

PART 3

WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

There are many types of disabilities, such as those that affect a person's hearing, vision, movement, thinking, remembering, learning, communicating, mental health, and social relationships.

Disability can impact communication. Providers and their staff can learn about each patient and the impact of their disability and make simple accommodations to ensure effective communication.

Ask. Accommodate. Communicate.

One way to be aware of any barrier to effective communication or to delivering proper care is to routinely ask patients if they will need an accommodation during their visit. Usually the patient will be the best source of information about what accommodation will work best.

Consider asking the following question when scheduling every appointment:

“Do you have any special needs related to a disability that we can assist you with during your visit?”

Examples include:

- Help with dressing or undressing
- Understanding medical information
- Positioning during a procedure, such as a mammogram
- Help with completing forms
- A sign language interpreter
- Adjustable medical equipment that goes low enough for someone seated in a wheelchair.

Be prepared to make accommodations. This will make the patient visit a better experience for staff and patients. The following information offers suggestions and resources for accommodating patients with different types of disabilities.