



# Age-Friendly Calgary

Guide for  
communicating with an  
aging population

In partnership with

Calgary



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This document is meant to help organizations, businesses and community organizers to better communicate with older adults and persons with disabilities more effectively. This will help provide a more equal community experience for everyone. The information provided in this document is a collection of best practices material from a variety of agencies, levels of government, communication specialists and professional publications.

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# Age-Friendly Calgary: Communicating for an aging population

Age-Friendly Calgary is a collaborative initiative of Calgary organizations and citizens preparing for Calgary's aging population. The *Age-Friendly Calgary: Communicating for an aging population* document addresses the Access to Information and Services local priority area of the Seniors Age-Friendly Strategy. Specifically,

## **Result 1:**

**Older adults have access to  
information and services**

## **Strategy B:**

**Ensure that older adults are able to access  
information in ways that meet their needs.**

The following questions can help inspire accessibility considerations when preparing materials for communication.

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# Communication planning tips

When creating a public relations, marketing or communication plan consider the RACE formula: Research, Action Planning, Communication and Evaluation. Consider the following points:

**Who is the audience?  
Does it include an aging population?**

**What are the two main things they should get from this communication?**

**Do you have statistics to tell and sell the story?**

**Is there a human story to add to your message?**

**Can you easily identify any special needs the audience may have?**

**What is the action the audience should take after hearing the message?**

**How can you highlight and repeat the main messages?**

**What is the simplest language you can use?**

**What is the most direct way to connect to the audience?**

**How can you get feedback from your audience members?**

**How technologically literate is your audience?**

**Are you using the accessibility features of the technology you are using?**

# Publication

## Challenges

- **Vision**
- **Literacy**
- **English proficiency**
- **Cognitive ability**



### Resources:

Health Canada  
(Communicating with  
Seniors)<sup>1</sup>

National Institute of Ageing  
(Making your printed health  
materials senior friendly)<sup>2</sup>

## Best practices

- Use high colour contrast
- 12 – 18 pt font
- 1.5 – 2 spacing
- Font type: Arial or sans-serif is best
- Plain language
  - Favour short words and short sentences
  - Highlight important information through bullets or bolding
  - Use images or diagrams to present ideas and examples
- Use images
  - High-definition illustrations
  - Use easily interpreted images
  - Do not wrap text around images
- Standardized icons (universally recognized images)
- Consider translating into common languages for your area

# Web/e-Newsletter

## Challenges

- **Vision**
- **Internet access**
- **Literacy**
- **English proficiency**
- **Cognitive ability**



### Resources:

Accessible Software Options<sup>3</sup>  
E-newsletter Mailing Services<sup>4</sup>  
Web Content  
Accessibility Guidelines<sup>5</sup>

## Best practices

- Use high colour contrast
- 12 – 18 pt font
- 1.5 – 2 spacing
- Font type: Arial or sans-serif is best
- Plain language
- Graphics and visuals that relate to the topic
- Icons
- Ability to increase and decrease font size on page
- Ability to make text on page played in audio format
- Ability to translate text on page
- Hyperlinks change colour to show people the link has already been chosen
- Create simple to navigate and read web pages:
  - Top three tips:
    - Limit the number of links in text
    - Home page navigation from any page on website
    - Quick navigation through tabs or hub pages
- Consider the audience's computer skills
- Avoid PDFs that aren't designed to be easily translated or searched. Leaving information in a webpage format is best.
- Test with your targeted audience

# In-person meeting

## Challenges

- **Physical accessibility**
- **Hearing**
- **Vision**
- **Cognitive ability**
- **Language barrier**



## Best practices

- Good lighting
- Everyone's face can be easily seen – to aid lip reading
- Venue is accessible to your audience
- Consider the emergency and safety needs of your audience
- Consider if providing a sign-language interpreter is needed
- Consider if providing Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) is needed
- Effective signage
- Consider if providing Frequency Modulation (FM) system is needed
- Ask attendees if they have any specific needs prior to attending
- Consider the audience and provide oral interpretation as needed

### Resources:

ASL Interpretive Services  
(Deaf and Hear Alberta)<sup>6</sup>

Communication Access  
Realtime Translator  
(CART)<sup>7</sup>

Health Canada  
(Communicating with  
Seniors)<sup>1</sup>

# Presentation

## Challenges

- Literacy
- Vision
- Hearing
- Physical accessibility
- Cognitive ability
- Language barrier

### Resources:

ASL Interpretive Services  
(Deaf and Hear Alberta)<sup>6</sup>

Frequency Modulation  
(Deaf and Hear Alberta)<sup>8</sup>

Closed Captioning for  
Presentation Slides  
(Microsoft Office, 2007)<sup>9</sup>

Communication Access  
Realtime Translator,  
(CART)<sup>8</sup>

Language Bank<sup>10</sup>

Tips for creating and giving  
effective PowerPoint  
presentations.  
(Statistics Canada)<sup>11</sup>

## Best practices

- Plain language
- Large font and handout
- Use high colour contrast on slides
- Amplification (microphone or other)
- Easy access for mobility issues
- Lighting
- Consider printing notes so people can follow along
- Consider posting/hosting presentation on webpage
- Limit the number of messages and the amount of text on each slide
- Limit the use of visuals and icons – be sure they relate to the topic
- Be considerate of the audience members' time
- Consider using captioning or Communication Access Realtime Translator (CART)
- Consider using a Frequency Modulation (FM) system
- Consider seating comfort during long presentations
- Consider oral interpretation



# Phone/conference call

## Challenges

- Language
- Vision
- Hearing
- Cognitive ability
- Technology accessibility

## Best practices

- Speak clearly and slowly
- Be prepared to repeat information and answer questions
- Be patient
- When leaving a voice message repeat phone numbers at least twice
- When setting up your voice mail consider:
  - Limiting menu options
  - List most popular menu options first
  - Limit options to no more than five
  - Provide a phone number after a message
  - Include a back button in your message options
  - Have an option for an operator – best number to use is 0
  - Test systems regularly

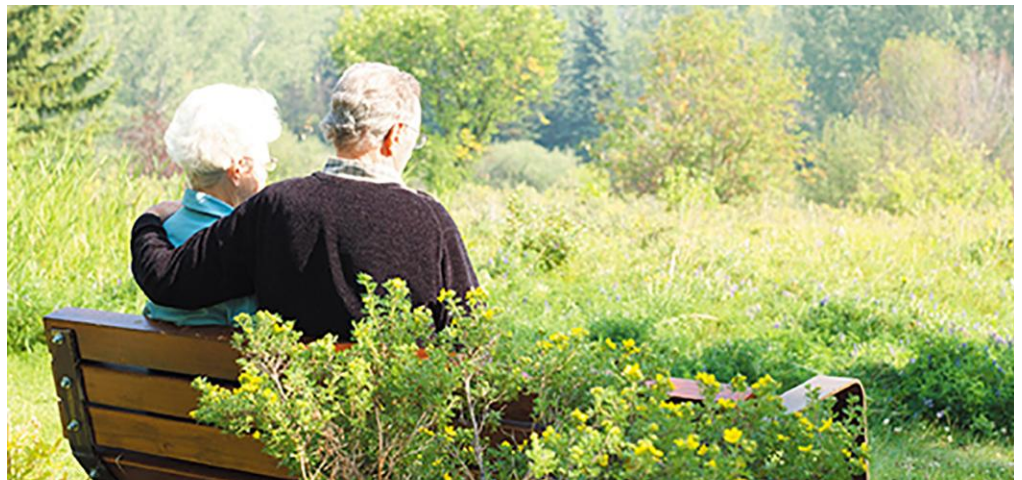
### Resources:

Cornell University.  
(Audio Conference Call  
Etiquette)<sup>12</sup>

Health Canada.  
(Communicating with  
Seniors)<sup>1</sup>

Plain Language<sup>13</sup>

Text to 9-1-1 Services<sup>14</sup>



# Video

## Challenges

- Literacy
- English proficiency
- Vision
- Hearing
- Cognitive ability



## Best practices

- Closed captioning
- Name plates on the top half the screen not on the bottom third of the screen
- Consider using on screen graphics and icons
- Use high colour contrast
- 12 – 18 pt font
- 1.5 – 2 spacing
- Font type: Arial or sans-serif is best
- Use plain language
- Narration for your audience
- Described video capability
- Everyone's face can be easily seen – to aid in lip reading

### Resources:

Common Craft Videos<sup>15</sup>

Closed Captioning Guide for YouTube<sup>16</sup>

Plain Language<sup>13</sup>

# Radio/audio podcast

## Challenges

- **Hearing**
- **Cognitive ability**
- **Language**
- **Internet access**

## Best practices

- Providing transcripts
- Transcribe into video
- Repeat audience questions during question and answer periods



### Resources:

- Communication Access Realtime Translator (CART)<sup>8</sup>
- Deaf and Hear Alberta<sup>17</sup>
- Language Bank<sup>10</sup>
- Plain Language<sup>13</sup>

# End notes

## Publication:

1. Communicating with Seniors: Advice, Techniques and Tips, Health Canada, 2010.  
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/alt-formats/pdf/publications/public/various-varies/afcomm-commavecaines/AFComm-Commavecaines-eng.pdf>
2. Making Your Printed Health Materials Senior Friendly, National Institute on Ageing, 2008.  
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/publication/making-your-printed-health-materials-senior-friendly>

## Web/e-Newsletter:

3. Accessible software options, e.g. Essential Accessibility App  
[www.essentialaccessibility.com](http://www.essentialaccessibility.com)
4. Mail Chimp  
[www.mailchimp.com](http://www.mailchimp.com)
5. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines  
[w3.org/TR/WCAG20/](http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/)

## In-Person meeting:

6. ASL Interpretive Services, Deaf and Hear Alberta  
<http://interpreter.deafandhearalberta.ca/>
7. Communication Access Realtime Translator, (CART)  
<http://www.chs.ca/services/speech-text-transcription-cart-communication-access-realtime-translation>
1. Communicating with Seniors: Advice, Techniques and Tips, Health Canada, 2010.  
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/alt-formats/pdf/publications/public/various-varies/afcomm-commavecaines/AFComm-Commavecaines-eng.pdf>

### Presentation:

6. ASL Interpretive Services, Deaf and Hear Alberta  
<http://interpreter.deafandhearalberta.ca/>
8. Frequency Modulation, Deaf and Hear Alberta  
<http://estore.deafandhearalberta.ca/Assistive-Listening-Devices-s/1833.htm>
9. Closed captioning for presentations, Microsoft Office, 2007.  
<https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Add-captions-annotations-or-subtitles-to-presentations-e086e141-62b0-4e42-9699-97fbacb7a044>
7. Communication Access Realtime Translator, (CART)  
<http://www.chs.ca/services/speech-text-transcription-cart-communication-access-realtime-translation>
10. Language Bank, <http://settlementcalgary.com/translation-and-interpretation>
11. Tips for creating and giving effective PowerPoint presentations, Statistics Canada, 2009.  
<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/conferences/it-ti2009/tips-conseils-eng.htm>

### Phone/conference call:

12. Audio Conference Call Etiquette, Cornell University, 2014.  
<https://www.alumni.cornell.edu/volunteer/documents/ConferenceCallEtiquette.pdf>
1. Communicating with Seniors: Advice, Techniques and Tips, Health Canada, 2010.  
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/alt-formats/pdf/publications/public/various-varies/afcomm-commavecaines/AFComm-Commavecaines-eng.pdf>
13. Plain language, The Centre for Literacy  
<http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/node/188>
14. Text to 911, [www.calgary.ca/CSPS/PSC/Pages/Text-with-9-1-1.aspx](http://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/PSC/Pages/Text-with-9-1-1.aspx)

### Video:

15. Common Craft video elements, [www.commoncraft.com](http://www.commoncraft.com)
16. • Closed captioning for YouTube videos  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJGiS83eQLk>
13. Plain language, The Centre for Literacy  
<http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/node/188>

### **Radio/audio podcast:**

8. Communication Access Realtime Translator, (CART)  
<http://www.chs.ca/services/speech-text-transcription-cart-communication-access-realtime-translation>
17. Deaf and Hear Alberta  
<http://deafandhearalberta.ca/>
12. Language Bank, <http://settlementcalgary.com/translation-and-interpretation>
15. Plain language, The Centre for Literacy  
<http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/node/188>

### **Others:**

- Typography and the Ageing Eye, AIGA, the Professional Association for Design, 2006.  
<http://www.aiga.org/typography-and-the-aging-eye/>
- 411,  
[www.canada411.ca](http://www.canada411.ca)