



Accessibility: Honouring the Past
Showcasing the Present
Inspiring the Future



“The Evolution of Accessibility”

Discussion Guide

Introduction

The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario has produced a 16-minute, three-part documentary film titled “The Evolution of Accessibility.” It can be downloaded from the following website: www.TheAccessibilityHub.ca.

2017 marks the 150th anniversary of Canada’s confederation. Through this film, we can look at how accessibility has changed over the years in order to honour the past, showcase the present, and inspire the future.

The film tells the stories of accessibility champions across Ontario and how they have personally experienced and navigated accessibility in their communities over the years. It highlights the lifestyles of Ontarians of different ages, backgrounds, disabilities and experiences.

Some of the people featured in the film work in organizations that support people with disabilities; others are business owners, community builders, athletes, politicians, and faith leaders. All are advocates for accessibility in their communities.

Purpose of the Guide

This discussion guide was developed to show you how you might use the film at events in your community to spark discussion about how accessibility has changed over time and what change still needs to happen.

Time Needed

You will need about 60 minutes to view the film and allow time for discussion.

Audience

This film is appropriate for teenagers to senior citizens. It could be shown at an Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting, council meeting, service club meeting, youth group meeting, or as part of workshop or training course.

How to View the Film

You may wish to watch the entire film and discuss general impressions as a group first. You may also wish to view the film one part at a time to initiate discussion on specific issues. Select a part with issues that interests you or your group -- it is not necessary to work sequentially.

Encourage viewers to jot down their impressions, ideas, questions and concerns as they watch. After each part, or after viewing the whole film, encourage viewers to discuss the questions provided in small groups and then report back to the larger group, or have a whole-group discussion. Feel free to view, discuss and develop your own approach.

Discussion Questions

Part 1: Honoring the Past (0:00-05:29)

This first part of the film looks back on the past, and explores accessibility as it was years ago. You will hear from people with disabilities and their family members on their memories of the barriers they faced.

Discussion Question:

What is the most significant change you have seen regarding accessibility in your community (e.g., increased awareness, greater participation of people with disabilities)? How did the change begin?

Part 2: Showcasing the Present (05:30-12:27)

Now that you've had a glimpse of how Ontarians experienced accessibility in years past, let's reflect on the present state of accessibility in our communities. It's been 12 years since the introduction of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. From more accessible technology to barrier-free athletic centres, education programs to improved access to buildings, we'll hear about how things have changed for the better.

Discussion Question:

What is one accessibility success story from your community? What makes it a success?

Part 3: Inspiring the Future (12:28-16:45)

Now that you've heard about the past and present state of accessibility in Ontario, it's time to look to the future and imagine an accessible and inclusive Ontario. You'll hear about what an accessible Ontario looks like to our accessibility champions and what they and other organizations are doing to go beyond legal requirements to create more inclusive communities.

Discussion Question:

What do you see as an emerging innovation, technology or trend that will positively impact people with disabilities in the future?

Next Steps

Having worked through the film, the viewers may now be ready to take action. Have them talk about what, if any, action they could take to identify, prevent and remove barriers to access for people with disabilities.

Before ending any discussion session, spend at least a few minutes focusing attention on the factors that seemed to be important for the persons with disabilities appearing in the video. What can you learn from these individuals?

Accessibility Features of the Film

The film features video description and closed captions. A transcript of the film is also available on the following website: www.TheAccessibilityHub.ca.



Questions?

If you have questions or would like to request this guide in an alternate format, please contact the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario at:

Telephone: (416) 849-8276
Toll-free: 1 (866) 515-2025
TTY: 1 (800) 268-7095
Fax: 416-325-3407
Email: accessibility@ontario.ca