



**The Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities  
Act, 2005 (AODA)**

**Customer Service:  
What You Need to Know!**

**A brochure for  
St. Clair Township Staff**

Please read, complete the enclosed  
Quiz, and return the signed quiz to John Rodey





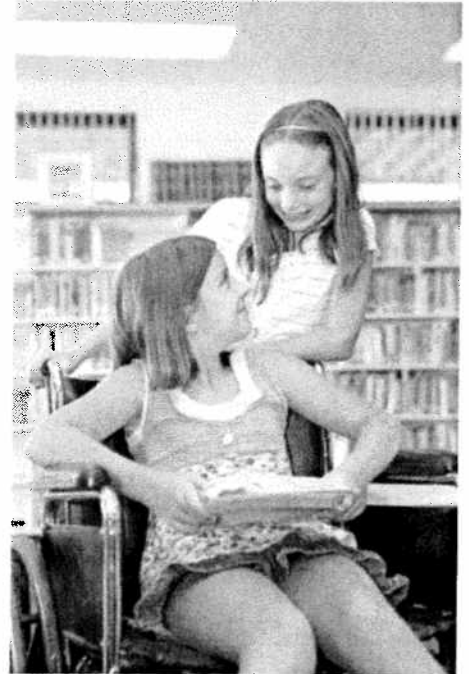
## AODA Customer Service Training

Welcome to the Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act (or AODA) customer service training package.

This brochure is designed to provide St. Clair Township employees who have limited contact with the public and are not managers or supervisors with the training required under the AODA.

The purpose of the Township policy is:

**“To ensure all St. Clair Township programs and services are accessible to everyone in the community in accordance with Ontario legislation....”**



## You know someone with a disability!



This legislation will make Ontario a better place for all people but especially those with a disability. Every day you interact with someone who has a disability. Do you know how to make their experience positive?

What services do you deliver to the public? Can you think of ways that we can be more accessible? Share with your supervisor!

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Who do you know who has a disability? What challenges do they face?

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Do you have any assisted devices in your workplace (elevators, adapted phones, lifts)? Do you know how to use them? How will you learn how to use them?

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Think of all the people you know with disabilities, including heart disease, arthritis, diabetes, mental health challenges, visible and invisible disabilities. Now, do you think 15% of our population have disabilities? Is this a high or low estimate? How many people do you think will have a disability at some time in their life?

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## Objectives of this brochure

Readers will

- Understand the purposes of AODA and the requirements of the customer service standard
- Learn how to interact and communicate with people with disabilities
- Learn how to interact with people who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide dog, other service animal, or support person
- Learn how to use equipment or devices available at your premises or that you provide (i.e. TTY telephones, elevators, lifts, accessible interactive kiosks, etc.)
- Learn what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services.



## People with Disabilities:

- Approximately 1.8 million Ontarians (15.5%) live with a disability.
- This is increasing as the population gets older
- In 2026 approximately 16% of people in Canada will have a disability

## The Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)



The purposes of the AODA are:

- To achieve a fully accessible Ontario by 2025
- Develop accessibility standards
- Enforce the standards
- The AODA will apply to public & private sectors.

## Customer Service Standards

Municipalities must comply by January 2010 with:

- Accessible customer service policy, procedures and practices
- Staff training
- A feedback method
- Alternate communication methods
- Notice of service disruption

## Principles of Accessible Customer Service

Positive customer service for people with disabilities is based on principles of:

- Respect,
- Dignity
- Independence.
- Equal opportunity and
- Integration

## Terminology IS Important!

When referring to someone with a disability it is extremely important that you put the person **FIRST!** It is

- a person with a physical disability
- a person with a hearing impairment
- a person with a vision impairment



What kind of service disruption could you incur in your facility?  
how will you notify the public?

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Would any of these principles of accessible customer service be problematic in your workplace? Why? How can this be addressed?

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A physical barrier in your workplace is:

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A information / communication barrier in your workplace is:

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An attitudinal barrier in your workplace is:

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A technological barrier in your workplace is:

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A barrier caused by policy or practice in your workplace is:

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# Barriers can be:



**Physical**

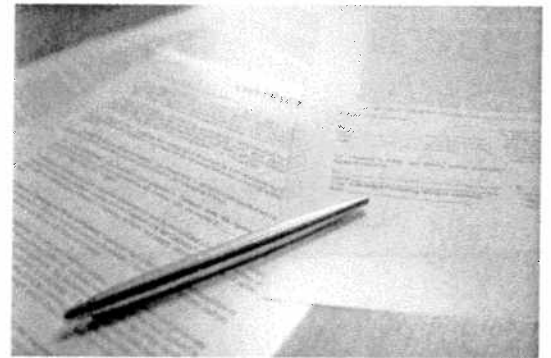


**Information / Communicational**

**Attitudinal**

**Technological or  
a Policy or**

**Practice**



**Disabilities may be  
invisible!**

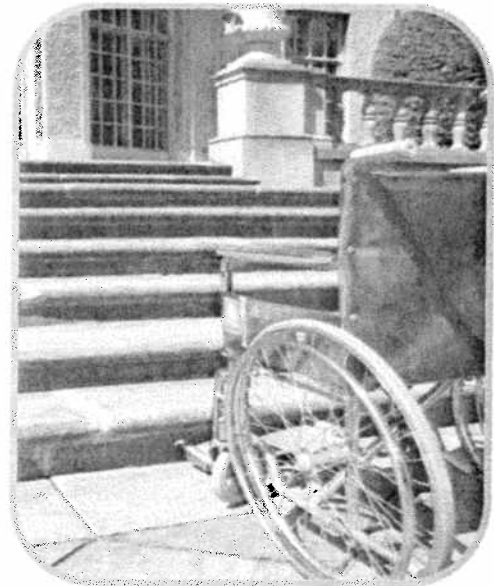


**visible or**

## Tips for Customer Service: Persons with Physical Disabilities

**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

Persons with physical disabilities will have the following challenges in my workplace.

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I can assist them in the following way:

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Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing will have the following challenges in my workplace.

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## Tips for Customer Service: Persons who are deaf or hard of 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 person who is deaf 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.
- Speak clearly and don't shout!



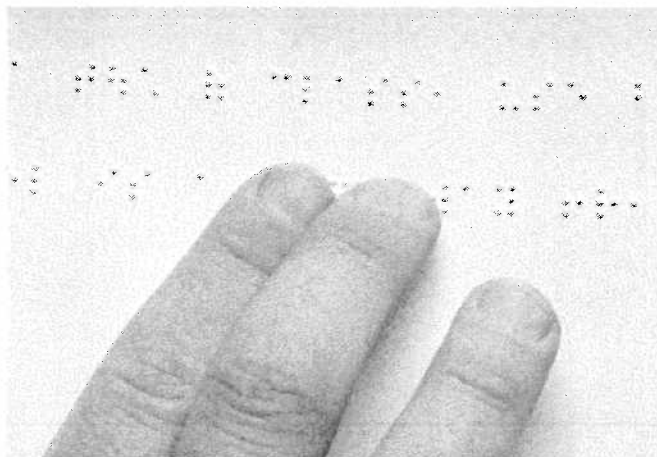


## **Tips for Customer Service: For Persons who are blind or have visual impairment**

**Vision** disabilities range from slightly reduced visual acuity to total blindness.

Vision loss can result in:

- Difficulty reading or seeing faces
- Difficulty manoeuvring 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.

Persons with speech disabilities will have the following challenges in my workplace.

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## Tips for Customer Service For Persons with Speech disabilities:

**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
- Speech



## 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.
- Verify your understanding

People who are deaf-blind face the following challenges in my workplace.

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## Tips for Customer Service: Persons who are deaf-blind

**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 individual's hand.

### Tips for Customer Service

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



Photo of deaf-blind campers talking at Enchanted Hills Camp, a program of the LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Persons with mental health disabilities will have the following challenges in my workplace.

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## Tips for Customer Service for Persons with Mental Health Disabilities

**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 Services for Persons with Mental Health disabilities

- 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.

# Tips for Customer Service for Persons with Learning Disabilities

**Learning disabilities** include a range of disorders that effect verbal and non-verbal information acquisition, retention, understanding and processing.

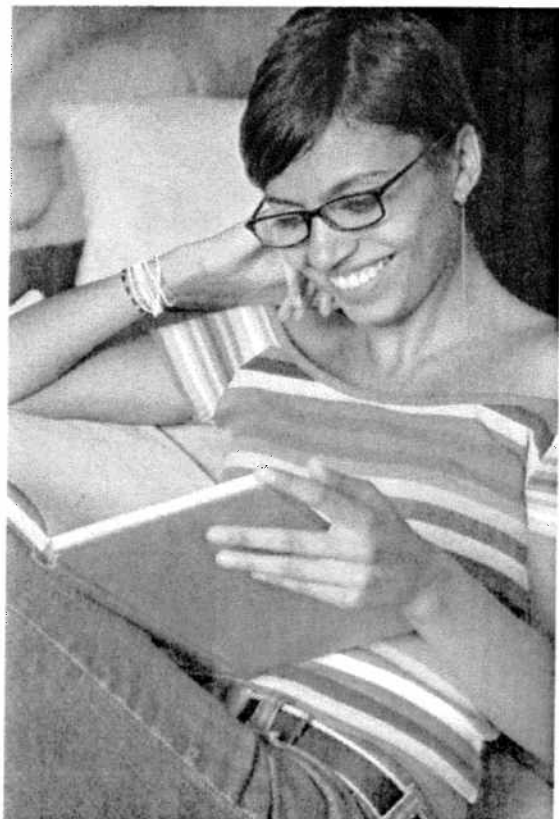
People with a learning disability have average or above average intelligence, but take in and process information and express knowledge in different ways.

Learning disabilities can result in difficulties in reading, problem solving, time management, way finding and processing information.

## Tips for Customer Service for Persons with Learning Disabilities

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.



Persons with learning disabilities will have the following challenges in my workplace.

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## Tips for Customer Service for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

**Intellectual disabilities** affect a person's ability to think and reason. It may be caused by genetic factors such as Down's 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

Persons with intellectual disabilities will face the following challenges in our workplace:

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## Other Disabilities

**Sensory Disabilities** can involve the ability to smell touch or taste.

- A person with a smelling disability or hypersensitivity to odours and smells may have allergies or may be unable to identify dangerous gases, smoke, fumes and spoiled food.
- A person with touch disabilities could be hypersensitive to touch temperature or have numbness and the inability to feel sensations.
- A person with taste disabilities may be unable to taste and unable to identify spoiled or noxious substances



**Other disabilities** can 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 disabilities** can result from a range of conditions, or accidents including heart disease or joint replacement.

**Remember: Everyone can benefit from your attentive care.  
Your first question should ALWAYS be,  
*“How can I help you***



Are there any circumstances where it would not be possible to have service animals in my workplace? What law prohibits them? How will I provide alternate accommodation?

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Do you charge a fee that will be waived for a support person?

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## Service Animals and Support Persons in St. Clair Township Facilities

**Service Animals** accompanying persons with disabilities are welcome on St. Clair Township premises unless the animal is excluded by law. If a service animal is forbidden by law, staff should ensure that the person accesses our services with alternate assistance.



A service animal is in service when it is apparent that the animal is being used for reasons related to a person's disability; or the person provides a letter from a doctor or nurse confirming that the animal is required for reasons relating to a disability. A service animal may be a cat, bird, monkey or other animal, not just a dog.



**Support persons** assisting a person with a disability may be:

- a paid professional,
- volunteer,
- family member or
- friend.

An accompanying support person can access Township facilities at **no charge** where there is a regular fee.



**Please Complete the following Quiz, sign the form below and return the completed signed form to John Rodey**

1. Match the following statements:

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| a. AODA             | 1. One of the principles of Accessible Customer Service |
| b. Dignity          | 2. A combination of vision and hearing loss             |
| c. Assistive Device | 3. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act    |
| d. Deaf-blind       | 4. ASL Interpreter                                      |

2. Circle the right answer:

Physical disabilities are always visible. True or False

People with learning disabilities generally have average to above average intelligence. True or False

If I encounter a person with a hearing disability I should speak slowly and loudly. True or False

You can usually tell if a person has a disability and determine what they can manage to do. True or False

If I think that a person has a disability of some kind, I should ask how I can help. True or False

Its okay to talk to a service animal you just can't touch them. True or False

**Pick the best answer from the list given:**

The four principles of Accessible Customer Service are:

- a) Equal Opportunity, Independence, Dignity and Integration
- b) Special Attention, Admiration, Praise and Appreciation
- c) Accessible, Fast, Standardized, Simplified

A person with a learning disability cannot:

- a) Be employed
- b) Understand simple directions
- c) Read
- d) None of the above

A person with a physical disability:

- a) Will always have an accessible parking permit
- b) May have periods of reduced mobility, depending on the condition
- c) Will always use a wheelchair, scooter, cane or scooter to get around

Asthma, Diabetes, HIV/AIDs and environmental sensitivities are:

- a) Not really disabilities. Just diseases a person needs to live with.
- b) Disabilities that impact how a person lives day to day
- c) Not a disability as defined in the AODA

Accessible Customer Service means that I have to:

- a) Determine who is disabled and how I have to serve them
- b) Provide notice if a service is going to be unavailable
- c) Learn how to communicate in sign language
- d) All of the above

A person who has informed me that they have manic- depression can be called:

- a) A mentally ill person
- b) A mental patient
- c) Insane
- d) A person with a mental health disability

**After reading through all of the information provided and completing the quiz I feel that I understand the content and know how to implement Accessible Customer Service to all.**

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Name (printed)

Signature

Department

Date