

Working with a Communication Assistant

The following is a transcript of audio segments for slides in this lesson.

Lesson 1.1

There are 5 lessons in this course.

- Lesson 1 is about communication access rights
- Lesson 2 is about communication assistants and when people use them
- Lesson 3 is about ways to find, interview and pay for a communication assistant
- Lesson 4 is about your responsibilities when training a new communication assistant
- Lesson 5 is about getting communication assistance in important communication situations such as a hospital, or when communicating with police, lawyers or in a courtroom.

Slide 1.3 – Communication Access Rights

- You have a right to use community services and opportunities in the same way as everyone else.

This means that stores, restaurants, cinemas, bars, coffee shops, community centres, colleges, doctors, dentists – all services must be accessible to you.

If you use a wheelchair or a mobility device there should be a ramp and door openers so that you can get into the building – the washroom should be accessible to you – the counters at a level where you can see and interact with service providers.

- You cannot be discriminated against, denied services or get inferior services because you have a disability.
- You have a right to get the supports you may need when using services.

Watch the video on the next slide to learn more about your communication access rights.

Slide 1.5

In Canada, your communication access rights are protected by:

- The Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- Provincial Human Rights Codes
- Provincial Accessibility Laws (where they exist)
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

You can get a summary of your communication access rights in the resources. You can also find a link there to learn more about your communication access rights and these laws by going to the CDAC website.

Slide 1.6

Some people who have communication disabilities may need assistance when using services in their community – especially meetings and appointments.

- Some people may need support when communicating with service providers.
- They can't access these services without this support.
- They have a right to have someone assist them with communication.

Let's listen to what the instructors tell us about the right to have someone assist with communication.

Slide 1.7

Our instructors tell us about their right to use a communication assistant.

Slide 1.8 – So... What is a Communication Assistant?

A communication assistant is a person who supports someone to communicate in certain situations. For example:

- An important situation – like in a hospital, or communicating with police
- At a meeting or a public event – as Tony tells us public events that are organized by government groups need to be fully accessible and that if people need assistance communicating at these events, the organizers should either pay for their assistant – if they need one.
- With new people they don't know
- With people who don't give them enough time to communicate – like a busy doctor or dentist...

Slide 1.9 – What does a Communication Assistant do?

Everyone is different and has different needs. And so they need their communication assistant to do different things.

For example, they may want their assistant to

- Make sure the person they are communicating with can understand their message
- Help to understand what the other person is saying
- Make sure they get the time and opportunity to communicate everything they want
- Assist with communicating over the telephone
- Assist with reading documents and completing forms

Listen to what the instructors want their assistants to do...

Slide 1.11 – How does a Communication Assistant work?

The role of a Communication Assistant is to help with communication. They:

- Only communicate what you tell them to communicate
- Follow your instructions on how you want them to assist you
- Keep everything private
- Are respectful at all times

We asked the instructors to tell us what a good communication assistant does...

Slide 1.13 – What does a Communication Assistant not do?

It's important to know that a communication assistant does not:

- Make decisions for you
- Give advice on what you should communicate
- Advocate on your behalf
- Teach you how to communicate
- Censor what you communicate
- Give their opinions, unless you ask for their input

We asked the instructors to tell us when they use a communication assistant...

Slide 1.15

In this lesson, we talked about communication rights and how a communication assistant can help you when you communicate with services in your community.

You may want to think about and discuss some of the things covered in this lesson.
For example:

- Would you like to learn more about your communication rights? You can find a link in the resources.
- In what situations do you think you might need someone to assist you communicating?
- Have you ever used a person to assist you communicating? Where?
- What qualities would you like to see in a person who assists you communicating?

Slide 1.16

Please take a minute to give us feedback on this lesson. Once you finish the quick form, you can move to lesson 2.

You can also take a break and when you come back you can start Lesson 2.