

Healthcare Professionals Brochure

**Disability
Specific
Guidelines**

**Creative
Solutions**

General Information

Mobility

Blind and Visually Impaired

Cognitive/Intellectual Disabilities

Deaf/Hard of Hearing

Golden Rule

All Americans will experience some type of disability during their life span. Think “people first” and “disability second.” Treat people with disabilities as you would like to be treated.

People First

Talk directly to a patient, not to a companion or an interpreter. Involve a patient with disabilities in his/her own health care decisions. Avoid patronizing terms such as Buddy, Honey, Sweetie, etc., especially when interacting with adults.

Check and Note

Staff should be familiar with designated handicapped parking spaces, bus stops and accessible routes. Find out how best to communicate with patients regarding follow-up visits, treatments, test results, scheduling appointments, etc. Note this information in the patient’s chart.

Ask before Acting

Special needs vary depending on the patient and the situation. Ask if a patient would like any special assistance. Then, do as requested within reason.

Specific Disabilities

Mobility

Eye to Eye:

When talking with a patient seated in a wheelchair, sit to speak at eye level.

Lock Before Moving:

Always make sure that the patient's wheelchair is locked before assisting in a transfer.

Work Together:

Some patients find standard positioning needed for tests such as a colonoscopy, mammograms, etc., a challenge. Solicit patient suggestions to find creative solutions.

Blind and Visually Impaired

Ask Permission:

Service animals are allowed in all public areas. Get permission from a patient before petting, talking to, or feeding an animal.

Shh: I Hear You!

Speak normally. Mood is conveyed through your tone of voice.

Common Language

Feel free to use everyday words such as look, see, watch, etc. Give left/right directions according to the way a patient is facing.

Respect my Space:

Let a patient know when you are entering or leaving personal space. Do not move personal belongings without asking. Before administering any procedure, tell patient what you will be doing and what he/she may feel.

Cognitive/Intellectual Disabilities

Simplify:

Speak in short, clear sentences, rewording information as needed, and using a combination of illustration, written and/or verbal instructions. Verify patient's understanding by asking for feedback.

Look Ahead:

Provide written instructions for anyone who might be assisting with the patient's care.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing

Sign or Speak?

Realize that some patients prefer oral communication while others use interpreters. Clarify preference with each patient.

Interpreting:

You are responsible for providing certified American Sign Language interpreters if requested within 72 hours.

Speaking:

Oral communicators need to clearly see your lips. Maximize lighting and contrast. Keep your hands away from your face. Make sure that you are facing the person as you speak.

The Governor's Council on People with Disabilities exists to:

- Advise the Governor and General Assembly on statewide disability issues.
- Educate and advocate for:
 - ❖ Partnerships at the local, state and national levels.
 - ❖ Promotion of equality, access and independence.
 - ❖ Development of employment opportunities.
- Promote the value of diversity, dignity and the quality of life for people with disabilities.
- Be a catalyst to create systemic change promoting awareness of disability-related issues that will ultimately benefit all citizens of Ohio.

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