

Customer Service Tip Sheet

“How Can I Help You?”

Corus Entertainment (“Corus”) is committed to conducting business and providing services in the communities where we operate in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of all employees and customers, including those with varying abilities. To assist employees that are in a Reception capacity, some tips and references are below.

The Basics

If you notice that your customer is having difficulty accessing your goods or services, a good starting point is to simply ask “**How can I help you?**” Your customers are your best source for information about their needs. A solution can be simple and they will likely appreciate your attention and consideration.

- Always communicate with clarity, courtesy and patience
- Direct all communication to the person with the disability unless they have requested you direct your communication to a support person
- Develop reasonable and customized solutions when trying to provide the best customer service possible. Solutions may include offering to guide them to an appropriate waiting area or contacting the Accessibility Compliance Officer on their behalf

Do They Require Additional Assistance?

If the person you are assisting requires special assistive technology, adaptive equipment or accommodation of another nature due to a temporary or permanent disability and you are unable to assist them, guide them to the reception area and let them know you will contact the **Corus Accessibility Compliance Officer** in Human Resources. If the **Corus Accessibility Compliance Officer** is unavailable, contact the **Facilities Manager**. In the event that a situation escalates and you are unable to reach the above employees, Security personnel are to be contacted.

Corus Accessibility Compliance Officer: 416-479-6558

Facilities Manager: 416-479-6008

Security: 416-364-2391

Further tips on how to provide customer service to people with different types of disabilities are outlined below.

How to Communicate with People with Different Types of Disabilities

There are many types and degrees of disability. Openly communicating and responding to your customers' needs is the key to excellent customer service for all. If you're not sure about the best approach, just ask a person with a disability how you can best communicate with them. Here are a few tips for interacting with people who have various disabilities:

Physical Disabilities

Only some people with physical disabilities use a wheelchair. Someone with a spinal cord injury may use crutches while someone with severe arthritis or a heart condition may have difficulty walking longer distances.

Tips:

- If you need to have a lengthy conversation with someone who uses a wheelchair or scooter, consider sitting so you can make eye contact at the same level.
- Don't touch items or equipment, such as canes or wheelchairs, without permission.
- If you have permission to move a person's wheelchair, don't leave them in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position, such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors.

Vision Loss

Vision loss can restrict someone's ability to read, locate landmarks or see hazards. Some customers may use a guide dog or a white cane, while others may not.

Tips:

- When you know someone has vision loss, don't assume the individual can't see you. Many people who have low vision still have some sight.
- Identify yourself when you approach and speak directly to the customer.
- Ask if they would like you to read any printed material out loud to them (for example, a menu or schedule of fees).
- When providing directions or instructions, be precise and descriptive.
- Offer your elbow to guide them if needed.

Hearing Loss

People who have hearing loss may be deaf, deafened or hard of hearing. They may also be oral deaf – unable to hear, but prefer to talk instead of using sign language. These terms are used to describe different levels of hearing and/or the way a person's hearing was diminished or lost.

Tips:

- Once a customer has identified themselves as having hearing loss, make sure you are in a well-lit area where they can see your face and read your lips.
- As needed, attract the customer's attention before speaking. Try a gentle touch on the shoulder or wave of your hand.
- If your customer uses a hearing aid, reduce background noise or move to a quieter area.
- If necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier (for example, using a pen and paper).

Deafblind

A person who is deafblind may have some degree of both hearing and vision loss. Many people who are deafblind will be accompanied by an intervener, a professional support person who helps with communication.

Tips:

- A customer who is deafblind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them, perhaps with an assistance card or a note.
- Speak directly to your customer, not to the intervener.

Speech or Language Impairments

Cerebral palsy, hearing loss or other conditions may make it difficult for a person to pronounce words or may cause slurring. Some people who have severe difficulties may use a communication board or other assistive devices.

Tips:

- Don't assume that a person with a speech impairment also has another disability.
- Whenever possible, ask questions that can be answered with "yes" or a "no".
- Be patient. Don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences.

Learning Disabilities

The term "learning disabilities" refers to a variety of disorders. One example is dyslexia, which affects how a person takes in or retains information. This disability may become apparent when a person has difficulty reading material or understanding the information you are providing.

Tips:

- Be patient – people with some learning disabilities may take a little longer to process information, to understand and to respond.
- Try to provide information in a way that takes into account the customer's disability. For example, some people with learning disabilities find written words difficult to understand, while others may have problems with numbers and math.

Intellectual Developmental Disabilities

Developmental or intellectual disabilities, such as Down Syndrome, can limit a person's ability to learn, communicate, do everyday physical activities and live independently. You may not know that someone has this disability unless you are told.

Tips:

- Don't make assumptions about what a person can do.
- Use plain language.
- Provide one piece of information at a time.

Mental Health Disabilities

Mental health issues can affect a person's ability to think clearly, concentrate or remember things. Mental health disability is a broad term for many disorders that can range in severity. For example, some customers may experience anxiety due to hallucinations, mood swings, phobias or panic disorder.

Tips:

- If you sense or know that a customer has a mental health disability be sure to treat them with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
- Be confident, calm and reassuring.
- If a customer appears to be in crisis, ask them to tell you the best way to help.

How to interact with people who use assistive devices, and how to use any equipment that your organization provides to help customers with disabilities

An assistive device is a tool, technology or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities, such as moving, communicating or lifting. Personal assistive devices can include things like wheelchairs, hearing aids, white canes or speech amplification devices.

Tips:

- Don't touch or handle any assistive device without permission.
- Don't move assistive devices or equipment, such as canes and walkers, out of your customer's reach.
- Let your customers know about accessible features in the immediate environment that are appropriate to their needs (e.g. public phones with TTY service, accessible washrooms, etc.).

If your organization offers any equipment or devices for customers with disabilities, make sure you know how to use them. It could be helpful to have instruction manuals handy or an instruction sheet posted where the device is located or stored.

Some examples of assistive devices that your organization might offer include:

- Lifts, which raises or lowers people who use mobility devices
- Accessible interactive kiosk, which might offer information or services in Braille or through audio headsets
- Wheelchairs

How to interact with a person who has a service animal a guide dog or other service animal

People with vision loss may use a guide dog, but there are other types of service animals as well. Hearing alert animals help people who are Deaf, deafened, oral deaf, or hard of hearing. Other service animals are trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure.

Under the standard, service animals must be allowed on the parts of your premises that are open to the public. In some instances, service animals will not be permitted in certain areas by law (for example, a restaurant kitchen).

Tips:

- Remember that a service animal is not a pet. Avoid touching or addressing them.
- If you're not sure if the animal is a pet or a service animal, ask your customer.

How to serve a person accompanied by a support person

Some people with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person, such as an intervenor. A support person can be a personal support worker, a volunteer, a family member or a friend. A support person might help your customer with a variety of things from communicating, to helping with mobility, personal care or medical needs.

Welcome support people to your workplace or business. They are permitted in any part of your premises that is open to the public. If your organization is one that charges admission, such as a movie theatre or bowling alley, provide notice, in advance, about what admission fee will be charged for a support person.

Tips:

- If you're not sure which person is the customer, take your lead from the person using or requesting your goods or services, or simply ask.
- Speak directly to your customer, not to their support person.

Reference: Ministry of Community and Social Services

<http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/accessibility/customerService>