

TIPS FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

WHEN TALKING TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AND CAREGIVERS

PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Are a group of conditions caused by an **impairment in physical, learning, language, or behavioral areas**. These conditions begin during the developmental period, may impact day-to-day functioning, and usually last throughout a person's lifetime.

PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Are related to general **mental capability and includes difficulty carrying out everyday activities, and an impaired ability to reason, plan, and solve problems**, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly, and learn from experience.

SAY:

My name is... I'm here to help you, not hurt you.

I am a ... **(name your job)**

I am here because ... **(explain the situation)**

I look different than my picture on my badge because ... (for example, if you are wearing protective equipment)

SHOW:

Your picture identification badge **(as stated before)**

That you are **calm** and **competent**

GIVE:

Extra time for the person to process what you are saying and to respond
Respect for the dignity of the person as an equal and as an adult (example: speak directly to the person)

If needed, offer an arm to the person to hold as they walk, or an elbow for balance.
If possible, quiet time to rest (as possible, to lower stress and fatigue)

SHARE:

The **information** you've **learned** about the person with other workers who'll be assisting the person

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USE:

Short sentences

Simple, concrete words

Accurate, honest information

Pictures and objects to illustrate your words. Point to your ID picture as you say who you are and point to any protective equipment as you speak about it

PREDICT

What will happen (simply and concretely)?

How long this will last – when things will return to normal (if you know).

When the person can contact or rejoin loved ones (for example: calls to family, re-uniting pets)

REPEAT:

Reassurances (for example, “You may feel afraid That’s ok We’re safe now”)

Encouragement (for example, “Thanks for moving fast. You are doing great. Other people can look at you and know what to do”)

ASK FOR/LOOK FOR:

An **identification bracelet** with special health information

Special communication information (for example, is the person using sign language?)

Contact information

Distractions (for example: lower radio volume, use flashing lights on vehicles only when necessary)

Essential **equipment and supplies**
Medication

EXPLAIN:

Any **written material** (including signs) in everyday language

Public address system announcements in **simple language**