

Accessible Customer Service for Emergency Responders

An Emergency Management Ontario E-Learning Utility

Tips for Interacting with People who have a Communication Assistant

Approach and Introduction

- Speak directly to the individual, not to the assistant.

Communication

- Observe the person directing the assistant so that you know s/he is communicating and approving their messages.
- In some cases, an assistant may support the person selecting words or pictures on his/her display or device or putting these items into a sentence.
- If you are unsure about a message, ask “Is that what you wanted to say?”

Behaviour

- Ensure that the person who accompanies the person with the disability has been authorized to assist him/her with communication. Once you have confirmed that role, accept the person’s message as conveyed to you by the assistant.