

Disability Factsheet

Practical Advice

- Never assume that people need help and that you know how to help them.
- If a disabled person is accompanied by a carer, don't talk to the carer, talk directly to the disabled person.
- Talk to a visually impaired person the same way as you would talk to anyone else – try not to raise your voice
- Don't pat or talk to a guide dog
- When talking to a visually impaired person, always introduce yourself by giving your name and ensure that you use their name in your greeting. If you don't know their name, touch them gently on the arm to draw their attention. When you walk away let them know that you are leaving.
- Facial expressions, gestures and keeping your hands, cigarettes, food etc. away from your face will help someone who lip reads. Improving lighting conditions and looking straight at the person will also help.
- If difficulties occur when communicating with someone with a hearing impairment jot down notes.
- In your office, or reception keeping noisy machinery like photocopiers and printers away from the place where you communicate with customers will help people with a hearing impairment.
- If someone has a speech impairment, don't pretend to understand what they have said.
- Never lean on a wheelchair or grab the back of it to push it along.
- When talking to a wheelchair user get down to their eye level, getting a chair and sitting down is better as some people find it patronising if you crouch down.
- Never touch or move walking sticks or crutches without the owner's consent.

Mental impairments

Still a lot of stigma regarding mental illness, even though 1 in 4 people in Scotland will experience mental illness during their lifetime.

Make it clear that you are there for a friend who is going through a period of mental illness and be prepared to take them seriously.