



## Accessibility Includes Communication

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 **CDAC** Communication Disabilities Access Canada

### CDAC

- Canadian, non-profit organization – 2001
- Promote human rights, accessibility and inclusion for people with speech and language disabilities (SLDs), including people who use AAC.
- Time limited projects
- SLPs, AAC clinicians, Legal professionals, access consultants, people with SLDs
- Resources on projects

[www.cdacanada.com](http://www.cdacanada.com)  
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### Webinar Agenda

- Legal context for communication access rights
- Communication Access Now Project (CAN)
  - Policy makers and legislators
  - Businesses and organizations
  - People with SLDs
- Resources

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### Legal Accessibility Context

- Laws that protect the rights of people with disabilities to get equal access to goods and services.
  - Anti-discrimination
  - Access
  - Human rights
- These laws tell businesses and organizations what they must do to make their goods and services accessible to everyone.

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### Legal Accessibility Context

- Ontario has accessibility legislation
  - Make service accessible for people with disabilities
  - Mandatory training on accessibility
  - Accessibility policies and procedures
  - Reporting
  - Complaint process
- Not perfect but is gold standard for Canadian provinces

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### Legal Accessibility Context

- Many people with disabilities are benefiting from legislation.
- Specific regulations and guidelines
- Review 7 government documents
  - Mobility disabilities – 330
  - Sensory disabilities –281

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### People with SLDs

- Are people with SLDs benefiting from accessibility legislation?
- Speech disability - 7
- Communication is alternate formats and websites
- Communication disability is sensory or intellectual



### People with SLDs

- Communication is about respect and attitudes
- No obligations for what businesses and organizations should do to make services accessible for people with SLDs
- No representation of people with SLDs



## Why?

- We are not at the table
- Must include all people with SLDs
- No consensus on what we want
- Out of scope of practice
- Loudest voices are heard



## Why is it important?

- Many barriers for people with SLDs are caused by service providers / lack of accommodations
- Legislation can increase access and give clear directives
- Can be a part of the bigger disability human rights movement



## COMMUNICATION ACCESS NOW (CAN)

- Research project (2012)
- National awareness strategy
- 3 year project
- Funded by Employment and Social Development Canada
- CAN team
- Resources on website



## CAN online resources

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| • Symbol  | • E-learning modules       |
| • Barriers and accommodations for different sectors | • Brochures                |
| • Toolkits  | • Booklet                  |
| • Videos  | • Social Media             |
|   | • Links to other resources |



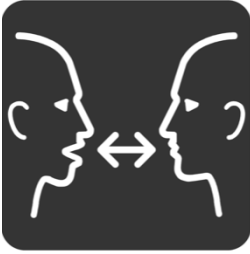
## COMMUNICATION ACCESS

- Understanding what others are saying
- Having others understand our messages
- Having time and opportunities to communicate
- Using our preferred methods of communication
- Being able to communicate at in face-to-face interactions, over the telephone, at meetings and public events
- Being able to access reading materials
- Being able to sign documents and complete forms

(Collier, Blackstone & Taylor, AAC 2012)

## What do we want?

- Access to goods / services for people with SLDs
- Legislators and policy makers
- Businesses and organizations
- Essential services
- People with SLDs



## Legislation / Policy

- Include people with SLDs, not caused by hearing loss
- Communication as a disability domain
- Not be a diagnostic approach
- Communication crosses all regulations

**Legislation / Policy**

- Communication to include comprehension and expression
  - Accommodations to support effective two-way communication
  - Face-to-face interactions
  - Telephone communications
  - Meetings, public events
  - Written communication

**Legislation / Policy**

- Communication access directives for sectors where communication is critical
  - Healthcare, EMS, government services, education, police, legal and justice services
  - Increased training
  - Policies / procedures
  - Communication Intermediaries when required

**Legislation / Policy**

- Representation on committees and engagement at public consultations
  - People with SLDs
  - Family members
  - Communication disability professionals

**2. ACCESSIBLE SERVICES (GENERIC)**

We want:

- Staff interacting with the public have basic training on communicating with people who have SLDs
  - Talk directly to person
  - Follow the person's instructions
  - Give more time for communication
- E-learning modules
- Display symbol as sign of awareness and welcome

### 3. Essential Services

- Policies and practices to ensure effective communication access
- Significant sectors for people with SLDs
  - Government services (e.g. social assistance)
  - Health care (e.g. communicating about health; informed consent; end of life directives, doctor assisted suicide)
  - Disability services (e.g. rehabilitation centres, attendant services, wheelchair vendors)
  - Transportation (e.g. bookings, communicating with driver)
  - Emergency services
  - Police, legal and justice services (e.g. disclosures, giving testimony, legal meetings)
  - All other sectors

### Essential Services

- Communication training for front line staff
- Process that identifies and addresses communication barriers and required accommodations
- Communication tools in emergencies and healthcare
- Communication intermediaries in critical communication contexts
  - 98% people who use AAC want communication assistance / 40% may not have someone to assist (Collier, Blackstone & Taylor, 2012)

### Essential Services

- Healthcare (Patient-Provider Communication)
- EMR (RERC site)
- Communication Access to Justice (CDAC)
  - Communication Intermediary training and roster
  - Education for police, legal and justice professionals
- Communication Access in legal decision making contexts (CDAC)
  - Healthcare (consent and capacity)
  - Financial
  - Supportive housing
  - Survey – via Facebook link
  - Webinars in 2016

### 4. PEOPLE WITH SLDs


People with SLDs and families need to know:

- Communication access rights
- Roles and responsibilities
- Individual access accommodations
- Tools and skills to negotiate their accommodations
- Rights for communication assistance
- Involvement in the political process

## Online toolkit

Instructions for completing card are on the website

**IT TAKES TWO TO COMMUNICATE**



[www.communication-access.org](http://www.communication-access.org)

CDAC Communication Disabilities Access Canada

- Talk directly to me, not just the person with me.
- Ask me if there is anything you can do to make communication go smoothly.
- Be patient.
- Tell me if you don't understand my message.
- Read about ways to make your services accessible for me.

[SEE OVER >](#)

## SUMMARY

- Progress is slow but making a difference
- Working with legal professionals to explore ways to strengthen legislation
- Engagement of people with SLDs, families and service providers
- Customizing legislation within essential services
- CAN ends March 2016

## RESOURCES

Collier, B. Blackstone, S., & Taylor, A. (2012). *Communication Access to Businesses and Organizations for People with Complex Communication Needs. Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, Dec. 2012. VOL. 28 (1), pp. 205 – 218.

CAN at <http://www.communication-access.org/>

CDAC at <http://www.cdacanada.com>

Access to Justice at <http://www.access-to-justice.org/>

Patient Provider Communication at <http://www.patientprovidercommunication.org/about.htm>

## RESOURCES

EMS at <http://aac-lerc.psu.edu/index.php/pages/show/id/18>

Useful websites

Scotland's Communication Forum at <http://www.communicationforumsotland.org.uk/>

Scope's communication project at <http://www.scopevic.org.au/service/communication-access/>

UK Connect at <http://www.ukconnect.org/>

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