

# GLOSSARY

**Accessibility:** *In the context of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*—a site, building, facility, or portion thereof that complies with ADA guidelines. *In disability ministry use*—free of architectural, attitudinal, and communication barriers that prevent the full inclusion of persons with disabilities.

**Accessible Route:** A continuous unobstructed path of travel connecting all accessible elements and spaces of a building or facility. Interior accessible routes may include corridors, floors, ramps, elevators, lifts, and clear floor space. Exterior accessible routes may include parking-access aisles, curb ramps, crosswalks at vehicular ways, walks, ramps, and lifts.

**ADA and ABA Accessibility Guidelines:** Common abbreviation for *Americans with Disabilities Act and Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines, July 23, 2004*, as published in the *Federal Register*. Revised guidelines jointly updating the ADA guidelines and the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) guidelines. Referred to by the Access Board and throughout this audit as “the 2004 ADA guidelines.” [www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm](http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm)

**American Sign Language (ASL):** The visual, manual language of the Deaf Culture. It is a true language with its own grammar, syntax, and lexicon (vocabulary).

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** *Federal law PL 101-336, passed July 26, 1990.* This law prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in public accommodations, telecommunications, employment, and public services. [www.ada.gov/](http://www.ada.gov/)

**Architectural Barriers:** Those obstacles causing physical and/or structural inaccessibility of a building.

**Assistive Listening Devices (ALD):** Also known as Assistive Listening Systems. Amplification systems utilizing transmitters, receivers, and coupling devices to bypass the acoustical space between a sound source and a listener. The assistive listening system delivers sound directly from a microphone to a transmitter, and on to an individual receiver and connector, eliminating the loss of clarity that occurs as sound travels through the air. (*See also Induction Loop, Frequency Modulation (FM) Technology, and Infrared Technology.*)

**Attitudinal Barriers:** Views or attitudes, held by people without a disability, that cause people with disabilities to feel unwelcome, and devalued. Often the result of fear, inadequate information, or misinformation about disabilities.

**Audio Loop:** A type of assistive listening device. (*See also Induction Loop.*)

**Autism Spectrum Disorder:** A developmental disability, known as a spectrum disorder, as it affects each person differently and with varying degrees. It begins early in life (before the age of 30 months) and lasts a lifetime. The disorder is also pervasive, as several areas of development are affected. Persons who have autism spectrum disorder typically experience trouble with verbal and nonverbal communication and social interactions.

**Blindness:** Having vision legally defined by visual acuity of not greater than 20/200 in the better eye with correction, or a field not subtending an angle greater than 20 degrees. A person can be legally blind, but may still have enough vision to read very large print.

**Braille:** A system, invented by Louis Braille, of reading by touch used by persons who are blind. Six raised dots are arranged in various patterns that communicate numbers, letters, and combinations of letters. People who use Braille move their fingertips over the raised dots and read the words created. (Not all individuals who are blind are able to learn and use Braille.)

**Captions:** The display of spoken words or sounds, often accompanying pictorial illustrations, such as motion pictures, videos, PowerPoint shows, and TV programs that remove the sound barrier for people who do not hear.

**Cerebral Palsy:** A disability resulting from damage to the brain. It is not progressive and may occur in varying degrees of severity. The most common symptoms are a lack of muscle coordination when performing voluntary movements (ataxia); stiff or tight muscles and exaggerated reflexes (spasticity); walking with one foot or leg dragging; walking on the toes, a crouched gait, or a “scissored” gait; and muscle tone that is either too stiff or too floppy. Cognitive abilities of individuals with cerebral palsy often are unimpaired.

**Chancel:** Refers to the area around the Lord’s table or communion table. The chancel is generally raised. The communion table, pulpit, and lectern are in this area, and sometimes the organ console and choir seating. A low railing often sets the chancel apart from the rest of the room.

**Chemical Sensitivities:** A type of environmental disability in which there is a reaction to combinations of low-level chemicals in the air, water, and food. Sensitivities emerge as the body’s detoxification system becomes stressed or impaired. Reactions may be disabling; continued exposure can increase the level/duration of the disability.

**Chronic Illness:** Among the less readily apparent disabilities. Among the various types are diabetes, cystic fibrosis, hemophilia, disorders of the kidneys, multiple sclerosis, sickle-cell anemia, asthma, lupus, cardiac conditions, osteoporosis, chronic back pain, cancer, HIV/AIDS, chemical sensitivities, and being consistently

**Circles of Friends:** A term frequently associated with the concept promoted by Robert Perske in his 1988 book of that title ([www.robertperske.com/Books.html](http://www.robertperske.com/Books.html)). People who figuratively circle around a person with a developmental disability to form a support system for that person as needed, including being the person’s friend. In recent years, a number of disability ministry groups have taken on that name.

**Circles of Support:** An extensive discussion of the circles-of-support concept can be found in a 2007 book by Erik Carter. [www.brookespublishing.com/store/books/carter-67434/index.htm](http://www.brookespublishing.com/store/books/carter-67434/index.htm). (See **Circles of Friends**.)

**Communication Barriers:** These occur when the content of a message sent is not understood by the receiver. An example of such a barrier is the lack of the use of sign language or of the services of an interpreter with a person who is Deaf, whose primary language is American Sign Language.

**Computer-Assisted Notetaking (CAN):** A technology that enables people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and who are fluent in written language to participate in discussions, meetings, and lectures with people who can hear. The operator, a typist called a “Computer-Assisted Notetaker,” uses a computer with word processing software and types summary notes of what was said. The notes are displayed on a computer monitor, or for large groups, the computer is hooked up to a projector and the notes viewed on a screen or wall.

**Culturally Deaf:** Identifying with the values and world view of the Deaf Culture, whose preferred language is American Sign Language. Persons who are culturally deaf associate primarily with the Deaf community.

**Curb Ramp:** Also known as Curb Cut. A short ramp cutting through a curb or built up to it.

**deaf:** A general term meaning either: (1) audiotologically incapable of understanding speech through the ear, or (2) (often with a capital “D”) culturally deaf.

**Deaf:** A specific term meaning culturally Deaf (spelled with a capital “D”).

**Deaf-Blind:** (Variously spelled as deafblind, deaf/blind, or deaf-blind.) Used for people who are either Deaf and blind, are Deaf and have low vision, are hard of hearing and blind, are hard of hearing and have low vision, are late-deafened and blind, or are late-deafened and have low vision.

**Deaf Community:** A community composed of people who are culturally Deaf, as well as people with a wide variety of hearing loss and communication modes who share experiences, needs, and goals. Structurally, the Deaf community can be local or national, and in reality it is a social community as well as a political one.

**Deaf Culture:** A set of values, modes of behavior, and folklore common to those who were born deaf. The Deaf culture has American Sign Language as its linguistic base.

**Deafened:** Having lost the ability to hear later in life. Persons who grew up hearing, are fluent in English or the spoken language of their parents, and may rely on speech reading rather than sign language.

**Developmental Disabilities:** A continuing disability originating from birth through age 21. The term includes any or all of the following disabilities: autism, epilepsy/seizure disorder, cerebral palsy, and intellectual disability (formerly called mental retardation).

**Disability:** The term disability, as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act, means a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities such as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, or learning.

**Environmental Disabilities:** Includes chemical sensitivities, mold sensitivities, and electromagnetic sensitivities. Any or all of these conditions become a disability if they limit one or more major life activities.

**Fragrances:** Fragrances include “any product which produces a scent strong enough to be perceived by others,” such as colognes, perfumes, aftershave, hair-care products, lotions, powders, some detergents, fabric softeners, and other personal and clothing-care products.<sup>1</sup>

**Frequency Modulation (FM) Technology:** An assistive listening system in which a stationary transmitter transmits a radio signal (such as a commercial FM radio) received by pocket-sized “radio receivers” using a variety of receiver-to-ear connectors.

**Hard of Hearing:** Refers to people who have some hearing ability, or residual hearing, and can understand speech, even on the phone, with the help of amplification or a hearing aid. People who are hard of hearing can range from those who identify more with hearing people to those who use sign language.

**Inclined Stairway Chairlift:** A type of mechanized lift, with a seat, that allows a person to travel up or down a flight of stairs. Differs from inclined or vertical platform lifts by not providing a platform, and so cannot carry a wheelchair.

**Inclined Platform Lift:** A type of mechanized lift that allows a person in a wheelchair to travel diagonally up or down a wide flight of stairs.

**Inclusion:** Broader than the concepts of welcoming and eliminating barriers for persons with disabilities. People with disabilities can experience inclusion only when they are provided opportunities to participate in meaningful ways in their church community.

**Induction Loop:** Also known as “audio loop.” An assistive listening device in which a wire is permanently installed around the perimeter of a room or building. This wire transmits an electromagnetic signal to individuals’ hearing aids or receivers.

**Infrared Technology:** An assistive listening device in which a transmitter beams infrared light to individuals’ receivers, usually with stethoscope-like receivers that dangle from the listeners’ ears. Only infrared receivers that have jacks can be used by people with hearing aids with a “T” switch, or by people with cochlear implants. An infrared device is unable to penetrate solid barriers, such as walls. It works best in a darkened room with light-colored walls. An infrared device does not work outdoors.

**Intellectual Disability:** The preferred term for what was historically called “mental retardation.” A disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before the age of 18. An extensive discussion of this term can be found in a publication by the AAIDD Terminology and Classification Committee.<sup>2</sup>

**Large Print:** Print that is set in a large type size for use by persons with low vision or limited vision. In the context of disability ministry, this term often refers to special format worship materials in 18-point type. For a comprehensive discussion of large print, see *Large Print Guidelines for Optimal Readability*: <http://www.aph.org/edresearch/lpguide.htm>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Human Ecologist*, “Fragrance control and health care facilities: An interview with Marlene Freeley, R.N., M.S., Director, Occupational Health Services, Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts,” Winter 2002, pp. 13-17.

<sup>2</sup> See “The Renaming of Mental Retardation: Understanding the Change to the Term Intellectual Disability,” by Robert Schalock, et al., *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), 2007, pp. 116-124.

**Learning Disabilities:** Defined in the federal law, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*: “...a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.”

**Lifts:** For purposes of this publication, refers to an inclined platform lift, a vertical platform lift, and an inclined stairway chairlift. (*See **Inclined Platform Lift, Vertical Platform Lift, and Inclined Stairway Chairlift.***)

**Limited-Use/Limited-Application Elevator (LU/LA):** A power passenger elevator in which the use and application is limited by size, capacity, speed, and rise, and may be used by the general public.

**Macular Degeneration:** The leading cause of vision loss in older people. It is a degenerative eye disease that causes damage to the central retina of the eye. Because macular degeneration affects central vision, people who are affected have problems reading, driving, and doing tasks that require clear central vision.

**Mental Illness:** Refers to a group of brain disorders that cause severe disturbances in thinking, feeling, and relating. There are differences in the degree of their severity, and many people prefer to use the terms “prolonged mental illness,” “major mental illness,” or “serious mental illness” in reference to the more severe disorders. There are many different types of mental illness, and specific categories are listed in the American Psychiatric Association’s standard handbook for diagnosing a mental disorder, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*.

**Mobility Disability:** (*See the last half of the definition for **Physical Disabilities.***)

**Mold Sensitivity:** A type of environmental disability. Refers to health problems some individuals experience when exposed to indoor mold growth.

**Multiple Sclerosis:** A neurological disease in which plaques form on different parts of the nervous system. This causes lack of muscular coordination, weakness, and speech disturbances.

**Oral Deaf:** Refers to people who are deaf and communicate through speech and speechreading rather than sign language.

**Partially Sighted:** Having a degree of vision loss that is not severe enough to be considered blindness, but which cannot be fixed by the use of corrective lenses.

**Pew Cuts:** Created by shortening the ends of several pews so that users of wheelchairs can sit within the main body of the congregation, not in a designated section, and not be forced to block the aisles. Pew cuts also are helpful for people who are deaf-blind, because they need to touch their sign language interpreter’s hands.

**Physical Disabilities:** A term including a wide range and variety of conditions. Covers spinal cord injuries, spina bifida, and other congenital malformations. It also includes amputations, arthritis, muscular dystrophy, and additional musculoskeletal conditions. Many physical disabilities can take the form of mobility

disabilities. An estimated 10 percent of people with mobility disabilities use wheelchairs, and others use such aids as walkers, braces, crutches, or canes.

**Quadriplegia:** Paralysis of both the upper and lower limbs; also called tetraplegia.

**Ramp:** A walking surface that has a running slope steeper than 1:20.

**Residual Hearing:** The degree of hearing that may remain when one has a hearing loss.

**Resolutions:** Actions or statements issued by denominations and other faith groups. Used in this publication to refer to official positions and policy statements of faith groups regarding accessibility, inclusion, and other disability issues.

**Retinitis Pigmentosa:** A hereditary disease of the eye characterized by atrophy of the retinal nerve layers resulting in gradual loss of peripheral vision. Because the central field of vision is clear while the periphery is blurred, this condition commonly is called “tunnel vision,” and ultimately leads to complete blindness. Retinitis pigmentosa also is found with deafness in a disease called “Usher’s Syndrome.” It is a leading cause of deaf-blindness.

**Sanctuary:** The main worship room or auditorium in a United Methodist church building. Includes the chancel, nave, and choir area.

**Side-Transfer Stall:** An accessible restroom stall in which enough space is allowed for a wheelchair to fit both in front of and beside the toilet, so that a person with a disability can maneuver the wheelchair into a position that will permit sidewise transfer onto the commode.

**Sign Language Interpreter:** A highly skilled certified professional who translates speech into sign language (usually American Sign Language, or ASL) or sign language into speech. Interpreters can be found by contacting the national association of sign language interpreters, the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). [www.rid.org/](http://www.rid.org/)

**Signed English:** A generic term that covers a variety of sign systems and manual codes of English. It can be used in conjunction with spoken English or by itself. Signed English ranges from Pidgin Signed English (PSE), which does not use spoken English and utilizes as many features as possible from American Sign Language; to a PSE that is closer to English and is signed simultaneously with spoken English; to manual codes of English that also use speech, such as Seeing Essential English (SEE I), Signing Exact English (SEE II), and Linguistics of Visual English (LOVE).

**Signing Exact English (SEE II):** A manual code for the deaf created to reproduce the English language.

**Simultaneous Communication:** Signing and speaking at the same time. Although two communication modes are existing simultaneously, two languages are not. When someone attempts to speak and sign simultaneously, the English delivery usually is fluent but the sign communication usually suffers.

**Speechreading:** The technical term for what most people know as lip reading. Speechreading can be difficult, as only about 40 percent of spoken English is produced visibly on the lips; 60 percent is formed inside the mouth and out of sight.

**Spiritual Supports:** The term refers to various relationships, opportunities, and types of assistance that allow people to participate in a faith community (or other spiritual activities and organizations), and to explore and express their faith in personally meaningful ways. Such supports might be instrumental in helping people to explore further this dimension of their lives, make connections with a community of faith, maintain their current level of involvement, or deepen and/or change their current involvement. These include supporting ways for a person to become a member in a congregation; supporting individual spiritual practices that reflect choice and tradition, such as prayer, religious holidays, grief rituals, and other life-cycle rituals, and other practices; supporting opportunities to be involved in other forms of spiritual activities, including nature, service, music, retreats or other activities, groups, or places that provide the chance to express spiritual interests.

**Supports:** In the disability ministry context, “supports,” in general, are kinds of formal and informal help that address the needs of persons with disabilities.

**Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS):** Also known as Relay Services. An operator service reached throughout the US by dialing 711. Over the telephone network, it connects two callers who have different abilities. The most common types of calls are TTY to Voice/Voice to TTY, and Voice Carry Over (VCO). Among other relay services are IP Relay (internet relay services), and Video Relay Services (using webcam or videophones).

**Traumatic Brain Injury:** Formerly called “head injury.” A type of neurological impairment most often caused by accidents.

**TTY:** A machine (originally a teletype machine) with which people who are deaf communicate over the telephone. The message is sent through the phone wire and converted into print so that a person who is deaf can read what is said and type a message back. TTY, as opposed to TDD, is the term preferred by culturally Deaf people for this type of machine. The use of TTYs is decreasing as people who are Deaf or hard of hearing are turning to technologies such as smart phones, cell phones with texting, and videophones, and increasingly using their computers for email, instant messages, and chats.

**Vertical Platform Lift:** A type of compact-mechanized lift which allows a person with or without a wheelchair to travel straight up and down between stairs or levels.

**VSA:** (Formerly Very Special Arts, and VSA arts.) VSA is an international, nonprofit organization founded in 1974 by Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith to create a society in which all people with disabilities learn through, participate in, and enjoy the arts. Founded on the belief that the arts belong to everyone and everyone deserves equal access, VSA showcases the accomplishments of artists with disabilities, and promotes increased access to the arts for people with disabilities. Americans participate in VSA programs through its nationwide network of affiliates (for example, VSA Indiana).

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