

Anywhere

Disability Access and Inclusion

Arrival and Welcome Guide

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Guide

Arrival and Welcome

When welcoming guests to your tour, accommodation, event, festival, retail or hospitality experience, it's important to consider how to specifically welcome people with disability and ensure that your business is providing an accessible service. This guide outlines some general principles and specific considerations for staff to consider when interacting with people with disability.

General Principles:

Be welcoming and friendly

- A warm smile and a sincere greeting go a long way.
- Be aware that some disabilities are invisible - you never know what type of access requirements someone may have.
- Treat everyone with respect and courtesy.

Speak clearly and directly

- Introduce yourself clearly (including your role).
- Explain if you'll be assisting the person.
- Speak directly to the person with a disability, not their companion or caregiver.
- Avoid technical jargon.
- Make sure the customer understands what's being said. If unsure, ask them or repeat yourself.

Offer assistance, but don't assume it will be needed

- Let the person take the lead and if you're unsure how to best assist, ask if they require any help.
- Never touch a person's assistive device (assistance animal, wheelchair, cane etc) without asking first.

Focus on the person and their needs, not their disability

- Engage in conversation and focus on the person, not their disability.
- When describing facilities for people with disability, use the word 'accessible'.

Specific Considerations:

People with visual impairments or who are blind

- Identify yourself by name when approaching or speaking to them.
- If appropriate, ask their name so you can address them directly and they know you are talking to them.
- If they require assistance, ask which side they would prefer that you stand and offer your arm.
- When offering written materials, ask if they would prefer an electronic version or if you can read it aloud.

People with hearing impairments or who are deaf

- Get their attention visually before speaking.
- Speak clearly and at a moderate pace, facing them directly.
- Move out of areas with lots of background noise.
- Be patient and allow extra time for processing information. If needed, consider using written communication or assistive listening devices.

People with mobility requirements

- Offer assistance if they seem to require it, but don't push or grab their mobility aid (wheelchair, cane) without permission.
- Never lean on or hang things on a wheelchair.
- Ensure doorways and pathways are clear of obstacles.
- If your counter isn't low enough to be reached easily, walk around it and service the customers face to face.
- Be mindful of assistance animals and give them space to work.
- Do not pat assistance animals or offer them food.

Cognitive differences

- Speak clearly and concisely.
- Offer choices, and breakdown instructions into smaller steps.
- Be patient and allow extra time for processing.

Remember:

- **Everyone is different:** Disability shows in many ways. Be flexible and adapt your approach based on the individual's needs.
- **Communication is key:** Clear and respectful communication is essential for creating a welcoming environment.
- **When unsure, ask:** It's always better to politely ask how you can be of assistance rather than make assumptions.