

# Valuing Diversity in the Workplace

## Disability Etiquette Appropriate Language and Behavior



Below are a set of guidelines on appropriate language and behavior to use when interacting with people with disabilities. Please note that these guidelines are not exhaustive and that some language which is considered appropriate by one person may not be considered appropriate by another. If you are unsure about the language you are using, then ask the person with disability what he/she feel most comfortable with and continue to use this language while in his/her presence.

### Avoid/Inappropriate

The disabled, the handicapped

Cripple, physically handicapped or wheelchair bound.  
These terms are patronizing.

Spastic

Deaf and dumb

The Blind

The Deaf

Raising your voice or talking as if speaking to a child.

Interrupting a person with a speech impairment and trying to finish sentences for them.

Putting your hands near your mouth when communicating with someone who is Deaf or hearing-impaired.

Playing 'guess who' games with people who are blind or visually impaired

Looking down at a person in a wheelchair for a prolonged period

Speaking to a disabled person's friend or support worker when your conversation is directed at the person with a disability.

### Use/Appropriate

People with disabilities

A person with a physical disability/impairment or wheelchair user

A person with cerebral palsy

A person with hearing and speech impairments

People who are blind, partially sighted, visually impaired

People who are deaf, hearing impaired

Maintain your usual pitch volume and rhythm when speaking

Listen patiently and ask for clarification if you have not understood.

Ensure that they have a clear view of your face

Introduce yourself by name to a person who is blind

Sit down and talk to them this makes eye contact easier and means they are not constantly craning their neck to look up at you.

Speak directly to the disabled person