

# DISABILITY ETIQUETTE

## A STARTING GUIDE

### GENERAL DO'S AND DON'TS

- ✓ Get to know your colleagues as **people** and **professionals**!
- ✓ Don't assume other people's needs/wants.
- ✓ Use 'Disability Pride' language:  
"Wheelchair user" instead of "confined to a wheelchair."

### INDIVIDUALS WITH MOBILITY DISABILITIES

- Do not touch a person's mobility equipment.
- Be considerate of possible pain, balance, or post-traumatic stress issues during physical contact.
- Put yourself at the person's eye level when engaging in a conversation; rather than kneeling, pull up a chair.



### INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BLIND OR LOW VISION

- Identify yourself when entering a conversation and announce when you leave.
- When serving as a sighted guide, offer your arm or shoulder rather than grabbing or pushing the individual.
- Describe the setting, environment, written material, and obstacles when serving as a sighted guide.
- Resist the temptation to pet or talk to a guide or service animal.



### INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

- Gain the person's attention before starting a conversation.
- If the individual uses a sign language interpreter, speak directly to the person, not the interpreter; keep your eyes on the individual and not on the interpreter.
- Face the person and speak in normal tones.



### INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE SPEECH DISABILITIES

- If you do not understand what the person is saying, ask the person to repeat what they said and then repeat it back to ensure you understood.
- Do not speak for the person or attempt to finish their sentences.



### INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE NON-APPARENT DISABILITIES

- Rephrase what you said.
- Move to a quiet area.
- Change the pace of the conversation.
- Accept this is their lived experience.
- Honor requested confidentiality.
- Support accommodations.



**What are some other tips?**