• Speak directly with the individual, not through a companion or service provider.
• Offer to shake hands when introduced.
• Always identify yourself and others who may be with you.
• Make eye contact and be aware of body language.
• Listen attentively.
• If a person has difficulty speaking, or speaks in a manner that is difficult for you to understand, listen carefully—then wait for them to finish speaking.
• Ask short questions that can be answered by yes or no.
• Do not lean against or hang on someone’s wheelchair. People with disabilities treat their chairs as extensions of their bodies.
• Do not talk to or pet guide dogs and service dogs without the owner’s permission. The animal is working and cannot be distracted.
• Place yourself at eye level when speaking with someone in a wheelchair or on crutches.
• Tap a person lightly on the shoulder or wave your hand to get the attention of a person with a hearing disability.
• Look directly at the person and speak clearly, slowly, and expressively to establish if a person can read lips.
• If a person is wearing a hearing aid, do not assume they can hear your speaking voice.
• Never shout at a person. Just speak in a normal tone of voice.
• Treat adults as adults.
• Do not assume familiarity by using the person’s first name, or touching the person unless you know them well.
• Do not patronize, condescend, or threaten.
• Do not make decisions for the person, or assume their preferences.
• Do not give unsolicited advice or assistance.
• If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted.
• Do not panic or summon an ambulance if the person appears to be having a mental health crisis. Calmly ask how you can help.
• Do not blame the person for a disability, especially a mental illness.
• Question the media stereotypes of disability. People with disabilities are more likely to be crime victims than to victimize others.
• Relax! Be yourself!
• See the person beneath the symptoms and behaviors.
• If you are fearful or uncomfortable, learn more about disabilities.
• Kindness, courtesy, and patience usually smooth interactions with all people, including people with a disability.

THE MOST IMPORTANT HINT:
Treat people with disabilities as you would wish to be treated yourself.