

Disability Etiquette

...So Everyone Can Relax and Get the Job Done

A Modern Disability Training

www.moderndisability.com

Disability Etiquette

...So Everyone Can Relax and Get the Job Done

Disability Etiquette

...So Everyone Can Relax and Get the Job Done

The Reasons for This Training

- Disability etiquette, more than ever before, is highly relevant in the workplace.
- Bring workplace culture up to speed with modern truth.
- People with disabilities are fully able to perform
- Need to hire and keep the best.
- If it were you, you would want to remain productive if possible
- Create a relaxed environment for WorkAbility.

Disability Etiquette

...So Everyone Can Relax and Get the Job Done

What's the danger?

What are we afraid we would do or say that is wrong when we are with a person with a disability?

Disability Etiquette

...So Everyone Can Relax and Get the Job Done

Independence and Helping

Objective

To become aware of the impulse to help, the confusion that arises, and to understand how it affects our sense of independence.

When did someone fuss over you in a way that was irritating?

What is it like to feel that someone doesn't think you can do something you know you can do?

Disability Etiquette

...So Everyone Can Relax and Get the Job Done

Independence and Helping, continued

- We are all innately independent, and that is precious
- When we lose some ability, what we can do is that much more precious
- Helping is about control
- Imposing help, no matter the intention, robs a person of dignity
- Key point of etiquette — preserve independence
- Right to choose for ourselves
- A little slower or more awkward can be worth doing it ourselves
- As likely to get in the way as to be of help.

Disability Etiquette

...So Everyone Can Relax and Get the Job Done

The Disabilities

Objective

To understand the wide range of "features" and the degree to which everyone is touched by them in some way.

Disability Types

- Mobility
- Sensory
- Cognitive
- Other
- Visible
- Invisible
- Childhood
- Adult onset
- Temporary
- Chronic
- Stable
- Progressive
- Nominally impairing
- Significantly impairing
- Adjusting / Adjusted

What types of disability have you personally encountered in people?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Disability Etiquette

...So Everyone Can Relax and Get the Job Done

Disability Language

Objective

To consider how language we use habitually informs our beliefs about disability, and what language lends itself to respect and potential.

What does the word “disability” evoke for you / in society / in the media?

What are common terms used to describe a person with a disability?

<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

Disability Etiquette

...So Everyone Can Relax and Get the Job Done

Disability Language, continued

The Word Game

On the next page, place these words in the area you think best fits: OK, Not OK, or Maybe OK.

Crippled

Lunatic

Crip

Confined

Invalid

Person with upper limb loss

Terminal

Deaf and dumb

Sufferer

Abnormal

Problem

Paralytic

Defective

Differently-Abled

Afflicted

Mobility-Challenged

People with disabilities

Specially-Able

Wheelchair-user

Handicapable

Victim

Handicapped

Wheelchair-bound

Left... blind, paralyzed, etc.

Retarded

Handicapable

The Disabled

Little People

Disability Etiquette

...So Everyone Can Relax and Get the Job Done

Disability Etiquette

Objective

To treat people with disabilities respectfully and to be relaxed in their presence.

Three Principles of Disability Etiquette

- **They are not their disabilities**

They are people first, and should be approached as you would anyone else.

- **They treasure their independence**

When you've lost any degree of independence, what remains is that much more precious to you.

- **They are the experts**

They use skills and strategies that are transparent to you, that you might not imagine could be possible.

General Etiquette Issues

- Consider if they need help
- Ask first
- Some accept, some don't
- If they accept, allow them to direct
- Curiosity about their disability
- Never address a companion on their behalf
- Don't start with your disability experience stories

Disability Etiquette

...So Everyone Can Relax and Get the Job Done

Disability Etiquette, continued

Wheelchair Etiquette Issues

- Patronizing touch
- Pushing the chair is a skill
- Don't use wide bathroom stalls
- Sit at eye level for notable chats
- Keep a clear path in the office
- When driving, easy on the brake

Disability Etiquette

...So Everyone Can Relax and Get the Job Done

Disability Etiquette, continued

Cognitive Disability Etiquette Issues

- Make no assumptions
- Might need extra time to process information
- Use clear language
- Don't take lack of response personally — might be overwhelmed
- Don't take sudden emotions personally — brain chemistry!
- Direct eye contact can be intimidating
- Allow for different styles of processing information

Disability Etiquette

...So Everyone Can Relax and Get the Job Done

Disability Etiquette, continued

Blind / Low Vision Etiquette Issues

- Never touch or grab a cane — or the person
- They will take your arm, elbow, or place a hand on your shoulder
- Describe what is on their path ahead
- Give them information — “I’m offering you my hand.”
- Let them know when you are leaving the room
- Face them when you speak
- Provide sufficient lighting

Disability Etiquette

...So Everyone Can Relax and Get the Job Done

Disability Etiquette, continued

Speech Impairment Etiquette Issues

- Allow them time to speak — feeling rushed impairs speech more
- Don't complete their sentences
- Don't say, "Oh, it's not important."
- If you don't understand, ask them to repeat
- If you're not sure you understood, repeat back what you heard
- If needed, ask them to write or use a computer
- Seek a quiet setting

Disability Etiquette

...So Everyone Can Relax and Get the Job Done

Disability Etiquette, continued

Deaf / Hearing Loss Etiquette Issues

- Speak normally — hearing aids are tuned for it
- Keep your face visible for lip reading
- Don't exaggerate speech or emotion
- Touch their arm or gesture to get attention
- When a translator is present, address the deaf person
- Avoid sudden changes of topic in conversation
