

SPECIAL NEEDS MINISTRY MISSION STATEMENT:



Our mission as a church is to enable every individual to fully participate in worship, teaching, fellowship and service through an inclusive approach which enables them to grow spiritually.

HOW ACCESSIBLE IS YOUR CHURCH?

CHECKLIST:

- Are your church services and activities accessible to every individual including those with disabilities and special needs whether mental, physical, social or emotional?
- Are you aware of the needs of adults and children with special needs and disabilities in your church?
- Do you meet the needs of adults and children with special needs and disabilities in your church?
- Are there features and functions of your church that may pose a hindrance for an individual with special needs or a disability?
- Do your clubs, groups, activities and services welcome and are open and available to individuals with special needs and disabilities?
- Do you offer any support to the families of individuals with special needs and disabilities?

People living with special needs and disabilities and their families are said to experience two main barriers to accessing services in their churches and local communities.

1. Attitudinal barriers
2. Environmental barriers

As a church, we need to ensure that there is 'access for all' and that these barriers, if they exist, are addressed as quickly as possible thereby making a way for the message of Salvation to reach as many people in our community as possible.

If you do not have the above in place it does not mean that you can't minister to people with special needs and disabilities. However having the facilities stated above will make it easier for these individuals to attend your church or group and enhance the experience that they have.

Churches need to ensure that they meet the requirement of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) when providing facilities for individuals with special needs and disabilities. The requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as it relates to churches under code of practice and key action points will be available in future packs along with useful sources of information and relevant organisations. Additionally training will be available during the course of the year to support this role effectively.

BUC Health Ministries
ASNA (Adventist Special Needs Association)
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In order to be accessible to and inclusive of individuals with special needs and disabilities, churches or groups need to consider the following:

Attitudinal issues -

- Do you focus on the limitations and inabilities of people with disabilities?
- Do you assume that disabled people have a 'problem' which needs to be 'cured' or 'fixed'? OR
- Do you assume that your church structures and attitudes need to be changed to enable disabled people to participate fully in the life of the church?

Environmental issues –

This list is by no means exhaustive but can be used as an initial discussion tool for your church board in addressing any environment barriers that may exist in your church.

- Access to all areas
- Ramps or lifts
- Handrails
- Seating for individuals who use wheelchairs
- A loop system
- Adequate PA systems
- Signed services
- Adequate lighting
- Printed materials available in large print, Braille, or other formats such as tapes or CD's
- Printed sermons
- Taped sermons
- An accessible toilet
- Reserved parking spaces
- Transport available for individuals with disabilities or special needs

