

## ALL ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD HAVE

- policies and practices for communication access
- staff who are trained to communicate with us

## ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Communication is important in all situations. However, effective communication is critical within health care, emergency, police, legal and justice services.

In addition to what all services should have, we want essential services to:

- Know how and when to engage a trained communication assistant, if we require one to support us communicating
- Have access to emergency picture, alphabet boards and other low tech communication tools
- Include people with speech and language disabilities on their accessibility committees

*"In critical situations, I may want a trained communication assistant to make sure people understand my messages. You can find people to assist with communication on the CDAC database".*

Colin Phillips, PhD



## COMMUNICATION ACCESS

Take our online courses about communication access by going to [courses.cdacanada.com](http://courses.cdacanada.com)

### YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT:

- Communicating with a person who has a speech and language disability
- Negotiating a person's communication access needs
- Supporting a person to understand what you are saying
- Making telephone services accessible
- Making meetings and forums accessible
- Using the communication assistance database
- Making websites, e-communications and forms accessible

### COMMUNICATION ASSISTANCE DATABASE

Go to [database.cdacanada.com](http://database.cdacanada.com)

Communication Disabilities Access Canada (CDAC) is a national, non-profit organization.

CDAC promotes human rights, accessibility and inclusion for people who have speech and language disabilities.

[www.cdacanada.com](http://www.cdacanada.com)



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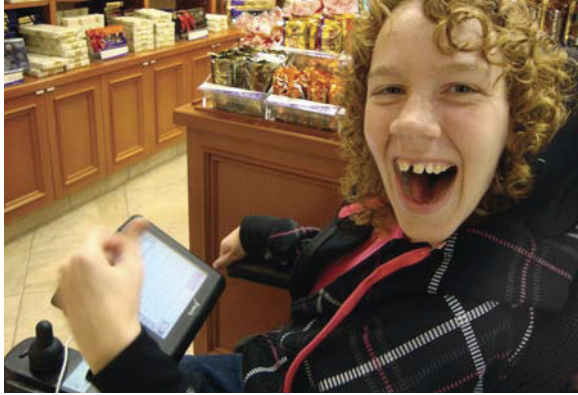
CDAC is a Registered Charity 87160 1712 RR0001

# ACCESSIBILITY INCLUDES COMMUNICATION



FOR PEOPLE WHO  
HAVE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE  
DISABILITIES





Over half a million Canadians have communication disabilities that are not caused by a hearing loss.

We may have cerebral palsy, autism spectrum disorder, cognitive disability, acquired brain injury, aphasia, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis or other conditions.

## We communicate in different ways

- Some of us have speech that may be difficult for you to understand.
- Some of us communicate using communication boards, devices or human assistance.
- Some of us may also have difficulty understanding what you are saying.

Like everyone, we have a legal right to access your business and services.

## We cannot use your services if you:

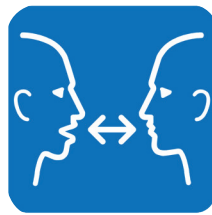
- are afraid to talk to us
- underestimate our abilities
- do not know how to communicate with us

*"My greatest barriers are people who think that because I can't speak, I cannot understand what they are saying or I am incapable of making my own decisions. Having a speech disability does not mean that I can't hear and understand".*

Jess Weber, Disability Advocate

## COMMUNICATION ACCESS MEANS

- understanding what you are saying
- having you understand our messages
- using the communication methods that work best for us
- having the supports we need to communicate at meetings, public forums and over the telephone
- reading and understanding your written information
- signing your documents and completing forms in ways that are accessible for us



Communication access is about what you can do to effectively communicate with us when we use your business or service.

*"I have aphasia after a stroke. It affects how I speak and sometimes I have difficulty processing what people are saying. For me, access is having someone who can assist me understanding what other people are saying and who can make sure I get to express my opinions".*

Dr. Kaufmann, Retired.



## THINGS YOU CAN DO

Everyone is different and has different accessibility needs. Here are some simple communication tips to get you started.

- Talk directly to us, not just the person with us
- Do not underestimate our abilities
- Speak in a normal tone and volume and not in a childish way
- Assume we understand, unless we tell you otherwise
- Ask what you can do when communicating with us
- If you do not know how we communicate "Yes" and "No", ask us to show you
- Watch and listen as we may use speech, body language, a communication board, device or human assistance
- Be patient. It takes us longer to communicate. We may need extra time at an appointment
- Tell us if you don't understand. We may want to repeat or change our message. Sometimes it helps to move to a quiet place so that you can focus on what we are communicating
- If we have difficulty understanding what you are saying, use everyday language, speak clearly or show us what you are talking about
- Give us trained communication assistants, if we need them to communicate at a meeting or when using your service
- Ask if we need assistance to read your materials, complete forms, take notes or sign your documents