

ACCESSIBLE TRAVEL

A LIFESTYLE SPECIALIST COURSE





Table of Contents

| | |
|---|------------|
| About the Course | vii |
| How Should I Study This Course? | vii |
| How Should I Prepare for the Lifestyle Specialist Test? | ix |
| How Do I Earn My Lifestyle Specialist Designation? | x |
| Lesson 1: Introduction to the Disability Market | 1 |
| Scope of the Disability Market | 2 |
| Segments of the Disability Market | 3 |
| Sensory Impairment | 4 |
| Mobility Impairment | 6 |
| Cognitive, Learning, or Developmental Impairment | 7 |
| Medical Dependent | 9 |
| Disability Etiquette | 10 |
| General Guidelines | 11 |
| Hearing and Speech Impairments | 11 |
| Visual Impairments | 12 |
| Mobility Impairments | 13 |
| Service Animals | 13 |
| Lesson 2: Accessibility Awareness | 17 |
| Transportation and Lodging | 19 |
| Airports | 19 |
| Hotels | 20 |
| Cruise Ships | 23 |
| Destinations and Attractions | 25 |
| Orlando | 26 |
| Las Vegas | 30 |
| Lesson 3: Traveling with Special Needs | 33 |
| General Travel Characteristics | 35 |
| Airline Travel | 36 |
| General Guidelines | 36 |
| Traveling by Air with a Wheelchair | 39 |
| Traveling by Air with Other Special Needs | 40 |
| Cruises | 41 |
| Cruising with a Wheelchair | 41 |
| Cruising with Other Special Needs | 42 |
| Bus | 44 |
| Traveling by Bus with a Special Need | 44 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Rail | 45 |
| Traveling by Rail with a Special Need | 45 |
| Car Rental | 46 |
| Lodging | 46 |
| Tours | 47 |
| Lesson 4: Marketing and Sales Strategies | 49 |
| Your Marketing Plan | 50 |
| Where Are You Now? | 50 |
| Where Do You Want to Go? | 51 |
| How Will You Get There? | 53 |
| Finding Travelers with Disabilities | 53 |
| The Internet | 53 |
| Existing Clients | 55 |
| Associations | 57 |
| Rehabilitation Centers and Physical Therapists | 57 |
| Senior Centers | 57 |
| Other Avenues | 58 |
| Making Your Office Accessible | 59 |
| Understanding Motivations | 60 |
| Identifying Needs | 61 |
| Glossary | 68 |
| Resources | 70 |
| Specialty Suppliers | 70 |
| Web Sites | 72 |
| Magazines | 72 |
| Access Guides and Brochures | 73 |
| Books | 75 |
| Review Quiz | 77 |
| How Do I Earn My Lifestyle Specialist Designation? | 79 |
| Lifestyle Specialist Test Request Form | 81 |
| Experiential Checklist: Accessible Travel Specialist | 83 |
| Certified Lifestyle Specialist Certification Form | 87 |
| Lifestyle Specialist Course Evaluation | 89 |

**LESSON
1**

Introduction to the Disability Market

▶ LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- ✓ Describe the scope of the accessible travel market.
- ✓ Identify various types of disabilities and segments of the disability market.
- ✓ Interact appropriately with people who have disabilities.

BRAINSTORMING

Please answer these brainstorming questions **before** you read the lesson. At the end of the lesson, review your answers and make changes as needed based on what you have learned.

1. What is a disability? How do you know if someone has a disability?

2. What makes people with disabilities a potentially lucrative market for your travel business?

3. How do you feel when you approach people with disabilities? What can you do to create a comfortable environment when communicating with people who have disabilities?

Do you know what the largest minority market in the United States is? If you guessed people with disabilities, you would be right.

The ***Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*** was signed on July 26, 1990, by President George H. W. Bush. The ADA prohibits discrimination against and ensures equal opportunity to persons with disabilities in employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation. This landmark act has enabled people with disabilities to become more a part of the mainstream of American life, and travel is certainly included in that description.

In these challenging times, smart agents must look for new opportunities, and selling travel to people with disabilities is a lucrative niche. This lesson will examine the scope of the market, the wide range of segments that comprise the market, and some basic lessons in disability etiquette.

Scope of the Disability Market

What exactly is a disability? The U.S. Census and the ADA define a ***disability*** as a physical, sensory, or cognitive impairment that limits one's ability to participate in basic activities. Disabilities can be visible, such as someone who uses a wheelchair, walker, or service animal, or they can be invisible and much harder to spot. Invisible disabilities can be medical conditions such as diabetes or heart disease in which there are generally no outward signs that the person has "limited ability in basic life activities." While it may be difficult to see who falls into the disability market, research indicates that the market—and its travel buying power—is sizable.

In the United States, it is estimated that 54 to 60 million people—about 20 percent of the total population—have some type of disability. A 2003 study conducted by students of The Hospitality College of Johnson and Wales University in Miami researched the number of disabled parking permits issued in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, and the criteria for getting a permit. The results indicated a sizable number of permits issued in the United States. Florida alone had more than 2 million permits, representing more than 10 percent of the total population.

And then there's the "mature" market—people over 50, many of whom have some challenges but do not consider themselves "disabled." Approximately 10,000 Baby Boomers turn 50 each day, and it is estimated that the U.S. population will have more than 70 million people over the age of 50 by 2015. Demographically, the disability market is naturally increasing, and more importantly, those over 50 also control more than half of the national

buying power. The chances of becoming disabled increase with age; therefore, it is natural to conclude that this is a sleeping giant for any smart marketer, particularly marketers of travel.

At least 12 to 15 million people with disabilities currently travel regularly, and another 24 million would travel more often if their needs were better met. People with disabilities represent more than \$1 trillion in aggregate income, with a disposable income of more than \$200 billion (*Fortune Magazine*, 1998).

An informal study conducted in 1995 revealed that people with disabilities and their companions spent some \$81 billion on travel. Travelers with a disability rarely travel alone, so you can expand your client base by also selling to their travel companions. Forty-six percent of disabled travelers are married, and many travel in groups. In addition, at least one-half of all nondisabled adults have a family member or friend with a disability; that's about one in every three or four persons!

Clearly, there is large market of travelers and potential travelers who have disabilities. Let's examine the various segments of the disability market so you can get an even better feeling for its wide scope.

Segments of the Disability Market

Disabilities fall into four major categories and several subcategories:

1. Sensory impairment, including:
 - Hearing impairment
 - Vision impairment
 - Speech/language impairment
2. Mobility impairment
3. Cognitive/learning/developmental impairment
4. Medical dependent, including people who require medical assistance with:
 - Oxygen
 - Kidney disease/dialysis
 - Diabetes

While it may be impossible to know about every condition that may necessitate a special travel need, accessible travel specialists should be familiar with some of the more common conditions, such as those listed below. As you encounter other conditions, make a point to learn about them and add new terminology to your specialist vocabulary.

- **Autism:** developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction.
- **Cerebral Palsy:** loss of motor control with involuntary spasms caused by permanent brain damage at birth.
- **Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD):** an impairment of the lungs' ability to exchange air.
- **Cystic Fibrosis:** congenital disease causing difficulty in breathing, digesting, and cooling.
- **Fibromyalgia:** chronic widespread pain in muscles and soft tissues surrounding joints, accompanied by fatigue.
- **Multiple Sclerosis (MS):** disorder of the central nervous system affecting muscular coordination and vision and also characterized by other sensory problems and paralysis.
- **Muscular Dystrophy:** disorder characterized by degeneration of muscle fibers; most common form is Duchenne muscular dystrophy.
- **Paraplegia:** paralysis of the lower half of the body, usually due to spinal cord damage.
- **Postpolio Syndrome:** condition characterized by neuromuscular symptoms occurring years after an initial attack of polio.
- **Quadriplegia:** paralysis of both the arms and the legs, usually due to spinal cord injury.

Let's look at each of these categories to further understand their dynamics.

Sensory Impairment

Hearing Impairment: Most people are surprised to find that hearing impairment is the most common type of disability; in fact, it is the number-one disability worldwide. And with an aging population, this is the fastest-growing segment in the disability market. ***Hearing impairment*** ranges from a mild hearing loss to total deafness. Much of the time, hearing impairment is a hidden disability. Unless a person is using sign language,

uses a service animal, or has a visible hearing aid, you generally cannot tell if a person has a hearing impairment.

Here are some interesting statistics.

- Some 27 million Americans, or roughly one-half of the disability market, have some kind of hearing loss.
- More than 20 percent of 55-year-olds have some kind of hearing loss.
- More than one-third of 65-year-olds have a hearing loss; by age 80, this number increases to 90 percent.
- The hearing aid is the most widely used assistive device after the walking cane, but only 20 percent of those who need hearing aids actually use them.
- People who are lip-readers generally do not use sign language, though many people who use sign language do lip-read to a certain extent.
- Hearing loss can be conductive or sensory. Conductive hearing loss is often mild and can be temporary. Sensory hearing loss, which occurs when the cochlea does not work properly, runs from mild to severe, and the condition is usually permanent.

TIPS AND TOOLS

Advise travelers with hearing impairment to:

- Bring extra hearing aid batteries and a spare hearing aid in case of breakage.
- Keep pens and paper handy for communicating.

Vision Impairment: The second-largest segment of the disability market is people with ***vision impairment***, which ranges from extreme near-sightedness or far-sightedness to total vision loss.

Consider the following statistics:

- About 14 million Americans, or one-quarter of the disability market, have some kind of vision loss severe enough to affect their daily lives.
- Much vision loss occurs in adults.