

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

On Disability Inclusion

What Should I Do If...



A person with a disability shows up unexpectedly at my class or facility?

- Welcome them, give a positive example to the rest of the group
- Make no assumptions, you can probably make this work!
- Ask what they are hoping for & what experience they have
- Arrange a time to talk one-to-one with the person
- Make quick adaptations e.g. extra space or mats in a yoga class
- Get advice for the longer term

My facility does not make provision for an individual's needs?

- Be honest and open, you are not personally responsible for provision
- Listen to their request, take notes, especially of specific barriers like washrooms or signage. By taking someone seriously you are dissolving one of the main barriers which is attitudes!
- Direct them to sources of information such as RIV (phone no.) and OneAbility (resources page)
- Promise to talk to a supervisor about their needs, and take contact details.
- Suggest other facilities which do make provisions

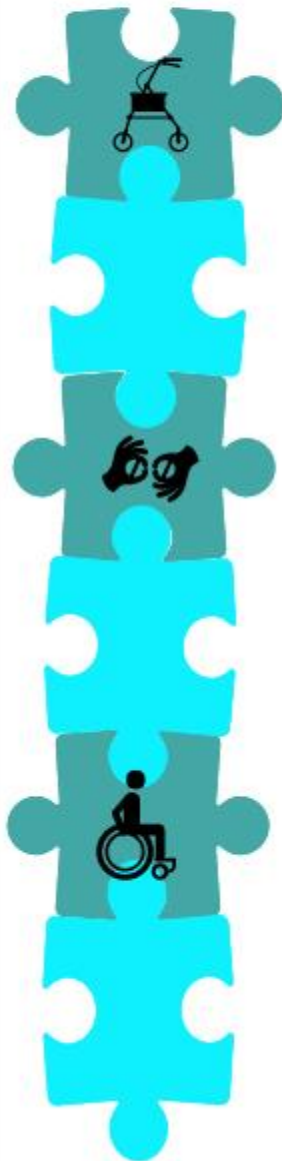
I don't know what language to use when talking to a person with a disability?

- First of all don't worry too much! If you smile, make eye contact and take time to listen then you are doing better than average
- Ask the person if you are not sure
- There is no need to avoid saying 'walk' to a person who uses a wheelchair or 'see' to a person with a visual impairment. We use the same language as everyone!
- For literature and policy there are guidelines (see separate infographic & online resources)

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I feel uncomfortable when talking to a person with a disability

- Don't panic... this will just make the situation more awkward
- Breathe, smile, introduce yourself. These simple steps help end the awkward
- If you are respectful and open there is no 'wrong' thing to do or say
- Focus on the person not their disability. Always consider the potential of a person, not the barriers. Discussion of the sport or activity will also dissolve discomfort
- If you don't know what to say or how to help, say so. The person will guide you
- Later on, think about where the discomfort came from. Was it due to a myth or fear about people with disabilities? How relevant is this myth or fear to the person you met?

I sometimes find it difficult to understand the speech of a person with a disability


- Be honest, say, 'I'm sorry, I don't understand.'
- Ask them how best to communicate, e.g. text, writing
- A carer or support worker may interpret for you, or answer for the client, however make sure you maintain eye contact with the person and don't 'talk over them'
- Always speak in a normal tone (not louder to a hearing impaired person, for example) and at normal speed
- Make suggestions. 'You want to go swimming?' 'You would like to use the gym?'

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I see a need that is not being fulfilled...

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- Talk to your manager(s). There may be training options or groups you could visit (e.g BC Wheelchair Sports, Canucks Autism, PISE Adaptive Fitness) & learn from
 - What could you do? Write a plan. E.g. how can your reception area be made more welcoming to people with disabilities? How can we encourage people with disabilities to use our facility? Action creates momentum!
 - Research the field. You will find help and experienced people who are keen to share their knowledge and understanding
 - Innovate to include!

I don't know how to adapt my activity for people with disabilities

- Identify the issue(s). Is it space? (e.g. you may need to make your pitch smaller). Is it the rules of the game? Is it equipment? Support staff? Ideas?
- Ask the individuals with disabilities for input. Do they need help with transfers? Extra strapping (for stability)? Accessing equipment (e.g. weights)? Balance? Written rules or visual supports?
- Ask for help. It is unlikely that your activity has not been tried by people with disabilities. Call RIV or OneAbility. Also ask around your facility, start a noticeboard or email chain asking for suggestions
- Be creative and look for the potential. This is an opportunity to use and develop your skills.

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I have health and safety and/or risk management concerns

- Remember there is always risk, risk is there to be managed not necessarily minimized, and it is safer to be trained and prepared than it is to react to situations unprepared
- Ask the appropriate staff for training in lifts & transfers, and use of equipment such as pool hoists. Lack of trained staff in these areas should never be a barrier. Training is your 'checks & balance' when managing risk.
- Identify the risk clearly. Many activities carry a risk and require participants to understand this and sign waivers. This is no different from working with able-bodied clients
- Work with the client to understand their needs, e.g. for specific communication, help with balance or mobility, issues of endurance (e.g. extra rest periods), specific triggers such as noise. For clients who do get triggered specific management strategies should be discussed
- If a client is having problems, create calm and space around them. These are not teachable moments!