



Disability awareness presentation for Safe Places

Designed to give you an improved understanding of how to approach and help the people you will meet through the Safe Places scheme.





This PowerPoint presentation is aimed at giving people a basic awareness in disability equality, communication and etiquette. It is not designed to give people a deep understanding of what it is like to be a disabled person or for people to be 'disability experts'.

What it will hopefully give people is a basic understanding and confidence in communicating with people and ensuring people are treated in an empowering way.





Terminology

People often get worried about saying the wrong thing or that they will use the wrong terminology which can lead to people being scared of saying anything in case they offend. Yes, there are some words that are not used anymore as they are outdated or inappropriate.

However, by following some simple rules, you are much less likely to offend someone or say something wrong. Remember, even the most experienced person will occasionally say something wrong, but as long as it's an honest mistake most people will understand.

The basic rule is just use the person's name and you won't go wrong!





The basics – disability terminology

If you do need to talk about someone's disability, here are some general guidelines:

- Don't describe someone who uses a wheelchair as wheelchair bound or "a wheelchair" – the correct term is wheelchair user or power wheelchair user
- Don't say the disabled – the correct term is disabled people/person or people/person with a disability or person with a learning disability/autism or person with a mental health issue
- Cripple/handicap/spastic/dumb/autistic is either an old fashioned term or inappropriate and is not used anymore, and could offend someone
- Use Deaf person or a person with a hearing impairment
- Don't say suffer or brave, as it is seen as condescending
- Use blind or visually impaired person



The basics – dementia terminology



For some specific conditions communication can be more complex. The following information relates specifically to helping a person with dementia:

- Don't describe someone who has dementia as a dementia sufferer, demented, senile, a burden, or a victim
- Correct terms include person/people with dementia, person/people living with dementia
- People will choose many different ways to identify themselves in the context of their dementia. Some people will describe themselves as 'a person with dementia' (or with a dementia), whilst others might identify themselves as someone with Alzheimer's disease
- People with dementia urge you to be thoughtful about your choice of words when talking about what it is like to live with dementia





Basic etiquette – general advice

Some people are unsure how to act around disabled people and can feel awkward, as they don't want to offend the person. Here are a few tips that will help.

- A person's wheelchair is part of them, try not to lean on it or push the person without getting their permission. Don't 'bob' down and talk to the person, use a chair or take a step back so you have face to face contact, don't get close and look down at the person
- For some people it might be hard for them to understand you or what you are saying, keep your language simple and most people will understand, but don't make assumptions about the person's ability and don't talk to them like they are 4 years old as this will offend people



Basic etiquette – sensory impairment



- If the person is Deaf, don't shout at the person to try and make them hear as it will not work, be patient and talk normally, some but not all Deaf people will be able to read your lips. Try writing down, but remember that some Deaf people may have difficulty reading and writing
- For people with a visual impairment or who are blind, it will be difficult to know what vision they have, so ask what support they need. If you are escorting a person, offer them to hold your arm so they are in control (don't grab their arm) and as you are guiding them, tell them what is in front of them, if there are any turns and which way, and if there is steps describe them as you approach



Basic etiquette - dementia



- If the person finds verbal communication difficult, speak slightly more slowly and use simple words and sentences. Be more aware of the tone you adopt
- A person with dementia may use their behaviour and body language to communicate, such as gestures, eye contact and facial expressions.
- Avoid asking too many direct questions. Consider giving the person options or asking questions with a yes or no answer
- People with dementia can become frustrated or withdrawn if they can't find the answer. Try to stick to one idea at a time. Giving someone a choice is important, but too many options can be confusing and frustrating





General communication advice

- Rephrase rather than repeat, if the person doesn't understand what you're saying. Use non-verbal communication to help (e.g. pointing at a picture)
- Listen carefully to what the person is saying. If you haven't understood fully, rephrase what you have understood and check to see if you are right. The person's reaction and body language can be a good indicator of what they've understood and how they feel
- If the person has difficulty finding the right word, or finishing a sentence, ask them to explain it in a different way. Also pay attention to their body language. The expression on their face and the way they hold themselves can give you clear signals about how they are feeling
- Allow the person plenty of time to respond - it may take them longer to process the information and work out their response. Don't interrupt the person



Thank you



We hope this presentation has been helpful, and given you an improved understanding of how to approach and help the people you will meet through the Safe Place scheme.

If you are interested in further information about improving communication, the following websites may be of interest:

Norfolk special educational needs & disabilities www.norfolk.gov.uk/sen

Norfolk and Norwich association for the blind <http://www.nnab.org.uk/>

Autism Anglia <https://www.autism-anglia.org.uk/>

Deaf Connexions <http://www.deafconnexions.org.uk/>

Opening Doors <http://www.openingdoors.org.uk/>

