

Communication



Communication with people with disabilities

Speak to a person with a disability as you would speak to anyone else.

Speak in an age-appropriate tone and treat adults as adults.

If a person with a disability is accompanied by another person, such as a carer, you should still speak directly to the person with disability.

Put the person first, not their disability. For example, use the term 'a person with disability' rather than 'a disabled person'.

Try to avoid negative phrases such as 'suffers from' and 'crippled'. Use the phrase 'people who use a wheelchair' rather than 'wheelchair bound'.

Communicating with people with physical disabilities

Remember that someone's personal space can include their wheelchair and crutches. Don't touch or push a person's wheelchair, and don't move their crutches or walking stick without their permission.

When speaking with a person who uses a wheelchair, try to find something to sit on to be at eye level with them.

Communicating with people with a vision impairment

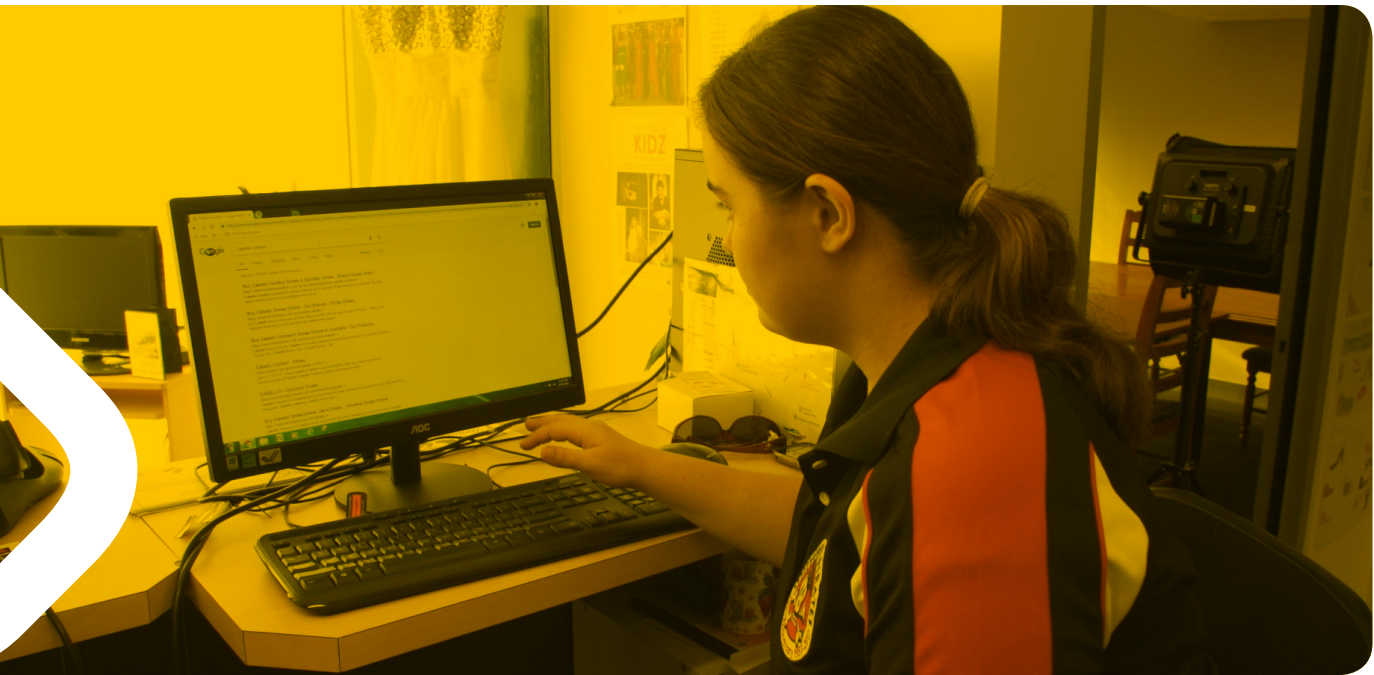
When you meet people who have a vision impairment, always address them by name and introduce yourself.

Speak clearly and in a normal voice – there is no need to raise your voice.

Remember that people with vision impairment can't rely on the same visual cues as people without a vision impairment. Make sure you verbalise any thoughts or feelings.

If a person is accompanied by a guide dog, don't pat it, feed it or distract it while it's in a harness. A dog in a harness is working to support its owner.

When you enter or leave a room, say something to make sure that the person who has a vision impairment won't be embarrassed by speaking to an empty space.



Communicating with people with a hearing impairment

Gain the person's attention before speaking. Try a gentle tap on the shoulder, a wave or some other visual signal to get the person's attention.

Face the person directly and maintain eye contact.

Make sure your mouth is visible – don't cover it with your hand or any other object as you talk.

Look directly at the person while speaking and don't speak too fast or too slow.

Don't exaggerate your mouth movements – this will only make it more difficult to lip-read.

Use short sentences.

Keep your volume at a natural level – don't shout.

Communicating with people with an intellectual disability

Make sure you have the person's attention before you start talking. Try using their name or making eye contact.

Keep your questions simple and your answers easy to understand.

Remember that your body language is important because people with an intellectual disability often rely on visual cues.

Be prepared to use visual information, or to get visual information, from people with an intellectual disability.

Be specific and direct. Avoid talking using abstracts, acronyms, metaphors or puns.

Remember: When you enter or leave a room, say something to make sure that the person who has a vision impairment won't be embarrassed by speaking to an empty space.