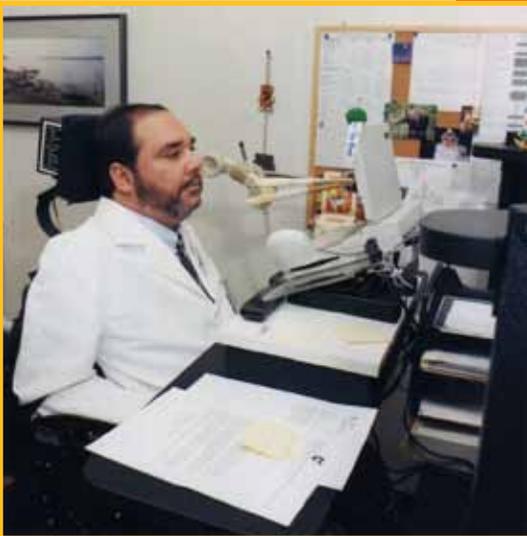


Healthcare Professionals

**DISABILITY
SPECIFIC
GUIDELINES**

**CREATIVE
SOLUTIONS**



www.gcpd.ohio.gov
800. 282. 4536

Servicing Patients with Disabilities

General Information

Mobility

Blind and Visually Impaired

Cognitive/Intellectual Disabilities

Deaf/Hard of Hearing

People with disabilities represent a large and growing patient cluster. However, many do not seek out or obtain quality health care because of inaccessible facilities, lack of specialized exam/treatment equipment, IE scales, adjustable exam tables, or awkward/frustrating interactions with health-care professionals. By following these general and disability specific guidelines, you can begin reversing this trend, one patient at a time.



Golden Rule

All Americans will experience some type of disability during their life span. Think “people first” and “disability second.” Treat people with disabilities as you would like to be treated.

People First

Talk directly to a patient, not to a companion or an interpreter. Involve a patient with disabilities in his/her own healthcare decisions. Avoid patronizing terms such as Buddy, Honey, Sweetie, etc., especially when interacting with adults.

Check and Note

Staff should be familiar with designated handicapped parking spaces, bus stops and accessible routes. Find out how best to communicate with patients regarding follow-up visits, treatments, test results, scheduling appointments, etc. Note this information in the patient’s chart.

Ask before Acting

Special needs vary depending on the patient and the situation. Ask if a patient would like any special assistance. Then, do as requested within reason.

Specific Disabilities

Mobility

Eye to Eye

When talking with a patient seated in a wheelchair, sit to speak at eye level.

Lock Before Moving

Always make sure that the patient's wheelchair is locked before assisting in a transfer.

Work Together

Some patients find standard positioning needed for tests such as a colonoscopy, mammograms, etc., a challenge. Solicit patient suggestions to find creative solutions.

Blind and Visually Impaired

Ask Permission

Service animals are allowed in all public areas. Get permission from a patient before petting, talking to, or feeding an animal.

Shh: I Hear You!

Speak normally. Mood is conveyed through your tone of voice.

Common Language

Feel free to use everyday words such as look, see, watch, etc. Give left/right directions according to the way a patient is facing.

Respect my Space

Let a patient know when you are entering or leaving personal space. Do not move personal belongings without asking. Before administering any procedure, tell the patient what you will be doing and what he/she may feel.

Cognitive/Intellectual Disabilities

Simplify

Speak in short, clear sentences, rewording information as needed, and using a combination of illustration, written and/or verbal instructions. Verify patient's understanding by asking for feedback.

Look Ahead

Provide written instructions for anyone who might be assisting with the patient's care.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing

Sign or Speak?

Realize that some patients prefer oral communication while others use interpreters. Clarify preference with each patient.

Interpreting

You are responsible for providing certified American Sign Language interpreters if requested within 72 hours.

Speaking

Oral communicators need to clearly see your lips. Maximize lighting and contrast. Keep your hands away from your face.

The Governor's Council on People with Disabilities exists to:

- Advise the Governor and General Assembly on statewide disability issues.
- Educate and advocate for:
 - » Partnerships at the local, state and national levels.
 - » Promotion of equality, access and independence.
 - » Development of employment opportunities.
- Promote the value of diversity, dignity and the quality of life for people with disabilities.
- Be a catalyst to create systemic change promoting awareness of disability-related issues that will ultimately benefit all citizens of Ohio.



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