



**Applying an Age-Friendly
Lens to Business & Service**

Presented by...

The Town of Wasaga Beach

- & -

**Wasaga Beach Age-Friendly
Community Advisory Committee**

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Module 3

Comfort, Visibility and Clarity

Meet Michael...

Michael is an active 68-year-old who enjoys swimming, biking and hiking. Two years ago, Michael started wearing hearing aids. He finds it difficult to visit stores that play loud music because the noise often makes it difficult for him to clearly hear what people in the store are saying to him.





Meet Susan...

Susan is a 75-year-old who volunteers at the local hospital. Last year Susan had to quit driving because she suffered a loss in vision. One of Susan's favourite pastimes is meeting friends for lunch at restaurants. However, the lunch dates have become less enjoyable lately because Susan finds the small print on some menus hard to read.

In this module

1

The importance of updated,
adequate lighting in key
locations

2

Signage that meets
accessibility standards

3

Effects of music and
peripheral noise

4

Creating comfort areas
that benefit seniors

Lighting

As we grow older visual impairments are inevitable. Physical changes in the eye as we age makes it more difficult to see in low light.

- Colours distort.
- Muscles that control the pupil weaken, making it more difficult to adapt from bright to dark spaces, and vice versa.
- The lens starts to lose elasticity causing blurred vision and difficulty focusing.
- In addition, there are also age-related eye diseases, including cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy.

Here are some points to consider when you evaluate your lighting:

- Increase ambient light levels – lighting that illuminates the entire space.
- Keep walls a light or neutral colour. Dark walls absorb light more than off-white walls.
- Maximize other lighting sources rather than rely just on one main light source.
- Recessed lights can cause shadows that can make any activity more difficult.
- Add “task lights” at the check-out counter, or throughout your store.
- Avoid glare; no bright, stark light fixtures on the ceiling.
- Lighting installed on stairs will illuminate each step to reduce missteps and falls.





“Sign, sign, everywhere a sign.”

Seniors can find price displays, store directions and other signage difficult to read.

Here are some recommendations to help you create material that is more easily read:

- Good contrast (black type on white background).
- Use readable fonts like Arial, Futura, and Helvetica. Text should be at least 12 point.
- Emphasize what is important.
- Keep it simple. Signs need to be uncluttered and easily identifiable.
- Place signs at eye level for those using a wheelchair.
- Place signs at key decision points such as, WASHROOM, STAIRS, EXIT, ENTRANCES AND STORE AISLES.
- Use appropriate pictographs or pictures to illustrate information.
- Signs should have a matte, non-glare finish.

Signage

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- Use upper and lower-case letters.
- Only use all capital letters for extra emphasis.
- Double space to create more white space.
- Create uncluttered pages with wide margins, lots of white space and small paragraphs with short sentences.
- Include instruction on your website on how to increase font size.
- Don't overuse colour.
- Consider making a large print version of your restaurant menu available for seniors like Susan from earlier in this module.

For more suggestions...

- The Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines
- The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

[See the resources section below this video.](#)



The World Health Organization has classified noise pollution as any unwanted or excessive sound.

Much of the sound and noise in public settings can be considered noise pollution and can have a negative effect on the interactions between staff and customers.





Noise pollution...

- Loud music or a noisy environment can make it difficult for customers to focus on your products or services.
- Customers will look only for what they came in for and get out quickly.
- You won't have a calm, attentive customer ready to engage with you and take the time to browse for additional items.

Start with a sound audit...

Here are ways to reduce noise that would benefit seniors like Michael:

- Background music should be at a volume lower than a conversational tone.
- Eliminate or reduce machine noise. Place office machinery away from your customer service area. Restaurants can examine ways to reduce kitchen noises that filter into the open restaurant.
- Consider a quiet room or area for one-on-one conversations so people can discuss their business, or concerns. For example, pharmacies can use a quiet room or space to discuss medications with their customers.

Start with a sound audit...

...continued

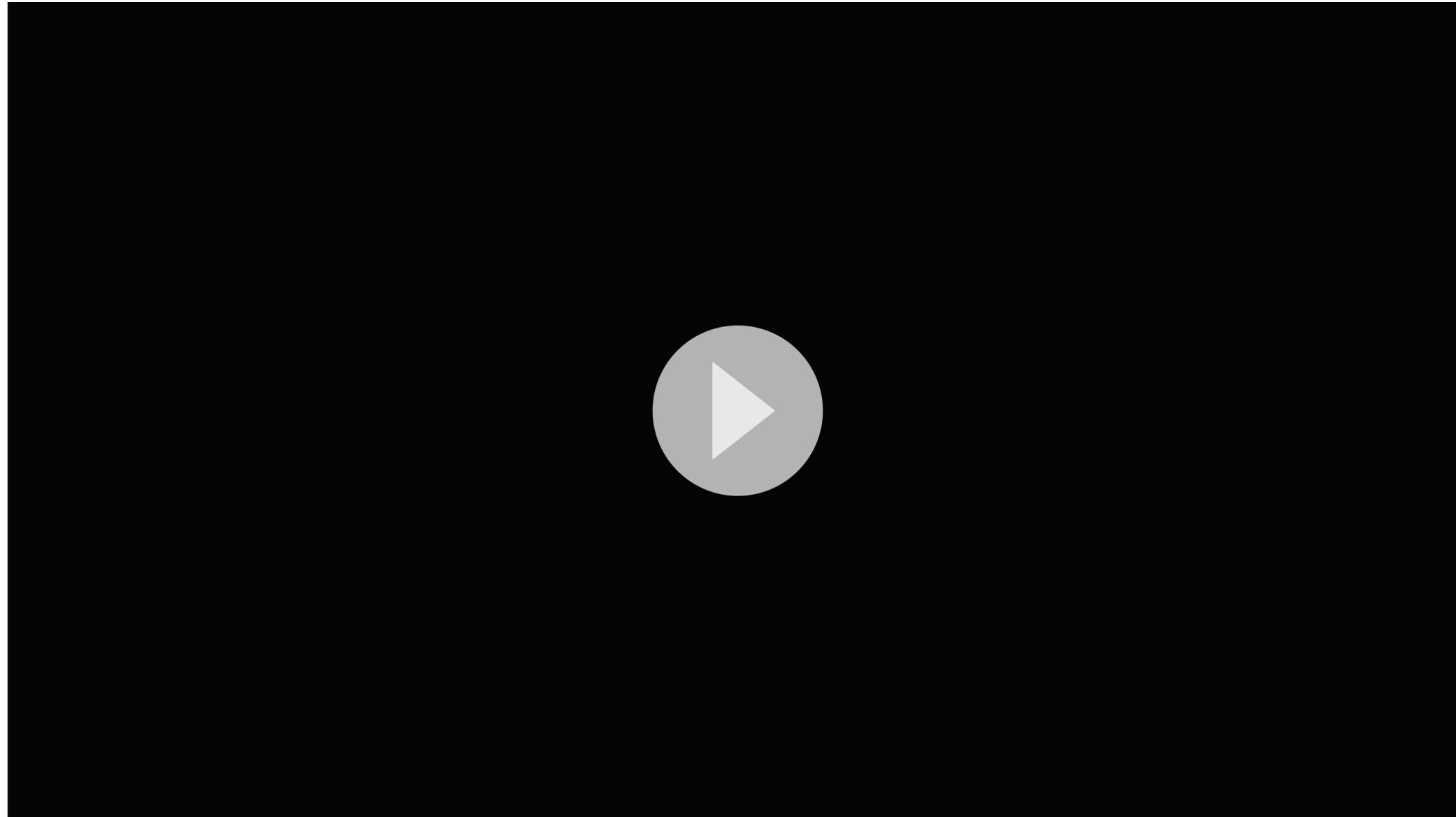
Carpeted floors can reduce noise and echoes.

Well-placed large plants can help absorb noise within a space.

Sound/speaker systems for public announcements should be clear and easy to hear.

Provide seating options in quiet corners or include high-sided booths.

Trying to hear is hard work...



Mary Courtenay

Grocery shopping, visiting the hair salon/barber, going to the dentist and even pumping gas are everyday events for many of us. But **some seniors find carrying out these tasks stressful and difficult.**

- The lifting of heavy bags
- Having to bend down or reach high for items
- Reading small print labels
- Pushing large and heavy shopping carts
- Walking and standing for long periods of time with nowhere to rest

How can you **help senior customers navigate and adjust to today's shopping experience?**

- Provide small, easy to use baskets that are hand-held or wheeled.
- Provide places to sit and rest throughout the store or the office.
- Use sturdy and stable chairs with arms for people who need help getting up.
- Space chairs and tables so assistive devices such as mobility walkers, wheelchairs and people with helpers accompanying them can get by.
- Make sure your washroom is clearly marked and easily accessible.
- Glass doors are clearly labelled with limited reflections. Handles should be easy to grasp or push.

How can you **help senior customers navigate and adjust to today's shopping experience?**

...continued

- Furniture should be simple and comfortable, but not too soft or low. Furniture should be high contrast in colour to the floors and walls.
- If staff are required to call out a name or number for people waiting to be served, ensure voices are loud and clear and make eye contact with those waiting.
- Temperature should be maintained at a comfortable level. Consider whether your air conditioning levels are too cool for seniors who can get cold easily.
- Have at least one or two tables that can be accessed by a wheelchair.
- If possible, offer to help with bagging or carrying out purchases.

In this module we introduced you to a number of key concepts:

- Proper lighting helps people find what they are looking for safely and comfortably.
- Signs and printed material should be readable for all ages as outlined in the guidelines provided by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and Canadian National Institute for the Blind.
- Keeping “noise pollution” to a minimum is beneficial for everyone.
- Taking a few additional steps like providing baskets and sturdy, stable seating will create a comfortable environment for everyone.



Coming up next...

Module 4

Safety Inside