

Individuals with Disabilities Check List

At Disability Concerns (www.crcna.org/disability) our aim is to assist you, the church advocate, with your job in your church. You are so valuable! The following is a tool to help you in ministry with people with disabilities in your church. There are two ways to do this:

Best: You and an elder and/or the pastor sit down with the person with a disability (and his/her family), and talk through these questions. Listen carefully!

Second Best: Visit the person who has a disability (and his/her family). Listen carefully! Report back to the elders/pastor what you learned (with the permission of the person with a disability).

1. Name the Disability _____
2. Is there more than one disability? _____
3. How long has this person had the disability? _____
4. Is the condition stable, progressive, painful, unpredictable? _____
5. Is the disability visible? _____
6. Put yourself in this person's shoes. What type of effort do you think it takes for this person to come to church every Sunday? _____ This may help put things in perspective for you. If you are an able-bodied person, it can be difficult to grasp the effort it takes to do a simple thing, like attend church.
 - a. Would they need help with personal care, feeding?
 - b. Would they need a ride to church?
 - c. Can they get out of the vehicle and get to the doors easily?
 - d. Can they open the door independently?
 - e. Is the entire church accessible?
 - bathrooms
 - social areas
 - sanctuary, including the pulpit area?
 - are there visual and audio aids available?
 - are there cut-outs in the pews for wheelchair access?
 - when sitting in the cut-out area, can you still see the pulpit and/or screen?
7. Family
 - a. Do they need help with some respite care?
 - b. Would the family accept it, if it were offered?
 - c. Would respite volunteers require training in the care they would provide?
8. Church Life
 - a. What programs do you think this person could participate in?
 - b. Would the program be accessible for this person?
 - c. Does a program need to be created for this person?
9. Service...Everybody belongs, everybody serves
 - a. What opportunities are there for this individual to give back to the church/community?
 - b. What do you think they may be good at or would like to do?
 - c. What does your church need to do so that they can serve?

Some of the answers might raise your awareness about a deficiency in your church building or program. For example, perhaps this person could enter the church independently if the building had button-operated doors. Is this something that could be budgeted for in the future, or is there a government program with initiatives for building improvements? Act on it!