

Say “wheelchair user”, rather than “confined to a wheelchair” or “wheelchair bound”. The wheelchair is what enables the person to get around and participate in society; it’s liberating, not confining.

With any disability, avoid negative, disempowering words like “victim” or “suffer”. Say “person with AIDS” instead of “AIDS victim” or “person who suffers from AIDS”.

It’s okay to use idiomatic expressions when talking to people with disabilities. For example, saying “it was good to see you” and “see you later” to a person who is blind is completely acceptable; they use these expressions themselves all the time.

Many people who are Deaf communicate with sign language and consider themselves to be members of a cultural and linguistic minority group. They refer to themselves as Deaf with a capital “D” and may be offended by the term “hearing impaired”.

## Final Thoughts

### Conflict Management

Sometimes conflicts arise between people with disabilities and the places they visit for fun, work, healthcare or education. These conflicts are usually the result of misunderstanding or lack of information.

Sometimes conflicts develop between people with disabilities who have conflicting needs.

For example, a person who is hard of hearing cannot hear the proceedings with the window open, but a person with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity needs the window open for fresh air. Someone who uses a guide dog may run into conflict with a person who has an anxiety disorder and extreme fear of dogs.

All of these situations call for flexibility, patience, creativity and open communication—a willingness to listen to the other guy’s perspective and learn.

Sometimes good faith efforts are not enough and parties have difficulty working out their differences. In these cases, consider using the services of a skilled mediator.

### A Word About Confidentiality

You may really care or you may just be curious about a person with a disability who is in crisis, suddenly ill or misses work for explained reasons.

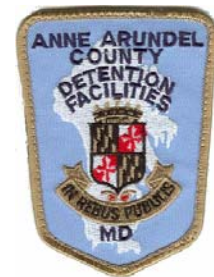
In spite of your concerns, please respect the privacy of a person with a disability. Allow him to discuss his situation when, and if, he feels comfortable doing so.

## Managing Special Needs of Offenders

### Americans with Disabilities Act

### Basic Tips

*A guide for staff, contractors, and volunteers of the Anne Arundel County Department of Detention Facilities*



**Anne Arundel County  
Department of Detention  
Facilities  
Training Unit**

## **Basic Tips**

### **Tips for dealing with a person who has a disability**

#### **Ask Before You Help**

Just because someone has a disability, don't assume she/he needs help. If the setting is accessible, people with disabilities can usually get around fine.

Adults with disabilities want to be treated as independent people. Offer assistance only if the person appears to need it. And if she/he does want help, ask how before you act.

#### **Be Sensitive About Physical Contact**

Some people with disabilities depend on their arms for balance. Grabbing them, even if your intention is to assist, could knock them off balance.

Avoid patting a person on the head or touching his/her wheelchair, scooter or cane. People with disabilities consider their equipment part of their personal space.

#### **Think before you speak**

Always speak directly to the person with a disability, not to his/her companion, aide or sign language interpreter.

Respect his privacy. If you ask about his disability, he may feel like you are treating him as a disability, not as a human being.

#### **Don't Make Assumptions**

People with disabilities are the best judge of what they can or cannot do. Don't make decisions for them about participating in an activity.

Depending on the situation, it could be a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to exclude people because of a presumption about their limitations.

#### **Responding Graciously to Requests**

When people who have a disability ask for an accommodation at your business,

it is not a complaint. It shows they feel comfortable enough in your establishment to ask for what they need.

#### **Put the Person First**

Say "person with a disability" rather than "disabled person". Say "people with disabilities" rather than "the disabled".

For specific disabilities, saying "person with Tourette's Syndrome" or "person who has Cerebral Palsy" is usually a safe bet. Still, individuals do have their own preference. If you are not sure what words to use, ask.

Avoid outdated terms like "handicapped" or "crippled". Be aware that many people with disabilities dislike jargon, euphemistic terms like "physically challenged" and "differently disabled".