MAKING FALL PREVENTION MONTH ACCESSIBLE

Accessibility benefits everyone.

By making information easier to access, more people can be involved with Fall Prevention Month and related activities.

Canadians of every age may need accessible information. For example, additional visual and auditory options can be helpful to a 22-year-old who is deaf or has a hearing impairment, a 30-year old who is autistic or on the autism spectrum and older adults in their 80s who have a visual impairment. For example, high contrast between text and the paper colour (e.g. black on white) may make a document more accessible for someone with a visual impairment and a person who is on the autism spectrum.

There are a few elements to consider when creating accessible materials. Most importantly, always ask your target audience how they would like to receive information. Never assume. No audience is homogenous, but you may discover patterns.

Format
- Use headlines to separate information in documents.
- Use colours that provide high contrast (e.g. dark blue and white, rather than yellow and green).
- Use simple sans serif fonts that are easily available, such as Arial, Helvetica and Tahoma.
- Use a larger font size, which is measured in "points." Twelve-point fonts are often suitable.
- Put extra space between lines, such as 1.15 instead of 1.
- Keep photos, graphics and tables to a minimum and include alt text.
- Create printer-friendly documents with no more than two decorative colours, if necessary, and keep the background white and text black.
- Consider how your documents will be seen on different digital platforms, such as desktops, mobile phones or tablets.

Language
- Speak and write clearly without jargon or negative language (Use "Do" instead of "Do not").
- Write short sentences.
- Write for a grade six literacy level. Journalists are taught to write with this in mind for all audiences, regardless of ability.

- Use person-first language such as "Participants who have a disability can contact us by…".
  - There are exceptions and differences in some deaf and autism spectrum communities. For example, in both communities some people believe that autism or deafness is an integral part of who they are and they want to be identified by that characteristic.
- Use language that recognizes independence, competence and experience such as "older adults" rather than "elderly" or "seniors."

Assume Independence
- Speak with or consult rather than tell.
- Ask what is needed rather than assume (e.g. video with captions instead of a document).
- Encourage independence by providing easy to access information.

There are various types of accessible documents:
- Websites optimized for screen readers
- Accessible Word document
- Accessible PDFs
- Braille
- Large print
- Subtitles or descriptive audio for video

Resources & Guides

Government of Ontario — Accessibility Laws
https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-laws

Ryerson University — Accessible Documents
https://www.ryerson.ca/accessibility/guides-resources/accessible-documents/

Queen's University Accessibility Hub — Accessible Documents
https://www.queensu.ca/accessibility/how-info/accessible-documents

Canadian Marketing Association
https://www.the-cma.org/regulatory/accessibility

Microsoft Word — Make your Word documents accessible to people with disabilities
https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/make-your-word-documents-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-d9bf3683-87ac-47ea-b91a-78dcacb3c66d#bkmk_decorative_mac&PickTab=Windows

Canadian Association of the Deaf: Terminology
http://cad.ca/resources-links/terminology/