

Atlas Assistance Dogs®
Atlas Trainer Academy Course Syllabi
Medical Specialties

Last updated October 14, 2023

Service Dog Foundations Summary2

Disability Skills Training – Medical Specialties3

Service Dog Foundations Summary

We have included key sections and summary material from our Service Dog Foundation Course as its own module along with this course. This is in addition to what is included in the syllabus below to ensure necessary pre-requisite information is available.

S4C – Disability Skills Training – Medical

Course Description

This course is text and video based. It covers detailed information regarding a variety of cues which are used to mitigate disabilities or symptoms related to various medical conditions.

The course is accompanied by our Medical Disability Skills Manual which provides details on how to introduce and refine each skill as well as tips, tricks, and important notes. **Please download this manual and read it as you go through the course. The manual will stand on its own as a helpful reference and is intended to be read in parallel as you go through the course.**

We present each skill with a definition, purpose, prerequisite, and applications/possible uses with clients. It is then followed by a video demonstration of use and/or teaching of skills.

Please note: The words “trainer,” “handler,” and “client” are generally used interchangeably. This is the person who is giving the dog the cue. There are cases where the handler is someone other than the client, and when that is relevant it is called out.

Course Objectives

This course will:

- Introduce a range of common skills and tasks that service dogs are taught to mitigate disabilities
- Discuss and demonstrate how these skills and tasks are applied for different medical conditions
- Teach trainers how to train assistance dogs for these common skills and tasks
- Teach trainers how to help clients train their assistance dogs for these skills and tasks

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and explain the common assistance dog skills and tasks used to mitigate various medical conditions
- Introduce, practice, and refine tasks aimed to mitigate medical disabilities. Such tasks include: **Visit, Lap, Prop, Toes, Go To [Person], Go Alert [Person], Get Help, Go Home, Hearing Alerts, Time of Day/Medicine Alerts, Body State Alerts, Medical Response, and Seizure Response**
- Describe and demonstrate how to support and instruct clients as they train their dogs for medical tasks

Outline

- Skills used to mitigate medical-related symptoms or disabilities
- Explanation and possible applications
- Demonstration through instructional videos

Course Expectations

Please allow multiple sessions of a couple of hours at a time to go through the course and review the references that will be provided. There are many details in the course materials and the accompanying manual, so please take time to digest them. If the topic is less familiar to you, you may need more time to view references or research the area in further depth.

You will be asked to complete a very brief survey after you complete the course to give us your feedback.

This course includes two video/written assignments. In each, the videos should show you working with a client to teach them two of the behaviors covered in this course, so as you are going through the course be thinking about which skills you might want to teach.

For the first assignment you may choose from: Light or Switch, Tug, Pull, Push/Close It

For the second you may choose from: Brace, Step, Mobility Retrieval Multi-part Skill, Laser Retrieval

Along with the videos, a detailed training plan is required. The training plans should cover the refining stages for each behavior. The videos should be approximately two to four minutes in length. It will likely take you one or more sessions with a client to achieve the desired results in the video. More detailed guidelines for the assignment can be found at the end of this course.

Assessments exist throughout the course for you to test your understanding. They are a mix of mix of multiple choice, fill in the blanks, true false, and long answer questions. A grade of 80% or above is required to pass the test. Students have the opportunity to discuss their answers with Atlas faculty as well as retake tests as needed.