The goal of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) (2005) is to make Ontario accessible by 2025 through the development of accessibility standards. The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation, 429/07) is now law. Other standards currently in development are Information and Communications, Built Environment, Employment, and Transportation.

**Huron’s Commitment**

Huron University College is committed to increasing the accessibility for persons with disabilities who study, visit or work at Huron. We can increase accessibility by proactively identifying and removing barriers so persons with disabilities can receive service in a respectful way.

Tips for Providing Accessible Services

**“How may I help you?”**

**Tips for Communicating with Persons with Vision Loss**

- Don’t assume the person cannot see you.
- To get the person’s attention, address him/her directly; say your name; do not touch the person.
- Ask the person in which format she would like to receive information.
- When providing printed information, offer to read, summarize or describe it.
- Don’t be afraid to use words such as “see”, “read” or “look”.
- When offering to guide someone, hold out your elbow. Give clear, precise directions.

**Tips for Communicating with Persons Deafblind**

- Offer to communicate in writing (pen and paper) as needed.
- Don’t shout or over-pronounce your words.
- Offer to communicate in sign language, Braille, speech and lip reading. A person with little or no functional hearing may use sign language, including sign language, tactile sign language, or FM systems; they may rely on lip reading. If the person uses a wheelchair, avoid leaving the person in an awkward position, such as facing a wall.

**Hearing Loss**

There are different types of hearing loss. Commonly used terms are hard of hearing, deafened, deaf and Deaf.

- Persons who are deafened or hard of hearing may use devices such as hearing aids, cochlear implants, or FM systems; they may rely on lip reading. Those who interact with, or provide service to others at Huron are asked to communicate with persons with disabilities in a manner that takes the person’s disability into account, and to align their practices with four principles of accessible service as much as possible:
  - **Dignity** (person is able to maintain his self-respect and respect of others)
  - **Independence** (person is able to do things on her own without unnecessary help)
  - **Integration** (person is able to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as others)
  - **Equal Opportunity** (person is able to have the same opportunity as others to benefit from the way you provide goods or services)

The information is prepared in accordance with The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, developed under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

This document provides tips for interacting and communicating with persons with disabilities. The information is prepared in accordance with The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, developed under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.
General Tips for Providing Accessible Service

Keep this Overall Service PACTT:

Pay calm, individual attention to the other person
- Avoid making assumptions about a person’s capabilities.
- Adjust posture/sit down as needed for face-to-face service.

Ask “How May I help?”
- Usually, a person with a disability knows what works best for him/h her.
- Before ending your interaction, ask “Does that help you with your need?”

Communicate clearly and patiently to ensure shared understanding
- Allow the person to finish what is being said, don’t pretend, ask if it is not clear who the support person is.
- If you see that a service or facility isn’t working, contact the unit responsible.
- Seek help from Western resources listed at the top of this brochure.
- Inform the person of the Accessibility at Western Feedback Process if the issue is unresolved.

How can I help someone who is having difficulty accessing my service?
- Ask the person how you may best help them.
- If you see that a service or facility isn’t working, contact the unit responsible.
- Seek help from Western resources listed at the top of this brochure.
- Inform the person of the Accessibility at Western Feedback Process if the issue is unresolved.

Specific Tips for Interacting with Persons with Various Types of Disabilities

Learning Disabilities
Examples include dyslexia (problems with reading and language-based learning); dyscalculia (problems with mathematics); and dysgraphia (problems with writing and fine motor skills). Having a learning disability does not mean a person is incapable of learning. Rather, it means they learn in a different way.

- Ask the person how he would like to receive information. For example, if you have written material, offer to read the information aloud.
- Be willing to explain something again - it may take a little longer for the person to process information.
- Give extra time to complete a task.

Mental Health Disabilities
Mental health disabilities can cause changes in a person’s thinking, emotional state and behaviour and can disrupt the person’s ability to work. These changes may also affect the way the person interacts with others. With most mental health problems, the symptoms are not static and can improve or worsen over time. These disabilities are often invisible.

- Ask the best way you can help. Be patient and respectful. A person with a mental health disability may have difficulty concentrating.
- If the person is in crisis, call Western’s 911 Emergency Services for medical or other assistance, as needed.
- Ensure safety of all.

Physical Disabilities
There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities. Some people may use assistive devices. Others may have conditions such as arthritis, heart or lung conditions and may have difficulty with moving, standing, or sitting for long periods.

- Focus on the person as a unique individual.
- Pay attention to her dignity, independence, sense of integration and equality.

Try to see the world in terms of accessibility
- Take into account the ways persons with disabilities experience your services.
- Know the location of nearby ramps, elevators, automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.

Terminology
- Use “disability,” not “handicapped” or “impaired.”
- Say “person with a learning disability” rather than “learning disabled.” Put the person first.

Physical Space
- Ensure the area is well-lit so faces are visible for lip-reading.
- Clear aisles, remove obstacles. Keep furniture layout the same from visit to visit. Focus on the person as a unique individual.
- As needed, ask if another method of communicating would be easier - e.g. always have a pen and paper available.

Alternate Formats
- Using alternate formats means making information available in ways other than the original format. Some persons may be able to access information through their own computer software (e.g. translate into audio or enlarged text).
- Offer plain text electronic versions of notes, email attachments, brochures, presentation material. To do this, save files using the option with the .txt extension. Html, pdf, rdf versions are also generally accessible, but are more difficult to work with.
- Avoid scanned images.
- Provide information in advance - this can be helpful for those with vision loss, hearing loss, or learning disabilities.
- Identify text books as early as possible, to give the person with a disability space to have them produced in an alternate format such as Braille.

Event Hosting
- Add a standard line to invitations such as “Please contact (name) if you require information in an alternate format, or if any other arrangements can make this event accessible to you.”
- In the invitation, describe the location of ramps, automatic doors, elevators, etc.
- Include a link to the campus accessibility map http://www.huronuc.ca/pdf/ Huron2009y2.pdf

Service Animals
Service animals include guide dogs, hearing alert animals, animals who help calm anxiety or alert their owner to oncoming seizures. The owner is responsible for the care and control of the animal. Allow service animals, except in areas where prohibited by law (e.g. health and safety reasons).
- Offer an alternative method of assistance if the animal is prohibited.
- Avoid touching a service animal - it is working and has to pay attention at all times.

Support Persons
A support person can be a personal support worker, a volunteer, a family member or friend of the person with the disability. They may offer physical assistance, personal care, interpretation, note taking or other services.
- Allow access to a support person, provided that the interaction does not compromise academic integrity.
- Ask if it is not clear who the support person is.
- Speak directly with the person with a disability, not the support person.
- Plan for support persons; reserve space for them and provide both parties written materials.
- Waive admission fees for support persons. Huron will not charge a fee for a support person to attend an event.

Assistive Devices
Examples include wheelchairs, canes, hearing aids, listening devices (FM systems), laptops with screen-reading software.
- The assistive device is an extension of the person’s personal space - touch only if asked to, and don’t move it out of the person’s reach.
- If your area provides assistive devices such as special equipment or software, become familiar with what they are, how they work, or whom to contact about operating them.

If the person is in crisis, call Western’s 911 Emergency Services for medical or other assistance, as needed.
- Focus on the person as a unique individual.
- Pay attention to her dignity, independence, sense of integration and equality.

RESOURCES:
Huron website: www.huronuc.ca/accessibility
Services for Students with Disabilities: ssd@uwo.ca 519-661-2147 x82147