Serving Clients with Disabilities

A training for the Homeless Prenatal Program

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City & County of San Francisco Mayor's Office on Disability

Our agenda…

- What is MOD and What it Does
- Defining Disability
- Disability Rights Laws & their Applications
- How They Affect Your Agency
- Practical Tips
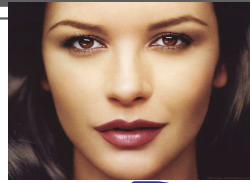- Additional Resources

About the Mayor's Office on Disability...

- Who We Are & What We Do

- Jurisdiction & Areas of Influence

- Mayor's Disability Council

(415) 554.6789 Voice / (415) 554.6799 TTY

www.sfgov.org/mod

Disability Defined...

- Different laws define disability based on different criteria, such as income earning potential, specific diagnosis, etc. However:

- **Civil Rights Laws** define a person with a disability as an individual meeting ONE of the following three criteria:

1. Physical or Mental impairment that limits one or more life activities.

2. A record of such an impairment.

3. Being perceived as having a disability though no impairment exists.

The numbers game...

- Approximately 20% of SF's population are people with disabilities. This includes:
- over 8,000 children and youth
- 95,000 adults between the ages of 21 and 64
- over 46,000 adults 65 and older
- The numbers include those who have visible disabilities such as mobility impairments AND invisible disabilities such as mental disabilities, cognitive impairments, etc.
  - 2000 U.S. Census Data

Some Disability Rights Laws that Apply to People with Disabilities:

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Fair Housing Amendments Act
- Air Carriers' Access Act
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Americans with Disabilities Act:

1. **Title III** – Access to Public Accommodations such as social service agencies
2. **Title II** – Access to State & Local Government Agencies and their contractors

What is Disability Access?

Would you like help with access to our services? Please let us know!

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS • DISABILITY SENSITIVITY • REAL TIME CAPTIONING • TTY MACHINES • ASSISTIVE LISTENING DEVICES • SIGN LANGUAGE • BRAILLE • INFORMATION AND HELP • LARGE PRINT • AMPLIFIED PHONES

Questions? Need more help?
Contact the Mayor's Office on Disability: PH: 554-6789; TTY 554-6799

- Services should be *"accessible to and usable by people with disabilities"*

- It includes:

1. Reasonable modifications to policies & procedures

2. Communication access

3. Architectural access

Common Disability Barriers:
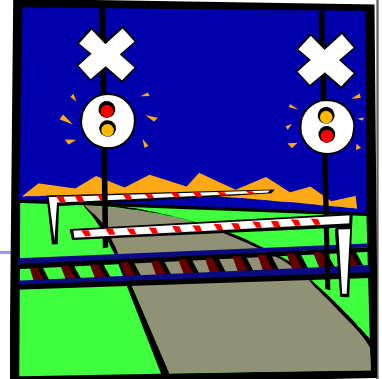
- "Please wait for the next available..."
  (Waiting in line)
- "I'm sorry. We do not allow pets..."
  (Prohibitions against service / support animals)
- "We'd like to offer you a ride, but..."
  (Inaccessible transportation)
- "We have a program, designed especially for..."
  (Segregation)
- "I'm sorry, but it's NOT safe ..."
  (Inappropriate application of safety standards)

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990:
A Civil Rights Law, with Standard Expectations

- ## Don't Deny Participation or Service

  If transportation subsidies provided by the agency did not include Para transit or wheelchair accessible options, it would exclude wheelchair users from the program.

- ## Don't Segregate

  If all clients with physical disabilities were referred to a public health clinic for prenatal care instead of being served onsite, this would be an example of segregation based on disability.

- ## Don't Retaliate or Coerce

  After she complains of access violations, a case manager writes up and refuses to work with a client with a mobility impairment based on minor rule violations that staff usually ignores.

Reasonable Modification to Policies, Practices & Procedures

■ We have the obligation to modify our policies, practices and procedures when needed to provide equal access – this is called a *Reasonable Modification*

■ *Examples:*

1. Allow a client w/ an anxiety disorder to be accompanied by an emotional support cat while attending therapy onsite.

2. Allow a person w/dyslexia to take an oral exam instead of a written test at a job training program.

3. Scheduling case management appointments ONLY in the afternoons for a client who is on psych medication that makes it to difficult to function first thing in the morning.
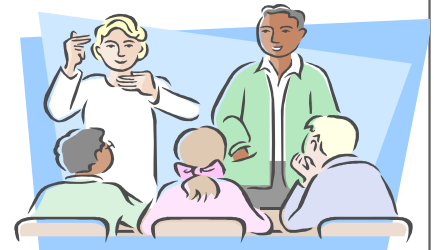
Communication Access
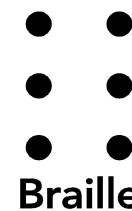
- People with disabilities MUST have the same opportunity as others to enjoy, receive and understand information from the agency.

- When the agency provides an auxiliary aid or service to ensure effective communication, we MUST give <u>primary consideration to the aid or service the individual with a disability has requested.</u>

Braille

People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing Use...

- Sign Language or Oral Interpreter
- Assistive Listening Device (ALD)
- Open or Closed Captioning
- TTY phone
- Telephone Relay System (711)
- Computer-Aided Real-time Captioning (CART)

Know the difference and appropriate use for each!

People Who Are Blind or Low Vision Use...

- Audio Description
- Accessible Websites
- Computer Screen-reading software
- Braille
- Large Print
- Readers
- Tactile Materials

Communicating with People with Psychiatric, Cognitive or Developmental Disabilities

- Get to know the person's communication method.

- Ask the individual to repeat if you do not understand their speech.

- Speak directly to the person instead of the interpreter or communication facilitator.

- Allow for plenty of time and frequent breaks.

- Choose a quiet, distraction-free site with adequate space so it lowers anxiety level.
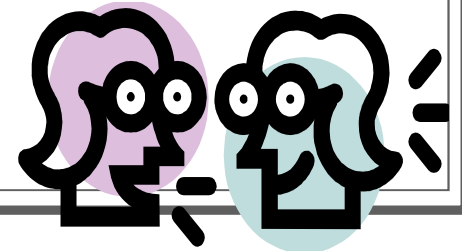
Regarding Architectural Accessibility…
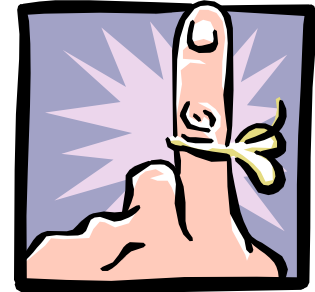
- As a private agency, you must also ensure *readily achievable barrier removal* when you conduct facility alterations and renovations.

- You also have an obligation to maintain those accessible elements in good working order- This is called *Maintenance of Accessible Features:*

  --Furniture Obstructions

  --Toilet Room Trash Cans

  --Elevator Out-of-service

  --Missing Signage

  --Broken Hardware
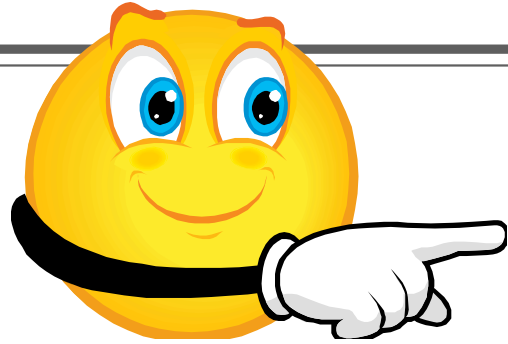
You Can Help!

- Regardless of your technical expertise with accessibility standards you must ensure:

1. New construction or addition plans have gone through a reliable accessibility (CASp) review.

2. Accessible route is maintained free, clear and in working order from curb to your front door AND throughout your office.

Next Steps *for Full Disability Access…*

- Provide notice to your customers about disability access features & policies.

- Become familiar w/ available resources Citywide & locally to assist clients who need them.

- Develop policies in advance to handle disability related requests & educate your staff.

- When in doubt, consult with your funding department's ADA coordinator or MOD.

MOD is Here to Help !

For a number of ADA Resources please visit our website:
www.sfgov.org/mod

- *Citywide ADA Grievance Procedure:*
  http://www.sfgov2.org/index.aspx?page=496

- *Accessible Public Events Checklist:*
  http://www.sfgov2.org/index.aspx?page=416

- *Accessible Public Meeting Locations:*
  http://www.sfgov2.org/index.aspx?page=398

- *Resources for Programmatic & Communication Access:*
  http://www.sfgov2.org/index.aspx?page=501