

# **ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL**

**How to Strengthen  
Services for People  
with Disabilities**

# SPEAKERS

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# **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- 1. Primer on the intersection of homelessness & disability**
- 2. How disability & accessibility come up at work**
- 3. How to improve service provision for people with disabilities**

# **1. Homelessness and Disability**

**a. The Disability Rights Movement**

**b. Prevalence & Impact**

**c. Federal Disability Rights Laws**

***d. Olmstead v. L.C. (Lois Curtis)***

# a. The Disability Rights Movement



# b. Prevalence & Impact

## People experiencing homelessness in CA:

- **42%** have a disability
- **82%** have experienced a serious mental health condition
- **48%** of single adults are 50 and older

## People experiencing homelessness in USA:

- **31%** had experienced chronic homelessness
- Over **1 in 5** were age 55 or older

## **c. Disability Rights Laws**

- ❖ **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**
- ❖ **Fair Housing Act**
- ❖ **Americans with Disabilities Act**

## d. *Olmstead v. L.C.*

- ❖ **U.S. Supreme Court (1999)**
- ❖ **Needless Segregation is Discrimination**
- ❖ **Integration Mandate**





# **2. Disability and Accessibility**

**a. Intakes**

**b. Policies & Practices**

**c. Reasonable Accommodations & Modifications**

**d. Program Administration**

## **a. Intakes**

Army veteran Sue (age 36) has been unsheltered since her roommate kicked her out for being too loud while she's sleeping. It's been hard to find an apartment without too many stairs, and that she can afford since she's not working. Sue asks for help filling out the intake form because she forgot her glasses.

## a. Intakes (con't)

Army veteran Sue (age 36) has been unsheltered since her roommate kicked her out for being too loud while she's sleeping. It's been hard to find an apartment without too many stairs, and that she can afford since she's not working. Sue asks for help filling out the intake form because she forgot her glasses.

## **b. Policies & Practices**

Every policy should have information on disability rights & responsibilities.

- ❖ CoC Service Standards
- ❖ Coordinated Entry
- ❖ Outreach
- ❖ Drop-in Centers & Shelters
- ❖ Housing Programs (TH, RRH, PSH)
- ❖ And for yourselves & your employees!

# c. Reasonable Accommodations and Modifications

- ❖ What's the difference?
- ❖ Participants' rights & responsibilities
- ❖ Programs' responsibilities
- ❖ Where they might come up
- ❖ Sample accommodations & modifications:
  - HUD: FHEO examples; [askjan.org](http://askjan.org)
- ❖ Any model forms?
  - Disability Rights CA Templates

# Hypothetical Client:

Charlie (age 67) is housed but having some trouble with his apartment. Since Charlie's last fall, he's having more trouble getting around the apartment complex, to his car, and up the stairs to his unit. He's also having trouble getting around his restroom, including in and out of the shower and on and off the toilet.

# Hypothetical Client (con't):

Charlie (age 67) is housed but having some trouble with his apartment. Since Charlie's last fall, he's having more trouble getting around the apartment complex, **to his car**, and **up the stairs to his unit**. He's also having trouble getting around his restroom, including **in and out of the shower** and **on and off the toilet**.

# Sample Request Letter

[Date]

Dear [Landlord and/or Property Manager name],

I live at/am applying to rent your property at [address]. I am writing to request the following reasonable accommodations/modifications for my disability: \_\_\_\_\_

This request is related to my disability because: \_\_\_\_\_

My [physician/psychiatrist/psychologist/therapist/social worker/occupational therapist/other individual] has deemed these accommodations/modifications necessary due to my disability. I can provide written verification if you need it.

Please respond to this request, in writing, by [date]. Feel free to contact me at [email/phone]. Thank you for your attention to this request.



# Sample Support Letter

[Date]

To [Landlord/Housing Authority/Homeowners Association]:

I am the [physician/psychiatrist/psychologist/therapist/social worker/occupational therapist] for [client] and I am familiar with [his/her/their] condition.

[Client] has a disability that causes certain functional limitations. These include [list functional limitations that require the requested accommodation]: \_\_\_\_\_

[The requested accommodation] is necessary for [client] to live in the community and to use and enjoy [his/her/their] dwelling by [describe how the accommodation will assist or support the client]: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for providing this reasonable accommodation request for [client].

# A Note on Animals

## ❖ Service Animals

- Dog, trained to work, can go anywhere handler can go, exempt from pet fees

## ❖ Emotional Support Animals

- Any animal, presence, can go in housing or shelter, exempt from pet fees

## ❖ Pets

- Any animal, may be subject to fees and limitations

# d. Program Administration

In addition to your policies & practices,  
double-check your program's:

- ☐ Forms (plain language, easy read)
- ☐ Website
- ☐ Office area
- ☐ Office culture

For more resources, visit U.S. Department of Labor: Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP): Program Areas

# **3. Improving Services**

- a. Being mindful of language**
- b. Identifying resources**

# a. Language

## Say This:

Person who uses a wheelchair  
Wheelchair user

Deaf, deaf, hard of hearing

Person with an intellectual or  
developmental disability

Person with a learning disability

Person who has bipolar disorder, a  
mental health disability

Accessible parking,  
Accessible restroom

People without disabilities

## Not That:

Wheelchair-bound,  
Confined to a wheelchair

Deaf-mute, Hearing impaired

“the mind of a X year old,” the R-  
word

Slow learner

He is bipolar, suffers from bipolar,  
crazy, mentally ill, emotionally  
disturbed, insane

Handicapped parking,  
Disabled restroom

Normal, healthy, whole, sane

# **b. Resources**

## **State:**

National Disability Rights Network

→ Find your Protection & Advocacy Agency

## **Local:**

National Council on Independent Living

→ Find your Center for Independent Living

## **Eldercare Locator:**

→ Connect to services and agencies for older adults, such as Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) or Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC)

# b. Resources (con't)

## National:

- ASAN: [autisticadvocacy.org](https://autisticadvocacy.org)
- Bazelon: [bazelon.org](https://bazelon.org); [peer services](#)
- Justice in Aging: [justiceinaging.org](https://justiceinaging.org); [NCLER](#)
- American Council of the Blind: [acb.org](https://acb.org)
- National Association of the Deaf: [nad.org](https://nad.org)

## Even more:

- Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities  
[c-c-d.org](https://c-c-d.org)
- Administration for Community Living: Housing  
and Services Resource Center  
[acl.gov/HousingAndServices](https://acl.gov/HousingAndServices)

# Hypothetical Meeting:

At a case management meeting, your team identifies the following clients:

- ❖ A client who is losing sight:
- ❖ A client who needs a sign language interpreter:
- ❖ A client with disabilities who wants to live independently:
- ❖ Clients who want to talk with someone who shares one or more of their lived experiences:



# Hypothetical Meeting (con't)

At a case management meeting, your team identifies the following clients:

- ❖ A client who is losing sight: ACB resources;  
NFB's Free White Cane Program
- ❖ A client who needs a sign language interpreter:  
NAD Interpreters Directory
- ❖ A client with disabilities who wants to live independently: NCIL; AAA or ADRC → local office
- ❖ Clients who want to talk with someone who shares one or more of their lived experiences:  
Call Blackline; Trans Lifeline

# DISCUSSION

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