

Accessibility

Quick Tips to Improve Access

This booklet will provide quick tips to assist you in improving access for people with a variety of disabilities.

This booklet has been prepared by the Accessibility Working Group of PRHC in compliance with Ontarians with Disabilities Act



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Quick Tips to Improve Access for People with Disabilities

“Accessibility Belongs to the Whole Organization!”

Did you know it helps to:

- Focus on the whole person (consider their strengths).
- Ask “what is most important to them.”
- Ask about their knowledge of their disability and needs in health care. They know their needs best. (ie: mobility, transfers, medications, routines).
- Be aware that many disabilities are invisible (hearing loss, learning disorders, mental illnesses, cognitive impairments and some mobility impairments).
- Good communication skills are important at all times.
- Be an active listener: summarize what they are telling you to be sure you understand.
- Speak directly to the person with the disability rather than someone accompanying them.
- Recognize that stress and anxiety can affect a person's ability to understand and be understood.
- Offer assistance to a person, but wait until your offer has been accepted before you help.
- Listen to any instructions from the person with a disability for the best way to be of assistance.
- Avoid labeling individuals as victims of their disability.
- People with disabilities are people first; therefore, address

them as a person and then the disability. For example:

- ✓ "person with a disability"
- ✓ "individual without speech"
- ✓ "woman who is blind or visually impaired"
- ✓ "person who is deaf or deafened or hard of hearing"

Tips for Specific Disabilities

Mobility:

- Any aid or equipment used, such as a wheelchair, scooter, animal or cane, is a part of that person's space. Do not touch or move that object unless given permission to do so.
- If a person transfers (ie. from a bed to a chair), be sure to move their assistive equipment to within their reach.
- When talking at length to a person in a wheelchair or scooter, sit or place yourself at the person's eye level, but do not kneel.

Visual:

- When you offer assistance to a person with a visual impairment, allow them to take your arm. This will help you guide them.
- When greeting a person with a visual impairment, always identify yourself and others who may be with you.
- Speak in a normal tone of voice.

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- Indicate when you move from one place to another.
 - Let it be known when the conversation has ended, especially if leaving the room.
 - When offering a seat, gently place the individual's hand on the back or arm of the chair so that they can locate the seat.

Hearing:

- Hearing aids do not restore 100% hearing.
- Attempt to talk in a quiet space. Hearing aids can amplify background noises as well as close conversations.
- Get the attention of the person before speaking to them.
- Provide information or directions in many forms (verbal, written, pictures).
- Speak slower, not louder. Shouting is embarrassing and can cause discomfort to a hearing aid wearer.
- Ensure the person has writing materials close by.
- Speak clearly and come close when you speak.
- Many hard of hearing people rely on lip-reading. Wait for them to look at you before speaking and remember they typically only catch 30% of what is said.
- Be careful not to cover your face when talking.
- Lip-reading is easier if the person knows the subject of the conversation.
- Make sure your face is not in a shadow. Standing with your

back to a window or other light source will shadow your face and make lip-reading more difficult.

- Find out if the person has a preferred ear. Speak to that side.
- Attempt to use body language to express your words and meaning.
- If you are unsure if you were heard, try rephrasing rather than repeating. Hard of hearing people often hesitate to ask for clarification when they misinterpret words.

Speech:

- Keep your manner encouraging rather than correcting.
- Avoid finishing sentences. Allow time to say what they are trying to say.
- Ensure the person has writing materials close by.
- Ask short questions that require short or yes/no answers, one at a time.
- Ensure that you understand their message, instead of pretending or making assumptions.

Cognitive:

- Take the time necessary to assure a clear understanding.
- Use simpler words and gestures while you talk.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Use precise, common language.
- Provide information or directions in many forms (verbal,

written, pictures).

- Give information in small chunks and directions in steps.
- Ask person to repeat instructions to confirm understanding.
- Give visual cues when available.
- Try to interview in a quiet environment.
- Be prepared to give the person the same information a few times in different ways to be sure they understand.

References:

The Center for Universal Design internet website, "Removing Barriers to Health Care, A Guide for Health Professionals," Mace, Ronald, L. FA/A, (1998), pp 12-15, <http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud>, extracted November 2003.

About Face International and the Body Image Project, Women's Health Centre, Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre, (2002) Building Bridges Across Difference and Disability, pp.4-6.

"Courtesy to Hard of Hearing People" — provided by the Canadian Hearing Society,
315 Reid Street, Peterborough ON K9J 3R2

Special thanks to the following organizations for providing responses to a survey, which helped us develop these tips:

About Face International

The Canadian Hearing Society

Learning Disabilities Association (Peterborough)

Parkinson Society Canada (Peterborough Chapter)

Community Care Peterborough

ACCESSIBILITY LINKS

The tips provided above are intended to be a brief summary of general information. If you would like more detailed information please contact the appropriate organization(s) below:

1. Adult Protection Services

349A George St. N. #302, Peterborough, ON K9H 3P9

Phone: (705) 749-6681

E-mail: joneil@accel.net

2. Alzheimers Society of Peterborough & Area

183 Simcoe St., PO Box 1701, Peterborough, ON K9J 7S4

Phone: (705) 748-5131

3. Arthritis Society

Time Square, Suite 263, 380 Armour Rd.

Peterborough, ON K9H 7L7

Phone: (705) 742-7191

Email: brimmer@on.arthritis.ca

Website: www.arthritis.ca

4. Autism Society, Peterborough Chapter

1 Greensboro Dr.. #306, Etobicoke ON M9W 1C8

Phone: (705) 743-9315

E-mail: brimmer@on.arthritis.ca

Website: www.arthritis.ca

5. Canadian Cancer Society

Phone: 1-800-263-6750

Website: www.ontario.cancer.ca

6. Canadian Cancer Society — Peterborough District

727 Lansdowne St. West

Peterborough, ON K9J 1Z2

Phone: (705) 742-3823 / 1-800-463-0432

E-mail: peterborough.ontario.cancer.ca

Website: www.ontario.cancer.ca

7. Canadian Diabetes Association

294 Rink St., Suite #1, Peterborough, ON K9J 2K2

Phone: (705) 742-2733 / 1-800-267-4704

E-mail: diabetes@kawartha.com

Website: www.diabetes.ca

8. The Canadian Hearing Society

315 Reid St., Peterborough, ON K9J 3R2

Phone: (705) 743-1573

E-mail: office@peterborough.chs.ca

Website: www.chs.ca

9. Canadian Mental Health Association

466 George St North, Peterborough, ON K9H 3R7

Phone: (705) 748-6711

Email: info@peterborough.cmha.on.ca

Website: www.peterborough.cmha.on.ca

10. Canadian National Institute for the Blind

159 King St. #300, Peterborough, ON K9J 2R8

Phone: (705) 745-6918 / 1-866-699-1699

Email: peterborough@cnib.ca

Website: www.cnib.ca

11. Canadian Paraplegic Association Ontario

520 Sutherland Dr., 2nd Floor, Toronto, ON M4G 3V9

Phone: (416) 422-5644

E-mail: info@cpaont.org

Website: www.cpaont.org

12. Children and Adults for Normalization, Growth, Equality & Socialization Changes

(Downs syndrome support)

360 George St. N. Unit #23, Peterborough Square

Peterborough, ON K9H 7E7

Phone: (705) 749-6695

E-mail: changes@pipcom.com

Website: www.aboutchanges.com

13. Community Care

180 Barnardo Ave., Peterborough, ON K9H 5V3

Phone: (705) 742-7067

E-mail: centofc@commcareptbo.org

Website: www.commcareptbo.org

14. Community Living – Peterborough

223 Aylmer St., Peterborough, ON, K9J 3K3

Phone: (705) 743-2411

E-mail: contact@communitylivingpeterborough.ca

Website: www.communitylivingpeterborough.ca

15. Council for Persons with Disabilities

500 George St N, Peterborough, ON K9H 3R9

John MacDonald, Chair

Phone: (705) 741-4251

E-mail: janddmacd@cogeco.ca (home)

16. Easter Seal Society

80 Bradford St. #125

Barrie, ON L4N 6S7

Phone: 1-800-461-3391

E-mail: info@easterseals.org

Website: www.easterseals.org

17. Epilepsy Peterborough & Area

P.O. Box 2453, 203 Simcoe St, Unit #4,

Peterborough, ON K9J 7Y8

Phone: (705) 876-0311

E-mail: epilepsytbo@hotmail.com

Website: www.epilepsyontario.org

18. Five Counties Children's Centre

872 Dutton Rd. Peterborough, ON K9H 7G1

Phone: (705) 748-2221 / 1-888-779-9916

E-mail: info@fivecounties.on.ca

Website: www.fivecounties.on.ca

19. Four Counties Brain Injury Association

Peterborough Square, 360 George St North Unit #27

Peterborough, ON K9H 7E7

Phone: (705) 741-1172 / 1-800-854-9738

E-mail: fcbia@nexicom.net

20. Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario — Peterborough Office

60 Hunter St. E. Unit 1, 2nd Floor,

Peterborough, ON K9H 1G5

Phone: (705) 749-1044

E-mail: hroutly@hsf.on.ca

Website: www.heartandstroke.ca

21. Huntington Society of Canada

1171 Duncan's Line RR#3, Keene ON K0L 2G0

Phone: (705) 295-4973 / 1-800-998-7398

Website: www.hsc-ca.org

22. Kawartha Participation Projects Foundation for Disabled Persons

77 Towerhill Rd. Peterborough, ON K9H 7N3

Phone: (705) 745-4122

E-mail: michell@kpp.ca

Website: www.kpp.ca

23. Kidney Foundation of Canada - Central Ont.Branch

700 - 15 Gervais Drive

Toronto, ON M3C 1Y8

Phone: 1-800-387-4474

Email: wkudeba@kidneycob.on.ca

Website: www.kidneycob.on.ca

24. Learning Disabilities Association Peterborough

159 King St, Suite #204, Peterborough, ON K9J 2R8

Phone: (705) 748-9455 / 1-866-503-3303

E-mail: administration@ldaptbo.com

25. Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada — Peterborough Chapter

PO Box 324, 1022 High St. Peterborough, ON K9J 6Z2

Phone: (705) 748-4221

E-mail: mssocietypbto@accel.net

Website: www.mssociety.ca

26. Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada

2345 Young St. Suite #901 Toronto, ON M4P 2E5

Phone: (416) 488-2699

E-mail: mottes@mdac.ca

Website: www.mdac.ca

27. Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy

104-1630 Lawrence Ave. W. Toronto, ON M6L 1C5

Phone: 1-877-244-9686

E-mail: info@ofcp.on.ca

Website: www.ofcp.on.ca

28. Ontario Literacy Coalition

365 Bloor St. E., Suite #1003 Toronto, ON M4W 3L4

Phone: (416) 963-5787

E-mail: olc@on.literacy.ca

Website: www.on.literacy.ca

29. Ontario March of Dimes

159 King St, Suite #201, Peterborough, ON K9J 2R8

Phone: (705) 741-0884

E-mail: omodptbo@nexicom.net

30. Osteoporosis Society of Canada - Ptbo. Chapter
384 Rogers St. North Wing Peterborough, ON K9H 7B6
Phone: (705) 740-2776
E-mail: oscptbo@pip.com
Website: www.osteoporosis.ca

31. Parkinson Society Canada
- Peterborough & Lindsay Chapter
686 Crawford Place, Peterborough ON K9J 3X3
Phone: (705) 745-2049
Email: general.info@parkinson.ca
Website: www.parkinson.ca

32. Peterborough AIDS Resource Network
159 King St. Peterborough, ON K9J 2R8
Phone: (705) 749-9110
Email: getinformed@parn.ca
Website: www.parn.ca

33. Peterborough Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Support Group
238 Caddy St. Peterborough, ON K9H 1M1
Phone: (705) 745-4269 / 1-800-267-4257
Email: bjohns@cogeco.ca
Website: www.alsont.ca

34. Peterborough Coalition Against Poverty

393 Water St., Unit 17, Peterborough, ON K9H 3L7

Phone: (705) 749-9694

35. Peterborough Communication Support Systems

P O Box 2078

Peterborough, ON K9J 7Y4

Email: pcss@on.aibn.com

Phone - Voice/TTY: (705) 748-6680

Fax: (705) 876-9247

36. Peterborough Community Access Centre

202 - 700 Clonsilla Ave, Peterborough, ON K9J 5Y3

Phone: (705) 743-2212 / 1-888-235-7222

Email: info@peterborough.ccac-ont.ca

Website: www.peterborough.ccac-ont.ca

37. Peterborough County-City Health Unit

10 Hospital Drive Peterborough, ON K9J 8M1

Phone: (705) 743-1000

Website: www.pcchu.peterborough.on.ca

38. Post Polio Support Group

Contact: Ann Marie Boviar

Phone: (705) 748-6625

39. P.R.O.S.P.E.C.T.S.

872 Dutton Rd. Peterborough, ON K9H 7G1

Phone: (705) 876-0339

40. Schizophrenia Society of Ontario

— Peterborough Chapter

P.O. Box 1555, 466 George St N

Peterborough, ON K9J 7H7

Phone: (705) 749-1753

Email: sso@ptbo@sympatico.ca

Website: www.schizophrenia.on.ca

41. Tri County Community Support Services — Behavioural Services

349A George St. N, Ste. 303 Peterborough, ON K9H 3P9

Phone: (705) 876-9245 / 1-888-616-3456

Email: gerryfucile@cogeco.net

Website: www.tricountyss.ca

42. Trent Valley Literacy Association

139 Douro St. Peterborough, ON K9H 1H5

Phone: (705) 749-0777

Email: info@trentvalleyliteracy.ca

Website: www.trentvalleyliteracy.ca