

CASE STUDY: YMCA Camp Manyung.

A journey towards Accessible Communication Accreditation

Introduction

The team at YMCA Camp Manyung in Victoria have been learning about the importance of accessible communications as key to good customer service, through undertaking the process of Accessible Communication Accreditation with SCOPE Australia.

The purpose of seeking Accreditation was for the staff team to learn ways of improving communications, to ensure people visiting camp with communication difficulties or with low English literacy, could give and receive information and feel welcome and included.

The Process

Accessible Communication Accreditation is a program offered by SCOPE Australia, that involves a dedicated access consultant working with the business to provide training and mentoring across a range of communication areas before being assessed and award the accreditation. Outlined below are a number of topics covered in the process.

1. Wayfinding

The first step in the process was learning about the importance of Wayfinding systems, that enables people to navigate from one place to another in new surroundings, like a camp. It was helpful to learn about Wayfinding firsthand from the Access Consultant who arrived at the camp property for her first visit and with fresh eyes, was able to provide feedback on how the positioning of the camps existing signage, did not enhance the user experience. A Wayfinding Audit Tool was then made available, to conduct a self-assessment to develop a range of wayfinding solutions to implement to create a more accessible and inclusive built environment.

2. Signage upgrade:

The camps existing signage was very outdated, inconsistent and long overdue for an upgrade. Through the Wayfinding and signage audit, new signage was designed that considered accessible font, size, graphics and introduction of imagery in addition to words. Draft graphic designs of the signs were created and sent to Scope for review and endorsement, prior to being sent to the manufacturer for final production.

3. Staff Training:

Key Word Sign:

One day 'key word sign' training session was delivered by SCOPE. Approximately 18 staff attended the training from across program, administration and catering teams. The course was an entry level course designed to give staff the confidence to use Key Word sign in everyday life.

Communication Access Training:

The Scope Access Consultant and mentor delivered general training for the staff team to introduce the concepts of Communication Access and its importance in the delivery of effective customer service. This training covered topics such as telephone communications,

communicating effectively with people with heavy accents, importance of consistent signage, use of camp information notice boards and more.

Easy English Course:

This one-day training course, delivered by SCOPE was undertaken by two members of the camps Administration team. This course provided a basic information about how to develop effective written communication to support people with communication difficulties, whilst ensuring key messages are conveyed.

4. Documentation updates:

Following the Easy English Course, a range of key documents for camp participants were updated and aligned with the Easy English guidelines. This training helped staff to learn ways to minimize waffle and become more succinct in written communications.

5. Communication Resources:

A range of communications tools were developed that could be used at various engagement points at the camp i.e. at the camp reception and at some activity sites.

6. Policy and Procedures update:

For accessible communication to be sustainable in the long term, it was important to embed accessible communication knowledge within the Camp operating procedures and inductions for new staff.

7. Accessible Communication Audit:

The final step in the process was the site visit by members of SCOPE audit team to assess the accessible communication strategies employed by the camp. The assessment in the area of Administration involved a National Relay Service phone assessment, a direct phone assessment and a face to face assessment.

Assessment in the area of challenge ropes course involved face to face assessment of interactions, use of communication aides, and responsiveness in using of the assessor's method of communication.

The accreditation is reviewed on a 3-yearly cycle.

Estimated Costs

	Task	Time Frame	Cost
Step 1	Site based tour with SCOPE Access Consultant and mentor	1 day	Free
Step 2	Signage and Wayfinding audit using audit tools	1 day	Free
Step 3	Graphic design process for accessible Signage & production of signage	3 months	\$8,000
Step 4	Introduction to Communication Access process by SCOPE Access Consultant	2hrs	Free
Step 5	Specialised Training		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Word Sign • Using Easy English 	1x day 1x day	\$1500 (18pax) \$750 (2pax)
Step 6	Whole staff team Training in Communication Access by SCOPE Access Consultant	2hrs	Free
Step 7	Review and modification of key Documents for customers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update booking information – align with Easy English Guidelines 	2-3 weeks	Internal
Step 8	Development of Communication Aides <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Boards • Communication Lanyards 	3-4 weeks	Internal
Step 9	Undertake Audit visit by SCOPE	1 day	tbc

Acknowledgments

Thank you to YMCA Camp Manyung team members, Jim Boyle, Renee Gascoigne, Jack Dunstan and Megan Willis for sharing their experiences of working through the process of achieving Scope's Accessible Communication Accreditation at Camp Manyung.

Thank you to Scope Access Consultant and mentor Zita Canning for her patience and for providing guidance and training at every step along the journey.