



# HOSPITALITY HINTS

INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- Speak directly with the individual, not through a companion or service provider.
- Offer to shake hands when introduced.
- Always identify yourself and others who may be with you.
- Make eye contact and be aware of body language.
- Listen attentively.
- If a person has difficulty speaking, or speaks in a manner that is difficult for you to understand, listen carefully-then wait for them to finish speaking.
- Ask short questions that can be answered by yes or no.
- Do not lean against or hang on someone's wheelchair. People with disabilities treat their chairs as extensions of their bodies.
- Do not talk to or pet guide dogs and service dogs without the owner's permission. The animal is working and cannot be distracted.
- Place yourself at eye level when speaking with someone in a wheelchair or on crutches.
- Tap a person lightly on the shoulder or wave your hand to get the attention of a person with a hearing disability.
- Look directly at the person and speak clearly, slowly, and expressively to establish if a persons can read lips.
- If a person is wearing a hearing aid, do not assume they can hear your speaking voice.
- Never shout at a person. Just speak in a normal tone of voice.
- Treat adults as adults.
- Do not assume familiarity by using the person's first

name, or touching the person unless you know them well.

- Do not patronize, condescend, or threaten.
- Do not make decisions for the person, or assume their preferences.
- Do not give unsolicited advice or assistance.
- If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted.
- Do not panic or summon an ambulance if the person appears to be having a mental health crisis. Calmly ask how you can help.
- Do not blame the person for a disability, especially a mental illness.
- Question the media stereotypes of disability. People with disabilities are more likely to be crime victims than to victimize others.
- Relax! Be yourself!
- See the person beneath the symptoms and behaviors.
- If you are fearful or uncomfortable, learn more about disabilities.
- Kindness, courtesy, and patience usually smooth interactions with all people, including people with a disability.

### **THE MOST IMPORTANT HINT:**

**Treat people with disabilities as you would wish to be treated yourself.**



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