complete tasks if necessary.

Intellectual

Intellectual disabilities affect a person's ability to think and reason. It may be caused by genetic factors such as Downs Syndrome, exposure to environmental toxins, such as Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, brain trauma or psychiatric disorders. A person with an intellectual disorder may have difficulty with:

- Understanding spoken and written information
- Conceptual information
- Perception of sensory information
- Memory



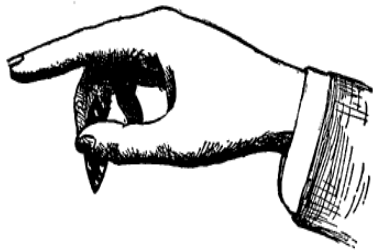
Tips for Customer Service:

- Use clear, simple language
- Be prepared to explain and provide examples regarding information
- Remember that the person is an adult and unless you are informed otherwise, can make their own decisions
- Be patient and verify your understanding



Sensory

Smell disabilities can involve the inability to sense smells or a hypersensitivity to odors and smells. A person with a smelling disability may have allergies to certain odors, scents or chemicals or may be unable to identify dangerous gases, smoke, fumes and spoiled food.



Touch disabilities can affect a person's ability to sense texture, temperature, vibration or pressure. Touch sensations may be reduced or heightened resulting in a hypersensitivity to touch, temperature, or the opposite, numbness and the inability to feel touch sensations

Taste disabilities can limit the experience of the four primary taste sensations; sweet, bitter, salty and sour. A person with a taste disability may be unable to identify spoiled food or noxious substances.



Other

Other disabilities result from a range of other conditions, accidents, illnesses and diseases including ALS, asthma, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDs, environmental sensitivities, seizure disorders, heart disease, stroke and joint replacement.

Temporary

Temporary disabilities result from a range of other conditions, accidents, seizure disorders, heart disease, stroke and joint replacement are a few examples.