

Customer Service: Making It Work

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What Is the ADA?

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a civil rights law passed in 1990
- Prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities
- Goal: **Full inclusion** of people with disabilities in all aspects of American society



Why Was the ADA Needed?

- Before 1990 ...
 - Many businesses and government programs were not accessible
 - People with disabilities were rarely seen in advertisements or TV shows
 - Sign language interpreters were rarely used at public events
 - People with disabilities were excluded from many activities



The ADA is Still Needed!

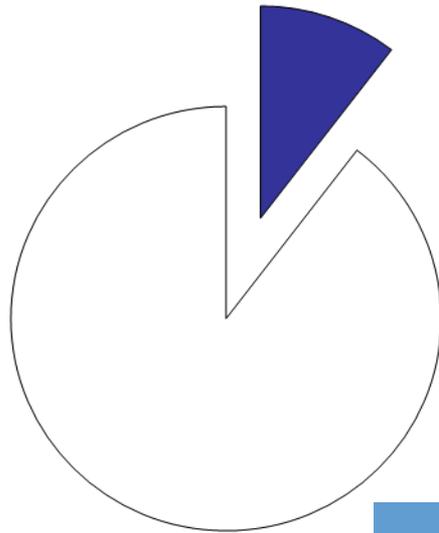
- We still have a long way to go to assure that people with disabilities have full access to goods and services in all aspects of life
- Think of examples in your day where access or customer service to include those with disabilities could be better

Did You Know?

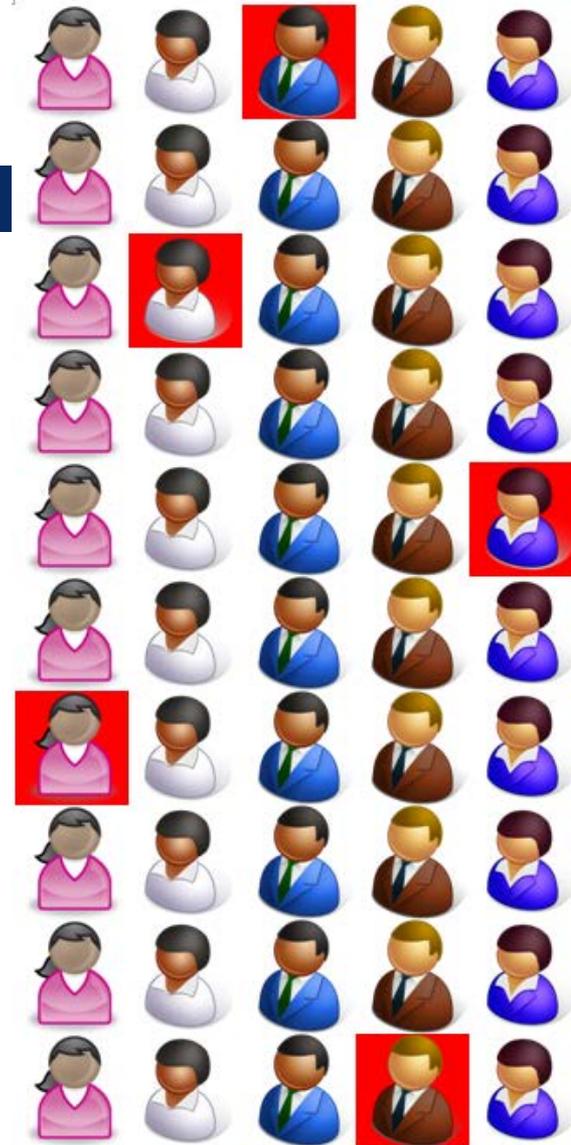
- There are nearly **57 million Americans** with disabilities, including mobility, sensory, neurological, or intellectual disabilities



15–24 Years

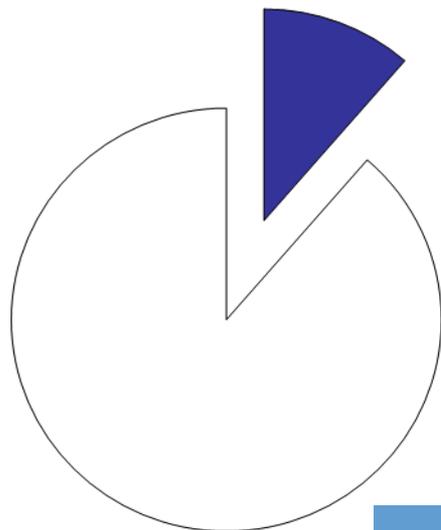


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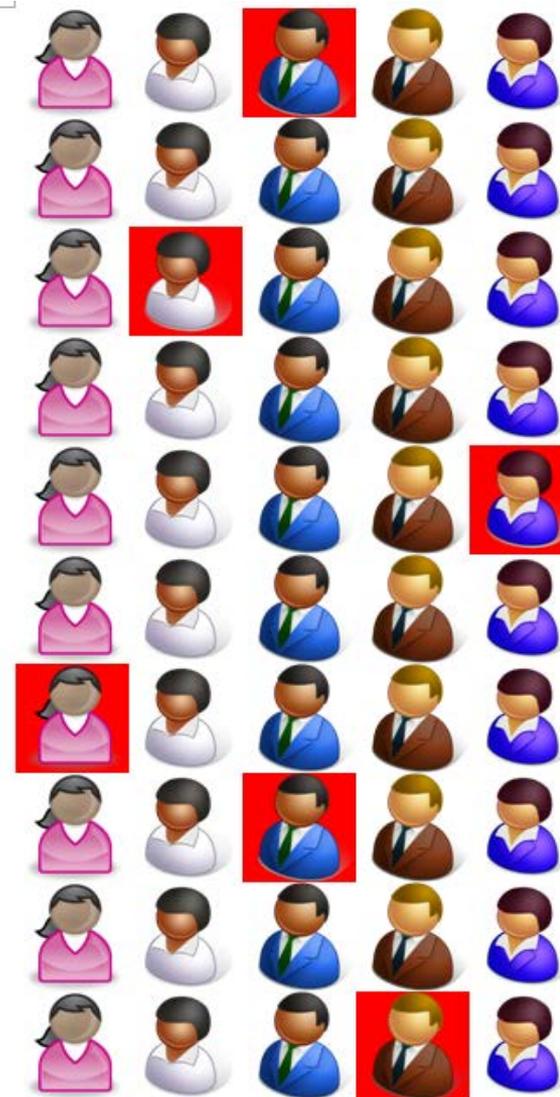


Brault, 2008

25-44 Years

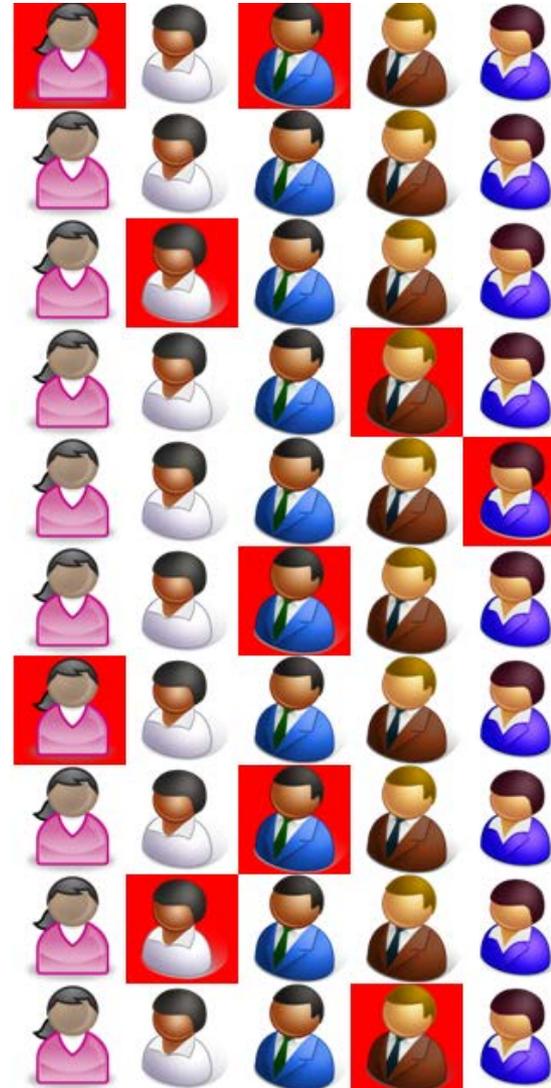
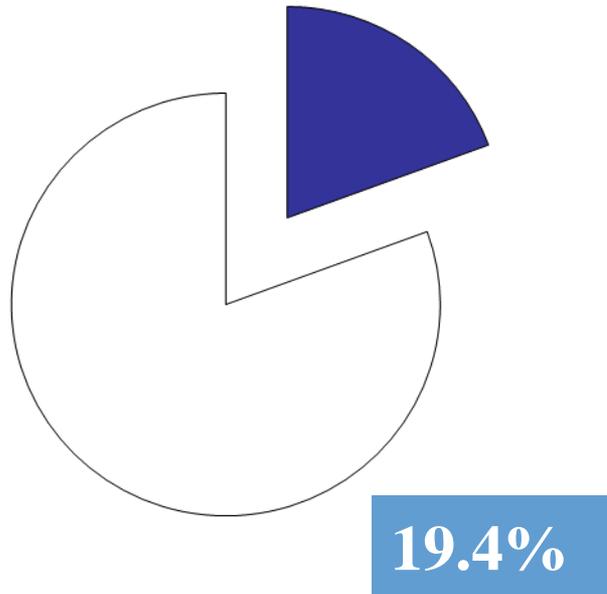


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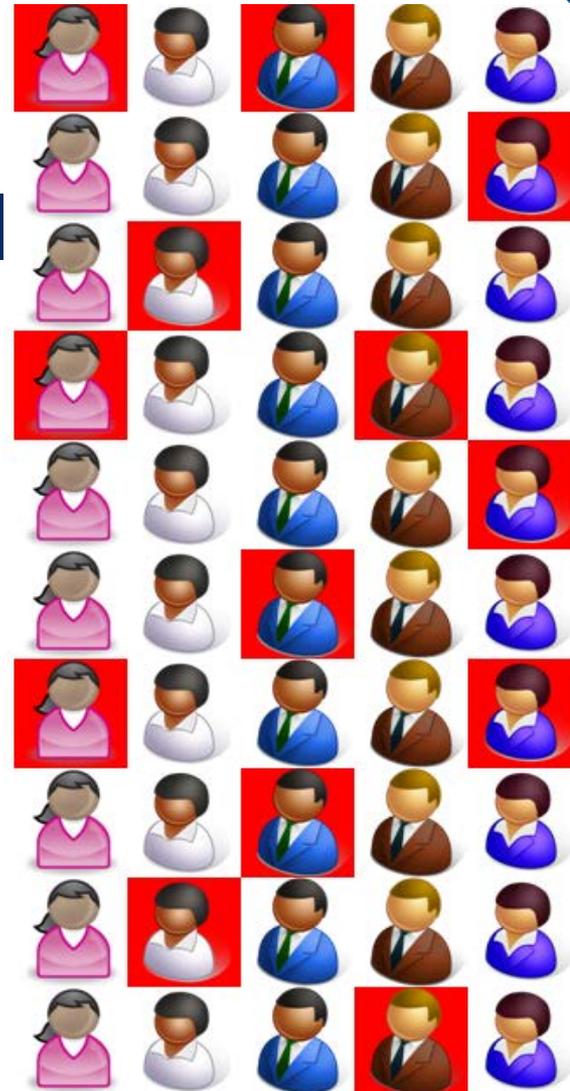
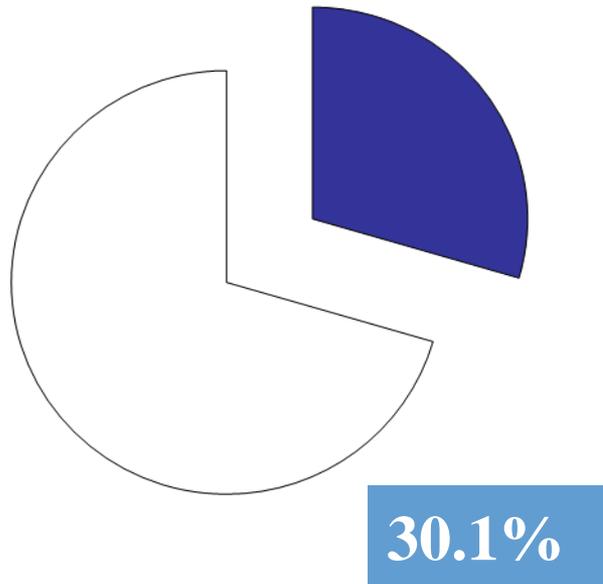
Brault, 2008

45–54 Years



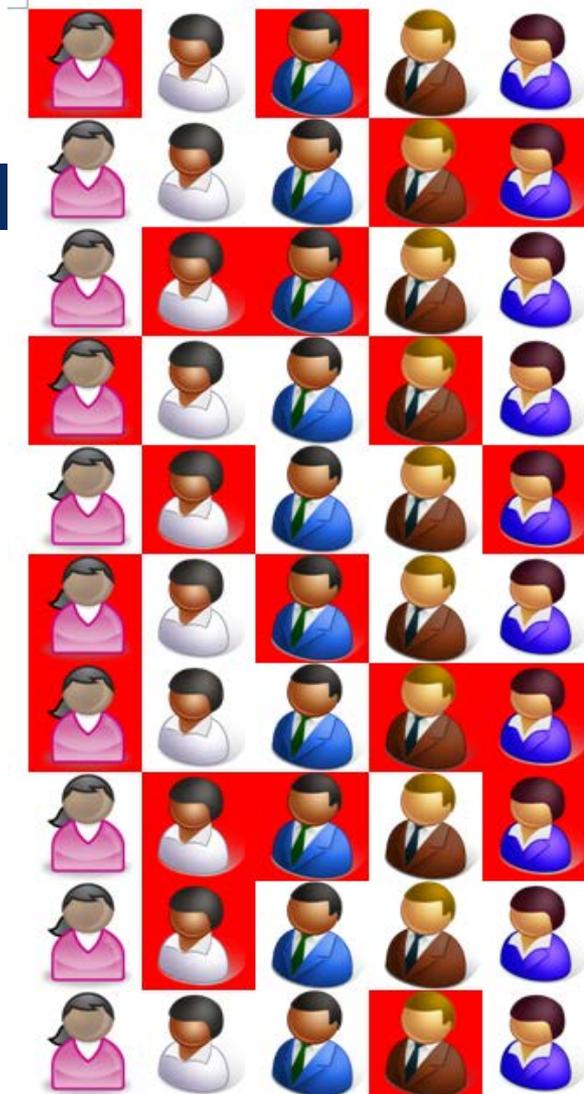
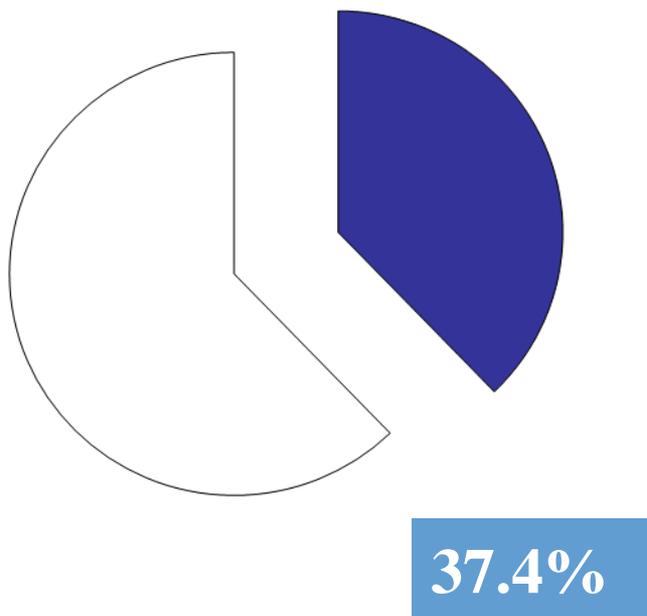
Brault, 2008

55–64 Years



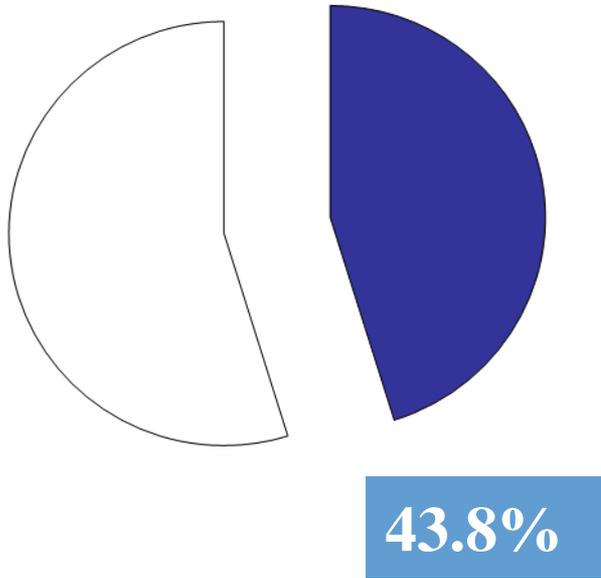
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65–69 Years



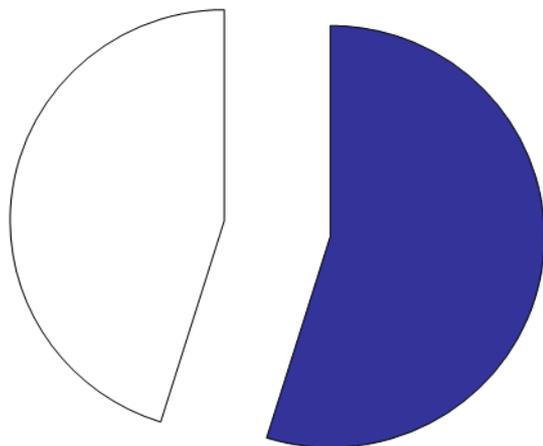
Brault, 2008

70–74 Years



Brault, 2008

75–79 Years



55.9%



Brault, 2008

What Kinds of Businesses Are Covered by the ADA?

- Places of public accommodation include:
 - Places of lodging (e.g., inns, hotels, motels), except for owner-occupied establishments renting fewer than six rooms
 - Businesses serving food or drink (e.g., restaurants and bars)
 - Sales or rental businesses (e.g., bakeries, grocery stores, clothing stores, shopping centers)

More Businesses Covered by the ADA

- Places of entertainment, exhibition, or public gathering (e.g., movie theaters, concert or lecture halls, arenas, museums, convention centers)
- Service businesses (e.g., laundromats, dry-cleaners, banks, barber shops and salons, funeral parlors, gas stations, pharmacies, offices of accountants, lawyers, health care providers)
- Places of recreation (amusement parks, gyms and spas, bowling alleys)

State and Local Governments

- Every state or local government agency is covered by the ADA; state, county, city, borough, township, etc.
 - All programs, services, and activities



What Are ADA Requirements for Customer Service?

- **Remove barriers**
- Provide **auxiliary aids and services** for effective communication
- Reasonably **modify policies, practices, or procedures**
- Ensure there are **no unnecessary eligibility criteria**

Disabled Money?



Spending Power

- Individuals with disabilities control more than **\$200 billion** in discretionary spending power (2010)
- Adults with disabilities spent **\$17.3 billion on travel** alone in 2015
 - These figures do not include the spending power of friends, family members, colleagues, and others.

How Can We Attract the Market?



Examples of Accessibility

- Provide accessible building features
 - Accessible parking spaces
 - No-step entrances
 - Fire alarm signals with flashing lights
 - Signs with Braille characters
 - Lower service counters
 - Accessible restrooms
- Read materials out loud
- Exchange written notes
- Provide assistance reaching products



Disability: the Human Experience

- *People with disabilities are not ...*

- Tragic or pitiful
- Helpless
- Angry or vengeful
- Stoic or brave
- Trying to be inspirational
- All alike

- *People with disabilities are individuals who ...*

- May do things a little differently
- May see disability as part of self-identity
- Have the same needs, desires, talents as others, and deserve the same opportunities

Ask Before You Help

- Don't assume a person with a disability needs help
 - If the setting is accessible, people with disabilities can usually get around independently
 - All individuals want to be treated as independent people
- People with disabilities will often ask if they need help, but offer assistance if a person appears to need it; if help is requested or accepted, ask *what to do or how to do it* before you act

Requests for Assistance

- Respond graciously to requests for assistance
 - When a person with a disability asks for an accommodation, it is not a complaint; it shows that the person is comfortable enough in your establishment to ask for what he or she needs

Brainstorm: Accommodations

DISABILITY

- Mobility disability / wheelchair user
- Blindness
- Deafness
- Intellectual disability
- Learning disability
- Little person

ACTIVITY

- Pay for a purchase
- Reach item on high shelf
- Read instructions
- Place an order
- Use self-serve stations
- Find restroom

Customer Who Is Deaf or Hard of Hearing

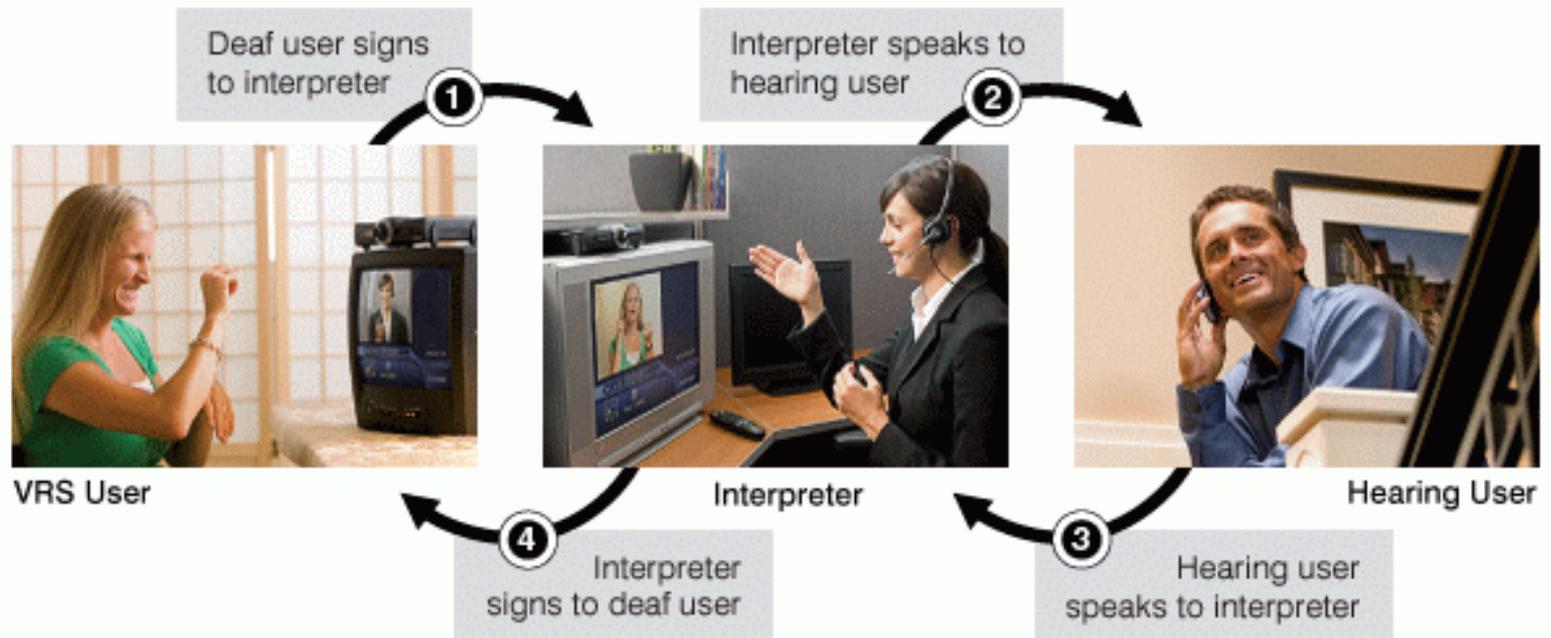
- Write notes back and forth
- Speak clearly and don't cover your mouth
- Use gestures and body language
- If someone is interpreting for a customer, speak directly to the customer, not the interpreter



Video Relay Service

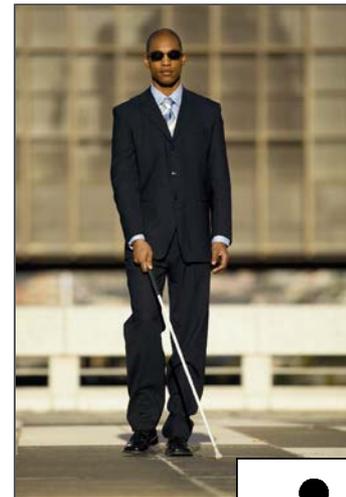
- Video Relay Service (VRS) is a form of Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) that enables people with hearing disabilities who use American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate with standard voice telephone users through sign language interpreters
 - Service is free, standard voice telephone users do not need any specialized equipment

VRS



Customer Who Is Blind or Has Low Vision

- Provide print information in large print, Braille, or electronic (tablet, email)
- Read documents or receipts to the customer
- Offer directions to different areas of the facility: restrooms, etc.
- Offer assistance with self-serve items
- Assist with finding signature line on credit card slips or other documents



Being a “Sighted Guide”



Customer Using a Wheelchair

- Do not lean on a person's wheelchair
- Position yourself in a seated position if possible for eye-to-eye communication
- Ensure that accessible counters are clear and usable, and self-serve items are reachable



Customer with a Speech Disability

- Don't pretend you understand if you don't
- Ask the person to repeat if necessary
- Be willing to write notes back and forth
- Don't shout or raise your voice
- If a person uses a computer to talk, continue to have a conversation as you normally would

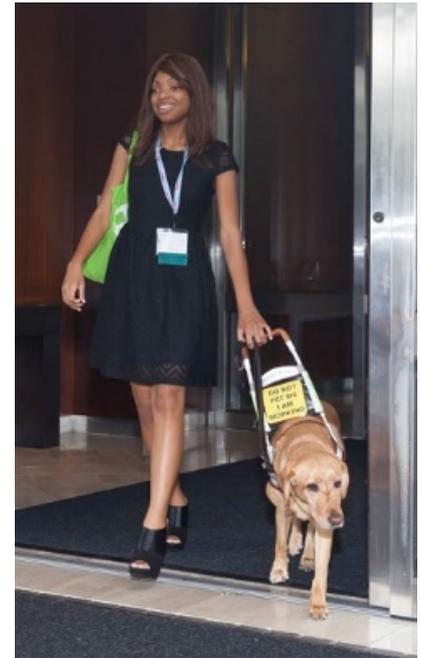


Customer with an Intellectual Disability

- Don't make assumptions about what the person can or cannot do
- Explain things clearly and be willing to repeat if asked

Customer with a Service Animal

- You must allow service animals on the premises even if you have a “no animals” policy
- Service animals are working animals and you should not pet, feed, or distract them
- People with all types of disabilities use service animals



Miniature Horses

- You may need to allow people with disabilities to use trained miniature horses, subject to certain additional considerations, such as the miniature horse's size and weight



Active Animals

- Service dogs or miniature horses must be **trained** to perform specific ***actions, tasks, or work***
 - Many animals, simply by being *present*, provide comfort, companionship, emotional support, or other benefits, but they are not trained to *do* anything specific – they are not service animals under the ADA (they may be covered by other laws, including state laws)

Two Questions You Can Ask

1. Is this animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has this animal been trained to perform?



Talking about Disability

- Avoid terms like “*the disabled*”
 - Instead say “**people with disabilities**”
- Avoid the word “handicapped”
 - Instead say “**person with a disability**” or “**accessible**” (if referring to parking, restrooms, etc.)

Talking about Disability, cont.

- Don't say "wheelchair bound" or "confined to a wheelchair"
 - Instead say "**person who uses a wheelchair**" or "**wheelchair user**"



Wheelchair bound?

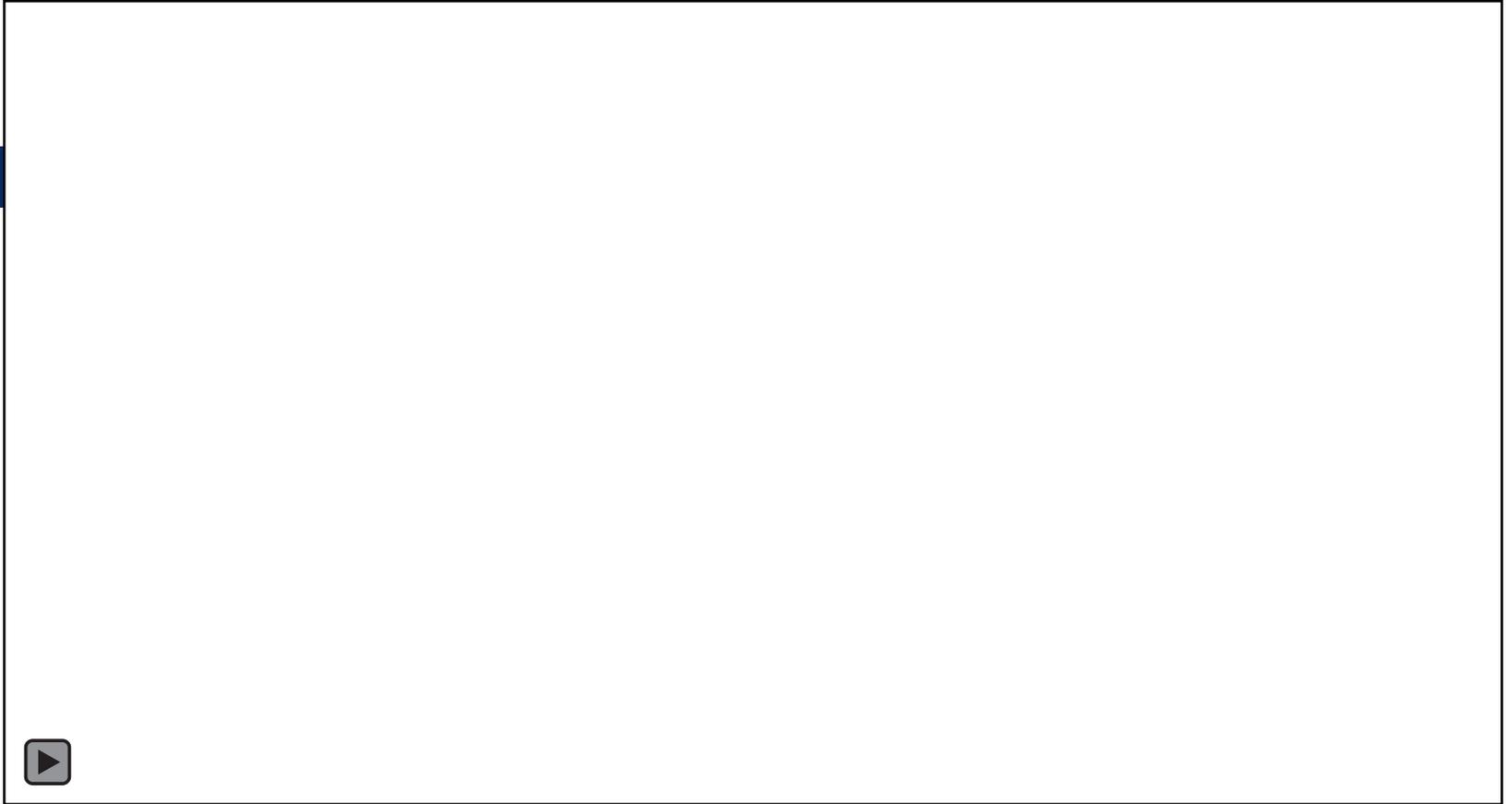
Disability Etiquette Review

- Don't lean on a person's wheelchair
- Treat adults as adults
- Speak directly to the person, not to an interpreter or companion
- Don't make assumptions – ask if help is needed
- When you meet a person with a disability, think: **CUSTOMER!**



Disability Etiquette Video

- The District of Columbia Office on Disability Rights developed their *End the Awkward* campaign (<http://ohr.dc.gov/page/endtheawkwardDC>) for the 25th anniversary of the ADA
 - The campaign, inspired by Scope (www.scope.org.uk/), uses humorous videos to highlight the right and wrong ways to interact with individuals with disabilities



At Your Service

- A dynamic new **twenty minute** customer service film “at your service”. It addresses best practices and features national disability leaders offering insights, tips and recommendations on how to provide exemplary customer service to individuals with disabilities.

<http://www.adahospitality.org/at-your-service>



Scenario

- Someone calls and asks if your facility is accessible for people with disabilities.
 - *What would you say?*

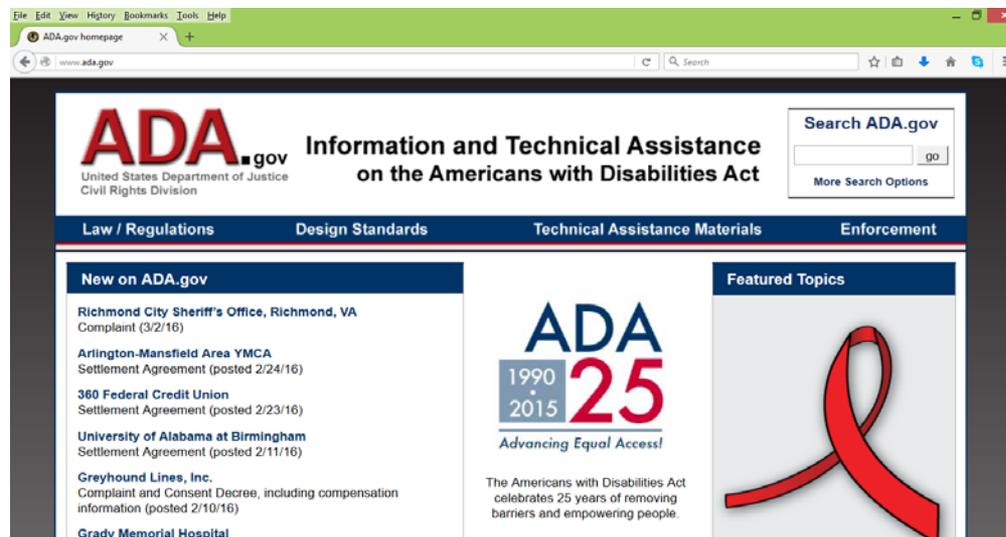
The “Bottom Line”

When you meet a
person with a disability,
THINK: CUSTOMER!



U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)

- [Disability Rights Section ADA Home page \(www.ada.gov\)](http://www.ada.gov)



For More Information...

ADA National Network

Nationwide toll-free number:

800-949-4232 V/TTY

(800-9494-ADA)

www.adahospitality.org



Funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)