

## **Helpful Communication Hints**

There are no strict rules, when it comes to relating to people with disabilities.  
However, here are some helpful hints.

### **General**

- Treat people with disabilities with the same respect and consideration that you do with others.
- Ask a person with a disability if he/she needs help before helping.
- Talk directly to the person with a disability, not through the person's companion.
- Refer to a person's disability only if it is relevant to the conversation.
- Avoid negative descriptions of a person's disability. For example, "a person who uses a wheelchair" is more appropriate than "a person confined to a wheelchair."
- Refer to the person first and then the disability. "A man who is blind" is better than "a blind man" because it emphasizes the person first.

### **Visual Impairments**

- Be descriptive with people with visual impairments. Say, "The computer is about three feet to your left," rather than, "The computer is over there."
- When guiding people with visual impairments, offer them your arm rather than grabbing or pushing them.
- Always ask permission before you interact with a person's guide or service dog.

### **Learning Disabilities**

- If asked, read instructions to users with some specific learning disability.

### **Mobility Impairments**

- Try sitting or crouching to the approximate height of people in wheelchairs when you interact.

### **Speech Impairments**

- Listen carefully and ask people with speech impairments to repeat what they have said if you don't understand.

### **Hearing Impairments**

- Face people with hearing impairments and speak clearly when you talk to them so they can see your lips.