



**THE OUTREACH CENTER**  
for Deafness and Blindness

Promoting Access for People Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, or Visually Impaired

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# **Communicators Tool Kit**

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# Introduction

The Outreach Center for Deafness and Blindness at OCALI is pleased to launch a new online module, Promoting Access for People Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, or Visually Impaired. Developed in collaboration with multiple school districts and agencies across Ohio, and funded by the Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children, this introductory training module is free and available to all everyone.

This module offers a collection of introductory information, evidence-based strategies, and scenarios at home, school, and in the community designed to build confidence and comfort for anyone communicating or connecting with people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired. The training is designed for anyone who touches the lives of those who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired in their personal and/or professional lives.

As a state agency, you serve Ohioans who could benefit from this training – your stakeholders and staff also can benefit. We are asking agencies to help spread the word with their stakeholders – including internal staff, local and county entities, partners, and families. The information from this training will benefit not only Ohioans, but also the agencies by offering a free resource to their stakeholders. Agencies whose stakeholders could benefit from the program include:

- Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities
- Ohio Department of Education
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities
- Ohio Department of Health
- Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services
- And more...

This communicators toolkit offers guidance and resources that will make it easy for you to incorporate information about the Promoting Access for People Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, or Visually Impaired online module into your current communication vehicles.

Visit [www.promotingaccess.org](http://www.promotingaccess.org) for more information, and to access the module today!



# How You Can Help

We need your help getting the word out about the Promoting Access for People Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, or Visually Impaired online module. The more times we can share this information with Ohioans, the more people will have access to this important information. This is a win-win for your agency—offering a free resource that can change lives increases the support you are offering your stakeholders.

We ask that you:

- **Consider completing the module yourself:**  
Completing the Promoting Access for People Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, or Visually Impaired training module will give you practical information and skills you can use to improve your interactions with people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired in your personal and professional lives.
- **Encourage agency staff to complete the module:**  
Using your internal communication channels, market the Promoting Access for People Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, or Visually Impaired online module to agency staff as a free resource that they can personally use to improve their personal and professional interactions with people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired.
- **Promote the module to stakeholders:**  
Using your external communication channels, market the Promoting Access for People Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, or Visually Impaired online module to stakeholders—county entities, associations, members, and the Ohioans your agency serves—as a free resource that people can personally use at work and in the community.
- **Connect with agency staff and stakeholders who work with Ohioans:**  
Talk to agency staff and stakeholders who have natural relationships and interactions with the Ohioans you serve and to discuss ways to promote the online module to Ohioans.
- **Encourage family and friends to complete the online module:**  
Let family and friends know about the training and encourage them to consider completing it.
- **Share information about your efforts:**  
Report back on your efforts—what did you do? What worked and didn't work? What other resources do you need? Your feedback will help us strengthen the training, and better support you in your efforts to help promote the training.



# Tools to Support You

You know your stakeholders best, and each agency has different communication vehicles. Use these resources as a guide, and customize them based on your audience.

## Key Messaging Framework

As you customize communications to your audiences, use the following key message framework as a guide.

## Why We Believe Access is Essential

- Information is everywhere we look—things like eye contact, body language, and environmental cues all contain information. And it's everywhere we listen, through conversations, alerts, technology, and entertainment.
- Information shapes our experiences and our experiences shape us. However, when vision or hearing is affected, part of the information is missing, and this can create hurdles.
- The number of people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired make up a small percentage of our society, meaning the incidence is low. This means that a person's only experience with a person who is deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired may be through what they've seen on TV, in the movies, or on social media—showing one person, in one place, at one time, which limits our perspective. The reality is that being deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired can look different in many ways.
- At the Outreach Center for Deafness and Blindness, we believe, increasing access to information connects us, it empowers us, and it promotes independence. When we promote independence, people are able to grow, learn, and live their best lives.

## How We Promote Access

- Access for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired begins with understanding needs and building relationships.
- With that information, supports can be put into place to provide equal opportunities for participation.
- It is important to take the time to understand and honor personal preferences for how we communicate, how we access information, how we choose to be identified, and how we navigate environments.
- Whether you're a family member, neighbor, coworker, an educator, bus driver, etc., there are a few simple things you can do to have an impact on a person's quality of life.

## What Is Being Offered

- To help parents, families, community members, and educators gain deeper insight into the factors that impact how a person receives information using sight, sound, and touch, the Outreach Center for Deafness and Blindness has created the Promoting Access for People Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, or Visually Impaired online module.
- This self-paced training module offers a collection of introductory information, evidence-based strategies, and scenarios at home, school, and in the community designed to build confidence and comfort for anyone communicating or connecting with people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired.
- The module contains an introduction and three chapters:

**Introduction:** Gain insight into factors that can impact how a person receives information using sight, sound, and touch. Discover simple and effective strategies to get you started with basic supports.

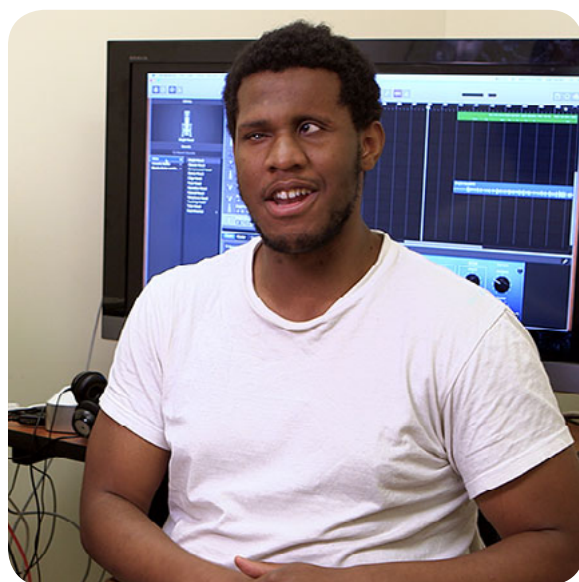
**Chapter 1: Establishing Relationships:** The relationships we form with one another are an important part of our social and emotional well-being. Understanding how we are similar and how we are different enriches our interactions and strengthens our bonds.

**Chapter 2: Understanding Supports:** Supports can come in many forms. Supports might be people, they might be ways our environment is structured, or they might be tools that are used for access.

**Chapter 3: Access in Action:** Observe these new strategies in real life scenarios at home, school, and in the community.



- In this module, you will hear perspectives from people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired, their families, community members, co-workers, educators, and others who touch their lives.
- Developed in collaboration with multiple school districts and agencies across Ohio, and funded by the Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children, this free, introductory training module is designed for independent or group learning. It includes reflective questions to spark your thinking or to share ideas.



# Promoting Access Fact Sheet

This fact sheet offers a general overview of the Promoting Access for People Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, or Visually Impaired online module. Share the fact sheet with stakeholders – copy and paste the text below, or print the PDF version.

## What is the Promoting Access for People Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, or Visually Impaired Online Module?

- The Outreach Center for Deafness and Blindness at OCALI has created a free, self-paced video training module that offers a collection of introductory information, evidence-based strategies, and scenarios at home, school, and in the community.
- Promoting Access for People Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, or Visually Impaired online module is designed to build confidence and comfort for anyone communicating or connecting with people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired.
- Users will hear perspectives from people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired, their families, community members, co-workers, educators, and others who touch their lives.
- Ideal for parents, families, community members, and educators, this training module provides deeper insight into the factors that impact how a person receives information using sight, sound, and touch.
- While users will have the option to earn professional development hours and a certificate, the program is designed so that every user can gain knowledge and implement the skills learned immediately.

## Why is it Needed?

- Information is everywhere we look—things like eye contact, body language, and environmental cues all contain information. And it's everywhere we listen, through conversations, alerts, technology, and entertainment.
- Information shapes our experiences and our experiences shape us. However, when vision or hearing is affected, part of the information is missing, and this can create hurdles.
- The number of people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired make up a small percentage of our society, meaning the incidence is low.
- This means that a person's only experience with a person who is deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired may be through what they've seen on TV, in the movies, or on social media—showing one person, in one place, at one time, which limits our perspective.

## How Was it Created?

- The Promoting Access for People Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, or Visually Impaired online module was a collaborative effort between multiple school districts and agencies across Ohio to put information into the hands of more people with the goal of making life better for the individuals, parents, and families we serve together.
- Funding for this training module was provided by the Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children.

# Videos

Below are links to videos that may be helpful in your communication efforts. Include links to the videos in your communication materials, share them during meetings and events, and share on social media. Each video offers audio description and closed captioning viewing options.



## Module Overview

<https://deafandblindoutreach.org/promoting-access-trailer>

This video talks about the importance of access and offers viewers a glimpse into how the topic is addressed in the module. (2:37 minutes)



## Module Features

<https://deafandblindoutreach.org/promoting-access-overview>

In this video, the host walks viewers through different features of the module. (1:28 minutes)



# Drop-In Article

Use the article below in your organization's newsletters or on your website.

## Expanded Version

### Improving Access for a Better Quality of Life: New Online Module on Promoting Access for People Who Are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind or Visually Impaired

Every day—multiple times a day—we receive information. Whether it's through conversations, alerts, technology, or entertainment, information is everywhere we look. And, information shapes our experiences and our experiences shape us.

"People may not realize it, but eye contact, body language, and other environmental cues all contain information," explains Christine Croyle, Program Director for the [Outreach Center for Deafness and Blindness](#) at OCALI. "When a person's vision or hearing is affected, part of the information is missing."

Guided by the belief that increasing access to information promotes independence, the Outreach Center for Deafness and Blindness has created a new online module, [Promoting Access for People Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, or Visually Impaired](#). To gain deeper insight into the factors that impact how a person receives information using sight, sound, and touch, the Center worked in collaboration with school districts and agencies across the state. This free, self-paced online module offers a collection of evidence-based strategies and scenarios at home, school, and in the community that can be used today.

Because the number of people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired is a small percentage of society, a person's only experience may be through what they've seen on TV, in the movies, or on social media—showing one person, in one place, at one time, which limits perspective. The reality is that being deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired can look different in many ways.

Featuring practical, real-world examples in a variety of settings was an important goal for the development of this module. This online module can be used for individual or group-based professional learning. If you're in a school, community organization, business, or just interested in learning more on your own, this module is flexible and includes reflective questions to spark your thinking or to share ideas. Users can also earn a certificate of completion for 2.5 hours that can go toward professional development.

"Life is about connection and we do not want anyone to miss the opportunity to connect," shares Shawn Henry, OCALI's Executive Director. "This module is designed to help people gain confidence when connecting and communicating with people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired anytime and anywhere." To learn more and explore the free online module, visit <http://promotingaccess.org>.

## Abbreviated Version

### Improving Access for a Better Quality of Life: New Online Module on Promoting Access for People Who Are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind or Visually Impaired

Information is everywhere we look—things like eye contact, body language, and environmental cues all contain information. And it's everywhere we listen, through conversations, alerts, technology, and entertainment. Information shapes our experiences and our experiences shape us. However, when vision or hearing is affected, part of the information is missing, and this can create hurdles.

To help parents, families, community members, and educators gain deeper insight into the factors that impact how a person receives information using sight, sound, and touch, the [Outreach Center for Deafness and Blindness](#) at OCALI has created the [Promoting Access for People Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, or Visually Impaired online module](#).

This free, self-paced online module offers a collection of introductory information, evidence-based strategies, and scenarios at home, school, and in the community designed to build confidence and comfort for anyone communicating or connecting with people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired. This online module can be used for individual or group-based professional learning and users can also earn a certificate of completion for 2.5 hours that can go toward professional development.

To learn more and explore the free online module, visit <http://promotingaccess.org>.

# Social Media Posts

Below are sample Facebook and Twitter posts for your agency's social media channels. Feel free to tweak the posts – use the hashtags #InspiringChange and #PromotingAccess.

## Facebook

Check out this FREE online module on Promoting Access for People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, or Visually Impaired from The Outreach Center at OCALI. The module offers introductory info, evidence-based strategies, and scenarios for home, school, and community to support independence. Visit [promotingaccess.org](https://promotingaccess.org) to learn more! #InspiringChange #PromotingAccess

Need continuing credit? Check out the FREE #PromotingAccess online module from The Outreach Center for Deafness and Blindness at OCALI! This self-paced online training has been designed to help you AND families/community members build confidence and comfort in connecting with people who are #Deaf, #HardOfHearing, #Blind, or #VisuallyImpaired. Learn more at: [promotingaccess.org](https://promotingaccess.org). #InspiringChange #PromotingAccess

Being an ally means being part of the change! Learn how you can support independence and access for everyone with a FREE online module on Promoting Access for People who are #Deaf, #HardOfHearing, #Blind, or #VisuallyImpaired. from The Outreach Center at OCALI. Learn more at: [promotingaccess.org](https://promotingaccess.org). #InspiringChange #PromotingAccess

Sharing our stories is one of the best ways to learn from one another. Check out [promotingaccess.org](https://promotingaccess.org) to hear how people are working together to promote access for people who are #Deaf, #HardOfHearing, #Blind, or #VisuallyImpaired where they live and work. #InspiringChange #PromotingAccess

## Twitter/Instagram

Spread the word! #PromotingAccess is easy! With @OCALI\_Outreach's FREE online you can promote access in your home, school, and community. #InspiringChange [promotingaccess.org](https://promotingaccess.org)

Did you know @OCALI\_Outreach's #PromotingAccess online module is FREE...and you can earn credit? Build confidence in supporting and interacting with people who are #Deaf, #HardOfHearing, #Blind, or #VisuallyImpaired. Learn more at [promotingaccess.org](https://promotingaccess.org)! #InspiringChange

You know that #RepresentationMatters, but not sure where to start? @OCALI\_Outreach's latest FREE online resource, #PromotingAccess for people who are #Deaf, #HardOfHearing, #Blind, or #VisuallyImpaired, is perfect for you! Get started today at [promotingaccess.org](https://promotingaccess.org)! #DeafAwareness #BlindAwareness #DisabilityAwareness

FACT or FICTION: "People who can't see have a better sense of hearing." Become a Myth Buster with @OCALI\_Outreach's #PromotingAccess for people who are #Deaf, #HardOfHearing, #Blind, or #VisuallyImpaired. Our FREE online module is available now at [promotingaccess.org](https://promotingaccess.org)!

FACT or FICTION: "All Deaf people use one sign language." Become a Myth Buster with @OCALI\_Outreach's #PromotingAccess for people who are #Deaf, #HardOfHearing, #Blind, or #VisuallyImpaired. Our FREE online module is available now at [promotingaccess.org](https://promotingaccess.org)!





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