

Disability Awareness - Practical Inclusion Tips

General Guidelines:

- Treat the person as a valued individual, with respect and dignity
- Don't make assumptions • Be patient
- Ask, "How can I help you?" • Ask questions – but don't get personal
- Speak directly to the person with a disability. Even if a third party is present, such as support people or interpreters
- Use person first language, e.g. person who uses a wheelchair

Person who uses mobility devices:

- Treat a person's mobility aid (cane, walker, crutch, wheelchair, or scooter) as an extension of their personal space
- Only push someone's chair if you have their permission
- Never lean on someone's chair • Sit down for longer conversations
- Create a wide, clear path of travel for them
- Ok to use words like "walk" and "run"

Person who has an intellectual disability:

- Be patient and relax
- Give time for the person to respond at own pace
- Speak in a normal tone and speed
- Provide one piece of information at a time
- Use plain language – common words and short sentences
- Use age appropriate language
- Rephrase what you're saying, if needed
- You can offer to use an image
- Be prepared to explain any materials you provide to the person

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Person who has partial sight:

- Identify yourself, let the person know if someone else is present
- Offer to guide the person and then offer your arm. Describe the path including turns, ups and downs, and any obstacles along the path
- Only talk to or pet a service dog if you have the owner's permission
- Ask them if it helpful to describe objects or their surroundings
- Let the person know if you are leaving the conversation/area

Person who has a mental health disability:

- Focus on meeting the person's needs
- Be confident and reassuring
- Don't assume the person will be violent
- If the person appears to be in a crisis, ask them to tell you the best way to help
- The person's reactions are not connected to you personally, the person is simply showing symptoms of their disability

Person who is Deaf or who is hard of hearing:

- Get the person's attention by gently touching his/her shoulder before communicating
- Make sure you are in well- lit area of the room, away from a window
- Look at the person, with your head up and your mouth clear of objects, e.g. your hand
- Keep your voice at your usual volume unless asked to speak louder
- Offer to use paper and pencil, if needed
- Email the person or text them if you have their cell phone number.
- Don't assume they cannot tell when you're talking about them

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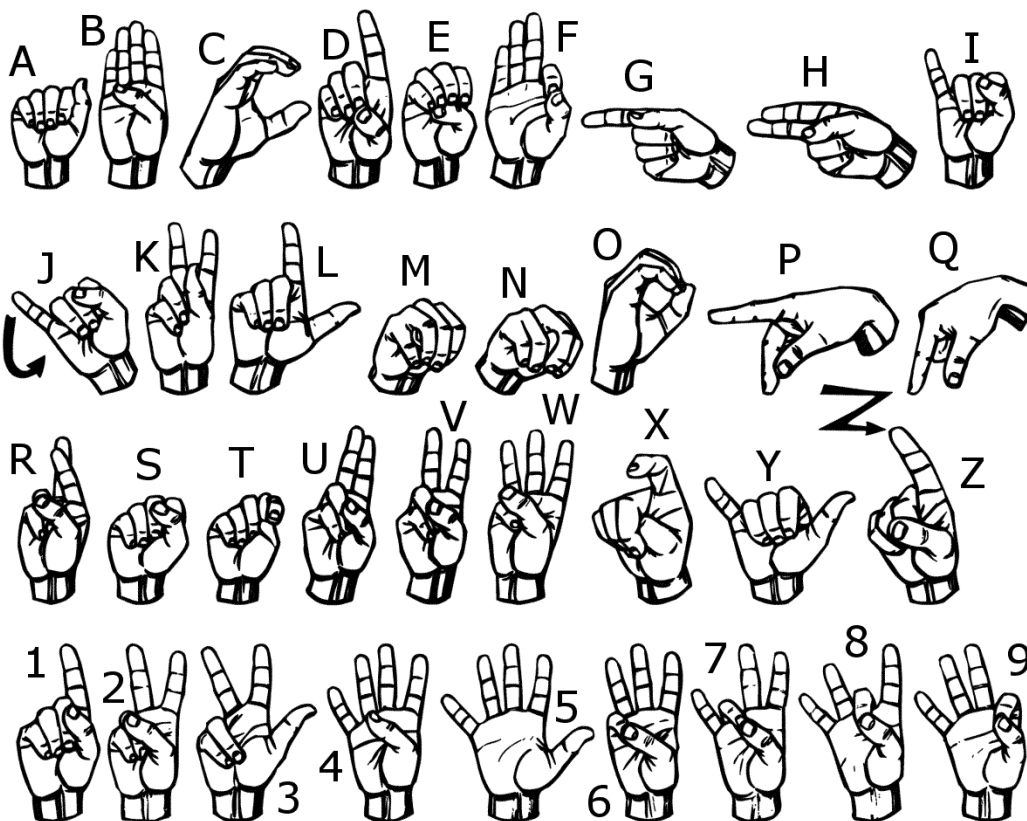
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Person who has a communication disability:

- Be patient and relax, give time for the person to respond at own pace
- Listen for key words, ask the person to repeat if necessary
- If possible, ask yes or no questions
- Use plain language – easy words and short sentences
- Repeat back what you think you have heard
- Offer to use paper and pencil when communicating, if you need

American Sign Language Alphabet



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