Disability Awareness & Sensitivity Training

Presented by the Richmond Centre for Disability

2013 – Presentation to Service Providers
Aims of Presentation

- To promote an understanding of disability issues
- To encourage service providers to focus on individual, not the disability
- To develop an understanding of appropriate and effective ways of interaction
- To foster an understanding of the ways to meet the needs of people with disabilities
Canada has a population of close to 33.5 million*

14% reported a disability that restricted daily living activities and needed access to products and services which would assist them in their daily lives

That means, 1 in 7 Canadians has some form of disability

*2011 Census Profile
Global Statistics

- 1 in 6.5 British Columbian has some form of disability (16%)
- 1 in 6 people in North America has some form of disability (17%)
- 1 in 5 people living in extreme poverty in the world has some form of disability (20%)

Statistics Canada PALS 2006 Data
Canada Disability Profile

- 10.5% of Canadian adults aged 15 or over have mobility challenges
- 10% have pain-related disability
- 4.4% reported having a hearing-related disability
- 2.5% have vision difficulties
- 1.5% have speech related disabilities

Statistics Canada PALS 2006 Data
Senior Statistics

- Seniors have the highest rate of disabilities (more than 40% among persons aged 65 or over)
- In 2011*, 1 in 7 Canadians was aged 65 or over
- In 2026, 1 in 5 Canadians will have reached age 65

Statistics Canada PALS 2006 Data
*2011 Census Profile
Who can “They” be?

- Moms and Dads; Sons and Daughters
- Employers and Employees
- Friends and Neighbours
- Students and Teachers
- Service Providers and Customers
- Scientists, Doctors, Actors, Presidents and more

**THEY ARE PEOPLE**
## Some Famous People with Disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Disability or Health Condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agatha Christie</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Epilepsy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beethoven</td>
<td>Composer</td>
<td>Hearing Loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher Reeves</td>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>Quadriplegia</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Helfgott</td>
<td>Pianist</td>
<td>Mental Illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin Roosevelt</td>
<td>US President</td>
<td>Polio</td>
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<td>Napoleon I</td>
<td>French Emporer</td>
<td>Epilepsy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray Charles</td>
<td>Singer</td>
<td>Vision Loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steady Eddie</td>
<td>Comedian &amp; Actor</td>
<td>Cerebral Palsy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Cruise</td>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>Dyslexia</td>
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Visible vs. Non-visible Disabilities

**Visible**
- Use wheelchair or some type of aid to move around
- Motor impairments
- A physical difference
- Assistance from other or service animals

**Invisible**
- Hearing loss
- Speech impediments
- Vision loss
- Cognitive or learning disability
Most Disabilities are Non-visible Health Conditions

- Asthma
- Arthritis
- Epilepsy
- Diabetes
- Chronic Pain
- Dyslexia
- ADD/ADDH
- Depression
- HIV/AIDS
- Eating Disorder/Anorexia
- Lupus
- Learning Disability
- Heart Disease

Richmond Centre for Disability
Defining Disability...

A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the daily living activities

For example –

walking, thinking, understanding, seeing, speaking or hearing
Useful Definitions

- **Impairment** – any loss or abnormality of bodily function, whether physiological, psychological or anatomical
  An organic damage; a medical condition

- **Disability** – a restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in a normal manner, resulting from an impairment
  Limitations of performing normal activities

- **Barrier** – the difficulty or disadvantage an individual may have when functioning in an environment
  Participation restrictions
Examples

What is the IMPAIRMENT, DISABILITY, BARRIER?

を持っていると、彼は車椅子を用いています。

- Spinal cord injury Cannot walk
  stairs, no ramp, no curb cut, things put too high

- A person had a stroke and the part of the brain for speech is damaged; he has slurring speech.

  Stroke Cannot talk clearly Communication
Barriers for People with Disabilities

People with disabilities may not need assistance until their environment presents barriers.
How to Remove Barriers?

Barrier-free

Barrier-free
The greatest barriers individuals with disabilities have faced for decades and continue to face today are **attitudinal barriers**.
Common Attitudinal Barriers

- Inferiority
- Pity
- Hero Worship
- Ignorance
- Spread Effect
- Stereotypes
- Backlash
- Denial
- Fear
The way we think can create either a positive view of people with disabilities, or it can reinforce common myths & misconceptions.
Myths & Misconceptions

- Our beliefs guide how we view and treat people with disabilities
- A lot of beliefs are based on inaccurate or insufficient information
- Myths and misconception can perpetuate inappropriate actions and interactions
Myths

People with disabilities are viewed as

- Victims or object of pity
- Burdens on society or on family
- A threat to the comfort and safety of others
- Having multiple disabilities
- Childlike or “Special”
Misconceptions

- Disability is contagious
- Having a disability is punishment for “bad” people
- People with disabilities are “sick”
- People with disabilities need constant care
- People with disabilities are all bitter and grumpy
Discussion

If our belief is based on some misconceptions or myths, what are some inappropriate actions or interactions that may happen?
Remove Barriers

Just **TALK**

- **T**ake the time
- **A**sk, don’t assume
- **L**isten attentively
- **K**now the person’s needs and act upon them
A Way with Words

The words we use to describe someone who has a disability is very important. It can cause harm to the person's self esteem and self image, or it can enhance it.
Handicapped vs. Disability

“Handicap” means “hand in his cap” for loser in an old English bartering game, and was thought to be at a disadvantage.

Legendary origin refers to a person with a disability begging with his “cap in his hand”
A Way with Words

It is not just a matter of semantics, or being “politically correct”; the language we use reflects how we see and feel about People with Disability.
Portrayal Issues

- Relate stereotypical or negative image of people with disabilities
- Use phrases and words that demean individuals with disabilities
- Portray people with disabilities in the same dimensional fashion as others, no individuality in a group designation
- Focus on disability not the person, e.g. “disabled or handicapped person”
People First Language

- People with disability are people; people without disability are also people – they are all people first.
- People First Language puts the person before the disability and describes what a person has, not who a person is.
- Words like “the disabled” do not reflect the individuality, equality or dignity of people with disabilities.
Why People First?

- Are you “myopic”? or
  Do you wear glasses?
- Are you “cancerous”? or
  Do you have cancer?
- Is a person “handicapped/disabled”? or
  Does he/she have a disability?
People First Language

Words to Watch
- Abnormal
- Afflicted with ...
- Birth defect or deformity
- Blind (the); the visual impaired
- Confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound
- Cripple; crippled
- Disabled (the)

Acceptable Terms
- Specify the “disability”
- The person has … (the disability)
- The person has a disability since birth
- A person who is blind; or person with vision loss
- A person who uses a wheelchair; or a wheelchair user
- A person with a physical disability
- People with disability; the disability community
### People First Language

#### Words to Watch
- Deaf (the); deaf and dumb
- Epileptic; fits, attack
- Handicapped (the)
- Insane, lunatic, maniac, mental patient, psychotic
- Invalid
- Mentally retarded; feeble minded, moron
- Mongol; he is Downs

#### Acceptable Terms
- People with hearing loss or impairment; a person who is deaf
- A person with epilepsy or seizure
- People with disability
- A person with a psychiatric disability or a specific condition
- A person with a disability
- A person with a cognitive or an intellectual disability
- He has Down Syndrome
People First Language

Words to Watch
- Normal; able-bodied
- Patient (other than in the context of doctor/patient relationship or in hospital)
- Physically/Intellectually/Vertically challenged; differently abled
- She has a problem with
- Suffer from; sufferer; stricken with

Acceptable Terms
- People without disability
- People with disability
- Person with a disability
- She needs or she has a need for
- Person with a disability
Interacting with People with Disabilities

Golden Rule:

It’s Common Courtesy!

Common sense &

simple sensitivity
Common Sense

- Every person is **UNIQUE** and has different needs
- Be **UNDERSTANDING**
- Show **RESPECT**
- **PERSON FIRST**, disability second (or culture, gender, colour, etc.)
- **EMPATHY**, not sympathy
Simple Sensitivity

Do not categorize or generalize a person’s disability; **DO NOT ASSUME**

Find a good way to communicate – **LISTEN CAREFULLY**

**ACT UPON WHAT YOU HEAR,** not what you think or what you want
Simple Sensitivity

- Do not treat people as though they are sick, or unable to do anything
- Speak directly to the person, not to their caregiver or other third party such as interpreter
- Treat people in a manner that is appropriate of their age; do not talk to adult like they are children
Good Customer Service

- Listen to what customers say; do not assume you know what they want or what is best for them
- Be yourself, be natural; do not patronize; do not force enthusiasm or be inappropriately solicitous
- Active listening, customer-centered and with a focus on outcome – to make the sale
Assisting People with Disabilities

What are the most difficult barriers people with disabilities are facing nowadays?

Sometimes negative attitudes or unconscious misconception will result in impolite or thoughtless act by otherwise well-meaning people.
Basic Disability Awareness

- Do not refer to a person’s disability unless it is relevant; let them mention their disability first.
- Avoid negative or sensational description of one’s disability.
- Treat them with the same respect and consideration that you have for everyone else.
Basic Disability Awareness

- Do not assume people with disabilities need your help; ask before acting
- Make eye contact and speak directly to the person, not through their companion
- Make basic information available in accessible formats: large print, Braille & electronic formats
Basic Disability Awareness

- Avoid actions and words that suggest the person should be treated differently. It is alright to invite a person in a wheelchair to “go for a walk” or ask a blind person if she “sees what you mean.”

- Extend common courtesies to people with disabilities as you would anyone else such as shaking hands or hand over business card.
Assisting People with Disabilities

People with disabilities expect to be treated with the same respect and dignity as other individuals, regardless of their disability.
People with Vision Loss

- What is the impairment?
- What is the disability?
- What is the barrier?

Accessible services available for people with vision loss
People with Vision Loss

- Profound blindness – unable to count fingers at a distance of 3 metres or less
- Severe low vision – unable to count fingers at a distance of 6 metres or less
- Legally blind – unable to see something at 6 metres that a person with full vision could see at 60 metres
Functional Limitations

- Unable to read leading to slower understanding and learning
- Unable to see leading to restrictions on mobility and some safety issues
- Unable to take note of visual cues leading to lower effectiveness in communication
- Only 10% of people with vision loss are totally blind; do not assume they cannot see at all
Tips for Interaction

- Make your presence known, and include other people if appropriate
- Speak directly to the person in normal tone, use their names
- Ask and wait for permission to offer assistance
- Do not pet service animal on duty; if the harness is on, the animal is working
Tips for Interaction

- When asked to guide, do not push or steer; or grab their arms or take over their dog’s harness.
- Describe surrounding of barriers, step, slope and other objects; be specific.
- In dangerous situations say “stop” rather than “look out.”
Tips for Interaction

- Be thoughtful and considerate such as offer individual orientation, make a tactile map, keep pathway clear of objects, avoid hanging signs too low, be consistent with signage, etc.

- Use large print signage with strong colour contrast

- Offer to read written information when appropriate
Demonstration

Safely guiding a person with vision impairment

- Walking together abreast
- Going along a narrow hallway
- Going up a flight of stairs
- Opening a door
- Getting into a car
People with Mobility Challenges

- What is the impairment?
- What is the disability?
- What is the barrier?

Accessible services available for people with physical disabilities
People with Mobility Challenges

- Accidents can result in spinal cord injury, amputation and acquired brain injury.
- Medical conditions such as cerebral palsy, spina bifida, muscular skeletal disorders, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, stroke, post-polio syndrome, hereditary conditions, exposure to drugs or chemicals, etc.
Functional Limitations

- Limited control of some or all voluntary muscles leads to restriction in walking, standing or movement coordination.
- Damaged nervous systems lead to reduced control of smooth muscles, distorted sensory feelings, incontinence, breathing, swallowing or speaking difficulties, etc.
- Dysfunctional joints leads to pain, fatigue and less mobile.
Tips for Interaction

- Speak directly and normally to the person
- Ask before giving assistance, even when the person seems to be in need of help
- Accept the person’s right to refuse help
- Do not push or lean on the wheelchair without permission
Tips for Interaction

- Consider sitting down to conduct conversation at eye level
- Take steps to ensure needed things are within reach, or to rearrange furniture to allow more space
- Be considerate of physical barriers or their mobility limitations
**Tips for Interaction**

- If you work with people with physical disability, learn how to push a wheelchair, how to get up and down steps, how to tip it backwards, how to use the brake and how not to lift by the arm rests or the wheels.

- Pay attention to universal design and remember basic accessibility standards are really the bare minimum.
Demonstration & Discussion

- Practice assisting someone in a wheelchair
- What are the accessible features in an accessible washroom?
People who are Hard of Hearing

- What is the impairment?
- What is the disability?
- What is the barrier?

Accessible services available for people with hearing loss
People who are Hard of Hearing

- Mild hearing impairment – may not even be aware of inability to hear certain sounds
- Moderate hearing impairment – may cause hearing difficulty in some situations such as loud background noise
- Severe hearing impairment - extreme limited hearing or no hearing, cannot hear low tone or telephone or smoke detector
Functional Limitations

- Unable to hear leading to slower understanding and responding
- Unable to follow speech leading to decreased confidence in communication
- Unable to hear from birth or young age leading to some speech impediments
- Hearing impairment is a varied and complex disability
Tips for Interaction

- Make eye contact, face the person
- Attract their attention by waving your hand or a gentle tap
- Let them take the lead how to communicate – sign, lip read or write
- Let them set the pace of conversation
- Always ask how you can help
Tips for Interaction

- Speak slowly and clearly; do not shout
- Simplify your sentence and use more facial expression and body language
- Pay attention to light and noise level and your hand gesture
- Do not walk away or turn away while talking to them
Tips for Interaction

- Speak to the person, not their interpreter even if one is present
- Completely ignore and do not touch service animal
- If necessary, use pen and paper
- Their first language may be “Sign Language”
Discussion

Buildings do not usually need to be specially modified to conform with the requirements of people with hearing loss

- Discuss some building designs that may benefit and accommodate people who are hard of hearing
People with Cognitive Disabilities

- What is the impairment?
- What is the disability?
- What is the barrier?
Functional Limitations

- Have difficulty with both expressive and receptive language
- Have difficulty in learning and concentrating
- May display behaviours that would appear to be inappropriate
- May be unable to read or write
- May have difficulty in participating in group settings
Tips for Interaction

- Do not assume what a person can or cannot do
- Use simple words and short sentences, do not use complex terminology or jargon
- Give one piece of information at a time
- Speak directly to the person, not the companion
- Stay focused and allow more time for communication
Tips for Interaction

- Identify yourself and make it clear that you are there to assist.
- If you are not understood, find other words or ways.
- If you do not understand, do not pretend you do, ask again.
- Use demonstration & visual cues.
- Be considerate without being patronizing.
Tips for Interaction

- Do not be offended by a lack of response or unconventional behaviour
- Address any inappropriate behaviour immediately; explain any rules or regulation and point out the acceptable behaviour parameters
- Determine what they want and how best to deliver service by consulting with them
Discussion

- What are some of the inappropriate behaviours displayed by people with intellectual disability?
- How can we address these inappropriate behaviours?
People with Mental Illness

- What is the **impairment**?
- What is the **disability**?
- What is the **barrier**?
People with Mental Illness

- Mental illness is a medical condition
- Genetic or biochemical factors have been identified as the cause
- Trigger is unknown; stress may be a factor
- Psychiatric disability can fluctuate and is a result of an intermittent and episodic process
- Not all people who have a mental illness will develop a psychiatric disability
Facts about Mental Illness

- 20% of Canadians will experience a mental illness at some stage in their lives.
- Condition can be transient but recurring, or happens just once and fully recover.
- Many people with mental illness say that overcoming the stigma attached to the illness can be more daunting than coping with and overcoming the illness itself.
Tips for Interaction

- Use clear and straightforward language
- Check that the person understands; repeat in different words if necessary
- Take seriously the emotional concerns the person is presenting
- Recognize the stress level and try to help the person to calm down
Tips for Interaction

- Be clear about the function or role of your service
- Eliminate physical or sensory barriers which may be causing a problem
- If possible, try to relocate the person to an area where there are fewer onlookers
- If the request is beyond your control, ask the person how you can best help
Discussion

- Identify some potential stressful situations and events which people using your service may encounter.

- How will you handle the situation?
People with Speech Impediment

People with Learning Disability

People who are Autistic
People with Speech Impediment

- Do not finish their sentences for them; allow them time to finish
- Do not pretend to understand, ask politely to repeat or rephrase
- If appropriate, ask question that can be answered “YES” or “NO”
- Do not assume the person has other disabilities
- PATIENCE, PATIENCE, PATIENCE
People with Learning Disability

- Put instruction and information in writing, or use video instruction
- Use hands on training
- Break down tasks into line items with check boxes
- Take time to understand the person’s special needs
- Remember the person has normal intelligence
People who are Autistic

- Tell them, they don’t hear
- They hear, but don’t understand
- They understand, but don’t agree
- They agree, but don’t comply
- They comply, but don’t do well
Planning is essential to minimize problems
An understanding, knowledgeable and empathetic service provider makes life easier
Gather information and share experience among peers
Take Disability Awareness & Sensitivity Training
Take refresher training at regular intervals
Don’t be Discouraged
Keep Trying!

When mistakes are made, apologize, correct the problem, learn from the mistake and move on
Persons with disabilities can be empowered and supported to have full participation by \textbf{Removal of Barriers!}
Persons with disabilities can be independent and self-sufficient to the best of their ability with Accommodations & Adaptive Methods!
EQUALITY IS

- Sometimes equality means treating people the same despite their differences
- Sometimes it means treating them as equal by accommodating their differences

The Honourable Madam Justice
Rosalie Siberman Abella
The Supreme Court of Canada
THANK YOU!!

RICHMOND CENTRE FOR DISABILITY
100-5671 No. 3 Road
Richmond, BC   V6X 2C7
☎ 604-232-2404  🌐 www.rcdrichmond.org