

Public Transportation Accessibility for People with Cognitive Disabilities and the Naim Kadima (Moving Forward) Project

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Key Words: Accessibility in public transportation, mobility in the community, mobility in public transportation, people with cognitive disabilities, Naim Kadima (Moving Forward) Project

Acknowledgements: The academic staff of the Department of Occupational Therapy in the University of Haifa, especially **Dr. Naomi Schreuer** for assistance in building a practical model for teaching mobility in public transportation. **Naama Nahir Mazor**, MA, OT, Service Accessibility Supervisor, Equal Opportunity Rights of People with Disabilities' Commission, Ministry of Justice.

Independent mobility is essential for enabling participation in various occupations throughout the different stages of one's life. Most people with cognitive disabilities are unable to drive, thus their reliance on public transportation system is imperative to their involvement in society. Today the use of public transportation can be a complicated and even tortuous task. People with intellectual developmental disability or those who fall within the autistic spectrum disorder may have difficulties learning this task and

need mediation to match their needs. Those with acquired cognitive deficits, psychiatric patients or the elderly who have lost their ability to drive due to mild cognitive impairment, might need relevant mediation to adjust and cope with public transportation. People with cognitive difficulties have to overcome many diverse obstacles to use public transportation. While common accessibility adjustments include mainly modifications to the environment for physically or sensory disabled people, adaptations are rarely made for people with mental or intellectual deficits. The international literature and a current survey among Israeli occupational therapists call for an intervention model to facilitate therapists dealing with this issue. Naim Kadima (the Moving Forward Project) presents a unique, practical tool: a client centered, structured, graduated program designed to facilitate the use of public transportation for people with cognitive disabilities, including principles, plans, schedules, implementations and intervention tools. The Naim Kadima Project supports the ability of community dwelling people with cognitive disabilities to make use of public transportation. The project provides guidance, consultation and tools for therapists and teachers and trains people with disabilities.