

Interviewing Courtesies for Effective Communication

Interviewing a person using Mobility Aids

- Enable people who use crutches, canes or wheelchairs to keep them within reach.
- Be aware that some wheelchair users may choose to transfer themselves out of their wheelchairs (into an office chair, for example) for the duration of the interview.
- Here again, when speaking to a person in a wheelchair or on crutches for more than a few minutes, sit in a chair. Place yourself at that person's eye level to facilitate conversation.

Interviewing a person with Vision Impairments

- When greeting a person with a vision impairment always identify yourself and introduce anyone else who might be present.
- If the person does not extend their hand to shake hands, verbally extend a welcome.
EXAMPLE: *Welcome to the City of San Antonio Planning Department, Disability Access Office.*
- When offering seating, place the person's hand on the back or arm of the seat. A verbal cue is helpful as well.
- Let the person know if you move or need to end the conversation.
- Allow people who use crutches, canes or wheelchairs to keep them within reach.

Interviewing a person with Speech Impairments

- Give your whole attention with interest when talking to a person who has a speech impairment.
- Ask short questions that require short answers or a nod of the head.
- Do not pretend to understand if you do not. Try rephrasing what you wish to communicate, or ask the person to repeat what you do not understand.
- Do not raise your voice. Most speech impaired persons can hear and understand.

Interview a person who is Deaf or Hearing Impaired

- If you need to attract the attention of a person who is deaf or hearing impaired, touch him or her lightly on the shoulder.
- If the interviewee lip-reads, look directly at him or her. Speak clearly at a normal pace. Do not exaggerate your lip movements or shout. Speak expressively because the person will rely on your facial expressions, gestures and eye contact. (Note: It is estimated that only four out of ten spoken words are visible on the lips.)
- Place yourself placing the light source and keep your hands, cigarettes and food away from your mouth when speaking.
- Shouting does not help and can be detrimental. Only raise your voice when requested. Brief, concise written notes may be helpful.
- In the United States most deaf people use American Sign Language (ASL.) ASL is not a universal language. ASL is a language with its own syntax and grammatical structure. When scheduling an interpreter for a non-English speaking person, be certain to retain an interpreter that speaks and interprets in the language of the person.
- If an interpreter is present, it is commonplace for the interpreter to be seated beside the interviewer, across from the interviewee.
- Interpreters facilitate communication. They should not be consulted or regarded as a reference for the interview.