

Jenna Flemming

Accessibility Council Brief Reflection

I found this assignment extremely helpful to me in countless ways. I am still shocked about how successful my project became. When I originally started out, my original plan was to do research on accessibility laws and sidewalk regulations as per the new Accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities Act (AODA), and do a small petition around my community. Clearly, it got a lot bigger than I envisioned.

The major difference would be the presentation I did for the town of Caledon's Accessibility and Advisory Committee on November 23rd, 2017. I owe a big thank you to the whole Committee for making that happen. Having that experience helped improve not only my project, but also tremendously increased my presentation skills. I originally hated public speaking, and I still do; however, I now feel I have a better skill set on how to handle them.

I learned how to be more articulate in front of a crowd; to pace myself, plan out what I am going to say beforehand, and to be mindful of eliminating extra words such as uh and um, making the presentation sound more professional. I also gained knowledge on how to do a presentation to people outside of school, which was surprisingly different. Unlike in classes, the people you are presenting to are not going to know what you are talking about, it is brand new information for them; you have to break it down better. Furthermore, the stakes for presenting are higher; there is more than just your mark on the line, you want people to care about what you are saying and for them to believe there is an issue here and it needs to change; and the audience can help you achieve that change. Another way the presentation helped me was, due to the huge success of it, it gave me a huge boost of confidence moving forward with other presentations and in the field when talking in front of groups. The Accessibility and Advisory Committee enjoyed the presentation so much they would like to see it again, at the Town of Caledon Council so the general public can hear the safety issues in Alton. These skills will help me when I delegate again.

The project also helped my researching skills because I put in a lot of work preparing the information going into it. I did research on the laws and regulation standards surrounding accessibility of sidewalks which were hard to find, I finally located them after two hours of searching, finding them, under exterior pathways of travel" instead of sidewalks. The written laws themselves were hard to understand and follow, but I was able to understand that Alton was not only inaccessible from people's point of view but also dangerous from a legal stand point. I am now better informed of my rights.

When completing the petition I was happy to hear others shared my frustrations over the sidewalks, which many other seniors and others with disabilities struggle with as well. I am happy I have done this. Overall, I have learned important skills and knowledge I will take in the field.