

## GUEST INTERACTION TIPS

### People First Language

We want our guests to know they are the most valuable and important people in the room. People first language aims to avoid perceived and subconscious dehumanization when discussing people with disabilities. To prevent unintentionally offending someone, we have provided a list of terms to avoid:

### Offensive Terms

- Handicapped
- Retarded
- Crippled
- Deaf and Dumb
- Mentally Different
- Autistic
- Epileptic
- Diseased
- Wheelchair-bound
- Emotionally Disturbed
- A “Patient”
- A “Case” or “Client”
- Slow
- Infirm
- Unfortunate
- “Suffers from”
- “Victim of”

### Offensive Phrases

Also, here are a few ways you can respectfully reword phrases:

- Instead of “a disabled person,” say “a person with disabilities”
- Instead of “a special needs person,” say “a person with special needs”
- Instead of “wheelchair-bound person,” say “a person in a wheelchair”
- Instead of “autistic person,” say “a person with autism”

The key thing to remember is to put the person first. They are not their disability; they are first and foremost a child of God and a person with feelings and emotions just like you.



## **General Tips for Communicating**

- When offering assistance to a person with a disability, wait until your help is accepted and then ask how you can best assist them.

## **General Tips for Communicating, continued...**

- It is acceptable to offer a handshake during introductions even if the other person has limited mobility in their hand or an artificial limb.
- Do not alter your voice or speak in a simplified, childish manner.
- If an interpreter is present, speak directly to the person and not their interpreter.
- Do not lean on anyone's wheelchair.
- Do not interact with service animals without asking first.
- If the person with whom you are speaking has a visual disability, make sure you identify yourself and any people who may be accompanying you.
- Be patient if the person with whom you are speaking has trouble understanding you. Do not get frustrated or raise your voice in an unpleasant way.

## **Preventing & Handling Awkward or Uncomfortable Situations**

- If you find yourself in an uncomfortable situation, do not be afraid to ask for help.
- Some signs of overstimulation include: yelling, screaming, crying, extreme fidgeting, fearful looks and/or aggressive behavior. If this happens, redirect them to a quieter location and if needed, find your guest's chaperone/guardian.
- Maintain your composure and speak kindly at all times.
- Never go off alone with one of the guests. Make sure you maintain physical boundaries and don't in any way encourage a guest to view you as their boyfriend/girlfriend.

*Used with permission from the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities, a university affiliated program at Minot State University, Minot, North Dakota, U*



