



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

**Presented by...**

**The Town of Wasaga Beach**

**- & -**

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

**With funding from...**





## Module 6

# Mobility & User-Friendliness

## In this module

**1**

A look at additional disabilities  
affecting seniors and resources  
to help

**An increase in our senior population has contributed to the number of people with disabilities and as we age the chances of experiencing a disability increases.**

- 33% of seniors aged 65 - 74 have a disability
- 56% of seniors aged 75+ have a disability



## What is a disability?

A disability is a physical or mental impairment that can substantially limit an individual's ability to do what they want or need to do.

## What is an accessible environment?

An accessible environment provides equal opportunity to persons with disabilities to acquire the same products, information, access the same places, engage in the same interactions and enjoy the same services as persons without such disabilities.



## **Disabilities common in adults 65 years and older include:**

- Physical or mobility issues
- Vision impairment/blindness
- Deaf or hearing impairment
- Cognitive impairment

**It's important to note that many disabilities can be invisible and not always obvious at first.**



## Here are some **resources** to check out to assist further in **meeting accessibility standards**:

### The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Its recommendations identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.

### Accessibility Canada

A training and development organization that helps non-profits and businesses understand and comply with provincial accessibility legislations.

### Wasaga Beach Accessibility Advisory Committee

This advisory committee to council works to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for full participation in the community.

See the resources section below this video for links.



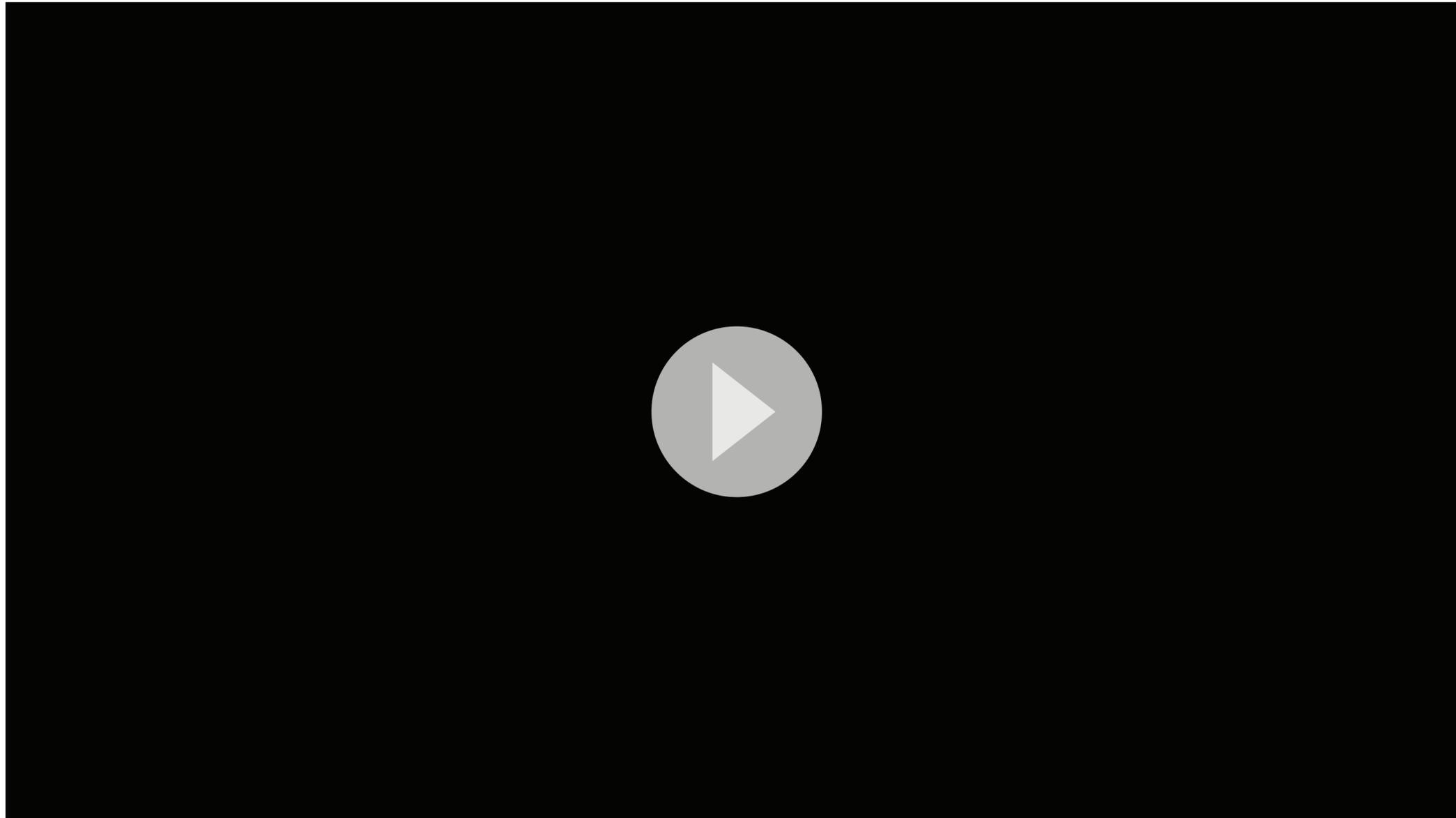
## Hearing Loss

Hearing loss can range from the inability to hear certain voices to complete deafness.

## When speaking to a senior with **hearing loss** consider:

- Minimizing or eliminating background noise
- Enunciate well and don't mumble or lower your voice at the end of a sentence
- Use hands and facial expressions when you speak
- Speak at a normal speed
- Consider that many supplement their hearing loss by lip-reading
- Speak with increased volume but don't yell
- Consider writing down information or conversations

# Trying to hear is hard work...



Mary Courtenay

# Dementia...

**Is not just a memory problem, it's a brain function problem.**

- Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe a group of symptoms that causes significant changes in the brain, severe enough to interfere with one's daily living.
- Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia.
- People living with dementia can have problems with: memory; attention; communication; word finding; reasoning; decision-making; problem solving as well as vision perceptions beyond typical age-related changes.





## **Dementia friendly communities...**

Over the last 5 years, Alzheimer Societies across Ontario have worked alongside people living with dementia, care partners and community partners to build dementia-friendly communities.

# There are two strategies for organizations and businesses looking to become dementia friendly...

1. Participate in dementia friendly education – either by contacting your local Alzheimer Society to arrange a live training session OR by using the **Dementia Friendly Communities Project** online modules.

**- OR -**

2. Participate in the dementia friendly education (options listed above) AND be recognized as a **Dementia Friendly Communities Supporter**.

**Alzheimer Society**

SIMCOE COUNTY

My companion has an illness which  
causes memory loss and confusion.  
**Your understanding is appreciated.**

***THANK YOU***

## Companion Cards...

Front line staff should be aware that they may be discreetly shown a wallet size companion card that may alert them that they are interacting with someone who is living with dementia so that they may modify their service strategies accordingly.

**Dementia friendly communities are places where people living with dementia can feel included and supported. [The Alzheimer Society recommends:](#)**

- Learning more about dementia through your local Alzheimer Society chapter
- Reduce environmental distractions
- Talk directly to the person
- Use simple sentences and include actions
- Avoid providing too many options
- Be respectful and avoid using dementia and memory-related jokes
- Be patient, flexible and understanding

## **Customers with vision challenges often require specialized assistance.**

Businesses and organizations must provide persons with a disability the right to customer service and ability to access their goods, services and facilities.



## The Canadian National Institute for the Blind suggests the following when **interacting with a customer who is blind or partially sighted**:

- Identify yourself, especially when you approach a visually impaired customer.
- Speak directly to the individual and not to their companion.
- Give specific directions and be descriptive; don't point and say "it's over there". Better yet, offer to take them to where they need to be.
- Give a clear descriptive picture when describing things to an individual. Describe details such as colour, texture, and shape and where things are in relation to other objects.
- Don't be afraid to say: "Nice to see you!".

# Interacting with the blind or partially sighted...

...continued

- Don't insist upon trying to help if your offer of assistance is declined.
- Let them know when you are stepping away so they are not left talking to themselves.
- Offer your elbow for assistance to guide them to a location rather than grabbing their arm.
- Don't pet, feed or distract a guide dog. These dogs are trained working companions who ensure the safety of their handlers and need to focus on the environment and their handler.
- Ensure your establishment is welcoming of guide dogs.



## Let's review this module:

- A user-friendly environment recognizes that everyone is entitled to access or use services, goods and facilities.
- The most common disabilities affecting senior customers include: vision or hearing impairments, physical/mobility issues and dementia.
- There are many resources and training opportunities to assist business and organizations to offer services to customers with disabilities.
- Evaluate your business in all areas from the viewpoint of a customer who may have a visible or invisible disability using the County of Simcoe's "Mobility and User-Friendliness" checklist.

## Coming up next...

# Module 7

Review & Recognition