OT at SEPTA

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# Americans with Disabilities Act and Public Transportation

* Under Title II, subtitle a (public entities and public transportation), law passed in 1990
* Includes National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak), along with all other commuter agencies
* Requires provision of Paratransit for all agencies providing fixed-route services as a safety net
* Minimum guidelines for accessibility on vehicles include-
  + -platform barriers for wheelchair safety
  + -sturdy handrails
  + -bridge plates
  + -wheelchair lifts
  + -priority seating for disabled people
  + -accessible doorways
  + -adequate lighting

# SEPTA Accessibility overview

* 28 years after ADA, SEPTA has invested $2 billion in improvements in system accessibility.
* This means accessible vehicles, services and facilities – supported with training, technology and organizational innovation.
* THE GOAL:
  + to enable people with disabilities to travel independently on regular public transportation
  + To promote the use of accessible fixed-route public transit, determining eligibility for SEPTA’s program serving people with disabilities, and older adults; to enforce regulatory standards, to monitor and report system productivity, and to ensure overall customer satisfaction.

# Accessible Vehicles

* Buses
  + 100% of fixed-route buses are handicap accessible
  + 100% automated Stop Announcement/Route ID
* Since 2015: low-floor articulated buses; every bus is equipped with a wheelchair lift or ramp, and bus must be lowered upon request
* Trackless Trolleys/Historic trolley cars
* Norristown High Speed Line
* Subway cars
* Commuter rail cars
* Silverliner V rail fleet
* Internal/External stop announcements, Digital destination signs, automatic bridge plates

# Reduced Fare & Senior Cards

* Seniors ages 65+ can ride SEPTA fixed-route services for free
* Persons with disabilities that functionally impair their ability to use public transportation qualify for reduced fare.
  + ½ fare for riders under 65 with disabilities
* Application to be filled out by a medical professional

# Occupational Therapist Role

* Travel training to Philadelphia area middle school and high school students with varying diagnosis including Intellectual Disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorder.
* Perform paratransit eligibility functional assessments in the ATC.
* Participate in outreach events (transition fairs, senior centers, etc)
* Teach train the trainer classes for teachers and other professionals.
* Travel training and classes in the ATC using the available mock subway platform, bridge plate, and bus.
* Support research with Temple

# Why OT benefits SEPTA

* Training people to take the bus instead of CCT can save about a million a year
* Staff OT’s completing Para transit assessments keeps costs down saving about half a million a year.
* OTs help to meet SEPTAs ongoing commitment to help people access the community.
* Having an OT program that helps train future OTs will lead to more individuals gaining the ability to travel independently>>more paying customers for SEPTA.
* Quarterly presentations and metrics keep upper management informed of how OT can benefit a large organization like SEPTA. We are constantly advocating for OT and use business analytics to help.

# What we do when we train

* Assess safety and cognitive abilities
* Pre-trip lesson using A Chance to Ride and Easter Seals curriculum
* Go on initial, simple trip
* Write individualized goals for each student.
* Goals can address-compensatory strategies for trip planning, safety awareness, advocacy with drivers, emergency planning.

# Work with area OT schools

* Supervise Level I + II Occupational Therapy graduate students from area universities.
* Support research, including doctoral-level capstone projects.
* Currently supporting and recruiting participants for a Temple research study:
* Recruiting individuals with diagnosis of autism age 18+ researching the impact of travel training on use of public transportation to access the community.
* Participants have to possibility of being compensated up to $74 for participation.
* If interested in the Temple study, or for questions, please contact Amber Davidson at tug57523@temple.edu or (215) 272-3080