

Appendix B

Barriers and Solutions

Some people see disabilities as barriers. But that is not the case. Barriers exist because accessibility needs are not considered.

Example: Sarah has low vision and has a hard time reading some restaurant menus. Her low vision is not the barrier. It is the small print on the menus. When a restaurant gives Sarah a large print menu, she can read it and place her order independently and barrier-free.

The tables below show different types of barriers and possible solutions to remove them.

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 customers with disabilities can or cannot do. Ask them.
Assuming that 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.

Appendix B

Barriers and Solutions *Continued*

Informational and communication barriers arise when a person with a disability cannot easily convey what they want to communicate to another person or receive and 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 that the print is legible for most people.
A PowerPoint, video or slide deck used in a presentation is not accessible to those with low vision or who have a hearing loss.	Develop a template for slide decks and PowerPoint presentations using large fonts, high contrast colours and a clean layout. Provide a visual description and/or captioning.
Brochures, guides and advertisements 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.
Signs are complicated, busy or confusing.	Keep signs clean and clear. Make information available in another form, such as a chart or pictogram.
Seating arrangements make 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. People with disabilities are not included in visuals, or considered as a potential target audience.	Ensure marketing and communications efforts reflect people with disabilities. Include people with disabilities of all generations in photos, testimonials and other communications. Ensure marketing materials, such as flyers, brochures, podcasts and YouTube videos, are accessible.
Service provider doesn't understand what a person with unclear speech is saying or how to communicate with someone.	Ask the person to show or tell you how they communicate, be patient, and move to a quiet area.

Appendix B

Barriers and Solutions *Continued*

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 are 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 do not have text descriptions.	Provide descriptions using alt tags for graphics and charts for people with vision loss.
There is only one way for your customers to reach you (Example: by telephone only).	Allow customers to contact you in a variety of ways, including telephone 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).
A person who can't speak and can't communicate effectively over phone.	Ask the person if they would prefer to have a person to assist them over the phone, or to use email or text.

Appendix B

Barriers and Solutions *Continued*

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 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.

Appendix B

Barriers and Solutions *Continued*

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 event or meeting spaces	When selecting a venue think about potential barriers. Consider washrooms, parking, lighting and signage, not just an entrance ramp.
Accessibility features, such as automatic doors, are broken and not fixed promptly	Develop a maintenance plan. Ensure prompt response times when equipment is broken.
Poor snow clearance creating temporary barriers to building entrance or parking lot	Maintain clear paths and parking lots.