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Accessible Mainstreet – Tipsheet

What You Need To Know About Customers with Mental Health Disabilities

Everyone is different in some way. Each of us has a different way of doing things and there are some things we can't do without some help from people, or from machines and products that are easy to use.

People with mental health disabilities look like anyone else. You won't know that your customer has a mental health disability unless you're informed of it. And usually it will not affect your customer service at all.

But if someone is experiencing difficulty in controlling their symptoms or is in a crisis, you may need to help out. Be calm and professional and let your customer tell you how you can best help.

Here are some tips on serving customers who have mental health disabilities:

- ❖ Treat people with a mental health disability with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
- ❖ Be confident and reassuring, and listen to your customers with a mental health disability and their needs.
- ❖ If someone appears to be in a crisis, ask them to tell you the best way to help.
- ❖ Take your customers with a mental health disability seriously, and work with them to meet their needs.
- ❖ Every business should have emergency procedures for customers with disabilities. Make sure you know what they are.

Additional Tipsheets can be found at:
www.toronto-bia.com/resources/tipsheets.php

Based on: "May I Help You?" – Welcoming Customers with Disabilities" Resource Package, Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, Ministry of Community and Social Services, 2005