



# 2009

## A Guide to Travel Training



Prepared by Ride Connection  
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## Introduction

The goal of the RideWise program is to promote the independent travel of older adults and people with disabilities by providing access to free information, training, and support. To that end, this guide to travel training was created to covers a wide range of topics related to independent travel using a fixed-route transportation system.

RideWise is of the belief that travel training and other related mobility supports should available to all citizens needing assistance with learning to ride public transportation. For example, older adults who are either new to the community or without prior transit experience may need an introduction to the world of public transportation. People with physical differences may benefit from training or orientation related to the accessibility features of today's modernized, accessible transit vehicles. Likewise, people with mental, intellectual, or sensory differences may also benefit from training, orientation and support.

When using this guide, remember that each of us learn differently and we must try to teach to one's strengths rather than weaknesses. Travel trainers must be patient, flexible, and creative.

The discussions and suggested lesson plans in this guide have been arranged to provide for a logical, sequential manner of instruction; however, we realize that individuals have differing skills, abilities and needs. All activities should be tailored to fit the needs of the individual seeking assistance. Travel trainers must consider age, background, prior transit experience, and the individual's ability to master new skills when determining which lesson plans and discussions are most appropriate for the individual they are training.

Each suggested lesson plan and discussion is designed to create an open dialogue and problem solving session regarding the topic. Field training activities are designed to practice appropriate reactions to each of the different situations that may occur while making use of public transportation.

It's important to note that some lesson plans and discussions, although a good starting point, may need to be modified to meet the needs of the travel trainee. These modifications are encouraged.

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## Section 1: Description of Program Elements

### **RideWise Mission Statement**

By striving to provide a flexible continuum of services which encompasses travel training and other related mobility supports, RideWise will promote universal access, support, encourage and enhance individual independence, and improve quality of life.

### **Customer Service Statement**

Travel trainers should be committed to providing quality service with a heightened level of care and sensitivity to all customers. Each person who requests service must be treated with dignity, respect and patience.

### **Travel Training Defined**

Travel training can be defined as a short-term, intensive, individualized course of instruction designed to promote the independent travel of older adults and people with disabilities.

### **Definition of Program Elements**

The most effective travel training programs offer a continuum of services that provide access to information, training and support for all customers. Program elements can include:

- A **personalized trip planning** system that is easy to access, and addresses the individual travel needs of each customer. All calls for transportation assistance are channeled through one central number. Service Representatives guide individuals through the resources and options available in their community. This personalized service provides customers with information on all transportation options so they are able to choose the best option for each of their trips.
- **Consumer education** and outreach program to familiarize customers with their transportation options, including bus, light rail and all other community-based transportation options.
- **Fixed-route vehicle familiarization services** designed for individuals who need assistance and practical experience boarding buses and/or light rail vehicles. To reduce the potential for unnecessary anxieties, this training takes place when the vehicles are not in service.

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- **Volunteer travel training program** to connect customers needing a little extra assistance with a trained volunteer who is comfortable negotiating the transit system. Due to the likelihood of volunteer travel trainers having one-to-one interaction with program participants, it is recommended that volunteers be required to submit to a thorough criminal history screening and background check.

- **Specialized one-on-one travel training**, a short-term, one-on-one, intensive and individualized course of instruction designed to teach older adults and people with disabilities to travel safely and independently using public transportation. This level of service is nearly always provided by staff travel trainers.



- **Ongoing support and training for professionals** that serve older adults and people living with disabilities. Gaining the commitment of local partners in a community is essential to the success of your program. Working with community organizations, human service agencies, local jurisdictions and other regional partners will result in improved communication and coordination while providing individual customers with improved access to services.
- **Transportation Resource Specialists** can be recruited at specific sites in the community to be the local contact for consumers seeking basic information about transportation options. This allows your program to maintain a high level of customer service using a very cost effective approach.

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## Section 2: Code of Ethics

The travel trainer will provide support, encouragement and training to any individual interested in traveling on public transportation. Travel trainers acknowledge that:

- Every person should be able to move about with purpose and without harm.
- All people should be afforded the dignity associated with independent travel. Program participants must also acknowledge the risks associated with such travel.
- All older adults and people with disabilities should be valued and treated respectfully and with dignity without regard to age, race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, disability, national or ethnic origins, or other socioeconomic factors.

### **Confidentiality**

Travel trainers may often know or become familiar with trainees. While it is desirable to establish a positive rapport with trainees in order to provide the best possible service, it is important to avoid situations that can create a "conflict of interest." It is recommended that travel trainers sign a confidentiality statement and acknowledge an understanding of an individual's right to confidentiality.

Violations of confidentiality shall be deemed as grounds for termination. The following serve as guidelines for the sharing and handling of trainee information.

- The right to confidentiality is breached when information received from or about a trainee is repeated to persons other than appropriate program management and supervisory personnel.
- Trainees may occasionally confide in a trusted travel trainer and it is tempting to share this information with others, but this temptation must be avoided. Travel trainers are encouraged to share concerns with appropriate management and supervisory staff. Additionally, the names of individuals receiving service from a program must not be divulged.

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- Information about a trainee must not be shared unless it is necessary to obtain needed services and the trainee has given written consent. If a trainee is not able to give permission to share information for his/her well-being, the travel trainer and program manager/supervisor should use their best judgment to share information only to ensure that needed services are provided.
  - Under some circumstances, the travel trainer is required to share information. This applies when the information relates to suspected abuse or neglect. If abuse or neglect is suspected, this information must be immediately reported to the appropriate program manager, supervisor or others if required by law.

### **Conflict of Interest**

A conflict of interest occurs when personal arrangements for transportation are made with trainees outside the scope of duties as a travel trainer. Such arrangements are prohibited and can lead to serious liability issues for the travel trainer and Ride Connection.

Travel trainers will not use, with or without personal or monetary gain, any information gleaned from or about a trainee learned through the process of travel training.

### **Informed Consent / Liability Waiver**

When a trainee decides to pursue independent travel, the travel trainer must use clear and understandable language in an accessible format to inform trainees of the nature and purpose of training, risks involved, the timeframe and extent of instruction, and the trainee's right to refuse or withdraw consent.

The trainee's family member, teacher and/or case manager can participate in this informed consent as needed and appropriate. The trainee is required to sign the consent, but the individuals involved in the care of the trainee may also sign the Training Consent Form.

Making use of a multi-purpose form that serves as a training consent, release of liability, and release of information authorization is beneficial.

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## **Setting Boundaries**

While it's important to establish a positive rapport with trainees, it's equally important to remember that travel training has a definite beginning and an end. Because certain trainees may expect or desire to have travel trainer accompaniment well beyond the point in which independent travel is achieved; travel trainers should clearly explain the purpose and limits of the travel training experience. This conversation is best when held prior to the commencement of field training. It may become necessary and even beneficial to reiterate the boundaries throughout the training process.

Trainees should never have access to personal phone numbers and addresses of travel trainers.

Travel trainers must not ask personal questions of trainees nor suggest medical, legal or other professional or treatment advice.

The travel trainer will provide training only to the level of his/her ability. The travel trainer must not misrepresent their role or competence to the trainee.

If, during training, it becomes apparent that the needs of the trainee exceed the abilities of the travel trainer, the travel trainer should suspend training and immediately report the concern to the appropriate program manager or supervisor.

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## Section 3: Emotions and Traveling Independently

### Understanding and Working with Emotions

For some trainees, this may be the first experience with true independence. The trainee may not be accustomed to making decisions or being self-reliant. Other trainees may have difficulty accurately labeling feelings, but this should not be a deterrent to an ongoing dialogue about feelings, fears, frustrations, emotions, etc.

Travel training can be filled with emotions for a trainee as well as the trainee's family and natural support network. These emotions, positive or negative, may also have a noticeable impact on the training process as well as the likelihood of successful independent travel.

Fears about independent travel may stem from the trainee's unique emotional makeup, prior exposure to the community, and skill level. These fears may include concerns about personal safety, getting lost, forgetting routes, crowds, not being able to communicate, falling, or the vehicle itself. While it's true that some of these fears can be unfounded and not based entirely in reality or on experience; the travel trainer must acknowledge that they are, nonetheless, very real for the trainee.

Rather than minimize or ignore these fears, the trainer should respond with empathy and understanding. The travel trainer must work with the trainee to identify and discuss each fear then find ways to help work through the feelings and take steps to overcome any problems. The conversation will be most beneficial if it is centered on ways to alleviate fears and anxieties.

#### **Suggested Lesson Plan – Identifying our fears**

- 1.** Ask trainee(s) to write down their fears.
- 2.** Tell them to try to think of anything that might be scary while riding transit.
- 3.** Discuss precautions taken by transit. (Ex: Transit Police, CCTV, Lighting, etc.)
- 4.** Write down all precautions next to the fear it addresses. Hopefully nearly all fears will have been addressed by the safety precautions of the local transit entity.

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Learning how to travel independently can invoke a myriad of feelings and emotions. Some of these feelings and emotions are:

- Embarrassment may occur if a trainee feels that they are slowing down or inconveniencing other bus travelers.
- Frustration may occur if the trainee feels they have made a mistake about bus procedures.
- Humiliation or anger may occur if the trainee feels they are being treated with disrespect by operators or other passengers.
- Anxiety may occur if a bus breaks down or is off schedule.

During the initial interview, planning session and subsequent trainings, the travel trainer will gather information about the trainee's feelings, emotional state and what incidents may trigger certain emotions. With this information the travel trainer can help develop appropriate responses and strategies. The goal is to help the trainee understand, and manage these feelings so that independent travel is not inhibited or adversely affected.

It's important to note that positive feelings also emerge from the experiences of traveling independently. Trainees can feel very good about their accomplishments throughout the training process. The travel trainer needs to stress the importance of the trainee's participation in this entire process and encourage the trainee to be involved every step of the way. The self-confidence gained from travel training frequently causes a ripple effect in other aspects of the trainee's lives, giving them the drive to try new things not related to independent travel.

It is equally important to recognize that newly found feelings of freedom and independence can lead to unsafe choices. Having knowledge of a particular route does not necessarily mean that it is safe for an individual to use all routes in a system.

### **Suggested Lesson Plan – Making Safe Choices**

- 1.** Discuss limitations and choices with the trainee to make them aware of possible unsafe situations.
- 2.** Discuss the difference between knowing a particular route versus knowing every route in a system.

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## Section 4: Developing Natural Support

A natural support system is essential to the success of the trainee's independent travel. It is important to encourage participation and support throughout the travel training process.

Riding public transportation does not happen in isolation, but involves interactions with other people as well as the individual's environment. Many trainees already receive help from people involved in their lives. These individuals are pre-existing natural support for the trainee and can help the travel trainer reinforce the skills needed for independent travel. Members of a trainee's natural support network might include:

- family members
- friends
- professionals
- neighbors
- individuals they work with
- direct care staff

New people will be encountered on the way to and from the bus stop, but these people should NOT be mistaken for natural helpers.

### **Suggested Lesson Plan – Natural Support Network**

- 1.** Ask the trainee to begin to develop a list of natural helpers in their environment. Write them down.
- 2.** Identify and suggest other natural helpers in the community. Help the trainee create a list of other natural helpers. Write them down.
- 3.** Discuss the natural helpers on the list. Talk about why certain people are safe to seek help from while others are not.

### **How to Develop a Natural Support System**

The trainee's natural support system may be static or dynamic depending on the trainee's needs, desires, and the regularity of riding the bus. Every person must have some form of a natural support system in place. The travel trainer must help the trainee identify people who they could go to for help – either on the bus or off. Potential sources of natural support to consider are:

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- bus operators
  - police
  - fire department
  - local businesses

Transit operators can be part of an individual's natural support system and should be discussed. If there is a regular operator on the trainee's route, that operator may become a natural helper.

Once individuals have been identified, the travel trainer should arrange at least one situation in which the trainee must initiate contact with a natural helper.

### **Working with a Natural Support System**

Family members, guardians, personal assistants and other caregivers often believe they represent the trainee's best interest. They can potentially impede the training process by assuming that the trainee will never be a successful independent traveler. More often than not, this is based on their own fears, lack of knowledge and an underestimation of the trainee's ability to become an independent traveler.

The importance of the trainee's family, guardian or other caregivers cannot be minimized or ignored. If these individuals are opposed to travel training, it can be detrimental to the achievement of independent travel.

Suggestions for involving the family, guardians or direct care staff:

- With the trainee's consent, natural supporters can be involved in the first field practice of the training. Because behaviors can be diminished and/or altered in other ways, it is recommended that family members participate in a travel training session not more than one or two times.
- Natural supporters could also speak to others who have been through the training and be comforted by their success.
- Family members and others may also be comforted by receiving periodic progress reports from the individuals and/or the travel trainer.

Efforts to include an individual's family, guardian or other care provider can be beneficial and is time well spent.

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## **Section 5: Travel Training Referral and Interview**

Referrals may be received from a variety of sources depending on the locale. Potential sources may include trainees, family members, guardians, transportation providers, case managers or direct care staff. All individuals referred, should be contacted in a timely manner.

### **Initial interview**

An initial interview must be completed with all individuals that are referred for travel training. The initial interview is used to gather information to make a determination of an individual's baseline ability level. The forms should be written in a way that encourages dialogue and maximizes the potential trainee's input. It is important for all individuals involved in the support or care of the potential trainee to be a part of this process. Building rapport with the trainee and their support network is a key to the success of the initial interview, goal setting session, and all subsequent trainings. It is important for the initial interview to be in-person. This should be done in a quiet location that is comfortable to the potential trainee. The interviewer should convey that they can be trusted and that the trainee's opinions and feelings are valued in this process.

Once the interview is complete, the travel trainer determines the appropriate level of service. It's important to remember that, while independent travel is appropriate for many, it is not an appropriate transportation option for all people. If it is determined that the individual must obtain certain skills prior to entering the travel training program, the reason for the determination will be stated and recommended action will be discussed. If the decision is difficult, a third party reviewer can be asked to re-evaluate travel skills to make a recommendation.

### **Goal Setting and Instructional Plan**

The next step in the interview process is to develop a plan that includes the goals of the trainee and the skills that need to be developed to ensure safe, independent travel. The trainee's strengths, weaknesses, learning styles, and motivation must be taken into consideration to assure success of independent travel.

When developing the goals and creating a plan:

- 
- Identify specific goals and objectives
  - All goals and objectives should be individualized
  - The trainee's ability level, method of communication, learning style and previous experience must be taken into account while developing the plan.

Travel training programs should be designed to meet the needs of each individual referred. Prior experience, cognitive level, and ability are all factors in determining the type and focus of training.

### **Motivators**

During the initial interview and goal setting session, it is important to identify why the trainee is interested in becoming an independent traveler. Motivators may include: desire to be independent, acquiring a job, freedom, or feelings of being included in the community. If the training becomes difficult or cumbersome, the motivating factor can be used as a reminder to why they originally wanted to learn how to travel independently.

Some individuals that are referred to travel training may lack the motivation needed to travel by bus. They may be seeking assistance due to loss of driver's license, a move, or loss of current means of transportation (i.e. death of a spouse, other means of transportation no longer available due to finances). If the trainee is not motivated, there is a serious question as to whether the training will be successful. For these individuals, the travel trainer may need to discuss the positive aspects of independent mobility, renewed independence, and opportunity to meet new people or go new places. This helps to develop motivators, make the training worthwhile and, most importantly, fun!

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## Section 6: Travel Skill Identification

### Definition of Travel Skills

Simply showing an individual a route to travel does not ensure safe travel. Trainees must demonstrate certain skills before they can be considered independent travelers. Three requisite skills are:

- An awareness of personal space
  - People with this fundamental skill know where their own personal space ends and the personal space of another begins.
- An awareness of their environment
  - People with this fundamental skill are aware of what is happening around them. They also understand that information, events and even their own actions have the potential to impact their environment.
- The ability to recognize and respond to dangerous or unsafe situations
  - People with this fundamental skill have the ability to recognize and respond appropriately to situations that either pose a direct threat, or have the potential to pose a threat to their personal safety.

Travel trainers must begin to teach the skills that the trainee is lacking and determine the level of independence that is possible. Because all individuals are different, despite any disability label they might have, they may require different training methods and techniques before a concept can be learned and then generalized to all appropriate environments.

This guide to travel training is all-inclusive and should be modified to fit each individual's needs, however, upon completion of the program, all individuals should possess the same travel skill set in order to successfully exit from the travel training program.

A successfully exited trainee will be 100% proficient, at a minimum, in the following travel skills:

- Crosses streets safely
- Identifies and boards the correct vehicle in chosen mode of transportation
- Problem solves
- Demonstrates decision making skills
- Follows directions
- Initiates action
- Maintains appropriate behavior

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- Interacts appropriately with strangers
  - Handles unexpected or situations or problems
  - Recognizes and avoid dangerous situations and obstacles
  - Asks for assistance and requests help from an appropriate source

### **Behavior**

It is important for the trainee to understand behavioral expectations on public transportation. The travel trainer and trainee need to figure out ways to practice avoiding, modifying or eliminating unacceptable behavior (for example, redirecting by flipping through a magazine, watching out the window or listening to headphones) as well as consequences of unacceptable behavior. Consequences for unacceptable behavior should be set incrementally on an individual basis. The final consequence, if necessary, is that certain behaviors result in not riding the bus for a period of time until the unsafe behavior is corrected.

#### **Suggested Lesson Plan – Appropriate behavior**

- 1.** Identify specific situations where a person must behave a certain way and what the consequences are if he/she doesn't. There are certain times when you have to follow the rules or there is a consequence.
- 2.** Review the local rules for using public transportation.
- 3.** Identify other behaviors either appropriate or inappropriate and make a list. These could be situations that have been observed by the trainees, ones that the trainees have been a part of, or just brainstorming ideas. Then address each one, why is it appropriate or inappropriate, what the consequences could be, how it affects the other passengers, how it will directly affect the individual now and in the future ( if you get suspended from transit then you can't get to work independently, you can't keep your job, you can't move out and live independently, etc.)
- 4.** When trainees use behaviors to simply avoid riding public transportation, discuss how other transportation options have the potential to limit activities, freedom, and choices.

Conducting oneself in a manner that promotes safety and conforms to the rules of bus travel must be mastered during travel training. Posted rules and prohibited behavior should be reviewed with the trainee. Proper decorum on the bus also includes, but is not limited to: being properly

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seated, only taking one seat, keeping feet out of the aisle, not using profanity, and not disturbing other passengers. The initial interview should have identified any areas of concern. Prior to boarding the bus, the travel trainer must take steps to address any areas of concern to keep undesirable behaviors at bay throughout the training process and beyond.

### **Self Advocacy**

One of the most important skills to teach in travel training is assertiveness. For some people, diminished self-esteem based on unwillingness to expose or otherwise disclose a disability can cause a lack of assertiveness necessary to seek assistance when required. The trainee needs to be able to seek assistance and take action in a variety of cases. The trainee also needs to be aware of his/her rights, and if they are not met, how to get them addressed.

#### **Suggested Lesson Plan – Learning to be a self-advocate**

- 1.** Ask the trainees what they think self-advocacy is. Discuss their answers, break it down in two separate words if necessary and lead them to the definition. The key to self-advocacy is effective communication because you have to speak up in order to be heard.
- 2.** Ask the trainees to identify some situations where a person needs to demonstrate self-advocacy skills. Examples: teacher gave the wrong grade in the class, a bully is picking on you, the bus driver won't let you on the bus because your hair is purple, etc. Discuss possible solutions to each situation. Determine whether the solution included positive self-advocacy skills or negative. If negative, find another solution.
- 3.** Identify one more situation where the self-advocacy skill includes asking for help. Discuss why this one is so important not only to riding transit but to the trainees' entire lives.
- 4.** Identify a specific situation on public transportation when you might need to ask for help. Ex: asking the driver to announce the stops, need help with lift equipment, there is another passenger harassing you. Discuss.
- 6.** Teach trainee how to file complaints, comments and compliments based on local procedure. One part of being a good self-advocate is knowing what to do when you have been treated unfairly.

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## Section 7: How We Travel In Our Environment

The section is designed to begin to shed light on things most of take for granted. We move throughout our environment without giving much forethought to the concepts of direction, landmarks, distances between locations, etc.

Purposeful movement is the cognitive and physical ability to move safely and independently in one's environment. This includes establishing locations, understanding distances between locations, comprehending the direction of travel between one location and another, linking locations, and transferring knowledge from memory to the surrounding environment.



When making a trip, each individual must consider how to get where they want to go. Sometimes these decisions are made prior to traveling (navigation) and other times while en-route (way-finding). Each individual travels in their environment in their unique way based on memory, technique, preferences and travel experience.

### How we find our way

When navigating, the route to be followed is preplanned, deliberately calculated and defines a course to be strictly followed between a specific origin and destination. Routes that are well-traveled become travel habits and minimize the need for en-route decision making.

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Way-finding involves the process of finding a path in an environment between an origin and destination that has not previously been traveled. It can be described, in simplest terms, as a two step process: making a decision and execution of the decision. Events occur during the course of travel that may affect the outcome. Way-finding is exploratory and spontaneous.

Cognitive mapping is identifying routes of travel by knowledge stored in long term memory. Learning a route involves identifying the origin and destination, recognizing choices to be made and recalling direction and turns to be made. By repeatedly practicing a route, the path of travel can be "mapped" cognitively or remembered. Places in the path that an action must occur can be recognized by knowing a direction, landmark, signage or street number/name.

## **Landmarks**

The ability to recognize landmarks when traveling is one way for individuals to orient themselves to where they are. Landmark knowledge is the most basic form of orientation. Landmarks create "anchor points" in our cognitive map. It comes from learning specific information about the features of the environment that a person sees every day. People remember specific things about their environment due to their distinctiveness, or because of their location. If something is remembered due to location, it is generally due to the fact that it can be used as a reference point when traveling, either consciously or unconsciously.

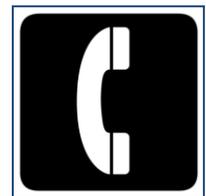
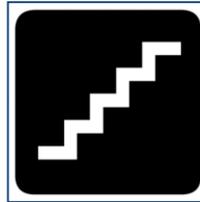
When assisting a trainee in identifying landmarks, it is important to choose landmarks that remain constant, are easy to see from the path of travel, and are of importance to the trainee. Picking landmarks that are permanent, fixed features in the environment is essential. Buildings, statues or schools are good landmarks, advertising billboards are not. A landmark is any feature of an environment that is significant to an individual. Landmarks are different for different people.

Organizing spatial information into layouts helps people learn new environments by picking a few landmarks and using this for way-finding. A tool that may help the trainee with remembering the landmark is to take a picture of it and have the trainee carry it with them as a memory aide. Once a landmark is chosen, it is important to point them out on each trip. At places in the travel path where a change in direction or event must occur, it is a good idea to identify a secondary landmark (in case the first is missed).

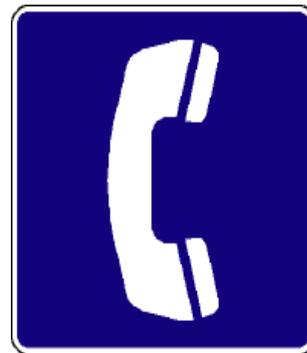
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## Signage

Universal signage can be used as a memory tool or “anchor” when becoming familiar with a route. Examples of universal signs are: restroom, payphone, hospital, stop sign, railroad crossing, stairs, crosswalks, etc. See *pg. 24* for additional examples.



When using signage as an anchor in the path of travel, be careful to explain that it is for that specific route. Individuals could become confused if they do not understand that the sign is specific to the item it is identifying and not unique in overall placement.



Signage that is specific to the transportation system can also be used as markers to find one's way.



### **Suggested Lesson Plan – Universal Sign Recognition**

Take a walk in the community, locate the following signs or symbols in the community; discuss where each one was found along with their meaning and importance to independent travel.

- 1.** Find a stop sign.
- 2.** Find a hospital sign.
- 3.** Find a traffic signal.
- 4.** Find a railroad crossing sign.
- 5.** Find a payphone symbol.
- 6.** Find a pedestrian crossing symbol.

## Street names and numbers

When assisting trainees to navigate in their environment, it is important to identify what tools the trainee is using currently and adapt those for further travel. Certain trainees prefer to use street names and number when navigating.



## Mapping Skills – Using the Cardinal Directions

The ability to navigate in one's environment by directional (or cardinal) indicators, north, south, east, west, is a very difficult, but helpful skill to learn.

Familiarity with the 4 cardinal directions will aid in teaching a person the proper way to use a map. For ease of use, most maps are oriented with North at the top.



### Suggested Lesson Plan: Mapping Skills

1. Using a simple map of the local area, discuss the cardinal directions. Remind the trainee that North is always at the top of the map, West is to the left, East is to the right, and South is at the bottom.
2. With assistance from the trainee, develop a sample trip plan using North, South, East, and West. Ex: Begin by walking 3 blocks North to 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Walk 2 Blocks East on 1<sup>st</sup>, etc.
3. Discuss how the cardinal directions relate to the map as well as the direction of travel in your sample trip plan.

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## Section 8: Barrier Analysis

### Path of Travel

Knowing the path of travel is a critical component in preparation of training. The path of travel is defined as origin to destination, including but not limited to: crosswalks, sidewalk to the bus stop, bus stop, sidewalk to the destination, and the destination itself. Sometimes the route itself may be the biggest barrier to traveling independently. The trainee may live too far from a bus line or the location of the bus stop might be in an unsafe place. Other factors to consider are:



- Amount of walking required for the trip
- Length of trip
- Number of transfers
- Hours of service on bus line
- Steep or uneven terrain

It is critical for the travel trainer to know the route before training begins. This includes:

- Trip planning using one of the three options (web, phone, map and schedule)
- Riding the entire route – checking for landmarks, detours or route deviations
- Conducting an environmental barrier analysis Identifying physical and social barriers

### Environmental barriers

The travel trainer should observe pedestrian facilities leading to and away from the bus stop as well as the streets leading to the bus stop. Notice where sidewalks exist and whether there are any obstacles to walking safely. When completing the analysis, it is important to



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know if the trainee is ambulatory or uses a mobility device. Noting curb cuts, uneven sidewalks, or other ambulatory difficulties within the built environment is essential to creating a route that is barrier free.

By identifying barriers prior to training, the travel trainer will be prepared to problem solve solutions. Environmental barriers may exist in a trainee's path of travel and should be identified to ensure a successful trip.

Determining the safety and accessibility of the path of travel requires careful review. If concerns are identified that cannot be reasonably solved (i.e. no curb cut), determine if there are alternative routes to take.

Note: Documenting the existence and location of problem areas may result in increased leverage when making a case for improvements to local jurisdictions.

### **Physical Barriers**

A physical barrier may include but is not limited to: vision, hearing, mobility, speech, multiple health concerns, or stamina. Trainees must have the stamina to complete the planned route. Careful analysis prior to training must take into account the trainee's stamina, terrain of the path of travel and rest stops.

### **Social Barriers**

A social barrier may include an inability to be around other people and maintain a set of appropriate social skills. The environment in which travel occurs includes people as well as other physical obstacles. When conducting an analysis on the transit route, identify traffic patterns of people. This can be done by observing the route while riding the bus and talking to the operator or other bus riders. If the trainee has identified a concern with balance and the bus line that they will be taking is always crowded between 8:00 - 9:00 am, the trainee may not get a seat on the bus. It is important to note the concern and help the trainee solve the problem. Some trainees may want to avoid certain intersections or transit centers. Others may not feel comfortable riding the bus at certain times, for instance school dismissal time.

The initial interview, instructional plan, and goal setting session should take place prior to completion of a barrier analysis. This practice lends itself to the most considerate analysis based on the trainee's unique circumstances.

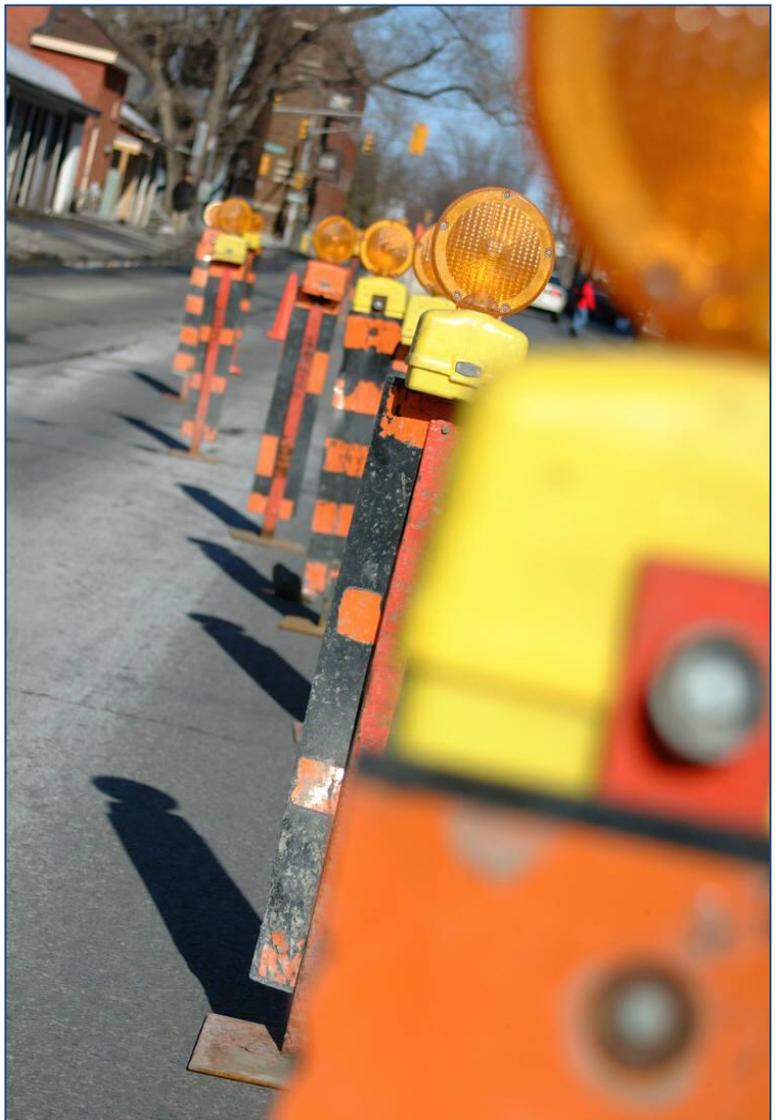
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## **Section 9: The Importance of Safety in Independent Travel**

Safety is of utmost importance when we are training individuals to access public transportation independently. Trainees must possess certain skills and behaviors before traveling independently. Trainees must know how to prevent and to avoid any unwanted or dangerous situations. Travel training must include information, hands on practice and problem solving techniques.

Each trainee will be at a different level of ability. Therefore, it is critical to refer to the initial interview and instructional plan in order to accurately prepare the trainee for independent travel.

The following are suggestions and techniques to prepare trainees for independent travel.



### **General Safety**

- Plan your route well ahead of time
- If possible, plan an alternate route that can be used to avoid unexpected situations should they arise
- Never board a bus or train just to see where it goes
- Plan routes that are well-lit and in populated areas
- Never walk in alleys, abandoned lots or construction sites
- Use the “call-back” system. Prior to starting your trip. Let someone know where you are going, the time you expect to arrive, and the time you expect to return. Call someone to let them know you’ve arrived at your destination then call again when you return home.

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### **Suggested Lesson Plan – Emergency Contact Card**

With assistance from trainee, create an emergency contact card. The card should be simple, but contain trainee's name, address, phone number, and the phone numbers of at least three natural helpers in their support network.

#### **Community Safety**

- Dress appropriately. Wear comfortable walking shoes and clothes.
- Dress according to the weather.
- Leave expensive jewelry at home. Or if you find yourself wearing jewelry, tuck necklaces inside clothing and turn rings around so the stones are not showing
- Carry as little as possible, only take as much money as you need, do not bring extra things along unless they are necessary.
- Bring a backpack or purse for extra items.
- Carry appropriate identification and emergency numbers.
- Carry enough spare change for use of a payphone (some are as much as \$1.00).
- Allow plenty of time to get to and from your destination.
- Look out for all types of vehicles: bikes, cars, motorcycles, buses and trains.
- Watch out for hazards, such as cracks in the sidewalk that may be hard to maneuver.
- Avoid walking at rush hour, due to the greater traffic volumes.
- Avoid walking after dark.
- Cross the street only at a crosswalk or intersection.
- Walk in well-lit areas.
- Walk in the middle of the sidewalk, not too close to bushes or buildings.
- Be familiar with your surroundings.
- Take a friend with you if possible, especially at night.

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### **Suggested Lesson Plan – Appropriate Dress**

- 1.** Ask the trainees what it means to be appropriately dressed. Discuss specific situations where a person has to be appropriately dressed and what that looks like.
- 2.** Ask trainee what about what it means to be dressed appropriately when riding transit. Make a list of all of the ideas. Examples: comfortable shoes when walking long distances, bright colors when traveling at night, an umbrella when it rains, a coat when it's cold, no coat when it's hot or a backpack to put it in,
- 3.** This is a good time to mention good hygiene as well - it doesn't help to have clean and appropriate clothes on if you aren't clean.
- 4.** Then ask the trainees about the weather. How do you know what the weather will be today? How do you know if what you're wearing is appropriate?
- 5.** Now, use the trainees as examples. Who is dressed appropriately today and who is not? Separate the class into 2 categories. Look at those dressed appropriately and discuss what they are wearing and why it is appropriate for a ride on transit today. Look at those dressed inappropriately (remind them that it's okay since we aren't riding transit today) and discuss what they are wearing and why it is inappropriate.
- 6.** Tell the trainee that you will review this everyday during the training. When it comes to going on the transit system, trainees must practice this skill to participate.

All independent travelers, especially those who are new to using transit, should be aware of their surroundings. It's important to teach new independent travelers to scan for people and activities in the immediate and surrounding areas. While scanning their surroundings, it's important for trainees to pay particular attention to the location of payphones, restaurants, stores, police stations, etc.

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## **Traveling with Confidence**

While in the community, independent travelers should make a conscious effort to exude confidence. This means traveling with the head held high, being alert, and NOT looking around as if lost.

## **Transit Safety Tips**

- Arrive at the stop 5-10 minutes ahead of the scheduled time to minimize unnecessary waiting
- Gain familiarity with the area; some stops are safe during daylight hours, but become dangerous during the evening hours.
- Have the exact fare ready when boarding so extra cash is not displayed
- Keep personal property on your lap, under your, or between your feet
- If you're feeling uneasy, change seat and alert the operator
- Try not to doze off or become absorbed in a book or music
- Don't engage in unnecessary conversation with strangers and NEVER give out personal information
- Stay seated until the vehicle comes to a complete stop
- Be alert as you step out and away from the vehicle
- NEVER cross the street in front of a transit vehicle; wait for the vehicle to pull away giving a clear view of the street
- Cross at a crosswalk or corner and always wait for the WALK signal to illuminate
- Stand at least two feet from the edge of train platforms
- Let other riders exit before boarding
- Don't touch vehicle doors as they are opening or closing and NEVER lean against them

## **Tips for Traveling at Night**

- Ride with a friend when possible
- Walk in well-lit areas
- Wear light-colored or even reflective clothing
- Carry a flashlight or wear a flashing strobe (available in many sporting goods stores)
- Check with your transit provider; many offer a night-drop service which allows operators to drop riders anywhere along a route to minimize walking distances

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## **Safe Pedestrian Techniques**

### Walking in Urban Areas

It is important when walking in cities and towns to utilize the sidewalks when provided. If there is no sidewalk, pedestrians should walk facing the traffic, on the left shoulder of the street.

### Walking on Rural Roads

Pedestrians who are walking along rural roads need to be ready for faster traffic than they would generally encounter in an urban setting.

Pedestrians should always walk facing the traffic, traveling in the left shoulder of the road they are on, single file and as far to the left possible. Walking facing traffic is very important because it allows the person(s) to see vehicles coming in their direction. It is very important to stop and move away from the roadway if large trucks or machinery are approaching.

It is also important to watch for vehicles passing one another at the same time they will be passing the pedestrian. Rural roads tend to be relatively narrow and when vehicles are passing one another, there is generally very little room for a pedestrian.

### Visibility

In the winter months pedestrian visibility is decreased. This appears to be because of the "camouflage effect" that comes from decreased daylight combined with the dark clothing many people wear in the winter. Motor vehicle drivers often just don't see a winter pedestrian as well as they see a brightly dressed summer pedestrian. To increase visibility:

- Wear bright clothing (like a white scarf) during the winter months.
- Buy a piece of high visibility fluorescent or reflective material to attach to a purse, pack or anything else that is in plain view.
- Remember that vehicles making left turns are especially dangerous to pedestrians during the winter months. Before entering the crosswalk or intersection, look in all directions for cars that could be a threat.
- If you're not sure the driver has seen you, let the car go by before attempting to cross the street.

### Street crossing

When crossing the street, make sure to cross at a crosswalk or street corner. Do not cross in the middle of the block or behind a parked car. Never run out into the middle of traffic to cross the street. Safe steps to take when crossing the street:

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1. Stop in a safe position at the corner – Remain far enough back from the edge of the curb to be a safe distance from traffic. Never step off of the curb until the path of travel is clear. Pedestrians are often struck by cars because the driver’s view was blocked by another vehicle, (for example a car that has stopped to let the pedestrian pass, or a large parked vehicle), or by a bush, mailbox, or any type of object that doesn’t let the driver and pedestrian see one another. The pedestrian should gradually come to the edge of the curb to make themselves visible before stepping off the curb. Always stop at the curb and look left, right, and left again *before* entering the roadway. When wanting to cross in front of any obstruction (another vehicle, or other object that may be blocking the driver’s view of the pedestrian), stop at the outside edge of the curb and look around for any vehicles that might be coming.
  2. Scan in all directions for traffic – Vehicles stopping at the crosswalk pose the most immediate danger. Look left, right, and left again. Always look left *last* because that is the direction the cars will come as a pedestrian first steps off the curb. Cars leaving the intersection tend to be more dangerous to pedestrians than cars entering the intersection as drivers are often increasing their speed as they exit the intersection. Drivers also could be making right or left turns through the crosswalk. Therefore, it is important to scan all roads that are approaching the intersection. Establish eye contact with drivers, before stepping out in front of their vehicle. Always remain alert.
  3. Respond appropriately to auditory and visual traffic patterns – Watch for turning vehicles. A driver may not notice a pedestrian until they are in the roadway. This makes the first half of the crosswalk more dangerous. Never walk behind a car that may have pulled up too far and is blocking the crosswalk.
  4. Use pedestrian traffic signals when available - Look left-right-left even when the signal says “WALK”. When crosswalk signals are not present, cross the street when traffic in the lane to be crossed has a red light.
  5. Decide a safe time to cross - If a vehicle stops to let the pedestrian cross, don’t jump at the offer. Instead, check to see if there is another vehicle that may overtake the stopped vehicle. Remember that green lights and walk signals do not mean “go”. They mean *look*, and go only if it is safe. Before crossing at an intersection, it may be safer to wait for a “fresh green” signal. Use the crosswalk when present.

6. Continue to scan for traffic while crossing – Continue to look and listen while crossing. Exaggerate your head turns so that you look in all traffic directions, including behind you. Make sure to watch for turning vehicles while crossing the street also.
7. Maintain appropriate speed for reaching the other side – Never start to cross the street when a pedestrian traffic signal is flashing don't walk. There may not be enough time to get across safely.
8. Step up onto the side walk or out of the traffic path.

### Understanding pedestrian traffic signals



Leave the curb to cross street

A steady walking pedestrian symbol or illuminated "Walk" means that the pedestrian may start crossing.



"Flashing" do not leave curb but complete crossing

A flashing upraised hand or flashing illuminated "Don't Walk" means don't start to cross the street. The flashing signal is a warning to pedestrians who have not yet entered the intersection that it's too late to safely cross the street before the traffic signal changes. Signals are timed to allow plenty of time for pedestrians who have already started crossing to safely finish while the sign is flashing.



A steady upraised hand or steady illuminated "Don't Walk" means don't cross, wait on the curb.

Some pedestrian traffic signals may require the pedestrian to push a button to cross. The buttons are located on a pole near the corner of the sidewalk and should have directional signage. Other factors to consider are:

- Do I need to push a button to actuate the walk interval? If so, where is the button?
- Is the button close enough to the crosswalk that I will have time to position myself correctly at the crosswalk, facing my destination curb, before the onset of the walk interval?

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- Which button controls the walk interval for the street I want to cross?
  - Does it stop traffic on one street, or all traffic?
  - Do cars still turn during the walk interval?
  - Is there a second button I must push that is on a median?
  - Will there be a surge of parallel traffic telling me the walk interval has begun?
  - Will I be able to hear it over other, concurrent traffic sounds?

Pedestrians often mistakenly assume that just because the signal says "WALK" that they can automatically start walking. Always be aware of oncoming traffic, or traffic that may be turning. The law requires a driver to stop if a pedestrian is in a crosswalk and remain stopped until they are across the street. This does not mean that it a pedestrian should assume the right of way. Teach trainees to always expect the unexpected.

### Turning Vehicles

Turning vehicles pose a real risk for pedestrians because drivers have to process a lot of information in such situations, and they may not see pedestrians who enter their blind spots while turning.

#### **Left Turning Vehicles**

- The driver turning left usually has to cross at least one lane of oncoming traffic when making the turn, resulting in a need to divide his/her attention. The driver may also commit to making the turn before the pedestrian is in view.

#### **Right Turning Vehicles**

- If the driver has a green light and has the right-of-way to turn right, and the pedestrian has a "WALK" signal and has the right-of-way to cross the crosswalk, someone will have to yield. Technically, the driver must yield to the pedestrian, but they may not see the pedestrian. So the best rule of thumb is to look over your left shoulder for cars turning right before entering the crosswalk.

### **Using Audible Signals**

Check with your local jurisdiction for the availability and location of Audible Pedestrian Signals (APS) also known as Accessible Pedestrian Signals.

An audible signal is activated by the "WALK" button at the intersection. When the "WALK" signal is on, a sound begins, and when the "WALK" signal is off, the sound stops.

Some audible signals emit a chime sound when the "WALK" is on. Newer audible signals produce a "Cuckoo" sound for the north-south direction of travel and a "Chirping" sound for the east-west direction of travel. Both

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types of signals are either activated when the “WALK” is on or upon pushing the push button down for two seconds. This type of signal is activated when the pedestrian button is depressed for at least two seconds. There is an audible tone locator for the push button.

Many intersections in modern cities are equipped with audible pedestrian signals, but be aware that there is no universal standard in terms of their type and location.

### **Safe and Unsafe Social Situations**

Trainees must be able to distinguish between safe and unsafe social situations. Some trainees may be overly friendly and won't have the ability to discriminate from a safe person and one who might cause them harm. Others may be so conditioned to not interact with strangers that they won't talk to anyone they don't know, even in an emergency situation. The three most important rules for appropriate interaction with strangers are:

- Don't share personal information with strangers.
- Don't get off the bus and go anywhere with a stranger.
- Don't accept anything from a stranger.

The best way to introduce and practice these techniques is through discussion and role playing exercises. Individuals who respond correctly to hypothetical situations may react quite differently when confronted with a real situation on the street. To reinforce concepts that have been discussed and practice problem solving, it may be appropriate to set up a stranger approach while on the bus.

### **Techniques to Use when Confronted with an Uncomfortable Situation**

Prevention needs to be practiced at all times and in all places. Preparation for any potential problems on the street or in the bus or train must be stressed. Trainees must have ideas of what to do if they are in an uncomfortable situation. Techniques mentioned in this section should be reinforced throughout training, with emphasis given to any special areas of need that have been identified. Whenever possible, travel trainers should stage an unsafe situation in order to provide an opportunity for the trainee to practice.

#### When A Person Invades Your Space

- Move away from the person.
- Ignore them, if possible.
- If they continue, GET HELP from police, a store clerk, neighbor, or another natural helper!



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### When Harassed By Someone

- Walk away to a safe area, crowd, or store, and ignore them if possible.
- Draw attention by yelling or screaming, and GET HELP!

### When Confronted in an Elevator

- Always check who is inside before entering. If a "suspicious" person is in the elevator, don't enter it and wait for the next one. A "suspicious" person will vary depending on individual's community experiences, but it is better to err on the side of caution in these cases.
- If you are in the elevator and someone enters that seems suspicious, GET OFF the elevator and wait for the next one.
- Stay close to the controls and if something happens, press the alarm and/or buttons to get off on the next floor. GET HELP!

### Check Restrooms

- Always check for "suspicious" people. If you feel uncomfortable, leave.
- If something happens when you are in the restroom, yell "FIRE!" and run out. GET HELP!

### Check Stairwells

- Never enter a dark stairwell.
- If you feel in any danger, look for the closest exit.
- If confronted, yell "FIRE!", run away, and GET HELP!

### When Followed by a Pedestrian

- Cross the street or change the direction of your travel.
- Stay in populated areas.
- GET HELP! Go to a store, restaurant, police station, etc.

### When Followed by a Vehicle

- Cross the street, or change the direction of your travel.
- Walk down a one-way street, if possible.
- GET HELP! Go to a store, restaurant, police station, etc.

### What To Do if you are Ever Confronted with a Dangerous Situation

- Let the person have what he or she wants.
- Wait for the person leave, then GET HELP from a natural helper and CALL 911!
- If possible, give an accurate description of the person to the police.

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## **Techniques for Problem Solving Difficult or Emergency Situations**

Sometimes, even when all proper procedures are taken, a difficult or dangerous situation may occur. It is important to prepare the trainee for this possibility and practice techniques to be used.

In the real world, as in the natural environment of traveling, problems are likely to occur. Problems may stem from a trainee's mistake (arriving late at a bus stop, or boarding the wrong bus) or external factors (re-routing of a bus, or the bus breaks down). Whatever the source of the problem, the trainee needs to know how to deal with it. Bus problems happening during the training period present a good opportunity for travel trainers to observe how the trainee handles the problems. These experiences can be used positively as a learning tool.

In other situations, depending on the individual, the travel trainer assessment, and the course of training, the travel trainer may actually want to create a problem. This will provide a semi-controlled situation where the travel trainer can see how the trainee problem solves. Depending on the outcome, this method may be repeated until the trainee can successfully deal with various problematic situations.

Dealing with assorted bus problems requires making judgments as well as the generalization of information. Generalization is the ability to make associations where concrete links are not provided. By experiencing a variety of learning situations and environments, the goal is for the trainee to have the ability to transfer knowledge to new or unfamiliar areas, situations and environments.

Listed below are some possible bus problems and suggested training techniques and strategies to address them:

### Missing the Bus

Buses run on a time schedule. Usually, the only way a trainee could miss the bus is by arriving at the bus stop later than the scheduled arrival/departure time or by standing where the bus does not stop.

If trainees miss the bus, they need to know that panicking will not help the matter. First, they need to know when the next scheduled bus will arrive or if there is another bus that can take them to their destination. The travel trainer must give this information when training begins, to help avoid any dilemmas. Some routes have buses that run every few minutes, and others only once an hour. Next, trainees will have to decide on whether to wait for the next bus and be potentially late or whether finding another form of

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transportation, such as a taxi, parents, or staff member if necessary. Depending on the decision, they should be instructed on how to call or notify the employer, parents, or staff member and describe the problem and its proposed solution.

If missing the bus becomes a pattern, the travel trainer must discover the reasons and develop a strategy to avoid them. Some things to look for are: not leaving the home on time because of oversleeping or doing something out of the normal routine, or when en route to the bus, stopping at a store or talking to a friend, or not paying attention to the buses arriving at the busy bus stop or the terminal.

If the trainee misses connections because of continuous bussing problems such as detours, accidents or congestion, it would be advisable to change to an earlier bus to insure connection. If this is too inconvenient, changing the transfer point or even changing to another route should be pursued.

#### Missing the Destination Stop

Trainees who ride past their bus stop need to know how to solve this dilemma. When they realize that they rode past their stop, they must decide what to do. They should be instructed to ask for assistance and look to the bus operator as a natural helper at this time.

Steps to follow when missing the stop are:

- If it's only a few blocks or less to the next stop, get off the bus and walk back.
- If the bus has gone several blocks before trainee realizes that the stop was missed, he/she should immediately seek assistance from the bus operator. The operator will help them back to the stop.
- If the trainee gets off the bus and is confused, they should remain calm, locate the nearest intersection and then locate a phone to call a predetermined emergency number for assistance.
- Trainees may also wish to seek other natural helpers in the community (*see Section 4: Developing Natural Support Network*).

#### Boarding the Wrong Bus

Boarding the wrong bus presents a serious problem. If the trainee realizes that the wrong bus has been boarded early in the route, he or she should use the same procedure described for missing a bus stop.

In order to prevent trainees from boarding the wrong bus, the travel trainer should have them identify the proper bus at each stop on each day of training.

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### Becoming Lost or Off-Track

Becoming lost or off-track occurs when one is unexpectedly confused by an external influence. Generally, people realize they are off-track before they are completely lost, and this comes from memories of what their surroundings are supposed to look like and their current environment not matching up to that. Due to this knowledge, the more one travels their route, the more they become accustomed to it and the better they know it. However, if a person does become lost, they will need two pieces of information:

- Where the nearest phone is (cell phone, pay phone, local business, etc.)
- The names of the streets at the nearest intersection (1<sup>st</sup> and Main, Walker and 185<sup>th</sup>, etc).

Call a natural helper for additional directions. It is important to stay calm and observe your surroundings.

### **Suggested Lesson Plan – Dealing With Emergencies**

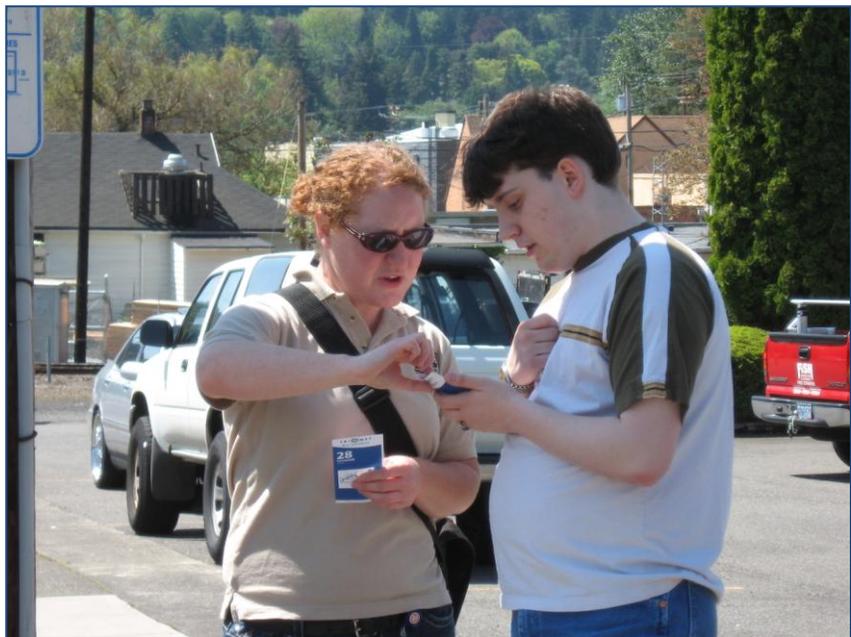
1. Ask the trainee what he or she considers an emergency to be. Discuss the examples and possible solutions.
2. Ask the trainee what type of emergencies he or she might expect to happen while riding transit. Discuss the examples and possible solutions. Examples: harassed by another passenger, being confronted by a stranger, being followed by a stranger, missing your bus, missing your bus stop, getting on the wrong bus, getting lost, etc. Write these on the board.
3. Instruct the trainee to create a different emergency plan for 3 of the situations listed. The plan should include what you will do right now, what you will do after the emergency is over and what you will do to prevent it from happening again.
4. Discuss the emergency plans and focus on the prevention section. List them in 3 categories on the board - now, after, prevention.
5. Select a situation not chosen, select it and figure out a plan together.
6. Set up an emergency while travel training and watch the trainee carry out his or her emergency plans.

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## Section 10: Field Training

Travel training is a sequence of basic principles of individualized instruction, hands on practice and graduated lesson sequencing. The method by which concepts are taught, the level of complexity and approach will differ from individual to individual. The steps that are recommended in this section may take as little as one day to accomplish or may need to be broken down into smaller tasks that can take several days per task. The actual travel training that each trainee receives will vary considerably due to their unique ability level and independent mobility goals.

**Keys to Effective Training** (Source: *Easter Seals Project ACTION and People Accessing Community Transportation (PACT), The Kennedy Center, Inc.*)



- Always keep safety as the foremost concern.
- Be sensitive to different learning needs, styles and patterns.
- Involve the trainee in planning his or her own travel goals.
- Structure lesson sequence so that each succeeding task is built upon previous successes.
- Keep the training steps short and simple.
- Check back to see that the trainee has understood the explanation, by asking for restatement or demonstration.
- Take cues from the trainee as to the speed and conditions of training.
- Use the natural helping network to reinforce the skills taught and provide encouragement.
- Turn what may be a negative occurrence in bus travel into a positive travel training experience.
- Use psychological motivators (i.e. freedom, independence, money) to encourage the trainee to learn the fixed-route system.
- Communicate a positive acceptance of the trainee, regardless of success or failure during the travel training lessons.

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- Foster independence, but remain an advocate.
  - Be patient.
  - Keep a sense of humor.
  - Make the learning process fun.

Travel training provides information, activities and practice. Each step of the program has objectives that move the trainee closer to attaining the ultimate goal of independent mobility. The steps are:

- **Experiencing** – information sharing and field practice.
- **Sharing** – discussing what has happened and problem solving ways to improve upon experience.
- **Interpreting or Association** - linking one event, condition, or idea with another. Pointing out landmarks as the trainee begins to learn the bus route is one way of making associations for the trainee to use later. The sequence of these associations provides the mental map for reproducing the task.
- **Generalizing** - ability to make associations where actual links are not provided. It is the process behind concept formation, problem solving, and transfer of training. The result of generalization can be learning to ride new bus routes on one's own.
- **Applying** - bridging the past with the present by understanding and planning how the generalization can be tested in the future.

The key factor in moving the trainee through the steps is ability to process the information. Processing the information is based not only on ability but motivation and involvement. There are a number of different training methods and techniques. Each travel trainer will need to modify the method to better fit the individual trainee. All training techniques need to be meaningful and fun for the trainee. The trainee needs to understand what the training is going to accomplish. The trainee must be included to the fullest extent possible in planning and decision making in all steps. Learning to ride the bus from home to work or school has meaning, especially if those are places that the trainee wants to go.

Identifying a trainee's learning style will also help in processing the information. Learning style is defined as the way in which a person learns a new concept or idea. There are three distinct learning styles, they are:

**Visually** – through seeing,  
**Auditory** – through hearing,  
**Kinesthetically** – through doing.

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The first task in communicating the new idea is to decide the best way to present the information. Directions can be given verbally, in writing, pictorially with photographs or maps, or through a recorded audio tape. It may be necessary to provide the instruction in more than one way, verbally and with photographs. It may be necessary to break each step down into tasks, depending on ability of the trainee and complexities of the concept. An example of this type of task analysis for safely crossing the street includes:

1. Stopping in a safe position at the corner.
2. Scanning in all directions for traffic.
3. Responding appropriately to auditory and visual traffic patterns.
4. Using pedestrian traffic signals when available.
5. Deciding a safe time to cross.
6. Using the crosswalk when present.
7. Continuing to scan for traffic while crossing.
8. Maintaining appropriate speed for reaching the other side.
9. Stepping up onto the sidewalk or out of the traffic path.

Language should be clear, consistent and carefully chosen. Terms like north and south, right and left may work for some trainees but not all. It is important for the travel trainer to make sure that the instructions are being understood by the trainee. Even a simple command like “walk straight down the hill” may produce confusion to a trainee. Many people learn best by following the travel trainer’s demonstration of the required task.

Preparation, patience and adaptability are key elements in travel training.

### **Method of training**

The definition of independent mobility is unique to each individual that requests training. The range in independence can range from learning a certain line that has a specific origin and destination to feeling confident on the whole system. The instructional plan and goal setting session will pinpoint the type of training.

- **Route Specific** training refers to learning a specific route. The trainee generally will learn to go from the origin to the destination and back. No other bus routes are introduced.
- **Generalized System training** is building upon the information learned from a specific route and being able to apply it to the whole system.

In either of these types of training the following methods should be used to teach the skills needed to be an independent traveler.

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## Model

The travel trainer describes and demonstrates the proper methods for the skill or task being taught. All skills and activities being taught should be modeled as a first step. Example: crossing the street safely. Discuss concepts and then demonstrate correct crossing techniques. Keep in mind that some skills may need to be broken down into tasks.

## Prompt

- **Verbal Cues** - A verbal cue is a method of prompting the trainee of the behavior they should do. Ask in question form: Is this the landmark where we signal for our stop? Make sure to phrase the question in a way that it requires an answer (yes or no works best). Once the question is asked wait for a response. If no response is given, rephrase the question. If the trainee is still unable to model the skill, try a different cue.
- **Physical Prompt** - To lead or direct a trainee with a physical reminder. A physical reminder is a tap on the shoulder or placing a hand on the stop or signal. This is effective in the initial stages of training.
- **Gestural Cues** - The use of body language to indicate an action is needed such as: a nod of the head, eye contact, or pointing.
- **Role Playing** - Simulated situations are acted out to problem-solve events that might happen on the bus or in the community. This method is effective in the areas of emergency procedures.

## Monitor and Fade

Less instruction by the travel trainer equals more independence for the trainee. Once the travel trainer believes that the trainee has learned a skill, it is essential to fade out prompts and monitor the trainee's ability to perform the skill independently. If the trainee is unable to successfully perform the skill, reinforce the lesson with steps identified in prompts section. The travel trainer will need to adjust prompts or techniques tried to determine the best method of instruction based on the trainees learning style.

This step is done in close proximity to the trainee. The travel trainer should position themselves behind the trainee and follow him/her through the process. If the trainee doesn't demonstrate a step as instructed, the travel trainer is close enough to correct immediately. Gradually, the travel trainer should offer less instruction and more monitoring. The travel trainer should distance themselves from the trainee (sitting in the back of the bus, walking ten yards behind the trainee). From this point on, if the trainee makes a mistake, except in a dangerous situation, the travel trainer should refrain

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from intervening. The trainee needs to have the opportunity to problem solve unexpected circumstances and learn from these travel experiences.

More advanced skills should also be introduced at this time (map reading, asking for help, etc.).

### Observe and Shadow

Observing that the trainee is at 100% proficiency in each identified skill is critical to the success of the travel trainer and promotes safety.

To begin shadowing, the travel trainer should follow in a vehicle. It is important that the travel trainer has prepared the trainee for this day. The travel trainer should meet the trainee at the bus stop and at all transfer points, including the final destination. In some instances, an observer unknown to the trainee may travel the same route to watch for proper application of travel skills along the route.

After the trip, a review of what happened should take place and the trainee should receive encouragement for the newly acquired skills.

The next step is for the travel trainer to follow in a car without the trainee knowing. If the trainee is successful with independent travel, they are considered trained.

The travel trainer's position while shadowing is important. The travel trainer must be able to see the trainee, the bus route number and the bus identification number at all times. This will significantly decrease the likelihood of losing track of the trainee. It is also recommended that the travel trainer have identification and a card explaining what is occurring during this process. It may be helpful to inform the support network of the trainee, local law enforcement and transit authority of the trainee's trip. This covert shadowing will sometimes raise red flags in a community if the community is unaware or uncertain of what is transpiring. By letting appropriate community members know, there is less of a chance of a group or individual intervening and disrupting the training.

During the first week of independent travel, it is important to stay in touch with the trainee. This system allows the travel trainer to stay in touch, be aware of any problems, reinforce techniques, and further build confidence. The travel trainer should gradually fade out of this activity. After one month of independent travel, the travel trainer should meet the trainee in person for a more comprehensive review of the trainee's progress. This review will occur again at three and 6 month intervals.

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## **Finding a Lost Trainee**

All people involved in travel training need to know that there is a chance that a trainee may become lost at any time while traveling. If this were to happen during training, it would most often be late in the program, when trainees travel independently while the travel trainer shadows in another vehicle. The travel trainer would be in close proximity to the bus and would be able to monitor any problem rather quickly. Parents, guardians, and supervisors, along with the travel trainer, must be ready if a trainee becomes lost. The following procedures, which involve teamwork, should be followed to ensure a quick recovery of a lost trainee.

### Call the Place of Origin

If a trainee doesn't arrive at their destination at the predetermined time, the first step is to call the place of origin to see if they left on time. Next confirm that they have not reached their destination.

### Stay by the Phone

The person who made the call reporting the missing trainee should stay by the phone and keep the phone line open to receive calls from the lost trainee and the network of people searching. Others must go out and search, first checking the area of origin and the boarding and exiting bus stops. This will help to clarify whether the trainee did board the bus and at what point he or she exited. If natural helpers are used, they should be contacted for any information.

### Travel the Entire Route

After checking at bus stops and the neighborhood of the place of origin, and not finding the lost trainee, one person in a motor vehicle should travel the entire route, checking bus stops and places that could entice a trainee, such as restaurants and stores. If the trainee has any pattern of places he or she goes, such as a friend's house or recreation area, these places should be checked as well.

### Call Dispatcher

At this point, if the trainee is still not found, a dispatcher should be notified if available. If the specific bus number the trainee should have been on is known, the dispatcher may be able to call that particular operator. If the route and direction of travel is known dispatcher can sometimes send a message to operators on that particular route. If the route and direction is unclear, the dispatcher may send a message to a large number of buses or the entire fleet. The following information should be given when contacting the dispatcher:

- 
- The bus number or route number(s) the trainee travels.
  - The direction of travel.
  - The time of boarding each bus along with the transfer points, if any.
  - Description of the trainee.
  - Leave name and contact number for call back purposes.

The dispatcher can then ask the operator if they remember seeing the lost trainee, or if the trainee is still on the bus.

#### Meet the Trainee at the End of the Route

If the trainee is still on the bus, find out where the end of the route is and meet him or her at that point. If the operator remembers seeing the trainee, ask where he or she got off and then search that area. If the trainee was not seen on the bus that he or she should have been traveling on, have a dispatcher make a call to all the bus operators, especially those buses that stop at the same bus stop as the trainee's bus does and notify them with the same information. At this point, consider notifying the local police department.

#### Call in Periodically

Those who are searching for the lost trainee should call in periodically to find any new leads or information on how the search is proceeding. This has to be a team effort to ensure speedy recovery.

#### Finding the Trainee

Once the team finds the trainee, reviewing the situation with the trainee is essential. Turning the stressful situation into a learning experience can change the outcome. If necessary, wait until everyone has calmed down and can think through the situation rationally, then discuss what happened prior to becoming lost, what actions were taken once the trainee realized that he/she was lost, and what the trainee should do differently if it happens again.

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## **Section 11: Ongoing Evaluation**

### **Progressive Evaluation**

It is important to evaluate the effectiveness of the trainee on an ongoing basis. Travel trainers will need to listen, observe and document the trainee during every training session and determine whether or not each skill has been learned and mastered. A training session includes field training as well as site-based activities and discussions. The travel trainer will provide the trainee with constructive feedback in a timely manner and allow for additional opportunities to master the skill. In order to successfully complete the program, the trainee will need to acquire all skills and concepts listed on the Progressive Evaluation of Travel Skills form and be able to demonstrate 100% efficiency in each skill.

### **Final Evaluation**

Trainees will be observed and assessed at the end of the training period and the travel trainer will determine whether or not the trainee has met each of the necessary competencies and met the goals and objectives on his/her Individual Travel Training Plan. If it is determined that the trainee did not successfully complete the program due to specific behaviors, health concerns or other issues, then the travel trainer will meet with the trainee and any other interested parties to provide a summary of skills that need to be acquired before applying to the program again.

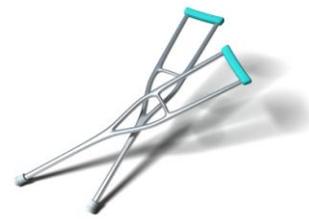
### **Follow-up Evaluation**

In order to determine the long lasting effects of this travel-training program, a follow-up evaluation needs to be conducted with every trainee - successful or not. A series of questions will be asked regarding his/her use of transit since the training, and the results of these follow-up evaluations should be recorded and reviewed by staff. A positive result from the follow-up evaluation process is the leading indicator of a successful travel training program.

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## Section 12: Disability Labels

While it is true that individuals who share a disability label may have certain commonalities, it's important to recognize that disability labels are NOT a reliable predictor of ability or behavior.



Travel trainers must resist the urge to form preconceived opinions about their trainee's ability level or behaviors based on the disability label alone.

Please read this excerpt of an article by Kathie Snow. To view the entire article visit [www.disabilityisnatural.com](http://www.disabilityisnatural.com) Copyright 2004 Kathie Snow, used with permission.

*"People with disability labels constitute our nation's largest minority group. It is simultaneously the most inclusive and the most diverse: both genders, all ages, all religions, all socioeconomic levels, every ethnicity, and any sexual orientation are represented. Yet people who have been labeled are all different from one another-and the only thing these individuals truly have in common with one another is dealing with societal misunderstanding, prejudice, and discrimination. Furthermore, this largest minority group is the only one which any person can become part of, at any time! Some join at birth. Others join in the split second of an accident, through illness, or by the aging process. If and when it happens to you, will you have more in common with others who have labels or with family, friends, and co-workers? How will you want to be described? And how will you want to be treated? ... Words are powerful. Old and inaccurate descriptors, and the inappropriate use of these descriptors, perpetuate negative stereotypes and reinforce an incredibly powerful attitudinal barrier. And this invisible, but potent, attitudinal barrier is the greatest obstacle facing individuals who have been labeled. ...*

*... What constitutes a disability depends on who you ask and what services a person receives. First and foremost, a disability label is a medical diagnosis, which becomes a sociopolitical passport to services or legal status. Beyond that, the definition is up for grabs! The "disability criteria" for early childhood services is different from vocational-rehabilitation which is different from special ed which is different from worker's compensation and on and on."*

For permission to reprint, contact [Kathie@disabilityisnatural.com](mailto:Kathie@disabilityisnatural.com)

Always put the PERSON before the disability.

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## Physical Impairment

Physical impairments can result from numerous diseases and other health conditions. Further information about specific diseases, disorders and medical conditions can be found online by visiting:

<http://www.merck.com/mmhe/index.html>

### Strategies and things to remember

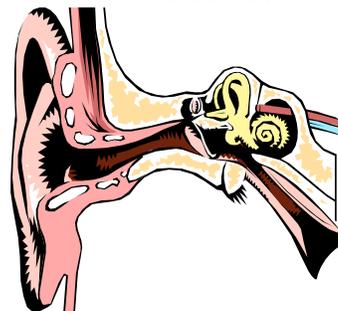
- Get to know the trainee and his/her abilities prior to training.
- Be aware of any mobility devices that the trainee may be using and provide strategies for obstacles and difficult situations.
- Ask the trainee if there are specific conditions to avoid during training.
- Ask the trainee if he/she needs assistance. Never assume that they do.
- Review the Barrier Analysis form prior to taking the trainee on a route. Make sure that it is safe and accessible.



## Hearing Impairment

There are more people who are partially deaf than have no hearing at all. Many of these people communicate with Sign Language. It is an official language with its own grammar, context and rules. Others may use lip-reading that while helpful without sound clues, is only 30% - 50% effective and very tiring after long conversations.

- Hearing Aids: Some people who have hearing aids do not wear them. If hearing aids are uncomfortable or irritating, encourage riders to discuss this problem with their physician.



It is important to note that many older adults experience hearing loss as a natural part of the aging process.

### Strategies and things to remember

- Eliminate unnecessary background noise whenever possible.
- To gain the attention of a trainee with a hearing impairment, move into their direct line of vision or gently place your hand on their arm.
- Be expressive by using facial expressions, hand gestures and body movement to accentuate your speech.
- Carry a notepad and pencil for writing down messages that cannot be understood.
- Do not shout.

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- Be friendly and patient.
  - If the person lip-reads, face the person and use short sentences in a normal manner. Good lighting is helpful.
  - When using a sign language interpreter; address your trainee, not the interpreter.

### **Speech and Communication Impairment**

Speech impairment is an impairment of voice, articulation of speech sounds, and/or fluency. These impairments are observed in the transmission and use of the oral symbol system.

Language disorder is the impairment or deviant development of comprehension and/or use of a spoken, written, and/or other symbol system. The disorder may involve (1) the form of language, (2) the content of language, and/or (3) the function of language in communication in any combination.

#### Strategies and things to remember

- Be patient.
- Ask short questions that require short answers.
- Give your whole attention when you are talking to someone who has difficulty speaking.
- If you are having trouble understanding the person, ask them to repeat themselves rather than pretending that you understand.
- Communicate with the person in a quiet location without distractions.
- Don't speak for people. Let them finish their own sentences.
- If it is possible and/or desirable, use written or pictorial directions as an alternative form of communication.
- Be prepared to adapt to the form of communication being used by the rider.

### **Vision Impairment**

Many individuals that need transportation assistance have vision problems. A person is considered legally blind if their vision is 20/200 with best correction. Many people who are considered legally blind do have some sight. Only 5% of those who are legally blind have total vision loss.

Travel training programs are not intended to replace Orientation and Mobility Training. Individuals who are legally blind must be referred to a qualified Orientation and Mobility Specialist. Orientation and Mobility is defined as a professional discipline incorporating tools and techniques used by people who are blind or visually impaired to systematically orient themselves to their environments and to move independently.

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Many people experience changes in vision because of the natural aging process.

#### Strategies and things to remember

- Try to involve all of the senses use of sounds, smells and feeling
- Glare and other lighting conditions may create difficulties for some people. Take this into consideration when planning a time for training.
- Many systems produce materials in alternative formats (Audio, enlarged print, etc).
- If a trainee seems to need assistance, be sure to ask before you act.
- Be sure to give clear and concise directions.
- Minimize background noise.
- Be patient without being overprotective.



#### **Cognitive Impairment**

Cognitive refers to the mental process of comprehension, judgment, memory and reasoning as contrasted with emotional and voluntary processes.

#### Strategies and things to remember

- Be familiar with effective behavior management techniques.
- When memory deficits are prominent, repetition of information and skills can be helpful.
- Training should be highly structured. Tasks should be sequential and in small steps.
- Be patient, flexible and supportive.
- Make verbal communication simple.
- Speak slowly, at a normal level.
- Use short, familiar words and simple sentences.
- Ask only one question or give one direction at a time.
- Give positive instructions - avoid the don'ts.
- Be aware of indications that the trainee is not listening.
- Non-verbal communication is important.
- Use non-verbal signals or informal sign language.
- Use easy going, non-aggressive posture, and a calm voice.

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## **Developmental Disability**

Developmental disability is a term used to describe life-long disabilities attributable to mental and/or physical or combination of mental and physical impairments, manifested prior to age twenty-two.

### Strategies and things to remember

- Treat adults as adults and select age-appropriate activities when training.
- Get to know the trainee and his/her abilities prior to training.
- Be patient and calm even if the trainee doesn't understand the first time around.
- Repeat directions if necessary. This will help the trainee remember it.
- Remember that all individuals learn differently despite their ability level. If you try one way and it doesn't work, then try again a different way until the trainee succeeds.

## **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

Autism is a brain development disorder that is characterized by impaired social interaction and communication, and restricted and repetitive behavior, all starting before a child is three years old.

It is important to note that a person with autism spectrum disorder may or may not have a cognitive impairment as a result. It is called "spectrum disorder" because there are a wide variety of disability labels falling into this category.

### Strategies and things to remember

- Get to know the trainee and his/her abilities prior to training.
- Explain what the training session will consist of and then stick to a schedule.
- Teach it correctly the first time. It will be very difficult to re-teach.
- Focus on abstract tasks, appropriate behaviors and social skills. The fixed-route familiarization orientation will be easily memorized in most cases.
- Address the specific sensory issues for each trainee either by talking about them and strategies to limit them or by practicing alternative routes that avoid a specific issue (Ex: if noise is a problem, wear headphones).
- Ask the trainee to repeat your directions back to you in order to determine his/her comprehension of the directions.
- Use vocabulary and directions appropriate to the trainee's ability to comprehend. Don't talk down to or up to anyone if you want to get results.

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- Avoid giving multiple step directions until each task has been mastered.
  - Provide written or pictorial directions whenever possible to encourage independence from you, the travel trainer as well as allowing the trainee to know what to expect next.
  - Be patient and calm even if the trainee doesn't understand the first time around.
  - Remember that all individuals learn differently despite their ability level. If you try one way and it doesn't work, then try again a different way until the trainee succeeds.

Further information about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) can be found online by visiting <http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer>

### **Mental Health Disorder**

A Mental Health Disorder can be described as any clinically significant psychological syndrome characterized by the presence of distressing symptoms.

#### Strategies and things to remember

- Get to know the trainee and his/her abilities prior to training.
- Avoid giving multiple step directions until each task has been taught at least once.
- Use vocabulary and directions appropriate to the trainee's ability to comprehend. Don't talk down to or up to anyone if you want to get results.
- Explain what the training session will consist of and then stick to a schedule.
- The focus should remain on emotional development and appropriate social skills that typically are lacking in a person with a behavior disorder.
- Strategies should be built around what the specific behavior is, what is causing the behavior and how to decrease or eliminate the behavior.
- Be sure that the travel trainer's and the trainee's roles are both defined prior to training. Review as needed.
- If the trainee begins to demonstrate inappropriate behavior in the field, and efforts to correct the behavior are unsuccessful, the training session should be discontinued immediately and a meeting should be scheduled to determine if training can continue.
- Be patient and calm even if the trainee doesn't understand the first time around.

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Specific information about mental health disorders can be found online by visiting <http://www.merck.com/mmhe/sec07.html>

Further information about specific mental health disorders can be found in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV)* published by the American Psychiatric Association.

### **Medications**

Individuals react differently to different medications, and it is essential that the travel trainer become familiar with the type(s) of medications that his/her trainee is taking. The travel trainer will document medications that may affect travel on the intake form. While it will be impossible to learn about and memorize all medications, their side effects, special warnings, recommended dosage, etc., it is possible to refer to [www.pdrhealth.com](http://www.pdrhealth.com) prior to training in the community in order to learn as much as possible and especially warning signs and dangerous symptoms to look for.



The travel trainer should always note any “odd” behavior that is observed while training and if possible, share this information with someone who knows the trainee personally. They will be able to tell you whether this behavior is typical for the individual, a result of stress or anxiety or possibly a reaction to the medication(s).

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## Section 13: The ADA - Rights and Responsibilities

In the United States, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) protects the civil rights of people with disabilities. It simply states that all public buildings, programs and systems must be made accessible, within reason, to all individuals despite their disability.

The ADA gives individuals the right to:

- Use any public bus or rail system.
- Request route and service information in a format you can use.
- Stand on a lift if you cannot use the steps of the bus or train.
- Expect that all lifts and other accessible equipment be kept in good working order.
- Use a common wheelchair or other mobility aid to board a bus or train.
- Have stops, major streets, and intersections called out along the route.
- Ride the bus or train seated in your own mobility aids.
- Have securement devices made available to you.
- Travel without a personal attendant or aide.
- Travel with guide dogs or other service animals that are not disruptive or dangerous to others.
- Travel with any necessary equipment or devices, such as respirators or portable oxygen tanks.
- Ample time to get on and off a bus or rail car.
- Get on and off a bus or train at any regular stop where a lift can be safely used.
- Receive courteous, respectful assistance.
- File complaints with the transportation provider, if necessary.

The ADA also expects you to:

- Use fixed-route transportation, when possible.
- Know if your mobility aid meets the common wheelchair requirements (30" wide X 48" long or less and no more than 600 lbs when occupied).
- Arrive at the bus, train, or paratransit stop at the correct time.
- Know how to contact the transportation provider and receive route schedules and information.
- Keep service animals under control.
- Request lap/shoulder belts and securement for your wheelchair, if desired.
- Signal or ask the driver to stop the bus at the desired designated stop.
- Pay the proper fare.
- Treat the driver and other passengers with courtesy and respect.
- Know how to file complaints with the transit company, if necessary.

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### **Equipment Malfunctions**

According to the ADA, if a lift or securement devices don't work, riders are entitled to have alternate transportation. If there is more than one half hour before the next lift-equipped bus arrives, the rider should ask the operator to call a dispatcher and have them send some type of transportation to accommodate their needs.

### **Inappropriate Operators**

Travel trainees need to know how to communicate appropriately with operators to get the assistance and information they need. Sometimes, even a polite comment by a rider can elicit a nasty, rude, or obnoxious response from the operator. Trainees need to know what their rights are under the ADA and how to exercise those rights.

Travel trainees need to know their rights and understand what incidences should be reported. In some circumstances, a trainee's rights may not be violated, but an operator's attitude is such that customer service concerns exist. These incidents should also be reported.

Some examples of poor customer service are: Operators hurrying them, asking nonessential questions, not using kneeling devices, or complaining or making rude statements to them or about them.

An example of an individual's rights being violated include but are not limited to: the Operator refusing to kneel a bus because they don't think it is necessary, or an individual using a wheelchair is passed by at a stop.

Without becoming antagonistic or overly aggressive, the trainee needs to be prepared to work through possible responses in these situations.

### **Filing a Formal Complaint and Comments**

It is important to discuss the local complaint or compliment process with individuals receiving travel training.

Generally, the information needed to file complaints, compliments or comments is as follows:

- Vehicle Identification Number
- Route Number
- Location
- Direction of Travel
- Exact Date and Time



