

You can contribute to the positive image of people with disabilities by following guidelines. Your rejection of stereotypical, outdated language and use of respectful will help to promote a more objective and honest image.

For more information you can download: *Guidelines: How to Write and Report People with Disabilities* at www.rtcil.org/guidelines



these terms
About

Say this	Instead of
Disability	Differently abled, challenged
People with disabilities, disabled	Handicapped
Survivor	Victim, suffers from
Service dog or service animal	Seeing eye dog
Accessible parking or restroom	Handicapped parking, disabled stall
Person with Down syndrome	Mongoloid
Intellectual disability	Mentally retarded, mental retardation
Autistic, on the autism spectrum, atypical	Abnormal
Person with a brain injury	Brain damaged
Person of short stature, little person	Midget, dwarf
Person with a learning disability	Slow learner, retard
Person with mental illness, psychiatric disability	Crazy person, psycho
Person with spinal cord injury	Cripple
Amputee, has limb loss	Gimp
Nondisabled, person without a disability	Normal, able bodied, healthy
Blind, low vision	Visually handicapped, blind as a bat
Deaf, hard of hearing	Deaf-mute, deaf and dumb

Building Rapport (Relationships)

- Make eye contact. If you are looking at someone you are listening to them.
- Minimize distractions – turn off electronic devices.
- Be responsive – use facial expressions and make verbal comments.
- Be inclusive. Include people in making plans and decisions.
- Build positive associations.
- Engage people in conversations about things that interest them.
- Avoid sarcasm, irony or too much slang.
- Speak at an age appropriate level.
- Be considerate of the extra time that it might take someone with an intellectual disability to say something and allow them time to speak.
- Inform people what is about to happen before it occurs.
- Try giving verbal and written instructions or try giving examples that illustrate ideas and summarize ideas.
- Give instructions in small bit size pieces.
- Never assume someone is unintelligent and will believe anything you tell them.
- Always tell people the truth when communicating. Lies create mistrust.
- Put yourself in the place of the person that you are speaking to and ask yourself how you would like to be talked to.



Parallel Talk – Describe what the individual is doing as they are doing it.

Self-Talk – Describe what you doing with the individual as you are doing it.

Name Names – Speak the words aloud for objects in the individual's environment



etiquette

Ten Commandments of Etiquette for Communicating with People with Disabilities

These are general suggestions for appropriate behavior.

Not all people are the same, these guidelines hold true for *most individuals most of the time*.

- Be aware that there are many people with hidden disabilities that are not always visibly apparent. Just because you can't see it, doesn't mean that it doesn't exist.
 - Just because someone has a disability, it doesn't mean that they are incompetent, sick, dependent, unintelligent, or contagious.
 - Just because someone has a disability doesn't mean that they are hard of hearing. You don't necessarily have to speak louder, or use a voice that you would use around children.
 - Just because someone has a disability doesn't mean that they have to become a spokesperson for said disability, nor does it mean that they owe anyone an explanation of their disability. Before inquiring about an individual's disability, it is recommended that one first forms a relationship with said individual.
1. When talking with a person with a disability, speak directly to that person rather than through a companion or sign language interpreter.
 2. When introduced to a person with a disability, it is appropriate to offer to shake hands. People with limited hand use or who wear an artificial limb can usually shake hands. (Shaking hands with the left hand is an acceptable greeting.)
 3. When meeting a person who is visually impaired, always identify yourself and others who may be with you. When conversing in a group, remember to identify the person to whom you are speaking.
 4. If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen to or ask for instructions.
 5. Treat adults as adults. Address people who have disabilities by their first names only when extending the same familiarity to all others. (Never patronize people who use wheelchairs by patting them on the head or shoulder.)
 6. Leaning on or hanging on to a person's wheelchair is similar to leaning on hanging on to a person and is generally considered annoying. The chair is part of the personal body space of the person who uses it.
 7. Listen attentively when you're talking with a person who has difficulty speaking. Be patient and wait for the person to finish, rather than correcting or speaking for the person. If necessary, ask short questions that require short answers, a nod or shake of the head. Never pretend to understand if you are having difficulty doing so. Instead, repeat what you have understood and allow the person to respond. The response will clue you in and guide your understanding.
 8. When speaking with a person who uses a wheelchair or a person who uses crutches, place yourself at eye level in front of the person to facilitate the conversation.
 9. To get the attention of a person who is deaf, tap the person on the shoulder or wave your hand. Look directly at the person and speak clearly, slowly, and expressively to determine if the person can read your lips. Not all people who are deaf can read lips. For those who do lip read, be sensitive to their needs by placing yourself so that you face the light source and keep hands, cigarettes and food away from your mouth when speaking.
 10. Relax. Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use accepted, common expressions such as "See you later," or "Did you hear about that?" that seems to relate to a person's disability. Don't be afraid to ask questions when you're unsure of what to do.