



Disability Ettiquette



USE OF LANGUAGE

- Talk about the person first instead of their disability. E.g. "person with a disability" rather than "disabled person".
- Talk directly to the person.
- Be patient and allow the person to communicate and have a say.
- Address the person directly, rather than speaking to a companion or carer. maintain eye contact and engage in conversation.
- Use clear and easy-to-understand language.
- Do not use baby talk or speak down to a person.
- Avoid using words that have a negative message such as confined to a wheelchair instead of using a wheelchair.
- Never use the words deformed, retarded, dumb, crippled, or victim.
- Ask the person if they would like the information written down. It may be helpful to write information down or use pictures for people who have difficulty with memory.

PHYSICAL DISABILITY TIPS

- Do not touch a person's equipment such as a wheelchair without their permission.
- Always ask the person if they would like help. Do not assume they cannot do something.
- Ask if it is ok to use words such as running or walking when someone uses a wheelchair.
- Do not assume someone using a wheelchair cannot open doors.
- If you are having an extended conversation with a person in a wheelchair, bring yourself to eye level so that they are not straining their neck looking up at you.
- For people who are vision impaired, ask if they need assistance. Do not automatically take their arm.
- Only push a person in a wheelchair when you are asked to by the person using the wheelchair.

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EMBER program is funded by the Australian Government supporting emergency preparedness for people with disability

HIDDEN DISABILITIES

- Many people may have a disability that is not visible. It may be temporary, situational, or permanent. It can be neurological, cognitive, auditory, sensory or a processing difficulty.
- Treat everyone in the manner you want to be treated.
- Never make assumptions or judge a person.
- Say hello, use eye contact and start a conversation.
- Use the person's name if you know it. Speak directly to the person
- Ask the person what is the best way to communicate to them.
- Face the person so they can see your facial expressions or they may lip read.
- Be patient and wait for the person to finish completing a word, thought, or sentence.
- If it is difficult to communicate with a person, try writing a note.
- Never raise your voice.
- Be calm and read the body language to assess the situation.

IN GENERAL

- Treat individuals with respect and dignity
Treat every person equally as you would expect to be treated.
- Focus on abilities, not limitations.
Listen actively to what they have to say
- Highlight a person's strengths, skills and abilities rather than their disability.
- Do not make assumptions about a person's abilities or limitations. Everyone is unique.
- Ask first when offering assistance.
If a person has a guide dog, do not distract or touch the dog when it has a harness on it. It is a working dog. When the harness is off the dog, ask the owner if you can pat it.
- If you think someone may need assistance, politely offer your help first.
Respect their independence. Wait for their response or ask if they require assistance before providing it.
- Respect personal space and physical boundaries.
- Never say a person is a victim, suffers from is deformed or dumb

TO HELP YOU

If the person you are interacting with is non verbal, use a tool like a Communication Board - or download the Non Verbal Communicator app located at www.emberapp.com.au.

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