

## National AccessAbility Week Tips 2021

1. Did you know...**May 31<sup>st</sup> to June 4<sup>th</sup> is National AccessAbility Week!**  
National AccessAbility Week was first established in 1988 to promote better community access for people with disabilities.

1 in 7 Ontarians, and 42% of people over 65 years of age, have a disability.

Mississippi Mills is committed to making our community more accessible for everyone. Throughout the week we will be posting tips on our website for individuals and businesses to help those with Accessibility needs.

Lend a hand and join us in an effort to raise awareness for equal access and full participation for individuals with disabilities.

Let's celebrate the achievements of those who encounter barriers every day!

For more information on Accessibility, the Municipality, and organizations associated with Accessibility please visit our website at [www.mississippimills.ca](http://www.mississippimills.ca)

2. Did you know...**Physical disabilities** include a range of functional limitations from minor difficulties in moving or coordinating one part of the body, to muscle weakness, tremors, and paralysis.

Here are some **tips to assist people** with physical disabilities:

- People with physical disabilities often have their own way of doing things. Ask before you help.
- Wheelchairs and other mobility devices are part of a person's personal space, don't touch, move or lean on them.

Here are some **tips for businesses** to assist people with physical disabilities:

- Keep ramps and corridors free from clutter. Remove obstacles and rearrange furniture/shelving to ensure a clear passage.
- Provide accessible seating with arms for those who may not be able to stand or wait in lines for long periods of time.

- If you need to have a lengthy conversation with someone who uses a wheelchair or scooter, consider sitting so you can make eye contact at the same level.

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3. Did you know...**Hearing loss** can cause problems in distinguishing certain frequencies, sounds or words and like most disabilities has a wide variety of degrees.

Here are some **tips to help people** who are deaf or hard of hearing:

- Attract the person's attention before speaking. A gentle touch on the shoulder or a gentle wave of the hand works well.
- Make sure you are in a well-lit area and keep your hands and other objects away from your face and mouth while speaking.
- If the person uses a hearing aid, try to speak in an area with little background noise.

Here are some **tips for businesses** to assist people who are deaf or hard of hearing:

- Provide a pen and paper at all customer service desks for an alternative method of communicating.
- speak directly to your customer – not to their sign language interpreter – if they are accompanied by one.

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4. Did you know...**Vision disabilities** reduce a person's ability to see clearly. Very few people are totally blind. Many have limited vision such as loss of peripheral

or central vision, where others can only see outlines of objects or the direction of light.

Here are some **tips to help** people who are vision impaired:

- Identify yourself when you approach the person. Speak normally and clearly and don't walk away without saying good-bye.
- If you offer assistance, wait until you receive permission from that person then offer your arm to guide them while walking slowly.
- Don't touch or address service animals as they are working and have to pay attention at all times to their surroundings.

Here are some **tips for businesses** to assist people that are vision impaired:

- Ask if the customer would like you to read any printed material out loud to them (e.g., a menu or cost of services)
- Make it clear that service animals are welcomed in your establishment.
- Don't leave the customer in the middle of the room if you need to leave them, guide them to a comfortable location.
- Use planters beside uneven steps to visually mark changes in levels which could be hazardous.

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5. Did you know...**Mental health disabilities** include a range of disorders such as anxiety, mood, and behavioural. People with mental health disabilities may seem edgy or irritated, act aggressively, be pushy or abrupt, unable to make a decision, start laughing or get angry for no apparent reason.

Here are some **tips to help** people who have mental health disabilities:

- Treat a person with mental health disabilities with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
- If someone appears to be in a crisis, ask them to tell you the best way to help.

Here are some **tips for businesses** to assist people with mental health disabilities:

- Respect your customer's personal space
- Limit distractions that could affect your customer's ability to focus or concentrate – loud noises, crowded areas and interruptions could cause stress.
- Stay calm and courteous, even if the person exhibits unusual behaviour, focus on what they need and how you can help.

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