



## **Fact Sheet: Working with Persons who have Learning Disabilities**

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Humber College is increasing accessibility for persons with disabilities. Approximately 1 in every 7 Ontarians has a disability and as the population ages that number will continue to grow. This resource is intended to provide faculty and staff with suggestions for working more effectively with persons who have learning disabilities.

Learning disabilities are information processing disorders. They can affect how a person acquires, organizes, expresses, retains, understands or uses verbal or non-verbal information. Learning disabilities affect every person differently, and the disorder can range from mild to severe. Some examples of learning disabilities are provided below:

- dyslexia (problems in reading)
- dyscalculia (problems in mathematics)
- dysgraphia (problems in writing and fine motor skills).

Learning disabilities can result in different communication difficulties for people. They can be subtle, such as difficulty reading, or more pronounced. Learning disabilities can interfere with the persons' ability to receive, express or process information. You may not know that a person has a learning disability unless you are told. The types of assistance a person with a learning disability may use include:

- Alternative technology for writing (i.e. portable note-taking devices)
- Calculator
- Scanning or reading technology
- Tape recorders, mini pocket recorders

Below outlines suggestions for interacting with persons who have speech or language disabilities to ensure they have equal access to goods and services at Humber College.

### **Suggestions for Interacting with People who have Learning Disabilities:**

- ✓ Patience and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.
- ✓ When you know that someone with a learning disability needs help, ask how you can best assist.
- ✓ Speak clearly and directly to the person.
- ✓ Take some time. People with some kinds of learning disabilities may take a little longer to process information and respond.
- ✓ Try to find ways to provide information in a way that works best for them. For example, have paper and a pen readily available.
- ✓ Be courteous and patient. The person will let you know how to best provide service in a way that works best for them.

### **Sources:**

1. Tips of Serving Customers with Disabilities. Retrieved from <https://ddsb.ca/AboutUs/Accessibility/Documents/Accessibility%20Tips.pdf>  
PDF is developed by Accessible Ontario Customer Service <https://www.osesc-cseo.org>
2. Understanding Disabilities. Ministry of Social and Community Services. [http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/accessibility/understanding\\_accessibility/physical\\_disabilities.aspx](http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/accessibility/understanding_accessibility/physical_disabilities.aspx)