

Tips for Providing Care to Individuals with Physical Disabilities

- People with physical disabilities often have their own ways of doing things. Ask before you help.
- Assistive devices, including wheelchairs, should not be touched without permission. They are considered an extension of the person.
- Provide the individual with information about accessible features of the immediate environment (automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.).
- Remove obstacles and rearrange furniture to ensure a clear path.
- Allow extra time for appointments and Transhelp pickup.

Tips for Providing Care to Individuals with Learning Disabilities

- When you know that someone with a learning disability needs assistance, ask how you can best help.
- Speak normally and clearly.
- Take some time — people with some kinds of learning disabilities may take a little longer to understand and respond.
- Try to find ways to provide information in a way that works best for them.

Tips for Providing Care to Individuals with Mental Health Disabilities

- Treat a person with a mental health disability with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
- Listen carefully and be confident and reassuring.
- Avoid being confrontational and don't take things personally.
- If someone appears to be in a crisis, ask them to tell you the best way to help.
- Treat mental illness as an illness and be understanding and supportive.

Tips for Providing Care to Individuals with Speech or Language Impairments

- Just because a person has one disability doesn't mean they have another. For example, if an individual has difficulty speaking, don't assume they have an intellectual or developmental disability as well.
- Speak in your regular tone of voice.
- If you don't understand, ask the individual to repeat the information.
- If you are able, ask questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no'.
- Be patient and polite, and give the individual whatever time he/she needs to get his/her point across.
- Work with the individual to determine the best way to communicate.
- Wait for the individual to finish when speaking.

Remember to TALK

Take the time to ask "May I help you?"

Ask, don't assume someone needs help.

Listen attentively and speak directly to the individual, not their support person or interpreter.

Know the accommodations and special services available.

For more information, please visit the CVH intranet under Education, Accessibility/Diversity.

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Providing Patient and Family Centred Care to People with Disabilities

Tips for Staff, Physicians and Volunteers



Your **H**ospital
for Life 

we are committed to providing respectful care that focuses on the unique needs of the individuals. Providing equitable care that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities is important to achieving patient and family centred care.

Recently the Ontario legislature passed an Act to strengthen the law on creating a barrier-free Ontario for people with disabilities. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, outlines mandatory standards that will improve accessibility in five areas beginning with the Customer Service Standard. All hospitals must comply with the standard by January 1, 2010.

The information in this brochure highlights key requirements of the standard and provides further direction on what you can do to provide equitable care to people with disabilities.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Communicate in a way that takes into account the individual's disability.
- Become familiar with the assistive devices available.
- Allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by their service animal/support person. Where this is not possible due to health/safety risks, make alternate arrangements.
- Provide notice of any disruption in accessing the hospital and its services, including alternatives (ie. detours) where available.
- Remember to put people first. Say 'person with a disability' rather than 'disabled person'.
- Always be supportive and patient.
- Familiarize yourself with the policy and procedure: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities, POL-PRO A1.3.

Tips for Providing Care to Individuals with Vision Disabilities

- Address the person by name and identify yourself and your role.
- Speak in a normal tone of voice.
- Ask if the person would like assistance and ask how you can help.
- Offer your arm (the elbow) to guide the person and walk slowly.
- Orient the person to their surroundings and identify any potential obstacles in the person's travel path.
- Let service animals work; don't touch them unless invited to do so.
- Inform and reassure the person by describing any procedures.
- If the person administers his/her own medication, ask them how they'd like you to organize it.
- Tell the person when you are giving them documentation across a counter or table.
- Inform the person when a food tray is delivered and where it is placed. Use the 'clock method' to describe the location of food on a plate.
- Say good-bye before leaving.

Tips for Providing Care to Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities

- Avoid assuming what a person can or cannot do.
- Use plain language and speak in short sentences.
- Ensure the person understands what you have said.
- If you can't understand what's being said, don't pretend. Just ask again.
- Provide one piece of information at a time.
- Speak directly to the individual, not to their companion or attendant.

Tips for Providing Care to Individuals who are Deaf, Deafened or Hard of Hearing

- Attract the individual's attention before speaking. The best way is a gentle touch on the shoulder or gently waving your hand.
- Make sure you are in a well-lighted area where the individual can see your face.
- Look at and speak directly to the individual, not their interpreter.
- If necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier, for example a pen and paper.
- Keep hands away from your face when speaking.
- Be clear and precise when giving directions, and repeat or rephrase if necessary. Make sure you have been understood.
- If the person uses a hearing aid, try to speak in an area with few competing sounds.
- Pocket talkers are available to amplify conversations for individuals who are hard of hearing. They can be obtained from the speech and audiology department at ext. 1575.
- TTY Bell pay phones are available at the main entrance, cancer centre entrance and rehabilitation waiting area.
- Units are responsible for booking American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters if needed. To book an interpreter contact Ontario Interpreter Services at 905-608-0271.

Tips for Providing Care to Individuals who are Deaf-Blind

- Avoid assuming what a person can or cannot do. Some people who are deaf-blind have some sight or hearing, while others have neither.
- Determine the most effective way to communicate.
- Speak directly to the individual as you normally would, not to their support person or interpreter.