

Basic Etiquette for Communicating with People with Disabilities

(Abstracted from The National Commission for Persons with Disabilities Etiquette Brochure)

- When speaking with a person with a disability, talk directly to the person rather than through his or her companion or sign language interpreter.
- When introduced to a person with a disability, it is appropriate to offer to shake hands. Even people with limited hand use or who wear artificial limbs can usually shake hands.
- When meeting a person who is visually impaired, always identify yourself and others who may be with you. When conversing in a group, remember to identify the person to whom you are speaking.
- Always ask before you assist a person with a disability. If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen to or ask for instructions.
- Leaning on or hanging on to a person's wheelchair is considered annoying. The chair is part of the personal body space of the person who uses it.
- Listen attentively when you are speaking with a person who has difficulty speaking. Be patient and wait for the person to finish, rather than correcting or speaking for the person.



- Invisible disabilities are disabilities that are not immediately apparent. Some people with visual or hearing disabilities who do not wear glasses or hearing aids or people with chronic anxiety disorders or chronic fatigue syndrome may not appear to have a disability.

The key is to treat everyone you meet with the same respect, courtesy and dignity with which you would like to be treated.



Office Hours:

Monday to Friday

9:00 am to 5:00 pm

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**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL SERVICES
AND**

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

**Department of Social
Services**

*Disability Affairs
Division*



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Vision Statement

To create a society for all ages through empowerment, protection, inclusion, cultural sensitivity and team-building, utilizing all social partners.

Mission Statement

To transform the landscape of social assistance through human development; empowerment initiatives; enhancement of physical environs, and revitalization of inner city spaces.

Disability Affairs Division

The Disability Affairs Division provides support and services to persons with disabilities to enhance their quality of life and empower them to take full advantage of opportunities to become independent, full participants in all aspects of society. Additionally, the Division seeks to sensitize the public and heighten awareness about the abilities, concerns, and needs of person with disabilities.

Services Offered

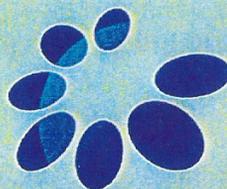
Counseling

Disability Allowance – Cash allowance for adults and children with disabilities.

Financial Assistance for:-

- **Assistive Devices** –To acquire prostheses, orthotics, wheelchairs, canes, hearing aids, eyeglasses, etc.

- **Medical Services, Travel and Supplies** - To assist persons with disabilities who have excessive medical expenses.
- **House Modifications** - Persons with disabilities who are unable to afford to pay for modifications to their home can qualify for this assistance.
- **Male and Female Support Groups** - Males and females with disabilities can access support groups which provide supportive therapy and counseling.
- **Braille/Computer Classes** - Adults who are blind or visually impaired may arrange private classes to be taught at the office.
- **Emergency Food Assistance** - Food assistance offered to persons with disabilities.



Investigations of Abuse/Neglect of Persons with Disabilities - To safeguard the well-being and safety of persons with disabilities.

How does a person qualify?

1. Must be a Bahamian citizen or permanent resident.
2. Medical letter verifying disability.
3. Inability to afford the cost of services without financial assistance.

Documents needed when applying for assistance

- Valid Passport or Voter's Card (from most recent election).
- Valid National Insurance Card.
- Three (3) quotations for assistive devices from vendors with approved government clearance.

