ASCLA

AccessAbility Academy

Positive Interactions:

Making the Library a Welcoming and Empowering Place for People with Disabilities

Is the library in which you work a welcoming place for people with disabilities? This session is for staff who would like to ensure that it is. A significant percentage of people have a disability that may impact their use of the library. This session includes tips and practical advice for positive interactions with people with disabilities. As you review the session, questions will encourage you to reflect, ask questions, discuss the topic with others, and apply the ideas to your own setting.

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will demonstrate awareness of the large number of people with disabilities, the broad range of types of disabilities, and will consider potential impacts on library usage.

2. Participants will demonstrate understanding of best practices for communication and interaction with library users with disabilities.

3. Participants will describe ways in which partnerships within the community can enhance communication with people with disabilities.

4. Participants will identify personal goals for learning more and improving service.

5. Participants will identify organizational goals for creating an improved culture.

Disability:

a gradient on which every person functions at different levels due to personal and environmental factors

Discussion Questions

1. What do you already do to make people with disabilities feel welcome at the library?

2. How do you invite people with disabilities to use the library?

3. How can the library create an organizational culture that fosters positive interactions with people with disabilities?

Checklist

- ✓ Staff customer service training includes tips for positive interactions with people with disabilities.
- ✓ Staff training related to learning more about disabilities is regularly offered.
- ✓ The library website includes welcoming language for people with disabilities.
- ✓ Library programming announcements include a message encouraging people with disabilities to participate.
- ✓ The library asks people with disabilities for input about the library's accessibility.
- ✓ Providing effective service to people with disabilities is included in the library's strategic plan.

Resources for Learning More

Americans with Disabilities Act http://www.ada.gov
The U.S. Department of Justice's ADA website contains a wealth of information to help businesses and organizations be accessible.

ASCLA Toolkit Library Accessibility: What You Need to Know
http://www.ala.org/ascla/asclaprotools/accessibilitytipsheets
Fifteen tip sheets developed to help librarians in all types of libraries understand and manage access issues

Census.gov http://www.census.gov
See the American Community Survey (ACS) and the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) for data about disabilities.

Disability.gov http://www.disability.gov
Find information on disability programs and services in communities nationwide.

Pew Internet http://www.pewinternet.org
See the 2012 report "Americans living with disability and their technology profile"