



General Disability Etiquette

- Remember he/she is a **PERSON** not a disability.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Talk directly to the person with the disability, even if he/she is using an interpreter. Even if parents or friends are present, encourage the person with the disability to express his/her own opinions.
- Don't assume assistance is needed. Ask if assistance is needed and/or wanted.
- Use a normal tone of voice.
- When talking to a person with a mental disability, speak simply, not loudly.
- Don't assume that because a person has one disability, he/she has others. For example, don't assume that a person who is blind cannot hear.
- When planning public events, make sure to consider the needs of persons with disabilities.
- When introduced to a person, it is appropriate to offer to shake hands. If the person cannot shake hands, they will let you know.
- Do not put people with a disability on a pedestal or talk to them in patronizing terms as if their performing normal, everyday activities were exceptional.
- Do not make assumptions about what a person can or cannot do based on their disability. All people are different and have a wide variety of skills and personalities, including persons with disabilities or special needs.
- RELAX. We all make mistakes. If you believe you have done or said something inappropriate, offer an apology. Keep a sense of humor and a keep a willingness to communicate.

