

FIRST UNITED CHURCH

Minimum Training Requirement for Volunteers (Ushers, Welcomers, Greeters & Others) **Recognizing & Accommodating People With Special Needs**

This training document has been produced in anticipation of assisting Ministry and Staff personnel, Ushers, Welcomers, Council members, Congregants, and the many volunteers who are active in our church, ensure persons with special needs receive equal treatment and equal access to our facilities and services. **Disability** or **Special Needs** covers a broad range and degree of conditions. Accommodation is a shared responsibility and everyone involved should understand and co-operate in the process. There is no set formula, and individual needs must still be considered each time a request or opportunity to assist presents itself. It is our hope to eliminate/reduce the barriers for “accommodation” by this document of awareness, and to promote respect, dignity, and the full participation of all persons with “special needs” in the life of our worshiping community.

How to Welcome

People with Special Needs

- Treat with patience & courtesy.
- Don't assume the type of disability.
- Look/listen and ask “Can I Help”.
- If unsure, ask again patiently.
- Always ask before you offer to help.
- Speak directly to the person.
- Use plain language/short sentences.
- Do not touch service animals.
- Do not touch assistive devices.

People With Vision Deficiency

- Identify yourself approaching the person.
- Speak directly, normally and clearly.
- Never touch without permission.
- Offer assistance after permission is granted.
- Offer your elbow and walk slowly.
- Be clear and precise giving directions.
- Don't assume the person can't see you.
- When leaving say “good-bye”.
- Do not leave the person unattended.

Deaf or Hard of Hearing People

- Ask how you can help. Don't shout.
- Attract attention before speaking.
- Insure the person can see your face.
- Look and speak directly to the person.
- If necessary, write your communication.
- Don't obscure your face with hands.
- Discuss personal matters in private.
- Sign language may be necessary.
- With hearing aids, avoid excessive noise.

People who are Deaf-Blind

- Never assume “capability”.
- An assistance card may be used.
- Do not address the intervenor.
- Identify yourself to the intervenor.
- Avoid touching service animals. Never touch without permission.

People with Physical Disabilities

- Address the person and not their guide.
- Respect independence, ask before helping.
- Be patient. Allow to identify their needs.
- Avoid touching assistive devices.
- Inform re: accessible features (elevators , washrooms etc.).

People with Speech/Language Impairments

- If you misunderstand, ask to repeat.
- Try to ask “yes” or “no” questions.
- Allow the person sufficient time.
- Be patient, do not interrupt speaker.
- Patience, respect, and willingness are your best tools to communicate.

People w/Mental Health Disabilities

- Treat with same respect you have for all.
- Be confident and reassuring, listen carefully.
- In a crisis situation, ask the best way to help.
- Demonstrate patience.

People w/Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

- Do not assume what the person can or cannot do.
- Use short sentences and plain language.
- Insure the person understands you.
- If unsure, do not pretend, ask again.
- Provide information one piece at a time.
- Be supportive and patient.
- Speak directly and not to their companion.

People w/Learning Disabilities

- Patience and willingness are best tools.
Ask how you can best help.
Speak normally/clearly/directly.
Allow sufficient time for a response.
- Provide information in a way that best works. (ie. try oral or pen & paper)
 - With children, be patient, encouraging & supportive.
 - Be courteous and patient. The person will advise what works for them.

People with Phone Disability

- Speak normally/clearly/directly.
- Listen to what is said, not how it sounds.
- Don't interrupt. Allow person time to explain.
- If you do not understand, request to repeat.
- If uncertain, repeat or rephrase what you heard.
- Speak normally to person and not interpreter.
If person has great difficulty speaking, arrange to call back and speak with someone else.

Moving A Person w/Assistive Devices

- Request permission to move a person.
- Wait for & follow person's instructions.
- Confirm person is ready to move.
- Describe your intent before you do it.
- Avoid uneven /bumpy surfaces.
- Practice consideration and safety.
- Leave person in a safe area.
- Do not move canes/walkers etc out of reach.
- Respect the individual's personal space.
- Advise person about accessible facilities that are available.

Examples of Personal Assistive Devices

- Wheelchairs.
- Scooters.
- Walkers.
- Amplification Devices.
- Hearing Aids.
- Oxygen Tanks.
- Electronic Notebooks.
- Personal Data Managers.
- Communication Boards.
- Speech-Generating Devices.

