

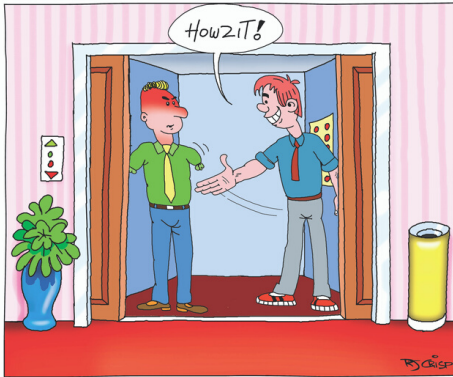
SAWUBONA DISABILITY

Disability Myths, Manners, Dos and Don'ts

ENGLISH



ATTRIBUTIONS



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Printed by xxx

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Robert Crisp was born in 1960 in a small mining town in the heart of South Africa. During his school years, he spent much of his time practicing his craft and entertaining his class mates with funny cartoons.

After completing two years of National Service in the army as a Pathfinder in a parachute unit, he backpacked across Europe for several years where he met Eilat, his wife. Robert broke his back in 1986 and has a disability as a result. He lives with Eilat in Johannesburg, where he works as a professional cartoonist.

"I observe people, the things they do and make. This and the desire to see just how accurately I can copy the 'split second' image that comes into my mind, is the driving force that keeps me constantly seeking new ideas," he says.



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CONTENTS

COO LETTER

Page 1

WHEELCHAIR USERS

Page 12

INTRODUCTION TO
DISABILITY

Page 2

DEAF OR HARD OF
HEARING

Page 13 - 14

KNOW THE DISABILITY

Page 3

PERSONS WITH SPEECH
DIFFICULTIES

Page 15

DEBUNKING THE MYTHS

Page 4

PERSONS WITH FACIAL
DISFIGUREMENTS

Page 15

DISABILITY RIGHTS

Page 5

LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

Page 5 - 6

PSYCHIATRIC AND
INTELLECTUAL
DISABILITIES

Page 16

LANGUAGE OF DISABILITY

Page 7

KNOW YOUR
TERMINOLOGY

Page 8 - 10

PERSONS OF SHORT
STATURE

Page 17

PERSONS WITH SIGHT
IMPAIRMENTS

Page 10 - 11

CONTACT INFORMATION

Page 18

PERSONS WITH MOBILITY
IMPAIRMENTS

Page 11

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Page 19

COO Letter

How does one communicate with people who have disabilities? What language should one use to write or talk about them? What is the etiquette when meeting a blind person or a wheelchair user? How much can one expect of a person with a disability, and what help should be given?

Many without disabilities will have felt shy or embarrassed when meeting those of us who have a disability. People tend to either blurt out commonly used but discriminatory language or get tied up in knots trying not to offend.

That is why QASA is proud to publish its *Sawubona Disability* booklet, which provides a short insight into the myths, manners, dos and don'ts of disability. There is a lot more to understanding disability than you will find here, but it's a friendly introduction that will set you on the right path.


We continually update the information in this booklet to keep up with innovation and trends as we publish to inform and develop the capacity of not only the general public, but QASA members too – many of whom, as a result, can understand disability, the value of this understanding and its ability to change behaviour for the better.

We are grateful for the ability to facilitate the process and flow of information. Our gratitude is owed to all the contributors of the booklet, including the professionals and the many persons with knowledge and experience who contributed to the valuable content.

Thank you to everybody who gave us hints, tips, information and funding to

research and print the booklet. We hope that this document continues to give support and lend a helping hand to those who need honest, useful information.

Enjoy the cartoons, think about the issues raised, and lend the booklet to others if you think it will help them. Our aim is not to dictate how you should think and speak, but to break down some false images and attitudes about people with disabilities. For it is society's attitudinal barriers that disable us more than anything else.



Raven Benny
QASA COO



INTRODUCTION TO DISABILITY

There are four million people with disabilities in South Africa (or 7,5 percent according to a Stats SA 2011 census). Although there are many people with disabilities, they are often marginalised and isolated, which can make it difficult for the wider society to grasp the perspective of people with disabilities.

Some might catch a glimpse of the challenges people with disabilities face while recovering from an injury or when facing old age, but this experience lacks one of the biggest challenges for people with disabilities: prejudices.

Although many everyday activities can be difficult for people with disabilities, people's attitudes and a lack of understanding can be a bigger challenge than the physical barriers as attitudes are much harder to change. A ramp can be fitted in a few hours to make a building accessible, but it can take decades to change beliefs.

As an example, think of hospital scenes in a movie when there is often a wheelchair user wheeled past. Society is geared to perceive wheelchair users as chronically sick and in need of permanent hospital care.

The disability sector is eager to demonstrate that disability is not a medical issue, but a social and environmental issue. Most people have little experience with meeting and interacting with people with disabilities on a day-to-day basis.

Unfortunately, and inaccurately, people with disabilities are often viewed as:

- victims or objects of pity;
- horrible or grotesque;

- burdens (either on society or their families and caregivers);
- unable to do things;
- having multiple disabilities (such as assuming that a person who uses a wheelchair also has an intellectual disability);
- "special" or "different";
- handicapped.

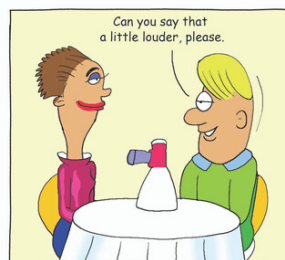
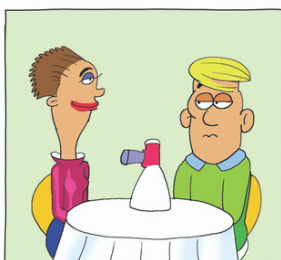
In order to address these false beliefs, society needs to understand the different types of disabilities and the appropriate language to use. This publication is a quick reference guide to speaking about disability and interacting with people with disabilities.

As every person with a disability is unique, it is important to ask the individual what their preferred terminology is and how they would like for you to interact with them. Make sure they feel comfortable to tell you when your behaviour is disrespectful or makes them uncomfortable.



KNOW THE DISABILITY

Disability	Explanation
Quadriplegia	A person with a limited or no mobility in their legs, arms and hands. They rely on a wheelchair to be mobile and might have difficulty gripping or holding small objects.
Paraplegia	A person with no mobility in their legs who relies on a wheelchair for mobility.
Blindness or sight impairment	A person with limited or no sight. They may not respond to physical gestures and require alternatives to read text.
Deafness or hearing impairment	A person with limited or no hearing. They may not respond to verbal communication or have difficulty hearing in venues with background noise.
Difficulty speaking	A person who may not speak clearly.
Intellectual or learning disabilities	A person who may be slow to understand information during conversation or struggles to learn in a traditional classroom setting.
Mental health condition	It can be difficult to tell a person who has a psychiatric disability apart from other people. Their illness can in some cases be treated (but not cured) with medication.
Facial disfigurements	A person with a face disfigurements, which doesn't imply an intellectual disability.



DEBUNKING THE MYTHS

People with disabilities are different from “normal” people

Normal is an abstract concept. People with disabilities think and feel just like any other person. They are just as unique as anyone else.

People without disabilities must care for those with disabilities

While some might require help and offering assistance is good, most people with disabilities strive to be independent.

People with disabilities need help

Many people with disabilities can care for themselves and are independent.

Wheelchair users are fragile, sickly and unhealthy

There are many reasons for people to use a wheelchair, not all of which is due to illness.

People with disabilities are brave, courageous and exhibit marvellous strength of character

Adjusting to a disability does require some changes, but it isn't necessarily brave. Rather praise the person on their accomplishments!

All persons with hearing impairments can read lips

Lip-reading skills vary and there is a risk of misunderstanding.

People who are blind have a sixth sense

Although most people who are blind develop their remaining senses more fully, they don't have a "sixth sense".

People with psychiatric disabilities are mad, insane or mentally ill

A psychiatric disability may

cause irrational or emotional behaviour, but doesn't make a person insane. This behaviour can often be managed through medication.

People with learning difficulties are mentally challenged

Learning difficulties are different to intellectual disabilities. Learning difficulties include dyslexia, which makes learning in a traditional classroom setting challenging. The person is often still very intelligent.

Other bizarre myths include:

- Parents are angels for raising their children with disabilities;
- People with disabilities go around suing everyone who upsets them;
- People with disabilities are suffering saints and that suffering makes you more spiritual;
- If you have a disability, you're incapable of handling your own affairs, living your own life or making your own decisions;
- Disability means you have sinned and are being punished;
- Disability is a tragedy and people with disabilities need a cure.



DISABILITY RIGHTS

There are various definitions of disability, but all point to society or an environment as the main factor behind a disability.

UN Convention 2006

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Disability Movement

Disability is the disadvantage or the restriction of activity caused by a society which takes little or no account of people who have impairments and thus excludes them from mainstream activity.

DPSA Constitution 2006

Disability is a social construct [and not a medical condition] that represents the outcome of the interaction between impairments and the negative environmental impacts on the individual, in recognition that society is constructed, both through the characteristic of its built environment and functioning, on the one hand and the prevailing attitudes and assumptions on the other, which results

in restricted opportunities for people with disabilities to participate on an equal basis, and failure of society to adapt to and accommodate their needs; and the term 'disabled' has a corresponding meaning.

Department of Social Development

Disability means moderate to severe limitations in a person's ability to function or ability to perform daily activities as a result of a physical, sensory, communication, intellectual or mental impairment.

Department of Labour

A long-term or recurring physical or mental impairment which substantially limits their prospects of entry into, or advancement in, employment.

Watermeyer, et al, 2006

Disability can no longer be seen as a static feature of an individual but rather as a dynamic and changing experience determined by the changing nature of the environment. This change from focusing on the individual to focusing on the environment plus the individual has important implications.

LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

Constitution (Bill of Rights, Section 9)

Everyone has the right to equal protection and the full enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. One cannot be discriminated against on the basis of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, disability, sexual orientation, culture or language. Visit www.info.gov.za for more.

The White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (WPRPD)

The WPRPD is the first ever policy document in South Africa. It takes its cue from the Constitution of South Africa and a number of international instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with

Disabilities and its Optional Protocol; Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action; the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action and the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals which reaffirm the rights of persons with disabilities.

Visit <https://pmg.org.za/policy-document/1112/> for more.

Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA)

This Act also aims to prevent unfair discrimination based on one or more grounds, including gender, race and disability, and seeks to:

- Promote equality;
- Protect human dignity;
- Prevent unfair discrimination and the use of hate speech;
- Promote a culture of democracy.

Visit www.info.gov.za for more.

Employment Equity Act

This Act aims to achieve equality in the workplace by eliminating all forms of discrimination and promoting equity in the workplace. The Act governs that no person in the workplace or applying for a job may be discriminated against on any grounds (race, gender, disability, etc).

The Act further promotes affirmative action; it protects people who have been historically discriminated against in the workplace. Affirmative Action requires that employers take steps to improve the situation of black people, women, and people with disabilities in the workplace. Visit www.info.gov.za for more.

Code of Good Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities in terms of the Employment Equity Act

The Code of Good Practice is a

guideline for employers, workers and trade unions on promoting equal opportunities and fair treatment for people with disabilities as required by the Act.

The Code is intended to educate and inform employers and workers to understand their rights and obligations, to promote certainty and to reduce disputes so that people with disabilities can effectively enjoy and exercise their rights at work.

The code is intended to help create awareness of the contributions people with disabilities make and to encourage employers to fully use the skills of such people.

Visit www.info.gov.za for more.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Convention promotes, protects and ensures the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights by persons with disabilities. Its comprehensive outlook includes key concerns such as accessibility, personal mobility, health, education, employment, habilitation and rehabilitation, equality and non-discrimination.

National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act

The National Building Regulations stipulate that buildings must provide the following accessible facilities:

- Ramps;
- Bathrooms;
- Doors;
- Lifts;
- Parking bays.

Legal Resources in South Africa

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC)
www.sahrc.org.za or info@sahrc.org.za

LANGUAGE OF DISABILITY

The language of disability has been changing for quite a while and continues to change. It is a vitally issue. Individuals with disabilities are considered to be disabled because of discrimination of which language is a big part. Mainly due to ignorance, many incorrect terms and phrases are used to describe disabilities and people who have disabilities.

However, people are increasingly aware of the way in which the language can reinforce negative stereotypes, even without the speaker realising it.

Certain word or phrases may give offence. It is important to avoid using language that suggests that people with disabilities are frail or dependent on others, or that makes people with disabilities objects of pity, such as "suffers" or "a victim".

It is an accepted practice that phrases should, if possible, put the person first, for example "people with disabilities" rather than "disabled people". Although there are no concrete rules, it is helpful to understand why some terms are preferred. Inappropriate terms and phrases include:

- Inconvenienced;
- Handi-capable or special;
- In spite of his disability;
- Overcame his handicap.

Remember the following when speaking about disabilities or to someone with disabilities:

- Don't communicate your admiration or

- or pity based on a person's disability;
- Each person is unique and may prefer a different term, so always ask;
- Acceptable disability terminology and the community are always evolving;
- Treat a person in an entirely non-judgmental manner;
- Restrain your curiosity and don't ask how the person sustained their injury.

A disability is extremely personal and the person will volunteer information if they are comfortable.

Have confidence and relax

There is no need to feel insecure or embarrassed. If you are worried about doing something "wrong", ask the person. They can assist you and your willingness to learn will be greatly appreciated.

Always be patient

Some people with disabilities need a little more time for everyday tasks such as entering a building or understanding the answer to a query.

Look beyond the disability

The most important is to remember you are dealing with a person first and not a disability. The person has thoughts, feelings, dreams, hopes and unique challenges like everyone else.

Important to acknowledge

The environment is often the disabling factor and not the impairment.

KNOW YOUR TERMINOLOGY

Avoid	Explanation	Use
Handicapped, crippled, physically challenged, differently abled, the disabled	The word “handicap” is negative. People with disabilities view themselves as people with medical conditions who are “disabled” by inaccessible environments.	A person with a disability Persons with disabilities
A paraplegic, a quadriplegic, an albino, a mongol	A person with a disability should not be defined by their condition, which is what these terms do. Instead, always refer to the person first, and then the disability.	Person with paraplegia, quadriplegia, albinism, Down Syndrome
Sipho suffers from cerebral palsy Sipho is afflicted/stricken with cerebral palsy Sipho is a victim of cerebral palsy	All four phrases cast disabilities as negative. "Suffers from" indicates ongoing pain, which is not the case for most people with disabilities. "Afflicted" and "stricken" denote a disease, which most disabilities are not. "Victim of" implies that a crime is committed on the person with a disability and that they are powerless.	Sipho is a child with cerebral palsy Sipho has cerebral palsy
Wheelchair bound or confined to a wheelchair	Wheelchair user consider this a mobility aid. Without it, they would not be able to move around. They also do many things without their chair like driving and sleeping.	Wheelchair user Sizwe uses a wheelchair
AIDS victim She's a diabetic	Some diseases by legal definition are considered disabilities. Victimising or defining the person by the disease is inappropriate.	Person with AIDS Person with diabetes
Dumb, stupid, slow, retarded	These words are negative. A person with a learning difficulty is often intelligent, but struggles to learn in traditional classroom settings.	Person with dyslexia or with a learning difficulty
Mentally challenged, mentally retarded, brain damaged	These are very derogatory words, and often inaccurate. Use inoffensive language.	Person with an intellectual disability or person with a mental disability

Avoid	Explanation	Use
Vision impaired, "the blind"	"Blind" or "visually impaired" are the correct terms to use.	Person is blind, visually impaired or partially sighted Blind people or people with visual impairments
Crazy, mental, lunatic, insane, mentally ill, nutter, psycho, schizo	These are very derogatory words that carry negative connotations.	Person with a mental health condition or mental ill health or a psychiatric disability
Deformed, deformity, birth defect	A person may be "born without arms" or "has a congenital disability," but is probably not defective. "Deformed" and "defect" are both negative words.	Person born without arms or with a congenital disability
Dwarf or midget	Avoid these negative words.	Person of short stature
Deaf and dumb, deaf mute, "the deaf"	Deafness doesn't impact on a person's intelligence. The term "mute" refers to the inability to speak. Many people with hearing disabilities are able to speak. People who are part of Deaf culture refer to themselves as "Deaf" with a capital "D". They may be identified in the same way.	Person is deaf or has a hearing impairment Deaf sign language user Deaf people or people with hearing impairments

GROUP TERMINOLOGY

Avoid	Correct terms
The disabled	People (or persons) with disabilities
Disabled rights	The disability rights movement
Disabled community	Disability community
The disabled residents	Residents who have disabilities

FACILITIES TERMINOLOGY

Avoid	Correct terms
Special bathroom or paraplegic bathroom	Accessible bathroom
Disabled parking	Accessible parking
Disabled seating	Seating for wheelchair users / accessible seating

The term "special" implies segregation and has negative associations. Accessible facilities can be used by anyone.

The principles of universal design are the pinnacle of accessibility whereby environments and items are designed to suit the needs of all human beings.

PERSONS WITH SIGHT IMPAIRMENTS

Sight impairments vary from person to person and range from limited sight, for example blurred or distorted vision, to no sight at all.

How to communicate

When approaching a person with a visual impairment, speak to them, so that they know someone is coming their way. Identify yourself clearly in case they do not recognise your voice but remember it is not necessary to shout.

Address a person with a visual impairment directly and not through a third person.

When introducing yourself, say, "shall we shake hands?" instead of taking them by surprise when you grasp their hand.

Some people who have visual impairments might have a guide dog. These are not pets and should not be fussed over. They are working dogs with an important function and should not overshadow the person with the disability.

How to offer to help

Being helpful is much appreciated. The best approach is to ask how you can be of help. Give verbal clues, such as "May I offer you an arm" or "May I take your bag for you" to avoid taking the person with the sight impairment by surprise.

When entering an unfamiliar area, give a brief description of the layout.

When leading a person, on approach of stairs, mention there are steps in advance, saying if they are up or down.

When offering the person a seat, the best way is to let them sit down by themselves. Do this by placing their hand on the arm or back of a chair.

When helping a blind person into a car, tell them which way the car is facing and place the person's hand on the roof over the open door.

When using public transport, such as a

train or bus, enter ahead of the blind person. Never push a person with a visual impairment in front of you.

At meals, a person with a visual impairment will manage independently or will ask for assistance.

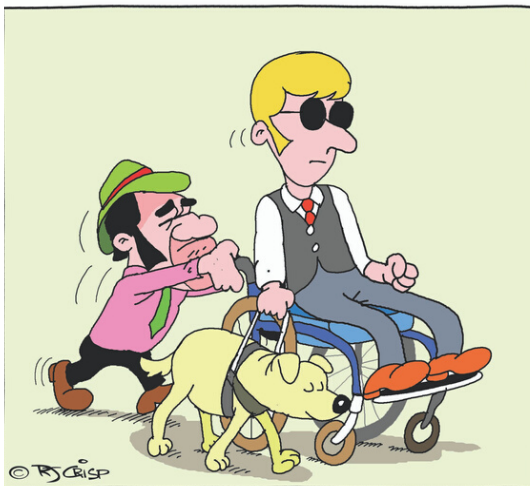
General etiquette

Do not leave a person with a visual impairment talking to an empty space. Tell them before you move away and gently announce yourself on returning.

If you need to move any belongings, first ask and then describe where they are. Check that they have picked up their possessions when you move.

In a business situation, if you need to give written communication to a person with a visual impairment, make sure

Information complied with the assistance of the National Council for the Blind.



you have this available in other formats, such as Braille, large print or audio.

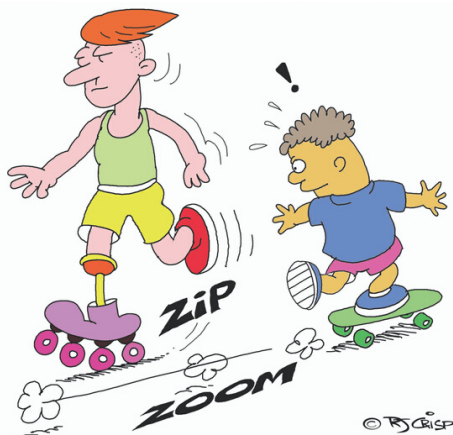
Ensure that doors are not left ajar. Avoid objects left on the floor as they are likely to be tripped over.

Persons with mobility impairments

Respect personal space

Items such as walking frames, crutches

and canes are also considered extensions of the user's personal space, so before you touch or move them, ask permission.



Offer to help

Always offer a seat. Also offer to open doors as this might be difficult for the person to do.

Be helpful, but make sure you offer to assist with bags or other belongings, before actually doing so.

Ask the person whether they would prefer a chair with arm rests or higher seats.

WHEELCHAIR USERS

There are many different reasons for someone to use a wheelchair and there is a wide range of physical disabilities among those who use wheelchairs.

How to communicate

Speak directly to the person and make eye contact. Don't stare at the wheelchair.

Offer a physical gesture (such as a handshake) when greeting the person even if they have very limited use of their arms and hands.

When speaking to someone in a wheelchair, put yourself at their eye level by sitting or lowering yourself. This will prevent the wheelchair user's neck straining or getting stiff.

If accompanied by a caregiver, make sure to still address the wheelchair user directly.

Never slap a wheelchair user on the back or thigh as this can cause the person to lose their balance or trigger muscle spasms.

When appropriate, a hug is acceptable, a touch is permissible, a smile is agreeable.

Don't be sensitive about using words like "walking" or "running". Wheelchair users also use these terms.

Respect personal space

Don't lean on or be overly familiar with a person's wheelchair. It's an extension of their personal space. It's also considered

rude to hang your items such as coats and bags on a person's wheelchair.

Never push a user's wheelchair without the person's consent.

How to offer help

Always ask the person before you help. Should they accept, ask them how they want to be assisted before going further.

When handing items to the person, place them within the person's grasp.

Accessible spaces

Don't park your car in a designated accessible parking place. These spaces are wider than usual (3500mm) in order to get wheelchairs in and out of the car and are close to the entrance for those who cannot push far.

Don't use accessible toilets designed for wheelchair users if you do not have a disability.



OOPS!

DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

Not all people who are hard of hearing are completely deaf. They may have varying degrees of deafness. Persons with mild, moderate, severe or profound hearing loss may use a hearing aid, may find lip-reading helpful or might use South Africa Sign Language (SASL). There are numerous ways to communicate with Deaf or hard of hearing persons.

Everyone lip-reads to some extent, especially in noisy situations. When you speak to someone, your facial movements give them information that helps them understand the meaning of what you are saying.

There are some important things to remember about lip-reading:

- Lip-reading requires skill and concentration, and can be tiring;
- Words can look similar on the lips;
- Some sounds are pronounced at the back of the throat and have no visible shape on the lips.

How to communicate

In order to start a conversation, get the person's attention with a slight touch to the shoulder, move into their line of vision or give a small wave (do not exaggerate this).

It is essential that the person sees you before you begin the conversation, else they may lose the first words of what you are trying to convey.

Establish eye contact before beginning communication.

It is best not to assume how much the person can and can't hear. Ask whether they are understanding and how

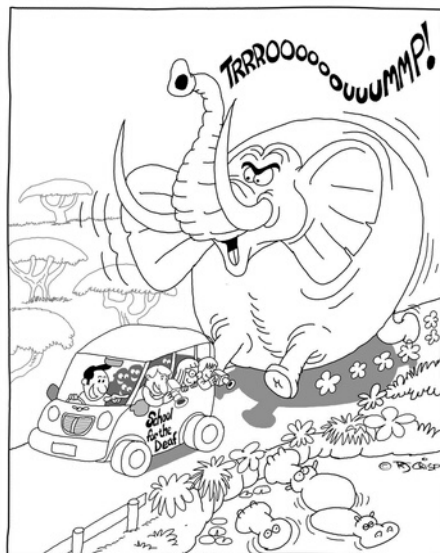
loud you should talk, and find out how best you can communicate with them.

Avoid raising your voice too much in order to be heard, and don't shout, especially when dealing with sensitive information. If you can't be heard or understood, write down what you want to convey.

Hand gestures can be useful, but use these as you would in any normal conversation. Exaggeration is not necessary and can be embarrassing.

Make sure that you have been understood – don't be afraid to ask. It is better to ask the deaf person whether they understand or whether they need help, than to assume.

Keep sentences short and use proper sentence construction. Rephrase rather than repeat sentences.



Speak clearly so that the person can see and read your lips. Use a normal tone of voice. Use facial expressions that correspond to the topic and mood of discussion.

Use basic signs to transfer your message. Indicate unforeseen happenings such as a sudden loud noise.

The deaf person may have a sign language interpreter who will translate what you are saying for them.

In this case, do not address the interpreter, but speak directly to the Deaf person as you would any other person.

General etiquette

Do not smoke, chew gum or let your hair cover your face while in conversation, as this will make it difficult to read your lips.

Do not look away during a conversation as this denotes the termination of the communication.

Especially for people who are hard of hearing but have some hearing ability, keep background noise to a minimum if possible, to help them hear more clearly.

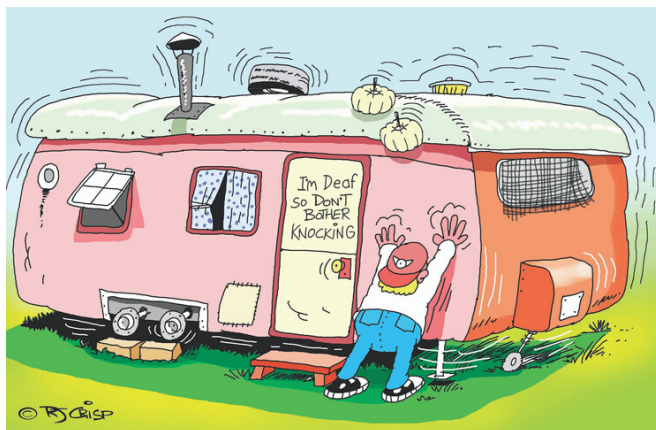
You may have to speak loudly to allow the person to hear. Always respect the person's privacy and suggest moving to a quiet corner or a private area when discussing sensitive information.

Many people can join in conversations by using a hearing aid or lip-reading:

- Make eye contact with the deaf person when speaking to them.
- Keep your face and lips visible by keeping them in the light. Avoid standing with your back to a light as this will put you in shadow.
- Do not speak too fast and keep your speech clear; however, do not speak in an exaggerated manner. Keep it natural!
- Remember that the person in this case needs to see your face when communicating; so if you need to turn away, stop talking, so that the person doesn't lose the sense of the conversation.

DO: Be patient and take time to communicate.

DON'T: Use exaggerated gestures or block your mouth when talking



*Information
compiled with
the assistance
of NCPPDSA,
NID and
DEAFSA.*

PERSONS WITH SPEECH DIFFICULTIES

Various factors can cause speech difficulties and language problems, and usually a speech difficulty is unrelated to a mental disability.

So, don't assume that because a person has a speech difficulty that they have a learning difficulty or mental disability. Treat them like any other person.

How to communicate

The key to effectively communication is to focus on what the person with the speech difficulty is saying as with any other person.

Patience is important, so show this in your voice and body language. However, don't be condescending or exaggerate your encouragement.

Do not correct the person or finish their sentences. You may know what they are trying to say, but this disempowers them.

Let them speak for themselves.

Ask one question at a time. When asking the person a question that requires a complex answer, consider breaking it up into single points that require only short answers.

Speak in a clear way and at a calm pace, but do not speak in an exaggerated slow way. Their speech difficulty may not always affect their understanding of what is said.

Don't pretend to understand what the person has said in order to make them feel better – honesty is the best policy. Instead, apologise and ask them to repeat what they have said.

To ensure that you do know what they have said, repeat what you understand they said, and ask if this is correct.

PERSONS WITH FACIAL DISFIGUREMENTS

People who have facial disfigurements are often faced with difficult situations, because society does not accept them as they are.

This can lead to discomfort. When speaking to a person with a facial or other disfigurement, bear in mind that they may be anxious, sensitive or have low self-confidence.

Don't turn away. Make sure to give them your attention during the conversation.

You can create a positive interaction with them by focusing on the person and what they are saying rather than their disfigurement. Don't stare!

Even if you feel uncomfortable, do not let your uneasiness affect your conversation with the person, or make them feel uncomfortable.

Looks are only skin-deep: bear in mind that other than their disfigurement, they are a normal human being.

PSYCHIATRIC AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Mental illness, mental disturbance or psychiatric illness is a description of the same condition. It could entail disturbances of mood, observation ability, thoughts, will power, memory and behaviour.

Psychiatric disability can affect anyone and no exact cause for psychiatric disability has been identified. If the brain is damaged and not able to work properly, we say the person has an intellectual disability. Intellectual disability can affect anyone. Many possible causes of intellectual disability have been identified and often no clear cause can be found.

One in four of us at some time in our life will experience a mental health problem and most of us will make a full recovery.

The major barrier people with mental health problems face are attitudinal rather than physical.

In many instances you will not know someone has a mental health problem.

While some persons with psychiatric illness remain functional and in control of their lives, others need ongoing support.

How to communicate

People with psychiatric disabilities don't necessarily have an intellectual disability, so do not assume they won't understand you.

Communicate with the person as if they are any other person, and don't make any prejudices about what you think they will or won't understand.

A patient attitude is important, but don't be patronising.

The best idea is to avoid complex words and terminology, and keep your conversation clear and straightforward.

Try changing the questions round to check if you still get the same response. If necessary, use communication aids such as symbols or pictures.

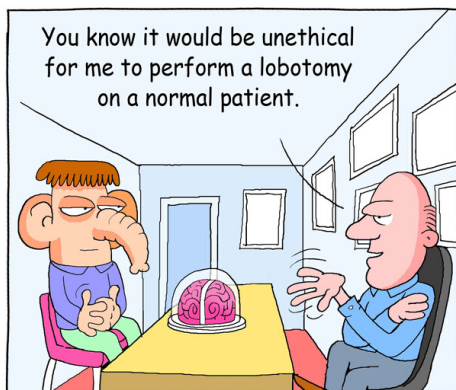
General etiquette

Be accepting, understanding and supportive. Be patient, and don't put the person under pressure to answer your questions quickly.

Some things can cause stress, including crowded rooms, flashing lights, loud noise and music. Try to eliminate these causes of stress.

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Content adapted from material supplied from SAFHM.



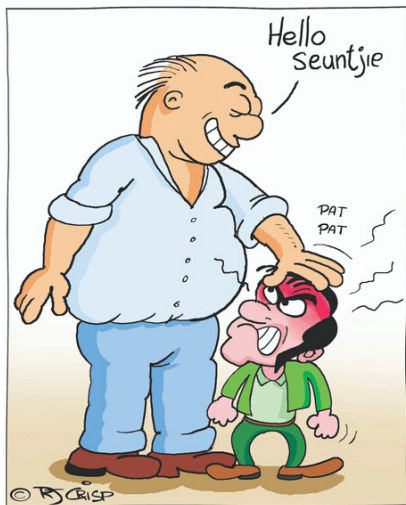
PERSONS OF SHORT STATURE

DWARFISM

Dwarfism commonly refers to a person with an adult height of less than 147 cm. There are different types of dwarfism that can be caused by genetic or other medical conditions. A person of short stature is neither a child nor a member of the local circus!

Communicate

Communication can be easier when people are at the same level, so step back or kneel down to make eye contact with the person.



Information compiled with the assistance of Engela Nel, APD Western Cape.

Don't talk down to the person or be over-familiar. The same courtesy and respect is required as when meeting any other person for the first time.

If the person is accompanied by a friend, colleague or family member, address the person directly and not the companion.

Etiquette

Do not assume the person's age and/or abilities based on their height.

Place items within the person's reach. Never pet the person on the head. Jokes about *Snow White* and the *Seven Dwarfs* are not funny.

Offer to help

Do not offer to pick up the person if they can't reach an object. Just pass the object or provide a step stool so they can reach it themselves.




Ask before putting a cushion on the chair. Often a loose cushion makes it more difficult for a person with short stature to get onto the chair.

Always ask the person if they would like assistance before you help. Should they accept, ask them how they want to be assisted before going further.

THE COLLECTIVE VOICE OF THE DISABILITY
SECTOR IN COLLABORATION

Organisation listings




AUTISM SOUTH AFRICA

 info@autismsouthafrica.org
 011 484 9909
 www.aut2know.co.za

CHESHIRE HOMES SOUTH AFRICA

 managerchs@cheshirehomes.co.za
 041 583 2183
 www.cheshirehomes.co.za

DEAFBLIND SOUTH AFRICA (DBSA)

 info@deafblindsa.co.za
 082 688 5344
 www.deafblindsa.co.za

DEAF FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICA (DEAFSA)

 brunodruchen@deafsa.co.za
 011 482 1610
 www.deafsa.co.za




DISABLED CHILDREN'S ACTION GROUP (DICAG)

 sandra@dicag.co.za
 021 761 3531
 www.dicag.co.za



EPILEPSY SOUTH AFRICA

 info@epilepsy.org.za
 021 556 3753
 www.epilepsy.org.za



MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY FOUNDATION OF SOUTH AFRICA (MDSA)

 gmnational@mdsa.org.za
 011 472 9703
 www.mdsa.org.za



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR PERSONS WITH CEREBRAL PALSY (NAPCP)

 elizma.woods@napcp.org.za
 0823499630


NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA (NCPDPSA)


 011 452 2774
 www.facebook.com/disabilities.sa/


NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE DEAF (NID)

 023 342 5555
 www.deafnet.co.za

QUADPARA ASSOCIATION OF
SOUTH AFRICA (QASA)


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 031 767 0352


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QUADPARA ASSOCIATION
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SOUTH AFRICAN DISABILITY
ALLIANCE (SADA)


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 011 452 2774


 www.sada.org.za


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GAUTENG NORTH


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 012 32 2572


SOUTH AFRICAN FEDERATION
FOR MENTAL HEALTH
(SAFMH)


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 011 781 1852


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SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL
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(SANCB)

 helpdesk@sancb.org.za

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 031 701 7444


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DEAF ASSOCIATION (SANDA)

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 www.sanda.org.za

Acknowledgements

Human Rights and Disability

Published by the South African Human Rights Commission
(www.sahrc.org.za)

Preferred Terminology

Published by the National Council for Persons with Physical Disabilities in South Africa (www.ncppdsa.org.za)

Training Manual: The Integration of all Persons Experiencing Hearing Loss

Published by the National Council for Persons with Physical Disabilities in South Africa (www.ncppdsa.org.za) and the National Institute for the Deaf (www.deafnet.co.za)

What to do when you meet a blind person

Published by the National Council for the Blind
(www.sancb.org.za)

Welcoming Disabled Customers

Published by the Employers' Forum on Disability
(www.employers-forum.co.uk)

Disability Communication Guide

Published by the Employers' Forum on Disability
(www.employers-forum.co.uk)

Disability and Social Change: A South African Agenda

Written by Marguerite Schneider, Brian Watermeyer, Theresa Lorenzo, Leslie Swartz and Mark Priestley. Published by the Human Sciences Research Council, Cape Town, South Africa.

Disability Awareness – Do it right! Your all-in-One how-to guide

Written by Mary Johnson. Published by Avocado Press, Louisville, United States.

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