

Types of Accessibility Barriers and Solutions

Attitudinal barriers may result in people with disabilities being treated differently than people without disabilities.

Attitudinal Barriers	Possible Solutions
Thinking that people with intellectual disabilities are not able to make decisions.	Do not assume what employees or clients with disabilities can or cannot do. Ask them.
Assuming a person who has a speech impairment cannot understand you.	Train staff to interact and communicate with people with different types of disabilities.
Believing a person who has a mental health disability or someone who uses a wheelchair would not be a good employee.	Learn about ways you can accommodate employees with disabilities.
Assuming that a person with vision loss cannot enjoy movies, TV or concerts.	Learn about the different ways and available technologies that help people with vision loss enjoy movies, TV and concerts.
Avoiding a person with a disability for fear of saying the wrong word or offending them.	Train staff to interact and communicate with people with different types of disabilities.
Thinking that every person with a disability will need costly accommodation.	Learn about the types of accommodations for people with disabilities. Many are low cost.

Informational and communication barriers arise when a person with a disability cannot easily receive and/or understand information that is available to others.

Information and Communication Barriers	Possible Solutions
Print that is too small to be read by a person with impaired vision.	Make everyday documents, such as signs and menus, easy to read by making sure the print is legible for most people.
A PowerPoint or slide deck used in a presentation is not accessible to employees with low vision or who have hearing loss.	Develop a template for slide decks using large fonts, high contrast colours and clean layout. Provide a visual description of the slides when making a presentation.
Videos to promote a program or service are not accessible to employees with low vision or who have hearing loss.	Include captions when producing videos. When this is not possible, provide a text transcription of the video.
Brochures, guides and advertisements that are not clear or easily understood.	Use plain language in written materials. Use symbols and pictures to help get your message across. Use sans serif fonts and avoid italics.
Complicated, busy or confusing signs.	Keep signs clean and clear. Make information available in another form, such as a chart or pictogram.
Seating arrangements making it difficult for people who have hearing loss to fully participate in meetings	Arrange seating at a round table to facilitate lip reading. Use assistive listening or amplification devices as appropriate.
Marketing and communications materials are not inclusive	Ensure marketing and communications, including photos and testimonials, reflect diverse people with a range of abilities and ages.
People with disabilities are not included in	Ensure marketing materials, such as flyers,

Information and Communication Barriers	Possible Solutions
visuals, or considered as a potential target audience.	brochures, podcasts and YouTube videos are accessible.

Technological barriers occur when technology, or the way it is used, does not meet the needs of people with disabilities.

Technological Barriers	Possible Solutions
Emails or other electronic communications not accessible to people who use screen readers.	Make sure every email is accessible to people who use screen readers and offer alternative methods of communications.
Website graphics and charts included without descriptions.	Provide descriptions using alt tags for graphics and charts for people with vision loss.
Having only one way for your customers to contact you (Example: by phone only).	Allow customers to contact you in a variety of ways, including phone or email.
Accepting only online job applications.	Welcome job applications in a number of formats.
Asking clients to use online forms to register for programs.	Offer clients alternative ways to register. (Example: telephone)

Systemic barriers are policies, practices or procedures that result in some people receiving unequal access or being excluded.

Systemic Barriers	Possible Solutions
People with disabilities are excluded from events by not considering their needs at the event planning stage.	Make sure that accessibility is considered when making plans for events and invite attendees to tell you if they have specific

Systemic Barriers	Possible Solutions
	accessibility needs, such as requiring on-line applications. Use accessibility checklists for events.
Not being aware of the different types of accommodations an employee might need when returning to work after an absence due to a disability.	Learn about the types of accommodations available. Inquire about specific employee needs. Talking to employees about their specific needs is a good first step.
No leadership or accountability to address issues related to people with disabilities.	Designate a contact person to implement accessibility policies and procedures.
Hiring policies not encouraging applications from people with disabilities.	Review current hiring processes to identify and remove barriers.
Procedures that may affect some employees, such as use of cleaning products that can cause allergic reactions.	Implement a fragrance-free policy.

Physical and architectural barriers in the environment prevent physical access for people with disabilities.

Physical/Architectural Barriers	Possible Solutions
Aisles are blocked by displays or Merchandise, making them too narrow for a person using a wheelchair or walker	Consider the paths that your employees and customers take when creating displays or storing merchandise.
Inaccessible events or meeting spaces	When selecting a venue think about potential barriers. Consider washrooms, parking, lighting and signage. Not just a ramp.
Accessibility features, such as automatic	Develop a maintenance plan. Ensure prompt

Physical/Architectural Barriers	Possible Solutions
doors, are broken and not fixed promptly.	response times when equipment is broken.
Poor snow clearance creates temporary barriers to building entrance or parking lot.	Maintain clear paths and parking