



Buddy Best Practices

Presented by 99 Balloons

Night to Shine is all about the Honored Guests

- If there is not room to walk beside your guest on the red carpet, walk behind them.
- From beginning to end, the spotlight remains on the Honored Guests.

Each honored guest will have a lanyard, which will include:

- Allergies (if applicable)
- Special needs / accommodations (if applicable)
- Emergency contact information

Discourage any boyfriend or girlfriend talk with your buddy

- Night to Shine is not a date.
- Kindly and gently steer the conversation in the right direction.

Consider how your guest is getting home

- Will they be riding with a parent / caregiver or will they be taking public transportation?
- Volunteers should NEVER provide transportation for Honored Guests.

Social media policy

- Do not post photos or videos including your buddy on social media without verbal or written permission.

Contact after the event

- Redirect any requests for your personal information back to your host church.
- Do not ask for personal information. Ask your host church for appropriate ways to stay in contact with your buddy.

Always refer to your volunteer team leadership with any questions

Disability Etiquette & Relationship Building

Presented by Guidelight

Jesus wasn't just a man for the people, but He was a man with the people

- It was always about more than service with Jesus, it was authentic relationship.

How to build authentic relationships with individuals with disabilities:

1. See the whole person.
2. Welcome them with open arms.
3. Find out what their likes and interests are.
4. Find ways to personally connect.

Relationship building happens when we erase the idea in our heads about service provider and service recipient and see ourselves as two people who both...

- equally reflect the image of God.
- belong to each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.
- were made for relationship.

Keep your eyes on the one you are building a relationship with, rather than looking at the provider or caregiver

- Some friends with special needs may occasionally need more time to think about your question to verbalize their answer. Give them all the time they need and don't try to answer for them. Be patient and not in a hurry.
- It's okay to ask someone with a disability to repeat themselves. It shows that you are truly interested in what they have to say and you're ready to work together to figure it out.

Wheelchair Etiquette:

1. Do not lean on or touch an Honored Guest's wheelchair. Always ask first.
2. Get on their level to look them in the eye.
3. Do not assume they authorize you to push them. Always ask first.

Recognize the person you are serving as someone fearfully and wonderfully made by God, just like you, and take the time to form a relationship with them.

- Recognize the mutuality of the relationship and take steps to make a personal connection.
- This is how we love and serve like Jesus and grow into relationship with others.

How to Help Guests Regulate

Presented by Overcomer Ministries

Things to look for when an Honored Guest is feeling overstimulated or their nervous system is dysregulated:

1. Watch for someone covering their ears or eyes.
2. Take notice of sudden change in mood or behavior.
3. Pay attention to indications or mentions of physical discomfort.

Fight, Flight or Freeze is a neurological response, not a behavior

- If you see any signs of this, help your Honored Guests get away from the overload of sensory input and go to the Sensory Room or Calm Space.

How to Transition to the Calm Space or Sensory Room:

1. Describe the room and suggest going there at a set time.
2. Use a social story.
3. Suggest making a delivery to the calm space or sensory room.

What to do in the Calm Space or Sensory Room:

1. Rest and relax.
2. Allow honored guests to talk, but limit your talking.
3. Show guests around the room and encourage them to choose something to help them relax.
4. Join guests in a quiet game or activity of their choice.
5. Model slow, deep breathing.
6. Try a grounding technique.

Ways to Help Prevent Sensory Overload:

1. Watch for sensory overload and reduce sensory input
2. Heavy pressure
3. Slow, deep breathing
4. Cold items and ice

3 Pitfalls to Avoid:

1. Pity / Charity Mentality
 - Our ministry does not flow out of pity for them. Our friends with disabilities are a vital part of the body of Christ.
2. Special Angels
 - Our friends with disabilities do not exist for our inspiration. While we each have unique lives and roads that we travel, there is one human experience and we all need Jesus. There can be no “othering.”
3. If you are not comfortable, we are not comfortable
 - We always want to be respectful and preserve the dignity of our Honored Guests, but please feel free to ask for help or to signal your discomfort to your volunteer team leadership so that they can help.

General Guidelines:

- Volunteers are NEVER to be alone with an Honored Guest.
 - Steer clear of empty rooms, restrooms, and any one-to-one situations.
- All volunteers need to wear a visible name tag throughout the entire event.
- Volunteers should NEVER administer medications.
- Familiarize yourself with the event space:
 - Bathrooms (are they handicap accessible or not?)
 - Sensory Room or Calming Spaces (as some of our friends may be seeking quiet as the night gets more overwhelming for them)
 - Food & Water
 - Stairs / Ramps / Trip Hazards