



EVERYONE'S INVITED

INCLUDING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

SECURITY & ACCESSIBILITY

ACCESS PROGRAM TRAINING

Proper training is part of a well-run Access Program. Your event's Security Team has personnel posted all around the site with many different jobs to perform. Wherever they are interacting with patrons is where you will need to provide training regarding how to provide the best customer service for patrons with disabilities.

Without such training I know of security staff that have confiscated important medications, lifted and moved a patron while she was experiencing a seizure, demanded proof of disability, and denied a deaf person a sign language interpreter. Training your security staff about the Access Program is essential for protecting your patrons from harm and your event from litigation.

With my system I provide training to three levels of staff: 1) All staff, where information is provided regarding the Access Program as a whole. 2) Particular teams, (in this case the Security Team). 3) Those carrying out certain jobs (for example: gate staff, service animal screeners, or reserved viewing area monitors).

In this issue's column I have provided sample wording for aspects of the Security Team training. Not included below but information the Security Team will also need is the All Staff training with basic information about your Access Program such as the Access Center services, accessible parking and camping, reserved viewing areas, accessible shuttle service, accessible restrooms, how to contact Access staff, and other features of your Access Program.

Each event will have its differences so the policies below must be tailored to your particular event.

Security Check at the Access Entrance to the Venue

- **How to Conduct Search:** It is against the law to ask about a person's disability or medical condition, or to ask for proof such as a doctor's note or disability identification. The search of patrons with disabilities should not take longer than for those without disabilities. While you may search much the same as you would a person without a disability, take care not to harm the person or remove any items necessary for self-care. Take care not to reveal what could be very personal medical gear while doing the search. Show the utmost respect and consideration for right to privacy for your patrons with disabilities.
- **Medications and Syringes:** Patrons may only bring enough medication for their own personal use for the duration of the event. Each type of medication must be in its own prescription container. The prescription must be in the patron's name and

they must show photo I.D. to match. If bringing a syringe, they must have accompanying medication in a prescription container. If there is a question regarding medication, ask the Medical Team for assistance.

- **Food and Beverages:** Because of food allergies or medical needs, some people may need to bring special food or beverages. Some people are prone to dehydration and may bring extra water.
- **Additional Exceptions:** Some people are very sensitive to the sun and may bring a small umbrella, some may not be able to get up from a low position and may bring a standard-height folding chair, some may need to bring particular medical equipment, etc. Use your best judgment.
- Patrons who have pacemakers may put their **RFID bracelet** on their ankle and the RFID wand must be kept away from their heart.

Service Animals

This section only applies to the federal law regarding service animals. Individual states and municipalities may have additional laws protecting emotional support animals and/or service-dogs-in-training. Do your research.

- Specially trained security will screen each animal at the entrance. Approved animals will be offered a tag. (Only include this if your event has set up a screening system.)
- Pets are not allowed. Only service dogs and miniature horses that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for persons with disabilities are allowed.
- By law, you may not ask for special ID or certification for the animal or person, nor should you ask about a person's disability.
- The animal should be housebroken and use the service animal relief areas provided by the event.
- The handler should not leave the animal alone and must keep the animal under control and on-leash. If the person cannot use a leash, the animal must remain under control through voice, signal or other commands.
- A service animal may be removed if: (1) it is out of control and, after given a chance, the handler still does not control it or, (2) it is not housebroken or, (3) it poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. Contact the Access Program before removing.
- If a service animal must leave, allow the handler to return without the animal.
- Service animals provide many services and not all are apparent to the observer. They may guide people who are blind, alert people who are deaf, pull wheelchairs, pick up dropped objects,

FOR THE SECURITY TEAM

alert a person who is about to have a seizure, provide balance support, or perform various other tasks.

- Never pet or play with a service animal.

Mobility Devices

- Only those who have mobility disabilities may use mobility devices.
- Manual and motorized wheelchairs, 3 or 4-wheeled scooters, canes, walkers and other typical mobility devices are allowed.
- Other motorized mobility devices are not allowed except on a case-by-case basis. Staff at the Access Center may grant permission to bring other mobility devices. Anyone who has permission to bring another device will be issued an access tag.
- Motorized mobility devices should be operated at a walking speed. Stop those who are moving too quickly and instruct them to slow down.

Seizures

If a patron is observed experiencing a seizure, follow these steps.

- Call for the Medical Team.
- Protect the person, especially their head, with a folded sweater, pillow, etc.
- Remove dangerous objects from around the person.
- Time the duration of the seizure and give this information to the medics.
- Turn the person on their side if they are vomiting.
- While you tend to the person, ask observers to create a protective ring around the person having the seizure. They should face outward, with their backs turned to give the person privacy, and stand far enough away to give room for air.
- Do not move the person, try to restrict their movement, put anything in their mouth, attempt to "bring around," or give food or drink, until the person is fully recovered.
- Stay with the person until the Medical Team arrives.

Customer Service Tips

As a Security Team member, it is your job to keep patrons and staff safe. Customer service is a large part of what you do. Keep these tips in mind while serving people with disabilities.

- **Non-Apparent Disabilities:** Remember that some people have non-apparent disabilities such as heart disease, arthritis, asthma, cancer, deafness, or other conditions. Because of that, don't jump to conclusions when interacting with your patrons.
- **Deafness:** If someone is deaf, shouting doesn't help. How does this person communicate? Do they read lips, use pen

and paper, text, or need a sign language interpreter? If a patron requests a sign language interpreter, contact the Access Program right away. Safety first, but do not delay in working to provide effective communication.

- **Slurred Speech:** A person with slurred speech may have a speech disability and may not be intoxicated. Offer a pen and paper if needed. Be patient.
- **Unsteady Gate:** An unsteady gate may indicate difficulty with balance or walking rather than intoxication.
- **Brain Based Disability:** A person who is on the spectrum, has a mental illness, brain injury, or other cognitive disability could become confused, agitated, or combative. Remain calm and keep your voice low. Determine the person's needs. How can you help? Is this person lost or separated from their companion? Help this person to a Medical Tent, Security, or to the Access Center.
- **Ask First:** How may I help you? Do not assume you know what the person needs.
- **Do not push wheelchairs** except in emergencies or if asked.
- **In an Emergency:** Assist people with disabilities in all the ways that you can. Assist with getting people to safety. Help to transport people with mobility disabilities. Communicate what is going on with people who are deaf or blind or who may be unable to understand. Remain calm.

While written materials are an important part of the training, in-person training sessions help people understand the importance of the material and retain the information. Whenever possible spend time with small groups or individual staff to help get the message across. See my Fall 2017 column, "My Secret Training System," for more information about training all festival team members.

Everyone's Invited, LLC, founded by **Laura Grunfeld**, is winner of the gold level "Best Accessibility Program," for the 2018 IFEA/Haas & Wilkerson Pinnacle Awards. Laura writes a regular column helping producers make their events accessible to people with disabilities. She has worked many festivals across the nation and readers can learn more about her event accessibility consulting, training, and production company at www.EveryonesInvited.com and www.linkedin.com/in/lauragrunfeld. Suggest topics or ask questions by writing to Laura@EveryonesInvited.com. © Laura Grunfeld, Everyone's Invited, LLC, January 2019