



TOP 10 TIPS



DISABILITY ETIQUETTE

Why practice Disability Etiquette?

Up to one in four Americans live with a disability that affects their daily life. When Disability Etiquette is used, everyone feels more comfortable and interacts more effectively. We all become stronger when we understand and support each other.

- 1 Ask before you help.** If you offer and the person with a disability accepts, follow their instructions. They know their capabilities.
- 2 Do not touch, pat or grab.** No one wants to be touched without consent, including people with disabilities. Do not touch, grab, or guide them or their wheelchair, scooter or cane without permission.
- 3 Speak directly to the person with a disability.** Also, remember that most people, including those with disabilities, would rather not discuss their bodies or medical history with people they just met.
- 4 Avoid making assumptions.** People with disabilities are the best judge of what they can or cannot do.
- 5 Be open to requests for access or accommodation.** Ensuring your business is accessible and committing to reasonable accommodations upon request showcases excellent customer service and dedication to all members of your community.
- 6 Use respectful, person-first language.** Avoid saying handicapped or wheelchair bound. Instead, say person with a disability or wheelchair user.
- 7 Provide a clear path of travel.** Ensure there are no obstacles that could hinder or trip people with physical disabilities or visual impairments.
- 8 Welcome service animals.** By law, service or support animals can accompany their handlers anywhere they go. If the animals are not well-behaved and harnessed, leashed, or tethered, you may ask the owner to remove them.
- 9 Remember, some disabilities are invisible.** People with autism or intellectual disabilities may process information differently than you do, so be patient and understanding when communicating with them.
- 10 Be respectful.** People with disabilities are individuals with families, jobs, hobbies, likes and dislikes, and problems and joys. While their disability is integral to their identity, it does not define them. Don't make them into heroes or victims.