

## **Module 8**

### **DISABILITIES**

- Things to Remember
- Language
- Personality Types
- Specific Disabilities
  - Hearing Impairment
  - Visual Impairment

# DISABILITIES

## Things to Remember:

- Each person with a disability is his or her own person.
- Each person with a disability is different and unique, and no matter what label is attached for the convenience of others, your client is still a person first. There are no two children with developmental disabilities who are the same or two adults with hearing impairment who will react in a similar fashion, for example.
- Persons with disabilities are persons first.
- Persons with disabilities have the same needs as you have, to love and be loved, to learn, to share, to grow and to experience, in the same world as you live in.
- Persons with disabilities have the same right as you to fail, to suffer, to cry, to curse, to despair. To protect them from these experiences is to keep them from life.
- Only the individual with a disability can show or tell you what is possible for him or her.
- Persons with disabilities must do for themselves. We need to be present to reinforce, encourage, hope and help when we are needed.
- Individuals with disabilities, no matter what the challenges, have a limitless potential for becoming – not what we desire them to become, but what is within them to become.
- People with disabilities must find their own manner of doing things. To set our standards (or the culture's standards) upon them is unrealistic, even destructive.
- People with disabilities need the world and others in order to learn. The world is a classroom and all persons are teachers. There is no meaningless experience.
- All persons with disabilities have the right to honesty about themselves, about you and about their condition. To be dishonest with them is the greatest disservice you can perform.

**Persons with disabilities need the best YOU possible**

**In order to be themselves- growing free, teaching, changing, developing,  
experiencing persons - you must also be these things  
You can only teach what you are.**

## Language

We can all promote change, and negative terminology can disappear over time, as a greater understanding of the words and phrases, which may give offence to people with disabilities, is reached.

There are no hard or fast rules as long as you respect individual preference.

### Remember when talking or writing about people with disabilities...

- Put the person first, not the disability.
- Refer to the person's disability only when it is relevant.
- Avoid images designed to evoke pity or guilt.

Instead of ....	Use...
Disabled, handicapped, crippled	Person(s) with a disability
Crippled by, afflicted with, suffering from, victim of, deformed	Person who has... or Person with
Lame	Person who is mobility impaired
Confined, bound, restricted to or dependant on a wheelchair	Person who uses a wheelchair
Deaf and dumb, deaf mute, hearing impaired	Person who is Deaf, hard of hearing
Retarded, mentally retarded	Person with a developmental disability
Spastic (as a noun)	Person with Cerebral Palsy
Physically Challenged	Person with a physical disability
Mental Patient, mental ill, mental, insane	Person with a mental illness, Person who has schizophrenia, Person who has...
Learning disabled, learning difficulty	Person with a learning disability
Visually impaired (as a collective noun)	Person who is visually impaired, blind

## Dealing with Different Personality Types

Client Character Types	Caregiver Character Types
<p><b>Aggressor:</b> This individual is characterized by being overly demanding and bossy. They show no appreciation to the attendant.</p>	<p><b>Nurse:</b> The caregiver who has developed his/her own medical technique and refuses to do a task any other way. The caregiver directs the client, assuming responsibility for the client's care.</p>
<p><b>Martyr:</b> This individual's favourite phrase is "don't worry about me", followed by a big sigh. This attitude encourages feelings of pity and even guilt from the attendant.</p>	<p><b>Mother:</b> The attendant feels their job is to take care of the person with a disability and to nurture them. This is the type of person who hovers sweetly, pats the person with disability on the head or arm, and does things that are not needed.</p>
<p><b>Pacifist:</b> The passive personality has a main goal to avoid conflict. This often results in unmet needs because of a fear that the attendant might be angry if asked to perform task outside.</p>	<p><b>Best Friend/Companion:</b> The attendant allows no privacy for the person with a disability and refuses to allow him/her to have other social relationships. This attendant would probably expect to be included in all social activities planned by the person with a disability and would be hurt if left out.</p>
<p><b>Guilt Maker:</b> Has difficulty accepting his or her disability and attempts to place the blame on others. His/her non-verbal message is "Oh poor me" or "The world owes me something".</p>	<p><b>Over Protector:</b> This person's creed is "I know what is best for my client". The attendant might try to prevent the person with a disability from taking even minor risks, thus encouraging a dependant relationship.</p>
<p><b>Roller coaster:</b> Experiences extreme mood swings which seem to be inconsistent. One minute the person is happy, and the next, sad. Not knowing what to expect can hinder a relationship.</p>	<p><b>Good Samaritan:</b> The attendant is a "do-gooder" whose primary objective is to make him/her-self feel she is needed. This person's creed might be "you've suffered enough already, let me take care of you". He or she will do more for the person with a disability than is necessary and may treat the person like a child.</p>
<p><b>Drug Abuser:</b> Because of drug dependency, they may behave in an inconsistent and/or be unable to assume the responsibility of their own care.</p>	<p><b>Drug Abuser:</b> Because of drug dependency – may do a good job when they are not "spaced out". But are usually unreliable and/or inconsistent in behaviour.</p>

<p><b>Perfectionist:</b> This person's attendants often describe him or her as "picky". Generally, the client insists that tasks be performed in a very specific, detailed way with no flexibility. Setting unrealistic priorities might be difficult for this person.</p>	<p><b>Assertive:</b> Like assertive people with a disability, this attendant states his or her feelings and needs in a direct, non-threatening manner. He or she does not "put down" another person. This attendant behaves in a consistent manner and has a strong sense of self.</p>
<p><b>Assertive:</b> This client is able to express his or her needs in a direct yet non-threatening manner. He or she does not manipulate other people. This type of individual knows her/him-self and is usually self-assured.</p>	

### Specific Disabilities - Hearing Loss

A sense of loss and loneliness can sometimes come to those who are hard of hearing. Too often they begin to feel isolated as others will stop talking to them and feel embarrassed with them, simply because friends and families are unsure how to communicate with them.

A little informed courtesy can make communication easier:

- Slower please, not louder
  - Shouting is embarrassing, and unnecessary. In fact, it can cause discomfort to a hearing aid wearer.
- The Nearer, the Clearer
  - Speak clearly and naturally, perhaps a little slower than usual. Come closer when you speak.
- No one has eyes in the back of his/her head
  - Many people who are hard of hearing rely on lip-reading. Wait for them to look at you before you speak. Be careful not to cover your face when you talk with them.
- Keep it light
  - Make sure your face is not in a shadow. Candlelight is not for lip-readers.
- Take sides
  - Find out if he/she has a "good" ear. Speak to that side.

- Actions speak as loud as words
  - A “deadpan” face is difficult to read. Remember that the tone of voice may not be heard, so use all your acting powers to help project the meaning.
- The same only different
  - If you notice that he/she did not catch what was said, try rephrasing rather than repeating. People, who are hard of hearing often hesitate to ask, so be alert to help them when they miss something.
- Now... I see
  - In conversation, give him/her key words or phrases. “Mary was saying that ...” maybe even jot down a clue or word. Lip reading is easier when you know the subject.
- Me too!
  - Hearing loss may be the “invisible disability”, but the person is still here. Never ignore a person who is hard of hearing.
- Plan ahead
  - Hearing loss need not mean loss of involvement in activities and social events.

### **Specific Disabilities – Visual Impairment**

There are many ways that you can assist a person who is visually impaired live active lives.

- When eating with a person who is visually impaired
  - Read the menu and prices aloud
  - If the person wants help he or she will ask for it
  - Explain the position of the food on the plate
- If a person who is visually impaired has a guide dog
  - Remember the dog is a working animal and not a pet
  - Do not divert its attention: it’s masters’ life depends on alertness
- If a person who is visually impaired lives alone
  - Always identify yourself when you enter a room
  - Don’t play “guess who” games
- If you live or work with a person who is visually impaired
  - Never leave a door ajar
  - Keep corridors clear of clutter
  - Indicate if furniture is moved

- When you talk with a person who is visually impaired
  - Don't shout. A person who is visually impaired usually hears as well as you, sometimes better
  - Always talk directly to the person, not thru his/her companion
  
- If assisting a person who is visually impaired to a seat.
  - When showing a blind person to a chair, put his/her hand on the back of the chair.
  
- If you give a person who is visually impaired directions
  - Give direction as clearly as possible, according to the way the person is facing.