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