

Disability Etiquette

How To Talk To People With Disabilities



SPEAK DIRECTLY

Speak directly to the person rather than through a companion or an interpreter.

OFFER TO SHAKE HANDS

When introduced, it is appropriate to offer to shake hands.

IDENTIFY YOURSELF

When meeting a person who is visually impaired, identify yourself and others who may be with you.

TREAT ADULTS AS ADULTS

Address people by their first names only when extending the same familiarity to all others.

DO NOT LEAN ON A WHEELCHAIR

Leaning on a person's wheelchair is similar to leaning on a person, and is considered annoying.

LISTEN ATTENTIVELY

Be patient and wait for the person who has difficulty speaking.

PLACE YOURSELF AT EYE LEVEL

Place yourself at eye level in front of the person to facilitate the conversation.

GET THE PERSON'S ATTENTION

Look directly at a deaf person and speak clearly, slowly and expressively.

Things To Remember

1. Treat people as you would like to be treated yourself.
2. People with disabilities are NOT alike and have a wide variety of skills and personalities.
3. Most disabled people are not sick, incompetent, dependent, unintelligent or contagious.