ACCES-VR
Workforce Development and Business Relations Contacts:

Statewide Coordinator—Tobi Bickweat
518-473-7630 tbickwea@mail.nysed.gov

Central NY Region—Dot Marinaccio
(Southern Tier, Syracuse, Utica District Office areas)
607-721-8420 dmarinac@mail.nysed.gov

Central NY Region—Michelle Barlow
(Southern Tier, Syracuse, Utica District Office areas)
315-793-2511 mbarlow@mail.nysed.gov

Hudson Valley Region—Tobi Bickweat (interim)
(Malone, Albany, Mid-Hudson District Office areas)
518-473-7630 tbickwea@mail.nysed.gov

Long Island Region—Ella Craanen
(Garden City, Hauppauge, Queens District Office areas)
516-227-6804 ecraanen@mail.nysed.gov

New York City Region—Arnold Dorin
(Bronx, Manhattan, Brooklyn, White Plains District Office areas)
212-967-2714 adorin@mail.nysed.gov

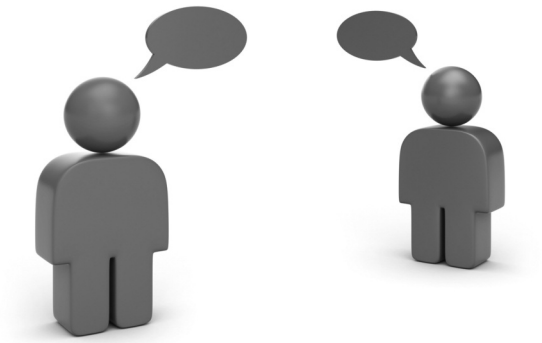
Western Region—Dennis Martinez
(Rochester, Buffalo District Office areas)
716-848-8015 dmartine@mail.nysed.gov

The State Education Department does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, religion, creed, disability, marital status, veteran status, national origin, race, gender, genetic predisposition or carrier status, or sexual orientation in its educational programs, services and activities. Portions of this publication can be made available in a variety of formats, including Braille, large print or audio tape, upon request. Inquiries concerning this policy of nondiscrimination should be directed to the Department's Office of Diversity, Ethics, and Access, Room 530, Education Building, Albany, NY 12234.

12-08210 12-012 cdc

ACCES – VR

DISABILITY ETIQUETTE



Tips for Interacting with People with Disabilities

The University of the State of New York
The State Education Department
Adult Career and Continuing Education Services
Vocational Rehabilitation
Albany, NY 12234
www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/

Everyone Knows Someone with a Disability

People with disabilities are the nation's largest minority and the only one that any person can join at any time.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 54 million people have disabilities.

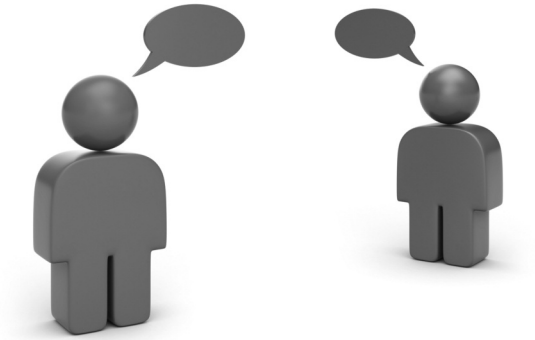
That is nearly 1 in 5 people.

Here are some general tips:

- Use person-first language. For example, rather than "disabled person", say "person with a disability."
- Avoid terms such as "handicapped", "crippled", "physically challenged", or "wheelchair bound."
- Do not worry about using common expressions such as "see you later", "did you hear about this?", or other expressions that seem to relate to a person's disability.
- When speaking to a person accompanied by a companion or interpreter, speak directly to the person, not to the companion/interpreter.
- Treat adults with disabilities as adults. Use first names only when extending that same familiarity to all others.

When meeting people who have physical disabilities:

- When possible, place yourself at eye level when speaking with someone in a wheelchair.
- Do not rest against or lean on someone's wheelchair.
- When introduced to someone with limited hand use or an artificial limb, do not hesitate to offer to shake hands. Offering your left hand is also acceptable.



When meeting people who are blind or visually impaired:

- Always identify yourself and others who may be with you. In a group, remember to identify the person to whom you are speaking.
- Do not speak to, pet, or otherwise distract a work animal from its job without the owner's permission.
- If you offer assistance, wait until the offer for help is accepted, and listen for guidance on what assistance is wanted.

When speaking with people with speech or hearing impairments:

- Listen attentively when talking with individuals who have difficulty speaking, and wait for them to finish. If clarification is needed, ask brief questions requiring short answers, "yes" or "no" responses, or a nod of the head.
- When approaching a person with deafness or a hearing impairment, tap the person gently on the shoulder or wave your hand to get his/her attention. If the person can read your lips, look directly at the person and speak clearly, slowly, and expressively. Try to face the light source and keep hands, food, and cigarettes away from your mouth.
- If a person is wearing a hearing aid, do not shout. Speak in a normal tone of voice. If the person is unable to understand what you are saying, think of ways to rephrase the same message.