



Effective Response To People With Disabilities

Presented By
LIFE

“Disability is a natural part of the human experience that does not diminish the right of individuals with developmental disabilities to enjoy the opportunity to live independently, enjoy self-determination, make choices, contribute to society, and experience full integration and inclusion in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of American society.”
The U.S. Developmental Disabilities and Bill of Rights Act

Americans with Disabilities Act

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 provides comprehensive civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities in the areas of employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications

Title II of the ADA

- Title II of the ADA prohibits discrimination against *qualified individuals with disabilities* on the basis of disability in all programs, activities, and services of public entities
- Public entities include state and local governments and their departments and agencies
- Title II applies to all activities, services and programs of a public entity

Who Is Considered An Individual With A Disability?

1. A person with a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities
2. A person that has a record of an impairment
3. Or a person that is regarded as having an impairment

What are Major Life Activities

- Some examples of major life activities might include:
 - Walking
 - Seeing
 - Breathing
 - Learning
 - Communicating
 - Caring for oneself

Hidden Disabilities

- The term “Hidden Disability” is a catch-all phrase that simply means that a person’s impairment or condition is not obvious or visible
- It may be used to describe people with visual impairments, dexterity difficulties, or people who are deaf or hard of hearing

Hidden Disabilities

- It is often used in relation to people who have disabling medical conditions such as
 - HIV and AIDS
 - Diabetes
 - Heart, liver or kidney problems
 - Epilepsy

Speech Disabilities

- Give the person your full attention
- Don’t interrupt or try to finish sentences

Speech Disabilities

- If you don’t understand, don’t pretend you do
 - Ask him to repeat or re-state what you think you heard
 - If, after trying, you cannot understand the person suggest another way of communicating, such as writing notes

Cognitive Disabilities

- People with cognitive disabilities may learn slowly, and/or have a hard time applying what they have learned
- Tell them what is going to happen and how long it will take
- If removed from loved ones, tell them when they will be able to return or contact them

Cognitive Disabilities

- **Speak in clear sentences using simple words and concrete concepts**
You may be able to help facilitate understanding by breaking complex ideas into smaller parts
- **Do not talk down or use baby talk**
- **Keep in mind that the person is an adult should be treated appropriately in all situations, including decision making**

Epilepsy

- **Epilepsy is a neurological condition that can cause seizure when the electrical system of the brain malfunctions**
- **The seizure may be convulsive or it may put the person in what appears to be a trance**
- **During some types of seizures the person may walk or make other movements while he or she is, in effect, unconscious**

Epilepsy

- **If a person has a seizure you cannot do anything to stop it**
 - Offer as much protection as you can and wait for the seizure to end
- **A person coming out of a seizure may feel disoriented, or even embarrassed**
 - Be respectful and ensure that he or she has time and privacy to collect him/herself

Epilepsy

- **Be aware that loud noises and flashing lights, such as emergency lights, can trigger a seizure for some people**

Psychiatric Disability

- **Is an example of a hidden disability**
- **This includes conditions like bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety and many others**



Psychiatric Disabilities

- **Psychiatric disabilities may interfere with a person's ability to think, feel, relate to others, and/or cope with the stresses of daily life**
- **Two of the foremost obstacles that people with psychiatric disabilities face are stereotyping and the attitudes that many people have about them**

Psychiatric Disabilities

- Stress can have an impact of the person's ability to function, so try to keep it at a minimum
- If the person is having a crisis, try to stay calm and be supportive. You may want to try to find out if there is a support person that can be contacted

Psychiatric Disabilities

- Only when truly appropriate, should you ask if there is medication that he or she needs to take

Traumatic Brain Injury

- It is the most frequent cause of disability and death among children and adolescents in the United States
- About 30,000 children have permanent disabilities as a result of brain injury annually

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

- A person with a TBI may have loss of mobility or muscle control
- They may have poor social skills with behaviors such as inappropriate comments, inability to understand social cues, and frustration at inability to understand and/or be understood

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

- TBI can can cause poor short-term memory and/or directional orientation
 - The person may need written directions or need to be accompanied
- The person may have trouble concentrating or organizing his or her thoughts

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

- They may stumble on the words or repeat themselves
- Be patient, and if possible, suggest speaking in a place with fewer distractions

Cerebral Palsy

- Cerebral means having to do with the brain
- Palsy means a weakness or problem in the way a person moves or positions their body
- A person with Cerebral Palsy may use a wheelchair or walk with crutches or braces

Cerebral Palsy

- The person's speech may be affected or they may not be able to speak
- During an emergency, a person with cerebral palsy may have spasms
 - This can cause them to not be able to move or hold something
 - It may also effect their speech more than usual

Stroke

- A person that has had a stroke may not be able to speak clearly or speak at all
- The stroke usually paralyzes one side of the body
- He/She may be able to walk, but will be slower and not as surefooted
- Don't grab or run with the person

Stroke

- Let the person try to speak and try not to interrupt
- No two people that have a stroke are alike with their abilities

Learning Disability

- Information is primary brought into the brain through the eyes and ears
- An individual might have difficulty in one or both areas
- Visual (eyes) – may not be able to distinguish shapes or may reverse numbers and/or letters
- Auditory (ears) – may have difficulty distinguishing sounds

Learning Disability

- Learning Disabilities are neurologically based processing problems that can interfere with learning basic skills such as reading, writing and math
- They can also interfere with higher level skills such as organization, time planning and abstract reasoning

Learning Disability

- No two people with a learning disability will be alike
- Use different techniques to communicate and reason with the person who has a learning disability
- You will want to try talking calmly
- Do not speak loud or with an angry voice

Learning Disability

- Simple words and movements and allow them time to speak at their pace, if possible
- Let the person know what to expect, where he/she will go or what he/she will be doing next
- They may want a familiar face or person to go with them

Not for Children

- Children don't grow out of ADD/ADHD
- The symptoms usually get worse as they grow into adulthood
- Adults with ADD/ADHD struggle with self regulation
- This includes regulating their attention, their impulse in talking and action and regulating their emotions

Not for Children

- A person with ADD/ADHD is more likely to have another type of psychiatric or learning disorder

People with Mobility Impairments

- Understand that people who use wheelchairs have different disabilities and different abilities. Don't make assumptions about the person's abilities
- Treat wheelchairs as an extension of the person. If you wouldn't normally lean on the person, don't lean on their chair

People with Mobility Impairments

- Ask before giving assistance. Try to avoid putting pressure on his/her arms, legs, or chests. It may cause spasms, pain or interfere with breathing
- Don't block ramps or access aisles
- If possible grab a chair and sit while you are speaking

People with Mobility Impairments

- Never move canes or crutches
- When giving directions to a person who uses a wheelchair consider distance, weather conditions and physical obstacles such as stairs, curbs and steep hills
- Don't forget that some mobility related disabilities are "hidden disabilities"

Spina Bifida

- Is not one condition
- It is a multitude of problems that affect the mind, body and spirit
 - No 2 cases are alike
- Most likely allergic to latex
 - The cause is unknown

Spina Bifida

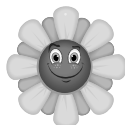
- The theory is because of early intense and constant exposure to rubber products through surgeries, examinations and bladder/bowel programs
- Spina Bifida can be a hidden disability

Spina Bifida

- It may be a small defect or gap in a few of the vertebrates and the person may be able to walk
- It can be as severe as the spinal cord and spinal nerves going through a hole in the spine
- This causes nerve damage and more severe disabilities

Multiple Sclerosis

- Affects the different parts of the central nervous system
- The symptoms vary from person to person



Multiple Sclerosis

- Some of the symptoms are:
 - Weakness
 - Blurred vision, pain in the eye, double vision
 - Balance problems
 - Memory, concentration
 - Fatigue
 - Bladder/Bowel
 - Speech

Service Animals



What is a Service Animal?

- The ADA defines a service animal as any guide dog, signal dog or other animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability
- If they meet this definition, animals are considered service animals under the ADA regardless of whether they have been licensed or certified by a state or local government

What is a Service Animal?

- Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that the individual with a disability cannot perform for him or herself
 - "Seeing eye dogs" are one type of service animal used by some individuals who are blind

What is a Service Animal?

- This is the type of service animal with which most people are familiar, but there are service animals that assist persons with other kinds of disabilities in their day-to-day activities

What is a Service Animal?

- Some examples include
 - Alerting persons with hearing impairments to sounds
 - Carrying and picking up things for persons with mobility impairments
- A service animal is not a pet

Your Obligations to People that have Service Animals

- The service animal must be permitted to accompany the individual with a disability to all areas where the public is normally allowed to go
 - This includes all shelters and hospitals
 - An individual with a service animal may not be segregated from the public

Your Obligations to People that have Service Animals

- A service animal is not a pet
 - The ADA requires the "no pets" policy to be modified to allow the use of a service animal by a person with a disability
 - This does not mean you must abandon your "no pets" policy altogether but simply that you must make an exception to your general rule for service animals

Your Obligations to People that have Service Animals

- Neither a deposit nor a surcharge may be imposed on an individual with a disability as a condition to allowing a service animal to accompany the individual with a disability

Your Obligations to People that have Service Animals

- You may exclude any animal, including a service animal when that animal's behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of you or others
 - For example, any service animal that displays vicious behavior toward you or the public may be excluded

Your Obligations to People that have Service Animals

- You may not make assumptions about how a particular animal is likely to behave based on your past experience with other animals
- Each situation must be considered individually
- Some, but not all, service animals wear special collars, vests and/or harnesses

Your Obligations to People that have Service Animals

- Some, but not all, are licensed or certified and have identification papers
- If you are not certain that an animal is a service animal, you may ask the person who has the animal if it is a service animal required because of a disability

Your Obligations to People that have Service Animals

- Although a number of states have programs to certify service animals, you may not insist on proof of state certification before permitting the service animal to accompany the person with a disability

Visual Impairment

- A term experts use to describe any kind of vision loss
- It can be a person who is completely blind or are legally blind
- A person who is legally blind has not lost their sight completely, but have lost enough vision that they have to stand 20' from an object to see it
- A person with 20/20 vision would stand 200' to see the object

People Who are Blind or Have Visual Impairment

- Identify yourself before making physical contact
- Give your name and, when appropriate, give your role
 - “Hello. I’m Mike, a police officer or an emergency personnel.”

People Who are Blind or Have Visual Impairment

- If you are leaving, be sure to say so
- If you see someone who is blind or visually impaired about to encounter a dangerous situation, be calm and clear about warning the person

Giving Directions to a Person Who is Blind or Visually Impaired

- When giving directions on how to get from one place to another, people who are not visually impaired will often use gestures such as pointing and nodding in the direction being referred to

Giving Directions to a Person Who is Blind or Visually Impaired

- Obviously, this is not helpful to someone who is blind or visually impaired
- Unfortunately, the verbal directions they receive are, quite often, not much better

Giving Directions to a Person Who is Blind or Visually Impaired

- “The store that you are looking for will be about 8 feet away on your left.”
 - Refer to the specific direction-right or left-as it applies to the person you are speaking to
 - “It is on your left.”

Giving Directions to a Person Who is Blind or Visually Impaired

- In addition to the direction, try to indicate the approximate distance
- If possible, give information on landmarks that the person will encounter along the way, keeping in mind that both sounds and scents can be used as landmarks

Giving Directions to a Person Who is Blind or Visually Impaired

- “The downward escalator is about 20 feet directly in front of you. You will hear it as you approach. When you get to the next floor down, you will want to turn to your right and walk about another 10-15 feet. When you reach the popcorn stand turn to your right and it is on the right .”

Being a Sighted Guide

- First and foremost, you must offer to guide a person who is blind or visually impaired by asking if he or she would like assistance
- Be aware that the person may not need or want guided help
 - For some people, it can be disorienting and disruptive
 - You should respect their wishes

Being a Sighted Guide

- If your help is accepted, offer the person your arm by tapping the back of your hand against his or her hand
 - They will, then, grasp your arm directly above the elbow
 - Never grab the person’s arm or try to direct him or her by pushing or pulling
- Relax and walk at a normal comfortable

Being a Sighted Guide

- Stay one step ahead of the person you are guiding, except at the top and bottom of stairs and to cross streets
- At these places, pause and stand alongside the person
- Resume travel, walking one step ahead
- Always pause when you change directions, step up, or step down

Provide Clear and Effective Communication to People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

People Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- Before speaking, be sure to get the person's attention
- Depending on the situation, you could wave your hand, tap them on the shoulder, or flicker the lights

People Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- Face the person you are speaking to
 - Remember that obscuring your face would make it difficult for a person who is deaf or hard of hearing to speech read
- Speak clearly, and don't shout

Provide Effective Communication to People Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Provide effective communication. In some cases this might be in the form of a note, but remember that not all people who are Deaf cannot communicate effectively by reading or writing notes in English.

Auxiliary Aids for People Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- Written materials
- Qualified Sign Language Interpreter



What does an Interpreter Do?

- The interpreter is there not only to make spoken communication accessible to Deaf individuals, but also to allow people who do not sign to be able to communicate with people who are Deaf
- Hence, the interpreter is there for all the people involved in the communication process

Tips on Working with an Interpreter

- You will want to speak directly to, and maintain eye contact with, the person that you are speaking with, not the interpreter
- Remember that the individual who is deaf will need to look at the interpreter so they can understand the message

Tips on Working with an Interpreter

- The interpreter, ethically, must interpret everything they hear
- Do not ask them to censor the conversation

Tips on Working with an Interpreter

- It is not necessary to say "tell him" or "ask her"
 - The interpreter will communicate the message in the first person, such as saying "I plan to call them" rather than "He says he plans to call them."

Tips on Working with an Interpreter

- Remember that the interpreter can only accommodate one speaker at a time
- People in groups should take turns speaking and pause to give the interpreter time to finish the previous speakers conversation

Autism

- To a person with Autism, sounds seem louder, lights seem brighter and smells seem stronger
- Autism is more common in boys than girls
- People with Autism have problems with social skills and communication

People with Autism

- Speak calmly
 - use direct, concrete phrases with no more than 1 or 2 steps or write brief instructions on a pad if the person can read
- The person may repeat the same phrase you said over and over or talk about something that is unrelated to the situation

People with Autism

- This is their attempt to communicate, and is not meant to irritate you or be disrespectful
- Some people with autism don't show indications of pain
 - Check for injuries
- The person may invade your space, prefer to be farther away from you or not make eye contact

People with Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

- Reassure the person that you understand he/she is chemically sensitive and will work with him/her in providing care
- Whenever possible, take the persons own medical supplies, medications, food/water, bedding and personal items if going to hospital or shelter

People with Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

- Try to avoid placing the person in a room with pesticides, strong cleaners, new paint and other recent remodeling

People who have an Emotional Disability

- In an emergency, the person may become confused
- Speak slowly and calmly.
- If they are confused, ask or state one thing at a time
- If they are confused, ask or state one thing at a time
- Don't talk down to them

People who have an Emotional Disability

- Try to avoid interrupting a person who is disoriented or rambling
 - Let them know that you have to move along quickly
- Have a forward leaning body position
 - This shows interest and concern

Seniors

- Older people may fear being removed from their homes
 - Be sympathetic and explain that this relocation is temporary.
- Reassure the person that they will receive help without fear of being placed in a nursing home
- Reassure the person that they will receive help without fear of being placed in a nursing home

Seniors

- If the person is believed to have dementia, turn off emergency lights and sirens if possible
 - Identify yourself and explain why you are there
 - Ask yes or no questions and make eye contact

Disability Etiquette

Etiquette

- “Etiquette” may seem like a rather formal term, but it is really just another way of describing the thoughtful, considerate behavior that we give to others and expect to receive in return
- A big part of “disability etiquette” is taking time to learn about the different types of disabilities and how you can be sensitive to any unique needs

Etiquette

- If a person with a disability needs help, ask them how you can assist them. Do not assume that you know what they need or how to help them
- Do not use someone’s wheelchair as a desk or to carry something without asking first
- Do not push someone’s wheelchair without being

Etiquette

- Some people have limited use of their hands, wrists or arms. Offer assistance with reaching, grasping or lifting objects, opening doors, etc...
- When talking to someone that uses a wheelchair or is very short, sit or kneel down to be closer to their level of eyesight

Etiquette

- Chairs that have arms an/or higher seats are usually easier for people with disabilities to use

Treat a person with a disability like you would want to be treated. Do not talk down to them or use baby talk. Many people with disabilities can take care of themselves, but need help during an emergency or disaster.

Remember people with disabilities are mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, doctors, lawyers, etc...

“The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightening and the lightning bug.”

Mark Twain

Person First Language

If you had to pick one descriptor that would be used to describe you for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Mother/Father

Son/Daughter

Husband/Wife

Smart, Funny, Beautiful, Handsome

Person First Language

What about...

Handicapped? Crippled? Retarded?

Or any other word that would lead others to think of you negatively?

Person first language puts the person before his or her disability, and describes what a person *has not* what a person *is*.

Some Examples of Person First Language

Try	Instead Of
People with disabilities	The handicapped
Sally has a cognitive disability	She's retarded
Bonnie has a physical disability	She's crippled
Jon uses a wheelchair	He's confined to a wheelchair OR He's wheelchair bound

“People with disabilities constitute our nation's largest minority group (one of five Americans has a disability).

It is also the most inclusive and most diverse: both genders, any sexual orientation, and all ages, religions, ethnicities, and socioeconomic levels are represented....

Furthermore, this largest minority group is the only one which *any person can join at any time!*

“You can join at birth or later, through an accident, illness, or the aging process.

If and when it happens to *you*, will you have more in common with others who have disability diagnoses or with family, friends, and co-workers? How will you want to be described?

And how will you want to be treated?”

Disaster Issues that Impact People with Disabilities

- Notification
- Evacuation
- Emergency transportation
- Sheltering
- Access to medications, refrigeration and back-up power
- Access to their mobility devices or service animals while in transit or at shelters
- Access to information

Tidbits To Help People With Disabilities To Be Prepared

- People with disabilities need to have a disaster kit ready at all times
- Make sure they have items they use everyday (medical supplies, hygiene, etc)
- Make them aware of the dangers of staying home and the atmosphere of a shelter

Tidbits To Help People With Disabilities To Be Prepared

- Teach/help them prepare their house for a hurricane (turn off gas, cover windows, etc)
- Remind everyone to have water, batteries, flashlights, food, etc. for 10-14 days

Notification

- Many traditional emergency notification methods are not accessible to or usable by people with disabilities
- People who are deaf or hard of hearing cannot hear radio, television, sirens, or other audible alerts
- Those who are blind or have low vision may not be aware of visual cues, such as flashing lights

Notification

- Warning methods should be developed to ensure that all citizens will have the information necessary to make sound decisions and take appropriate, responsible action
- Often, using a combination of methods will be more effective than relying one method alone

Notification

- For instance, combining visual and audible alerts will reach a greater audience than either method would by itself
- An emergency personnel may use hand gestures, a printed note or let them read your lips to tell a person who is deaf or hard of hearing that she/he needs to evacuate
- Some people who are deaf cannot read print and/or read lips

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Thank You!