Safe **T**oronto **A**ction **N**ow **D**isability **(STAND)**

Information Booklet

For more information on STAND and the Safety Ambassador Project, please contact IL Skills Trainer, Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT) at 416-599-2458 ext. 238, TTY: (416) 599-5077 or by email ilskills@cilt.ca

Safe Toronto Action Now Disability (STAND) Committee and Safety Ambassador Project

The Safe Toronto Action Now Disability (STAND) Committee is a cross-disability group of Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) tenants with disabilities and community partners concerned about safety. Some of the STAND participants have come from the Safe Engaged Environments Disability (SEED) Project.

The STAND Committee has created a one-year Safety Ambassador Project which is funded by the TCHC Social Investment Fund. The Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT) is the trustee.

The Safety Ambassador Project has recruited and trained a small group of TCHC tenants who have an interest in disability and safety issues to become Safety Ambassadors. The Safety Ambassadors are raising disability and safety awareness through interactive presentations and consultations with TCHC staff, first responders (i.e. police, fire, and ambulance workers), government, and other organizations dealing with safety issues. The presentations allow for feedback and evaluations, so that the project can keep improving, learning and engaging with our communities.

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Safe Engaged Environments Disability (SEED)

What was SEED?

SEED was a 3 year project where more than 300 people living with disabilities in Toronto came together to share their stories and safety concerns. This is the first time a project like this had ever been done. The SEED project was done BY people with disabilities FOR people with disabilities. Out of this project came the SEED report, which documented the safety concerns and themes of project participants, and outlined 34 recommendations to make the City of Toronto safer and more accessible.

The full SEED report can be found at www.cilt.ca, under the IL Skills heading.

Common SEED Safety Themes:

Common Physical Issues:

- Safety and Transportation
- Safety and Infrastructure
- Safety, Security and Surroundings

Common Social Issues:

- Disability and Identifying as a Woman
- Race, Religion, and Disability
- Police and Disability
- Fear of Retribution
- Emotion and Poverty

Some SEED Recommendations:

If you choose to look at the full SEED report, you will notice that the recommendations are focused specifically on the City and TCHC, but are transferable to all agencies and organizations in the GTA.

1. All information about safety should be provided in accessible formats
2. Agencies and organizations should conduct comprehensive reviews and consultations with people with disabilities to ensure that barriers can be addressed
3. Civic engagement programs for people with disabilities should be provided
4. The City, first responders, agencies and organizations are all responsible for having disability awareness training with the emphasis that all people with disabilities are to be approached from an assumption of competence rather than incompetence

Quotes from SEED participants:

"People with disabilities are isolated and stigmatized in their community…There is a police presence but it is adversarial and they have very few social supports…They don't have a gathering place and a green space and some kind of agency contact that they can trust." SEED Focus Group, August 2009, pg. 38

"I have concerns over handling money in public…I feel like there is a real target due to my visible disability and pulling out my wallet…Things do happen and you are a target when you are just sitting somewhere alone in a wheelchair." SEED Focus Group, August 2009, pg. 39

"There are multiple issues and multiple barriers being a female feeling vulnerable and add to that being a woman with a disability." SEED Focus Group, August 2009, pg. 42

"Police don't take you seriously because you have a disability – they ask you if you are taking your medication instead of taking the problem seriously." SEED Focus Group, September 2009, pg. 45

"I have a balance problem so before I ended up in my wheelchair I often got stopped by the police thinking I was drunk…" SEED Focus Group, September 2009, pg.45

"An ideal environment is when you can express any kind of sentiment to your worker and not have to worry about any kind of retaliation or abuse – be it physical or emotional." SEED Focus Group, June 2009, pg. 47

"If you get a disability, the stigma, it's a big stigma; it's like you're not there…If you're not white the discrimination is worse." SEED Focus Group, April 2010, pg. 48

"You can't feel safe when you are not being taken seriously. Fear can do horrendous things to your psyche." SEED Focus Group, September 2009, pg. 50

About the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

Accessibility For All Ontarians

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) became law on June 13, 2005. Under this landmark legislation, the government of Ontario will develop mandatory accessibility standards that will identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in key areas of daily living. The standards will apply to private and public sector organizations across Ontario.

We All Need Accessibility

Disability impacts the lives of many Ontarians, and the numbers of people with disabilities is increasing. Today, 15.5% of Ontario's population has a disability and this number will continue to grow as the population ages.

Improving accessibility is the right thing to do. It's also the smart thing to do. According to the Royal Bank of Canada, people with disabilities have an estimated spending power of about $25 billion annually across Canada. People with disabilities also represent a large pool of untapped employment potential. When we make Ontario accessible to people with disabilities everyone benefits.

Think Of The Broad Range Of Disabilities

When we think of disabilities, we tend to think of people in wheelchairs and physical disabilities – disabilities that are visible and apparent. But disabilities can also be non-visible. We can't always tell who has a disability. The broad range of disabilities also includes vision disabilities, deafness or being hard of hearing, intellectual or developmental, learning, and mental health disabilities.

Focus On Five Key Areas

Standards Development Committees are developing proposed standards in five key areas.

1. The **Accessible Customer Service** standard is the first standard developed to become a regulation. It came into force on January 1, 2008 and is now the law. Public sector organizations will be required to comply by January 1, 2010. Private sector organizations will be required to comply by January 1, 2012. The standard addresses business practices and training needed to provide better customer service to people with disabilities.

2. **Accessible Information and Communications** standards to address the removal of barriers in access to information. The standards could include information being provided in person, through print, a website or other means.

3. **Accessible Built Environment** standards to address access into and within buildings and outdoor spaces and are expected to build on Ontario's Building Code. The standards could include things like counter height, aisle and door width, parking, and signs.

4. **Employment Accessibility** standards to address paid employment practices relating to employee-employer relationships, which could include recruitment, hiring, and retention policies and practices.

5. **Accessible Transportation** standards have been identified as crucial for people with disabilities. Access to transportation is needed for going to work or school, shopping and other aspects of daily life. This standard is to address aspects of accessible public transportation.

Be Alert To Barriers To Accessibility

When you think about making your organization accessible it is important to be alert to both visible and invisible barriers. A barrier is anything that keeps someone with a disability from participating in the social or economic life of our communities.

Architectural or structural barriers may result from the design of a building such as stairs, doorways, the width of hallways and even room layout.

Information and communications barriers can make it difficult for people to receive or convey information. Things like small print size, low colour contrast between text and background, confusing design of printed materials and the use of language that is not clear or plain can all cause difficulty.

Technology, or lack of it, can prevent people from accessing information. Everyday tools like computers, telephones and other aids can all present barriers.

Systemic barriers can occur through policies and procedures. These are any practices or rules that restrict people with disabilities – for example, denying access to a person with a service animal.

Attitude is perhaps the most difficult barrier to overcome. Some people don't know how to communicate with those who have visible or non-visible disabilities. Or they simply discriminate against them because of stereotypes. They may feel that they could offend the individual with a disability by offering help or they ignore or avoid people with disabilities altogether.

Raising Awareness

We all need to be aware of accessibility. Raising awareness is an important part of reaching the goal of an accessible Ontario. Under the act, the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario will develop and conduct programs of public education on the purpose of the act and implementation of its requirements. The Directorate will also provide tools and other resources to help organizations comply with the standards once they become regulations in law.

To Read The Act

Visit the e-laws website of the Ontario government:

www.e-laws.gov.on.ca

Let's work together to make Ontario a leader in accessibility.

It's the smart thing to do. It's the right thing to do.

TALK

T: Take the time to ask "May I help you?"

- o Asking this at the beginning of an encounter will help you understand the needs of persons with disabilities when they enter or office or service centre, or when you are providing service over the phone or Internet.

A: Ask, don't assume.

- o Never assist unless asked to, as you would with a customer without a disability, unless it is a clear emergency.

L: Listen attentively and speak directly to the customer.

- o Do not speak to the person's companion or attendant.

K: Know the accommodations and special services available.

- o Be knowledgeable about the services available in your community

PEOPLE-FIRST LANGUAGE

What words define who you are? The color of your skin or hair? Your age? Your weight? Of course not. When words alone define a person, the result is a label—a label that often reinforces barriers created by negative and stereotypical attitudes. Every individual deserves to be treated with dignity and respect—regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, hair color, or anything else.

People First Language is an objective and respectful way to speak about people with disabilities by emphasizing the person first, rather than the disability. It acknowledges what a person has, and recognizes that a person is not the disability. In putting the person before the disability, People First Language highlights a person's value, individuality and capabilities.

What should you say?

When referring to individuals with disabilities, be considerate when choosing your words. Focus on the person—and never use terms that label, generalize, stereotype, devalue or discriminate. Unless it is relevant to the conversation, you don't even need to refer to or mention the disability. The following chart has some examples of People First Language:

SAY THIS	NOT THIS
people with disabilities	the handicapped, the disabled
people without disabilities	normal, healthy, whole or typical people
person who has a congenital disability	person with a birth defect
person who has Down syndrome	Downs person, mongoloid, mongol
person who has (or has been diagnosed with) autism	the autistic
person with quadriplegia, person with paraplegia,	a quadriplegic, a paraplegic
person with a physical disability	a cripple
person who is unable to speak, person who uses a communication device	dumb, mute
people who are blind, person who is visually impaired	the blind
person with a learning disability	learning disabled
person diagnosed with a mental health condition	crazy, insane, psycho, mentally ill, emotionally disturbed, demented
person diagnosed with a cognitive disability or with an intellectual or developmental disability	mentally retarded, retarded, slow, idiot, moron
accessible parking, bathrooms, etc.	handicapped parking, bathrooms, etc.

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/

Four Principles of Accessibility

Accessible web content must be:

1. **Perceivable:** Information and user interface components must be presentable to users in ways they can perceive.

2. **Operable:** User interface components and navigation must be operable.

3. **Understandable:** Information and the operation of user interface must be understandable.

4. **Robust:** Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies.

Guidelines

1.   Provide text alternatives for any non-text content so that it can be changed into other forms people need, such as large print, Braille, speech, symbols, or simpler language.
- If non-text content is pure decoration, it needs to be implemented in a way that it can be ignored by assistive technology
2.   Provide alternatives for time-based media.
- Captions need to be provided for all audio content
- Audio descriptions need to be provided for all video content
- Sign-language interpretation needs to be provided for all media
3.   Create content that can be presented in different ways without losing information or structure.
- Information, structure, and relationships conveyed through presentation can be programmatically determined or are available in text.
- Instructions provided for understanding and operating content do not rely solely on sensory characteristics of components such as shape, size, visual location, orientation, or sound.
4.   Make content distinguishable so it is easier for users to see and hear

- Colour cannot be used as the only visual means of conveying information, indicating an action, prompting a response, or distinguishing a visual element.
- The visual presentation of text and images of text must have a contrast ration of at least 4.5:1. (http://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG20/quickref/#qr-visual-audio-contrast-contrast)
- Text needs to be able to be resized without assistive technology up to 200 percent without loss of content or functionality.
- Avoid background audio.
- Foreground and background colours should be able to be selected by the user.

5. Provide users enough time to read and use content.
6. Do not design content in a way that is known to cause seizures
   - Web pages must not contain anything that flashes more than three times in any one second period.
7. Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are.
   - Web pages should have titles that describe the topic or purpose
   - Have multiple ways to locate a web page within a set of web pages
8. Make text content readable and understandable
   - A mechanism needs to be available for identifying specific definitions of words or phrases used in an unusual or restricted way, including idioms and jargon, abbreviations, and pronunciation
   - When text requires a reading ability more advanced than the lower secondary education level, supplemental content or a version that does not require an advanced reading ability needs to be available
9. Make Web pages appear and operate in predictable ways.
   - Web pages should have consistent navigation and consistent identification
10. Help users avoid and correct mistakes
    - Labels or instructions are provided when content requires user input
    - For Web pages that require the user to submit information, at least one of the following must be true:
        i. Submissions are reversible
        ii. Data entered by the user is checked for input errors and the user is provided an opportunity to correct them
        iii. A mechanism is available for reviewing, confirming, and correcting information before finalizing the submission

The Social Determinants of Health

Many factors combine to affect the health of individuals and communities. Whether people are healthy or not, is determined by their circumstances and environment. Economic and social conditions – and their distribution among the population – influence individual and community health.

The determinants of health include:

- The social and economic environment,

- The physical environment, and

- The person's individual characteristics and behaviours.

The context of people's lives determines their health, and so blaming individuals for having poor health or crediting them for good health is inappropriate. Individuals are unlikely to be able to directly control many of the determinants of health.

Social Determinants of Health: The Canadian Facts considers 14 social determinants of health:

1. **Income and Income Distribution**

2. **Education**

3. **Unemployment and Job Security**

4. **Employment and Working Conditions**

5. **Early Childhood Development**

6. **Food Insecurity**

7. **Housing**

8. **Social Exclusion**

9. **Social Safety Network**

10. **Health Services**

11. **Aboriginal Status**

12. **Gender**

13. **Race**

14. **Disability**

It is important to work together and come up with strategies about what actions can be taken to contribute to greater health equity for all of us.

THE CENTRE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING IN TORONTO (CILT), INC.

For persons with disabilities, the independent living movement represents a vision of control and choice within the community. Rather than focusing on limitations and dependency on professional interventions, the emphasis is on quality of life and involvement in the community. Independent Living Centres (ILCs) tend to incorporate the following principles: consumer control; cross-disability; community-based; promoting integration and full participation; and non-profit.

ILC core programs include four fundamental components: Information and Referral, Peer Support, Independent Living Skills Training, and a Service Development Capacity. Examples of services developed through CILT include initiatives in literacy, participatory research, television and radio programs, Direct Funding and the Parenting With a Disability Network (PDN).

CILT primarily targets the Toronto area and serves persons with all types of disabilities. Empowerment and consumer-driven activities based on the self-help model are stressed.

CILT is operated by a community board of volunteers whose membership must, based on the by-laws, be comprised of a majority of persons with disabilities. Also, the Executive must be comprised totally of persons with disabilities.

All key staff positions are held by persons with disabilities or "consumers". Benefits to the consumer community are enhanced by this approach. Consumers have more representation on coalitions, in community consultations, on committees and in the policy rooms of the country, because they have employed staff to be there.

Through organizations such as CILT, persons with disabilities have a say in the services they depend on and improved access to the opportunities and respect that every Canadian is entitled to. By empowering persons with disabilities, and by teaching people how to advocate for themselves, CILT has built a solid reputation as a responsive, innovative organization in Toronto.

CILT Staff for the STAND Project are:

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