



Frontline Staff Training

Presented by Eric Lipp
Executive Director of
Open Doors Organization



Open Doors
Organization

Open Doors Organization

- Chicago-based non-profit founded in 2000
- Mission—to create a society in which persons with disabilities have equal opportunities as consumers
- Primary Focus—Travel and Tourism



ODO Director Eric Lipp



People-First Language

- Use "Person-First" terminology such as person who is blind or people with disabilities since this acknowledges them as people first rather than their disability
- Avoid referring to groups of people by their condition or disability such as the blind or the deaf
- Never mention someone's disability unless it is relevant



Do Say	Don't Say
Person with a disability/who is disabled, person with reduced mobility	The disabled, handicapped, invalid, physically challenged
Little person, little people	Midget
Non-disabled, able-bodied	Normal, healthy
Uses wheelchair, uses assistive device	Wheelchair bound, confined to wheelchair
Birth injury, congenital disability	Birth defect, deformity, deformed
Person with a physical disability	Crippled, lame, deformed, invalid, gimp
Person who is deaf/hard of hearing	The deaf, hearing impaired, deaf mute
Has a speech disability	Has a speech defect, dumb
Person who is blind/has low vision	The blind, blind people, visually impaired
Person with an intellectual, cognitive, or developmental disability	Stupid, retard, retarded, slow, subnormal, mentally challenged
Person living with epilepsy/seizure disability	Epileptic, has fits, spastic
Person with a psychiatric disability	Crazy, nuts, loony

Myths and Misconceptions

- Myth—People with disabilities make up a small part of the population.
- Reality—In 2010, 19% of Americans—57 million—had a disability.* In terms of households, almost 1 in 3 (30%) has a member with a disability.
 - Europe has 80 million people with disabilities as estimated by the European Disability Forum
 - Globally, more than 650 million people have disabilities (10% of population) according to the World Bank.

*US Census Bureau, "Americans with Disabilities: 2010"



Myths and Misconceptions

- Myth—People with disabilities are housebound and don't get out much.
- Reality—ODO in 2005 found that 50% of Americans with disabilities eat out at least once per week. 4.8 million adults with disabilities fly every year, spending \$2.9 billion on just their own flights.



Riverwalk, San Antonio



Myths and Misconceptions

- Myth—Americans with disabilities are too poor to be a viable market.
- Reality—In 1996, the Dept. of Labor estimated their disposable income at \$176 billion. Current spending power is projected to be \$246 billion.



Myths and Misconceptions

- Myth—People with disabilities are not technologically savvy and don't use the Internet
- Reality—In 2005 ODO found that adults with disabilities are more likely to book their trips online than the general population.



Myths and Misconceptions

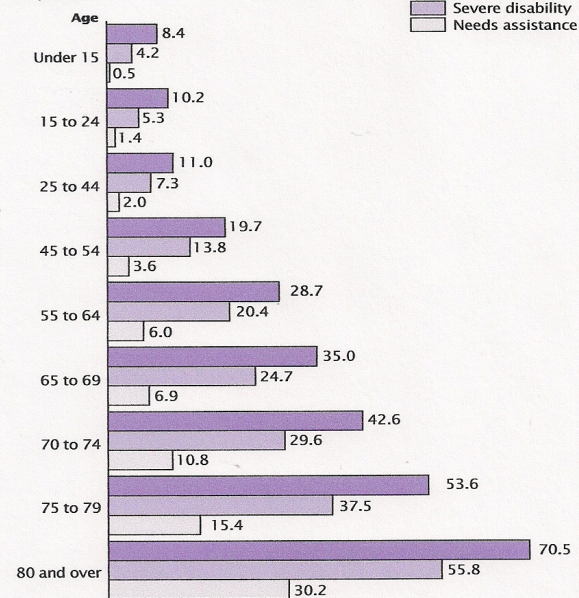
- Myth—Most people with disabilities are born that way.
- Reality—Less than 15% of disabilities are congenital or result from birth trauma. Most occur later due to accidents, health conditions and the process of aging.



Disability Prevalence By Age

Figure 2.
**Disability Prevalence and the Need for Assistance
by Age: 2010**

(In percent)



Note: The need for assistance with activities of daily living was not asked of children under 6 years.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, May–August 2010.

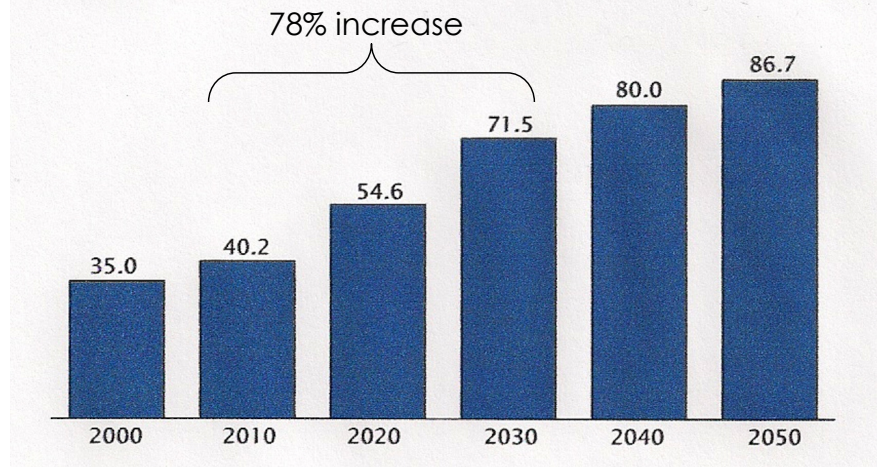
51.8% of Americans
65 and older have a
disability, 36.9%
have a severe
disability



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65+ Projected US Pop. Growth

Figure 2-5.
Population Aged 65 and Over: 2000 to 2050
(In millions)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 65+ In The US: 2005



Defining Disability

- The U.S. government defines disability as “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.”
- Major life activities include such activities as caring for one’s self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working.



Major Types of Disability

- Reduced Mobility
- Hearing Loss
- Vision Loss
- Speech and Language Disabilities
- Cognitive Disabilities
- Psychiatric Disabilities
- Medical Disabilities



Each Person's Disability Is Unique

- Disabilities vary widely in severity as does each person's ability to cope with their disability
 - Learning how to function independently takes a lot of training and hard work
- The type of assistive devices or technology the individual needs to function also differs
- So does the type and extent of the help each person requires...

SO ALWAYS ASK FIRST!



Hidden Disabilities

- Many disabilities are not obvious
 - Sensory disabilities may not be noticeable until you interact with the person
 - Medical disabilities are often hidden—heart disease, diabetes, asthma, epilepsy
 - Psychiatric disabilities are typically hidden as well—but the stress of air travel can worsen some conditions
 - Don't make assumptions about what people can and cannot do



Assisting Customers with Disabilities

Break down the **W.A.L.L.**

- First, **Watch**. Be observant of customers and their abilities.
- Then, **Ask** what you can do to assist the customer. Do not assume what the person's needs are.
- Third, **Listen**. Pay attention to what the customer says. If they don't need or want assistance, take "no" for an answer.
- Finally, **Learn**. Let the customer know that you understand their needs and respond appropriately. Use the experience to build your knowledge for the future.



Common Courtesies

**Just Say
Hi!**

- Always introduce yourself and ask the customer's name, if you don't already know it.
- Speak directly to the person with a disability, not their companion or interpreter.
- Ask, "How may I assist you?"
- As a rule of thumb, if you are ever unsure about what to say or do, just ask. More often than not, a person with a disability will be happy to let you know what they prefer.



Common Courtesies

- Allow the customer to remain as independent as possible. Be considerate of the extra time it might take them to get things done or said. Let them set the pace in walking and talking.
- When listening to someone who speaks slowly or with great effort, don't pretend to understand.
 - Politely asked him to repeat what you did not understand
 - Ask if writing notes would be okay
- Follow the “Golden Rule”—Treat someone with a disability the way you would want to be treated



Customers Using Wheelchairs

- Wheelchairs are part of personal space. Never touch or push someone's chair without permission.
- Don't lean over someone in a wheelchair to shake another person's hand.
- Never pat a person on his or her head or shoulder.
- Speak directly to the person in the wheelchair, not to his or her companion.
- Come out from behind a high counter to provide assistance. Offer a clipboard to write on.



Common with Cognitive Disabilities

- Speak directly to the person
- Lean in, smile and try to have good eye contact
- Treat adults as adults. Don't "talk down" as if you were talking to a child.
- Be patient and take the time to communicate. You may have to repeat yourself more than once.
- Unless the person requests it, do not use a wheelchair or cart. Just walk the passenger through the terminal.



Children with Autism

- Children with autism are hypersensitive to lights, noises, crowds and changes of routine
- When assisting...
 - Speak quietly and calmly
 - Never touch the child
 - Be patient and understanding
 - Be aware that the child may be nonverbal
 - Move the family to a quieter area if the child has an emotional outburst



Communicating with Persons with Hearing Loss

- To get the attention of a person who is hard of hearing or deaf, put yourself in their line of sight or tap the person on the arm or wave your hand.
- Look directly at the person and speak clearly and slowly to establish if the person can read your lips.
- Place yourself facing the light source and keep hands, food, etc. away from your mouth



Assisting Customers with Vision Loss

- When addressing a customer who is blind, always greet the person and identify yourself and the company you work for.
- Use a normal tone of voice. People have a natural tendency to raise their voice level when speaking to a person who is blind.
- Do not touch or grab the person to get his attention. This can be very unnerving.
- When offering assistance, ask, "May I assist you?" Then follow the individual's instructions.



An Exercise to Leave You With!

We're going to do a class exercise. Pair up with someone next to you. The person on the left makes a fist. The person on the right has 7 seconds to get the fist open. GO!!

