

# Inclusive language and engagement



People with disability are diverse! The best advice is talk to an individual to find out what their preference is and what language they are comfortable with. People with disability are people first and just want to be treated with dignity and respect.

## Inclusive Language

| Use  | Avoid  |
|--|--|
| <p>Putting people first:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person with disability, people with disability</li> <li>• People with mental illness</li> <li>• Person with physical disability</li> <li>• Person with hearing impairment</li> <li>• John uses a wheelchair</li> <li>• Person with autism</li> <li>• People who are blind</li> <li>• People who are deaf</li> <li>• Samantha has an intellectual disability</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• disabled person</li> <li>• handicapped</li> <li>• wheelchair bound; confined to a wheelchair</li> <li>• blind person</li> <li>• deaf person</li> <li>• the disabled</li> <li>• the blind</li> <li>• the deaf</li> <li>• the mentally ill</li> <li>• using an impairment/condition or a nickname to describe or label a person (e.g. spastic, Autistic, cripple, crazy, epileptic, dumb, invalid, psychotic, paraplegic, quadriplegic, snowflake)</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Positive, value-based language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focus on what a person can do</li> <li>• put the person first</li> <li>• use everyday language</li> <li>• be respectful</li> </ul>   | <p>Using negative language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• over or under selling the abilities of a person with disability</li> <li>• people with disability are not super-human, courageous, special, brave or inspirational</li> <li>• saying someone is unskilled, not capable or not equal because they need assistance to perform a task (whether by using a piece of equipment, need an environmental change or another person)</li> <li>• terms like victims, weak, sick, unemployable, unskilled, suffering, struck down, afflicted</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accessible toilet</li> <li>• accessible parking</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• disabled toilet or disabled parking (because the toilet or the parking bay is not disabled).</li> </ul>   |



# Engagement

| Hot Tips  | Be Aware of...  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Always ask the individual if they would like help, don't assume someone needs or does not need help.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helping without asking</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most people with disability usually do not also have a hearing impairment</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talking loud and slow</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce yourself to a person with vision impairment first, the person may not know who is in front of them</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Going up and start talking to someone with a vision impairment</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaning on wheelchair or equipment can encroach on personal space and can also be a safety issue</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaning on wheelchairs or start using someone's equipment</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk to a person with disability, not the person they are with</li> <li>People with disability can make their own decisions.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assuming the accompanying person is a support person/carer. The person with disability is the decision maker not the accompanying person.</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow someone the time to speak. Some people need a bit of time to think before they answer, might be anxious or have speech difficulties. Be patient and give the person the time they need.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talking over someone</li> <li>Finishing their sentences</li> <li>Ignoring what they have to say due to speech or communication difficulties</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If a person with disability provides feedback about your service or assistance, see it as an opportunity to improve.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don't take criticism the wrong way</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You run the risk of offending someone or hurting their feelings when you make jokes about someone's disability – even when trying to be friendly.</li> <li>We often think jokes lighten a situation whereas they can be patronising or hurtful.</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jokes and banter are often tricky areas to navigate.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A guide or assistance dog is a working dog and is specifically trained to assist an individual.</li> <li>Don't touch the dog if it's wearing a harness or jacket. This means it's working.</li> <li>Always ask permission to touch a guide or assistance dog.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pat or feed a guide or assistance dog</li> </ul>   |

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