

Disability Etiquette

**Satellite Conference and Live Webcast
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Faculty

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Disability Statistics

- **54 million Americans with disabilities**
 - **50% deaf or hard of hearing**
 - **25% mental disabilities**
 - **2% wheelchair users**
 - **Aging population**
 - **30% of families with one or more member with a disability**

Reasons for Effective Interaction

- **Makes good business sense**
- **Employees, clients, and customers with disabilities are more comfortable**
- **Huge source of new clients, customers, and employees**
- **Employees work more productively**
- **Basic human courtesy**

The Basics

- **Offer to help before assisting**
- **Be sensitive about physical contact**
- **Think before you speak**
- **Respond graciously to requests for help**
- **Don't make assumptions**
- **Use common sense!**

The Basics

- **Extend basic courtesies to ALL people**
- **Relax**

Language Tips

- For written materials and conversation
- Put people first
- Using the word “handicapped”
- Use common expressions
- Remember that people with disabilities are human

Mobility Impairments

- Wide range of abilities
- Mobility devices are part of personal space
- Ramps and accessible doors clear
- Reach ranges

Mobility Impairments

- Use signs to indicate accessible route and bathrooms
- Eye level
- Use of arms
- Fall-proof facilities
- Benches or seats

Blindness / Visual Impairments

- Impairments that are not obvious
- ID yourself before interacting
- Service animals
- If new to business, offer tour of the facility
- Offer to read written materials

Blindness

- Large print
- Good lighting
- Offer arm/don't grab theirs
- If you leave, let the person know
- Let regular customers or clients know about physical changes to the facilities

Deaf / Hard-of-Hearing

- Sign language
- Use of qualified interpreters
- Interact with the person, not his / her interpreter
- Get the person's attention

Deaf / Hard-of-Hearing

- **Speak clearly and don't cover your mouth**
- **Face the person when speaking**
- **Don't shout!**

TTYs and Relay Services

- **Learn to recognize incoming TTY calls**
- **Identify yourself when you answer**
- **TTY calls can take longer than standard calls**
- **Don't be nervous**
 - **It's just a phone!**

Speech Impairments

- **Different causes for impairments**
- **Give the person your full attention**
- **It's OK to ask them to write it down!**
- **Ask person to repeat if necessary**
- **Rephrase the person's comments to make sure you got their point**
- **Don't tease or laugh**

Hidden Disabilities

- **Not all disabilities are apparent**
- **Behaviors may seem strange, but are related to disabilities**
- **Even if hidden, the disability is real**
- **Respect the person's needs and requests when possible**

Allergies and Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

- **Avoid cleaning while people are in your facility**
- **Request employees limit perfume use**
- **Maintain good ventilation**

Allergies and Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

- **Limit exposure to second-hand smoke**
- **Be aware that any chemical can cause reaction**

Cognitive Disabilities

- **Developmental disabilities**
- **Learning disabilities**
- **Traumatic brain injuries**
- **Treat each as an individual**
- **Be patient**
- **Can vary dramatically**

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

- **Compile list of people with disabilities who use your facility and update periodically**
- **Interview each person and get feedback on best practices in case of emergency**

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

- **Develop plan for individuals who may visit**
- **Practice**
- **Keep plans up-to-date**

Accessible Websites and Email

- **Websites are an extension of your organization**
- **More individuals with disabilities using the Internet = more of an audience for your organization**
- **Educate web designers**
- **Invite individuals with disabilities to audit sites**