



The following table gives

**BASIC HINTS FOR INTERACTION WITH A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY**  
**THE GOLDEN RULE: ASK THE PERSON WITH THE DISABILITY**

DEAFENED / HARD OF HEARING	PERSONS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES	BLIND AND PARTIALLY SIGHTED PEOPLE
Wave or touch the person's shoulder to draw the person's attention.	Do not lean on, or touch a person's wheelchair, it is part of their personal space	Allow a blind/partially sighted person to take your arm (at or about the elbow). This will enable you to guide rather than propel or lead the person
Keep sentences short and use proper sentence construction. Rephrase, rather than repeat sentences that the person does not understand	Ask the person with a physical disability whether he/she prefers a chair with armrests or higher seats	Address a blind person directly and not through a third person
Speak clearly so that the person can see and read your lips. Use a normal tone of voice when having a conversation with a person experiencing hearing loss, unless otherwise indicated by the person	Be prepared to offer assistance to persons with limited hand, wrist or arm function	Do not be afraid to use the word "see" in phrases like "see you later" blind people talk to each other in the same way
Do not smoke, chew gum or let your hair cover your face whilst in conversation with a person experiencing hearing loss	Never ask a wheelchair user to hold e.g. Coats, etc. Do not put your drink, for instance, on the desktop attached to someone's wheelchair	When speaking to a blind person, always say who you are
Use facial expressions to correspond with the topic and mood of discussion. Keep eye contact and talk to the person rather than the interpreter	Do not push a person's wheelchair without their permission.	Always say goodbye when leaving a room so that the blind/partially sighted person is not left speaking to no-one
Be patient when either you or the person experiencing hearing loss, have difficulty in understanding or transferring a message	When talking to a wheelchair user, sit on a chair in order to sit at their eye-level. If you have to stand, stay at a distance so that the person does not strain their neck.	When greeting a blind person, wait for him/her to extend his/her hand before shaking it. Say something like "take my hand" this will prevent uncertainty and embarrassment for both parties
Do not change the subject or change your language in mid-sentence	Place items within a wheelchair user's grasp	Do not leave a blind/partially sighted person in a strange environment without orientating him/her to it
Use basic signs to transfer your message	People using canes or crutches need their arms to balance themselves, so never grab the person.	Do not distract a blind person's guide-dog from being his/her active "eyes"
Indicate unforeseen happenings e.g. sudden loud music or dogs fighting	Pulling out or pushing in a chair may present a problem. Always ask before offering help.	Do not hesitate to laugh when a blind person tells a joke about blindness. This is quite common among blind people.
If you are standing with your back to a light source, such as a window, the glare may obscure your face and make it difficult for the person experiencing hearing loss to speech read	Put out mats on slippery floors for persons using canes or crutches although people wheelchair users prefer floors without mats.	Do not grab the end of a blind persons cane in trying to guide him/her

**Need more information? Please contact me...**

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