

Inclusive Customer Service

It's Everyone's Business



blue sky
community services



Inclusive Customer Service

It's Everyone's Business

Introduction.....	04
Disability in Australia.....	06
Just Relax	08
Making your Premises Accessible.....	10
Assisting Customers with Mobility.....	12
Assisting People who are Blind or Vision-impaired	16
Assisting People who are Deaf or Hearing-impaired.....	18
Assisting Customers who are Neurodiverse	20
Assisting Customers with Communication	28
Assisting Customers with Understanding	30
Making your Service Accessible.....	32
Words to Use	35
Your Obligations	36
Hints and Tips	38

Introduction

This booklet, **Inclusive Customer Service: It's Everyone's Business**, has been designed to help customer service employees become 'disability confident' and more prepared to help customers with disability.

Customer service is the most important business operation for many organisations in Australia today. Good customer service can help to build a loyal customer base and increase customer satisfaction, which can help your organisation to grow and prosper.

Customers with disability are just like any other customer with spending power, and they are an important part of any customer base.

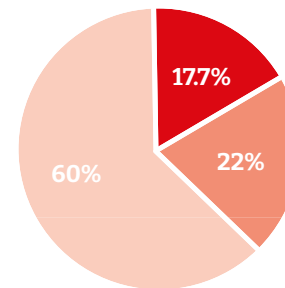
To ensure your organisation prospers, it is essential to build your skills and confidence to welcome people with disability, so that you can provide all your customers with great service.

“Blue Sky Community Services believes in identifying strengths and building on these to create positive outcomes.

We put this belief into practice across all of our work including how we run our organisation, how we support staff, and how we work with people and communities.”

More than 4.4 million people in Australia have a disability.

Approximately one in six people in Australia either have a disability, or are close to someone with disability. They, and the wider community, will avoid businesses that are not accessible or disability friendly.



- 17.7% of Australians are living with at least one disability
- 22% have a long-term health condition
- 60% have no disability or long-term health conditions

By getting to grips with a few basic tips for helping customers with disability, you'll feel more comfortable about your skills, and more satisfied about being able to provide all customers with good service. As you read through the tips in this booklet, you'll see that it's pretty simple, and involves basic common sense.

* Figures rounded to one decimal point

Disability in Australia

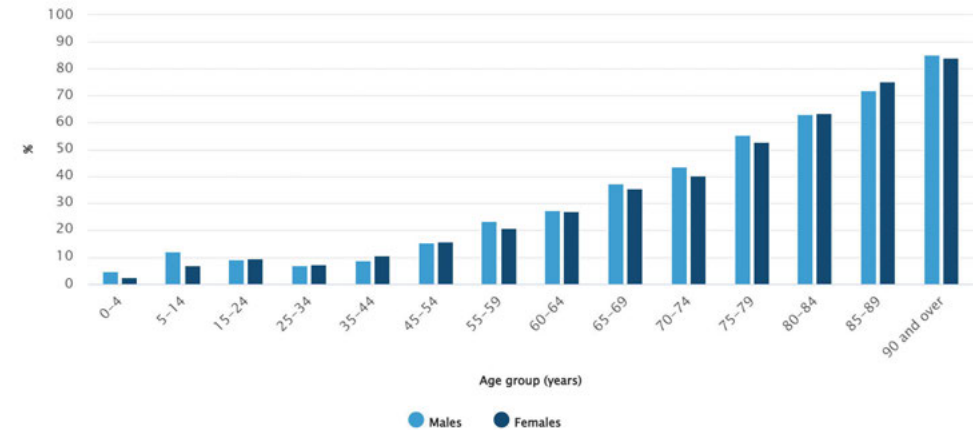
Disability can happen in many different ways and results in different types of restrictions. It may result from an accident or illness, or from congenital or genetic disorders. Disability can happen at birth, or can occur with age. Disability may be visible or hidden, may be permanent or temporary.

It may have a minimal or significant impact on a person's everyday life.

Approximately one in six Australians have a disability. That's almost 18% of your daily customers that may have a disability.



Disability prevalence rates by age and sex, 2018



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings 2018

Disability may affect:

- the way a person moves
- the way a person understands or communicates
- the way a person hears or speaks.

Some people may have more than one disability. It is not always obvious whether a person has a disability or not.

More than 75% of people with disability have a physical disability.

Other disabilities include mental illness, psychosocial disability, intellectual disability and behavioural disability.

If you serve 100 customers per day, then almost 20 will have a disability. Their disability may not be visible, and it may not be obvious that you are dealing with someone with disability.

Just Relax

As a customer service professional, it is inevitable that some of your customers will be people with disability.

You may worry that you will do or say the wrong thing when serving a customer with disability. This can lead to uneasiness or even avoidance.

Just relax: people with disability are just people. The best advice is to treat each person as an individual.

A customer with disability is like any other customer. Treat them with the same respect and courtesy you would give everyone else.

Try to remember that equal treatment is not always fair treatment. Sometimes you might need to do something differently in order to provide a person with disability the best customer service experience.



Three main things to remember:

- **Never assume**
- **Ask the person**
- **Use “person first” language i.e. a “person with disability”**

Tips

- Be polite and patient when offering assistance, and wait until your offer is accepted.
- Don't assume that the customer with disability will want or need your help – wait for specific instructions. Often customers with disability won't need or want any additional assistance.
- If you feel like you've embarrassed someone then apologise, but don't dwell on it or avoid the situation. Try to see the lighter side of things.
- Avoid asking personal questions about someone's disability as this can be intrusive and inappropriate.
- Be considerate of the extra time it might take some customers to do or say some things.
- Use “person first” language, i.e. refer to “a person with disability” or “people with disability”. See page 27 for more about this.

“Australia Post provides essential services for all Australians every day. We recognise that people put their trust in our ability to deliver, and aim to better connect with our customers through the provision of accessible products, services and facilities, both physically and digitally.” Australia Post

Making your Premises Accessible

Accessibility is about removing barriers so that everyone has equal access and can use your premises and services. As a service provider, you must ensure that your premises, goods, services and facilities are accessible to the whole community.



“We are committed to providing a safe and relaxed shopping environment for all of our customers including those with disability. We ensure all aspects of our shop and products are accessible through our floor layout and shop fixtures. Our team delivers superior customer care, ensuring assistance is available, and that customers enjoy their shopping experience.” ABC Retail

Physical Access

The physical features of your premises can create barriers that can put people with disability at a substantial disadvantage with accessing your goods or services. Premises should be free of obstacles and laid out in a logical manner. Your building manager should know the guidelines and be able to assist.

- Make sure all entrances and exits are well marked and are easy to get to.
- Install ramps if level access is not available.
- Fit handrails to assist mobility on stairs.
- Ensure doorways are wide enough to allow wheelchairs, prams and walking frames to pass through easily.
- Make doors easy to open by ensuring they are light or automatic.
- Make sure the floor surface is non-slip and is free from trip hazards.
- Create clear sightlines between the entrance and the counter so staff are aware when a customer needs assistance.
- Ensure part of your customer service area is at a height suitable for people using a wheelchair, or people of short stature.
- Organise displays to ensure they do not obstruct aisles and pathways.
- Place goods within reach of everyone.
- Put safety markings consisting of a wide strip across glass doors so that people with vision impairment do not become confused by reflections and walk into doors.
- Provide accessible seating for customers where possible.

Assisting Customers with Mobility

People with physical disability may be restricted or limited in the way they move around or communicate. Some people with physical disability may use a wheelchair to get around, others may use crutches or a walking stick, while others may have restricted upper body or arm movements, or may be without any obvious signs.

Customers who use wheelchairs or other mobility aids have the same rights as all other customers and should be made to feel welcome in every situation.



Wheelchair Users

People who use wheelchairs to get around need level access. Stairs, narrow or crowded aisles, or uneven footpaths can make it very difficult for wheelchair users to move around safely. In addition, thick carpet or rugs, computer or telephone cables, and even protruding table and chair legs can create barriers and hazards to wheelchair users.

Ways you can help:

- Offer a stable surface such as a clipboard for the customer to write on if a counter is too high for them to reach.
- Make sure that EFTPOS machines and other systems are cordless or are on a cord long enough to pass to someone in a wheelchair.
- You may have to come out from behind a counter in order to help a customer unload their shopping basket items onto the counter, or to hand the customer an EFTPOS machine or clipboard to sign.
- For detailed transactions, try and put yourself at eye level with the customer and speak directly to them.
- Ask the customer if they would like any assistance, e.g. offer to carry bulky items or to open heavy doors.
- When passing something to a customer, if they can't take hold of it, ask them how they can best take receipt of it, e.g. the customer may suggest you hang the shopping bag on the back of their wheelchair.
- For people who experience fatigue, or people standing in queues, consider offering them a chair.
- Make sure you know where the accessible bathrooms are and ensure that they are free from unnecessary items and obstacles. Know the most accessible route in to and out of the premises.

“I have cerebral palsy and my hands shake. It’s really helpful if the shop assistant or bank teller can guide my hand to where I need to sign.”



This chair is very low to the ground and has no arms. Getting in and out of this chair would be extremely difficult for a person with lower back pain or arthritic knees.



This chair is higher with arm rests. For a person with mobility problems, this chair would be easier to get in and out of. Consider having a variety of chairs available for customers.

Avoid:

- touching or moving the customer’s wheelchair unless asked to do so by the customer
- standing behind a wheelchair user
- patronising or talking down to a wheelchair user.

Be aware that:

- customers in a wheelchair may hang bags or other things on their wheelchair (their wheelchair is a part of their individual personal space and should be respected)
- customers who use crutches or other mobility aids may require extra assistance when carrying things, or getting up and down stairs (offer to assist, but always remember to ask before assisting any customer)
- it is important to make sure crutches and walking sticks are safely out of the way, but never move a customer’s belongings without their knowledge and consent.

Other points to note:

- Customers with disabilities that affect their movements may have some different requirements, e.g. a customer with restricted hand or arm movement may need assistance with writing, or may require a cup with a handle or straw.
- It is always best to ask the customer how you can best assist them.

Assisting People who are Blind or Vision-impaired

Approximately 300,000 people in Australia are blind, or have a vision impairment that cannot be corrected by glasses.

Most of these have some vision, but it may be cloudy, distorted or blurred. Only a very small percentage of people who are considered legally blind have no vision at all.

People who are blind or have low vision may use a cane or a guide dog to help them to navigate, and may also use 'Assistive Technology' to access information.

Ways you can help:

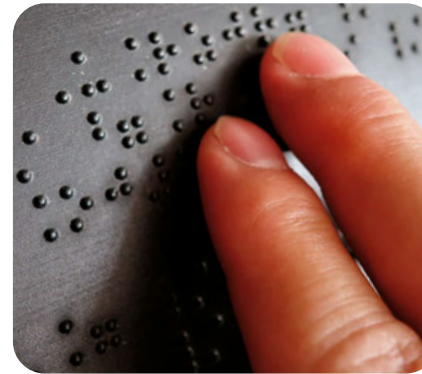
- Introduce yourself and your role when you approach and ask how you may assist.
- A person with a guide dog may want their guide dog to follow you. If that's the case, walk normally.
- If the customer wants you to guide them, offer them your elbow for them to hold on to. Don't take their arm
- Describe the layout of

the area for the customer, particularly any obstacles such as stairs or displays. Be specific, e.g. "The desk is one metre in front of you."

- Check the customer has taken all their possessions with them when they leave.
- You may need to read out small print to the customer.
- Make sure the signage for entries, exits and toilets is clear and illuminated where possible.

Avoid:

- assuming that the customer may need your assistance
- patting a guide dog or other assistance animal, or distracting it with food
- walking away without letting the customer know you're leaving
- crossing the customer's path of travel - they might not be able to see where you are going.



first language is not English, or people with some learning disabilities such as dyslexia.

"I have significant vision impairment. When I go into shops and banks it really helps when the signage is clear and there are no obstacles."

Some customers might require information in alternative formats, such as electronic, large print, Braille, apps or programs. Providing verbal information to a customer who is blind or vision-impaired can also be of assistance.

Having alternative formats can also assist other customers who may have difficulty reading, such as older people, people whose



Assisting people who are Deaf or Hearing-impaired

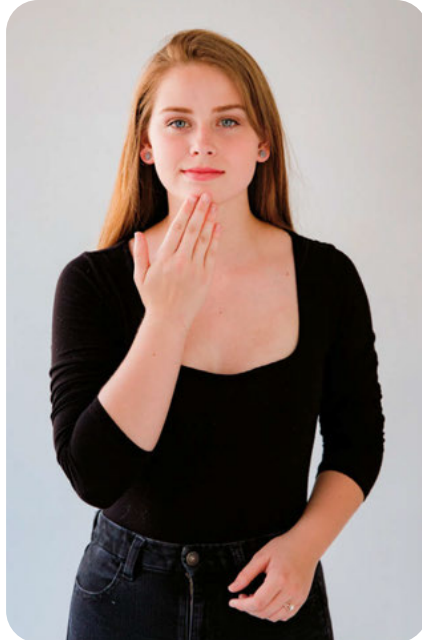
People who are deaf or hearing-impaired may use a hearing aid, may lip read or may use sign language to communicate.

It is estimated that more than three million people in Australia have some kind of hearing impairment.

A small percentage of people who are deaf use Auslan (Australian Sign Language) and may need an Auslan interpreter to assist them in conversation. 'Assistive Technology' such as hearing aids, hearing loops or FM systems may help some people who are hearing-impaired to participate in conversations more effectively.

Some people who are deaf or hearing-impaired may be accompanied by a hearing dog. You should treat the dog the same as you would any other assistance animal, and don't pat or distract it in any way.

Some customers who are deaf or hearing-impaired may also have a speech impairment, and may not speak as clearly as other people or may not speak at all.



Avoid:

- shouting at the customer
- over-exaggerating hand gestures
- speaking extra slowly
- covering your mouth when talking to the customer
- continuing to talk when you turn away from the customer.

Services

Telephone Services

There are services available to assist customers with hearing and/or speech impairments to communicate via telephone.

See page 26 for more information.

Translation Services

Auslan/English interpreting services are provided through the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS).

For immediate phone interpreting support (24 hours, 7 days a week) call 131 450. A cost applies to interpreting services.

For booking enquiries call 1300 655 082.

“Sometimes I have to tell shop assistants that I’m deaf and need a pen and paper to communicate. It’s great when they take the time to support me.”

Assisting Customers who are Neurodiverse

Creating Sensory-friendly Environments

Sensory Regulation

Neurodivergent individuals often experience the world through a unique neurological lens. These differences can influence how they process information, communicate, and interact with their environment.

Acknowledging and addressing their unique needs is essential for fostering an inclusive and supportive community. By implementing thoughtful strategies, communities can ensure that neurodivergent individuals feel valued, understood, and empowered to participate fully in all aspects of communal life.

Understanding the Context

Prevalence:

Estimates suggest around 15-20% of the Australian population is neurodivergent (Australian Disability Network), highlighting the significant number of people who could benefit from inclusive practices.

Challenges:

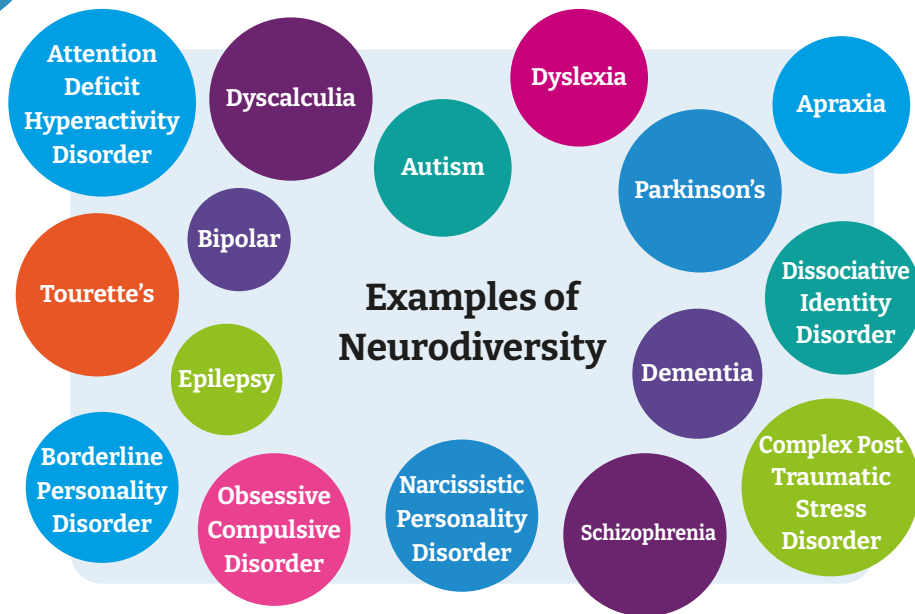
- **Stigma and misunderstanding:** Some people may still hold negative stereotypes about neurodivergence, which can prevent individuals from disclosing their needs or attending places that don't meet their needs.
- **Lack of awareness:** Not all organisations or communities actively implement practices to support neurodivergent individuals.

Environments

Neurodivergent individuals within a community often require environments that are accessible and considerate of sensory sensitivities.

Some examples may include:

- **Sensory-friendly spaces:** Providing quiet areas, adjustable lighting, designated low-noise zones, and options to manage sensory overload in public spaces like libraries, schools, and workplaces.
- **Flexible communication:** Offering diverse communication methods like written instructions, visual cues, and the ability to explain things in different ways to cater to varied processing styles.
- **Personalised support:** Recognising that each neurodivergent individual has unique needs and providing tailored accommodations or support systems to help them thrive.
- **Clear expectations and structure:** Providing clear guidelines and routines in social settings to minimise confusion and anxiety, while also allowing for some flexibility when needed.
- **Awareness and education:** Raising awareness about neurodiversity within the community to promote understanding and acceptance of different communication styles and behaviours.
- **Accessible technology:** Utilising assistive technologies like text-to-speech software, visual calendars, or noise-cancelling headphones to support learning and engagement.
- **Social inclusion:** Creating inclusive social spaces that encourage participation and respect for diverse communication styles, allowing for neurodivergent individuals to build meaningful connections.



Neurodivergent Support Strategies for your business

- **Open Dialogue:** Encouraging conversations between employees and managers to discuss individual needs and accommodations.
- **Inclusive Policies:** Developing workplace policies that promote neurodiversity and inclusion.
- **Advance communication or social stories:** Provide detailed information about the event or your place of business in advance, including schedules, locations, and any sensory considerations. This allows neurodivergent individuals to prepare and decide whether the event aligns with their needs.
- **Designated quiet areas:** Create spaces where attendees can retreat to if they feel overwhelmed. These areas should be free from loud noises, bright lights, and other sensory stimuli.
- **Sensory-friendly materials:** Provide materials that are tactilely engaging but not overwhelming, such as stress balls, textured fabrics, or noise-cancelling headphones.

- **Clear signage and instructions:** Use simple, direct language and visual aids to guide attendees through the event space and activities.
- **Highlight strengths and talents:** Incorporate activities that allow neurodivergent individuals to showcase their skills and interests, fostering a sense of pride and accomplishment.
- **Staff awareness/training:** Training should include recognising and responding to sensory needs, understanding the impact of sensory overload, and implementing supportive strategies. This ensures that all participants feel welcomed and supported.



Key Considerations for Supporting Neurodivergent Individuals and/or Employees

Creating an inclusive environment for neurodivergent individuals requires thoughtful strategies that respect their unique needs and promote understanding.

- **Respecting individual preferences:** Never assume that all neurodivergent people have the same needs and ensure that you always ask for their input on how to best support them.
- **Avoiding labels and stereotypes:** Focus on individual strengths and abilities rather than relying on generalisations about neurodivergence.
- **Promoting neurodiversity as a positive aspect of society:** Celebrate the unique perspectives and talents that neurodivergent individuals bring to the community.
- **Communication considerations:** If a neurodivergent person is quiet, don't assume they have nothing to say. Provide time, opportunity and space, especially in meetings; focus on their words, not their tone or body language. Relaxed or social settings don't necessarily make communicating easier for neurodivergent individuals; in fact, it can sometimes make it more challenging.



Sensory Tools and the Way to be More Inclusive

Many individuals, including those who are neurodivergent, benefit from using external sensory tools to enhance concentration, regulate emotions and process information within their environment.

By incorporating sensory tools, individuals can create a supportive environment that caters to their unique sensory needs, facilitating better engagement and wellbeing.

These tools can serve various purposes:

- **Calming:** Reducing anxiety and stress to promote relaxation.
- **Focusing:** Assisting in maintaining attention on tasks.
- **Distracting:** Providing a means to redirect or manage overwhelming stimuli.



Holding weighted toys, pillows or blankets. Playing with small objects, such as balls, necklaces, pens etc.



Listening carefully and identifying all the sounds you can hear.



Holding something cold, like a damp cloth or can of soft drink.



Slowly count backwards from 20. Try breathing on each count.



Listening to music, or noise-cancelling headphones.



Choose a colour or shape, look around and name all the objects that match.



Try to notice something with each of your five senses: sight, sound, smell, taste, touch.



Describe an item you see in detail, including the colour, texture, shape, its use etc.

SENSORY TOOLS

What are they?

Sensory tools are objects designed to stimulate one or more of the senses.

Sensory tools can be helpful for anyone. However, they are particularly helpful for people who are neurodiverse, as they assist sensory and emotional regulation.

What do they do?

Sensory tools help us regulate sensory input. They help us receive sensory information in a manageable way.

They can provide calming relief, a therapeutic distraction/replacement, or predictable and repeatable sensory input.

How can they help?

Think of sensory input like heat and a thermometer. Sometimes we get too hot or cold, but using tools can help us to be comfortable (e.g. air conditioning). Like temperature, we all have different sensory levels that we find comfortable. By using different tools to help us regulate, we can stay in a comfortable zone and function at our best!

Our 8 Senses:

- 1 Sight
- 2 Smell
- 3 Taste
- 4 Hearing
- 5 Touch
- 6 Proprioception
Where I am in space.
- 7 Vestibular
My sense of balance.
- 8 Interoception
How I feel inside.

What sensory zones might look like



Ways to Create a Sensory-friendly Environment:

A sensory-friendly environment can significantly enhance the comfort and experience of individuals with diverse sensory needs, particularly during group meetings, events or waiting areas. Implementing thoughtful adjustments can foster inclusivity and support individuals in managing sensory sensitivities.

Here are some practical ways to create such an environment:

- **Adjust lighting**
- **Minimise noise**
- **Comfortable seating**
- **Control scents**
- **Temperature regulation**
- **Tactile tools and fidgets**
- **Visual aids and signage**
- **Staff education and training**

By incorporating these elements into your business or organisational environment, you can create a welcoming and accommodating space that respects and supports the sensory needs of all members.

Recognising and accommodating the diverse needs of neurodivergent individuals is not merely an act of compliance but a commitment to fostering a society that values all its members. By implementing inclusive practices, such as creating sensory-friendly environments, offering flexible communication methods, and providing personalised support, we not only enhance the wellbeing of neurodivergent individuals but also enrich our communities. These strategies promote understanding, reduce stigma, and celebrate the unique perspectives that neurodivergent individuals bring to the table. As we continue to embrace neurodiversity, we pave the way for a more inclusive, innovative, and compassionate society.

Assisting Customers with Communication

There are many disability types that may affect one or more aspects of a person's life, including their ability to read, write, communicate or understand information.

Customers who have difficulty reading and writing may include those with low vision, learning or intellectual disabilities, or people for whom English is not their first language. Some people may have problems with speech.

Ways you can help:

- Ask how you can best assist them.
- Be patient and positive, and take extra time to explain things if the customer seems unsure.
- When a person with disability is accompanied by a helper, speak directly to the person who is the primary customer.
- Check you understand what the customer means by repeating back what you understood.
- Use plain English in written material.
- Use 12-point font, simple character shapes and high contrast colour on the background.
- Offer information in alternative formats such as large print, audio, electronic or Braille.
- Documents that are left-side justified are easier to read.

Avoid:

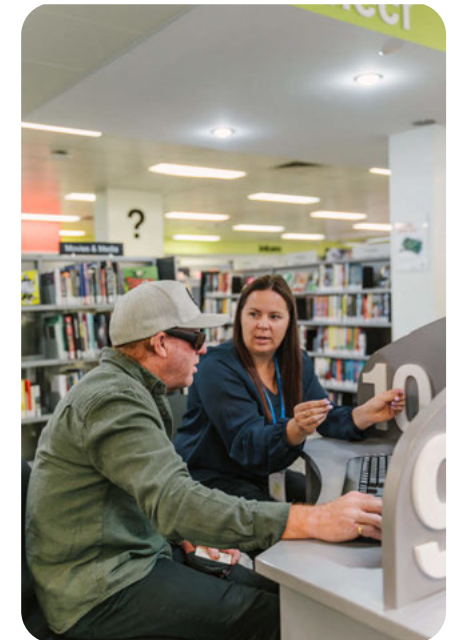
- patronising or talking down to the customer
- assuming that the customer doesn't understand the information simply because they have difficulty reading or writing
- speaking too quickly or too slowly.

Other Disabilities

You may encounter other disabilities that are not detailed here.

Disabilities that affect the way a person looks can significantly affect that person's confidence or self-esteem and can lead to social anxiety, awkwardness or even agoraphobia.

This is due largely to other people's attitudes and reactions to how they appear. It is important to make all customers feel as welcome as possible.



“Since my car accident, my speech is slurred. I’m self-conscious about this and know I can be hard to understand. It’s very helpful when shop staff or tellers are patient and take the time to serve me properly.”

Assisting Customers with Understanding

Some people with certain disabilities may have difficulties understanding or processing information. They may become unsure or confused about a situation, or have trouble understanding you.

Ways you can help:

- Approach the customer as you would any other customer.
- Be patient and encouraging, without being patronising.
- Ensure you understand what the person means by repeating back what you have understood.
- Ask how you can best help the customer, and if there are any adjustments you can provide for them.

Avoid:

- ignoring or correcting the customer, or finishing their sentences
- mimicking the customer or making fun of the way they are speaking
- rushing the customer, or interrupting what they are saying
- staring at the customer, pointing at them or drawing attention to them
- assuming that the person will not understand you
- asking personal questions about their disability.

Other

On rare occasions, a customer's difficulty with understanding may escalate, despite your best efforts to assist. In some cases, a customer's difficulty in understanding may coexist with another type of disability or other issues that are outside your control or capacity to assist. If this happens, remain calm and apply your organisation's usual guidelines for handling situations

where you need additional help, or refer the situation to your manager.

“Sometimes I have difficulty understanding what the shop staff are telling me. It's great when they repeat things in plain English, because then I can grasp it.”



Making your Service Accessible

Accessible Information

At times it may be necessary to provide customers with information in different formats from your standard.

This may be because the customer is blind or has low vision, is hearing-impaired, has a learning disability or uses 'Assistive Technology'.

Alternative formats might include:

- Electronic format
- Large print
- Plain text
- Braille
- Audio
- Pictorial/graphics

Additional adjustments that can assist are:

- making sure signs and product labels are clear and use high contrast colours

- providing product information/ menus in large print or Braille
- improving lighting, particularly around customer service areas
- making sure electronic payment systems and EFTPOS machines have features that allow people with low vision to use them
- finding ways to readily reduce background noise.

Assistive Technology

The rapid emergence of new technologies will most likely result in more people with disability using devices to communicate.

Be prepared to interact with such technologies. No special training is generally required on your part, it is usually self-evident how you should respond. Just be flexible, and if you're unsure how to respond or interact, just ask the customer. These devices are generally called 'Assistive Technology'.



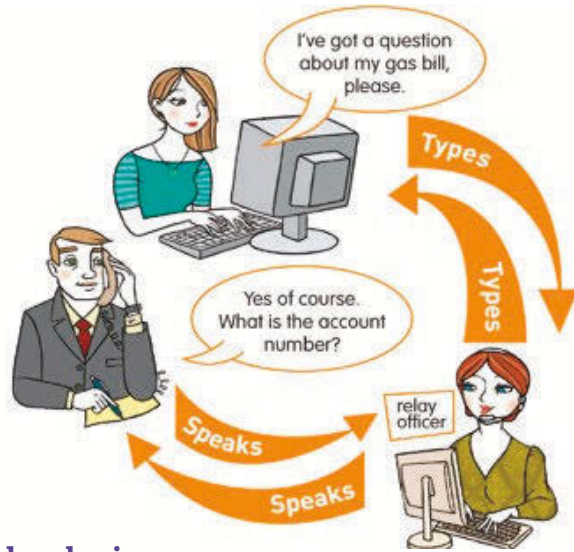
Software

Computer software programs that assist with communication include:

- Text to speech software, which can speak to you by converting text entered by the customer into electronically spoken words. Be patient during this process, as it can take time.
- Speech recognition software, which can speak to you by converting text from a customer

into electronically spoken words. Be patient during the process, as it can take time.

- Magnification software, which enlarges text and images on a computer screen.
- Electronic braille keyboards, messaging apps, Bluetooth connected to smartphones, and real-time captioning.



Other Technologies: Teletypewriter (TTY)

A TTY or teletypewriter can help a person with a hearing and/or speech disability to communicate to another person with a TTY. A TTY is a device that connects to a standard phone line allowing the two people to type messages to each other directly, TTY to TTY.

TTY users - dial 133 677, then the area code/number of the customer you wish to call.

The National Relay Service (NRS)

The NRS allows people who are deaf or speech-impaired to ring anyone, any time. In a typical

relay call a relay officer will relay the other person's words to you, and then relay your words where required.

If you receive a phone call via the NRS there is no cost, and you can be assured that the service protects the privacy of users.

If you need to call an NRS user through the service:

Speak and Listen users - dial 1300 555 727, then the area code/number of the customer you wish to call.

SMS relay number 0423 677 767.

Words to Use

Appropriate Language

Language is a very powerful tool and can have both positive and negative effects.

In Australia, appropriate language focuses on the 'person first' approach, and should be 'active' rather than 'passive'.

Try to avoid words that imply a person with disability is superhuman, extra special, brave or courageous.



Say	Instead of
Person with a disability, person living with a disability	Disabled person, cripple, the handicapped, the disabled
Wheelchair user, person using a wheelchair	Wheelchair-bound, confined to a wheelchair
Person who is vision or hearing-impaired	Deaf person, blind person
Person with an intellectual disability	Retarded, mentally handicapped
Person with a mental illness	Crazy, nuts, mental, headcase

Your Obligations

The Disability Discrimination Act aims to protect people with disability in Australia against discrimination, unfair treatment or harassment because of their disability. This includes physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological or learning disabilities, as well as physical disfigurements and the presence of disease-causing organisms (e.g. the HIV virus).

The DDA also aims to protect friends, relatives, carers and co-workers of people with disability from discrimination because of their connection with a person with disability.

Under the DDA, discrimination occurs when a person with disability is treated less favourably than a person without disability, and discrimination can be direct or indirect.

An example of direct discrimination may be refusing

The law aims to protect all people with disability against discrimination or unfavourable treatment.

entry to a person with a guide dog, or refusing service to a person with disability.

An example of indirect discrimination may be failing to provide wheelchair access to a restaurant, or failing to ensure that shop aisles are clear or wide enough for wheelchair users.

Indirect discrimination could also be failing to provide information in alternative formats such as Braille, large print, audio tape or verbal instructions for a person with low vision or blindness. If a person with disability feels they have been unfairly discriminated



against they can make a complaint to the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC). Complaints to the AHRC may result in significant costs, both financial and reputational, to organisations that are found to have discriminated against a person with disability. It is against the law to treat a person with disability less favourably than any other person.

Hints and Tips

- Treat customers with disability with the same respect and courtesy you would treat any other customer.
- Remember that a person's disability will not always be obvious.
- Customers with disability may require things to be done differently.
- Ask how you can assist.
- Being accessible to customers with disability means your organisation will be more accessible to everyone.
- Accessibility doesn't just refer to physical layout or facilities. Having accessible customer service practices, information and goods and services is also important.
- Use 'people first' language, for example 'person with disability'



Attitude is often a greater barrier for people with disability than a lack of accessible facilities.

or 'person who has low vision or blindness.'

- Don't judge a person by what you think they can't do.
- Relax and remember that people with disability are just like everyone else!



“The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) is committed to helping people understand their rights and responsibilities and encouraging willing participation in the tax and super systems. Through collaboration and consultation, we place an emphasis on understanding the needs of people with a disability so that we can provide relevant products, services and information to assist them in meeting their tax obligations.” Australian Taxation Office



Blue Sky Community Services

Tel: (02) 6651 1788

Email: contact@bluesky.org.au

www.bluesky.org.au

All statistics cited in this publication were sourced from: Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2018).