DISABILITY ETIQUETTE GUIDE

Equity and Diversity Council
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Contents

Introduction

The purpose of the Disability Etiquette Guide (Guide) is to provide NYC Emergency Management's (NYCEM) workforce guidance on appropriate ways to interact with colleagues and members of the public with disabilities. The Guide seeks to raise awareness and education of disability topics throughout NYCEM to change the way people think about and define disabilities to address ableism and end the stigma of disability and misperceptions about individuals with disabilities. NYCEM is dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment respecting individuals with disabilities and the differences in our workforce to benefit our colleagues, improve the quality of services we provide, and strengthen the communities we serve. Disability equity and inclusion in our agency is critical to NYCEM's success as a leader in emergency management.

Why Disability Etiquette Matters

Disability etiquette promotes respect among all people and makes society more inclusive for everyone. Approximately one million residents of New York City self-identify as an individual with a disability, but the actual number of City residents living with a disability is likely much higher. Individuals with disabilities make up the largest minority group in the United States. Disability affects everyone – all ages, genders, and ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Many of us will have at least one disability during our lifetime and count individuals living with disabilities among our neighbors, colleagues, family members, and friends. Disabilities are an integral and natural part of an individual's identity that allow unique experiences and contributions to society. Fostering environments that promote accessibility and inclusivity enables individuals with disabilities to engage with their communities, access fundamental services, and meet their most basic and critical needs. Creating a fully accessible and inclusive workplace includes changing the office environment so that everyone has full and equal access to everything our workplace has to offer and an opportunity to seek achievement, prosperity, and fulfillment.

There are several comprehensive civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination based on disability to ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal opportunities to participate in the workforce and New York City government programs and services. The most inclusive definition of disability that applies in New York City is from the New York City Human Rights Law, which covers those with "any physical, medical, mental, or psychological impairment or a history or record of such impairment." NYCEM is dedicated to advancing accessibility and giving all New Yorkers with disabilities a chance to thrive.

Medical Model Versus Social Model

There are two separate views of disability: the medical model and the social model.
- The medical model sees a disability as a thing that is "wrong" with a person's body or mind, The only way to help the individual is to "fix the person." This is _NOT_ the model NYCEM's workforce should use when interacting with colleagues and members of the public.
- The social model sees the issue as the environment within which the individual lives, rather than with the disability. The social model puts responsibility on society to create

inclusive spaces and services that do not hinder an individual with a disability. Everyone working at NYCEM should use the social model of disability. Everyone at NYCEM should remove barriers for colleagues with disabilities and members of the public with disabilities to ensure full and equal opportunities for all individuals with disabilities.

Ableism

NYCEM seeks to raise awareness and educate its workforce about ableism and address the harmful consequences ableism creates. Ableism is the discrimination of and social prejudice against individuals with disabilities based on the belief that individuals without disabilities are superior and rooted in the assumption that individuals with disabilities require fixing. Ableism defines individuals by their disability and includes harmful stereotypes, misconceptions, and generalizations of individuals with disabilities. Ableism happens in many different settings and forms both intentionally and unintentionally and, if unaddressed, leads to inequitable treatment and exclusion of individuals with disabilities. Not being able to "fit" into an unaccommodated workplace can perpetuate negative stereotypes and microaggressions during work. It can make people with disabilities feel less valued and sometimes cause them to be pushed out of workplaces. Ableism and lack of understanding can be found throughout workplaces especially in policies that do or do not exist, including:

- Rigid policies that do not take into consideration the needs of all workers and can make life needlessly difficult for workers with disabilities.
- Using ableist language, words, and phrases with hurtful or offensive origins that link disability to negativity.
- Making assumptions about the abilities of individuals with disabilities and behavior that favors providing work projects to individuals without disabilities.

There are several ways to address ableism in the workplace including:

- Focus on hiring inclusively.
- Educate yourself and your colleagues about ableism, disabilities, and accessibility.
- Include individuals with disabilities in development and planning for your unit's activities.
- Prioritize inclusivity in the work you do.

Basics of Interacting with Individuals with Disabilities

Everyone may find themselves in situations in which they do not know what to say or do when interacting with an individual with a disability. When interacting with individuals with disabilities, it's important to remember that they are people first. They want to be appreciated, respected, and productive. Below are examples of ways to interact with individuals with disabilities:

- Do not assume everyone with a disability needs assistance.
- Ask before you assist and ask how you should assist before acting.
- Do not ask people how they acquired their disability, how they feel about it, or other personal questions unless they want to discuss it. It is not their job to educate you.

- Keep disability etiquette in mind when planning work-related social events or trainings. Host events at accessible locations and design activities that include all employees. Email agenda and presentations prior to the meeting so colleagues can review. For events held in the community, make sure that flyers are accessible so all can view them.
- Extend the same courtesies to individuals with disabilities as you would others. Do not be afraid to ask how you can help.

Invisible or Hidden Disabilities

One of the biggest misconceptions about disabilities is that a disability is always visible or obvious. Seeing a person in a wheelchair, wearing a hearing aid, or carrying a white cane are visible indicators that a person may have a disability. However, not all disabilities are apparent. Invisible or hidden disabilities are certain kinds of disabilities that are not immediately apparent to others. A person may have an invisible or hidden disability such as, but not limited to, low vision, hearing loss, a learning disability, an intellectual disability, or a health or mental health condition. Because you may not know who has an invisible or hidden disability, it is important to never assume that a person you interact with does *NOT* have a disability. Treat people with disabilities with the same respect and dignity that you have for everyone else. People do not always choose to identify themselves as a person with a disability. When you plan an event, include individuals with disabilities in the planning process and make sure there is contact information for event staff who are familiar with accessibility issues and who individuals with disabilities can contact for accommodations. If you are aware that a person has a form of invisible or hidden disability, the best course of action may be to simply ask the person privately if they need assistance.

Appropriate Wording

The use of negative words can create incorrect perceptions and attitudes about individuals with disabilities. Such negative perceptions and attitudes are often the most difficult barriers for individuals with disabilities to overcome. When describing a person with a disability or a group of people with disabilities, refer to the person first. Examples of this are:

- Use **"a person who is blind"** and not "blind man" or "afflicted with blindness"
- Use **"person with a disability"** and not "disabled person"
- Use **"people with disabilities"** and not "the disabled"
- For specific disabilities, say **"person who uses a wheelchair"** or **"person who has cerebral palsy"**
- Say **"uses a wheelchair"** and not "restricted or confined to a wheelchair," or "wheelchair bound"
- Use **"person without a disability"** and not "normal" (referring to nondisabled persons as "normal" insinuates that people with disabilities are abnormal)

Below are some outdated terms that should not be used to describe individuals with disabilities:

- Handicapped
- Handicapable

- Incapacitated
- Maimed
- Cripple or crippled
- Retarded
- Crazy
- Insane
- Special Needs

- Wheelchair bound
- Victim
- Sufferer
- Physically challenged
- Differently-abled
- Visually impaired
- Hearing impaired

Some individuals with disabilities do not use person-first language to describe themselves because they choose to claim their disability as part of their identity. Some individuals with disabilities and disability advocacy groups around the world are reclaiming derogatory language, which has historically been used to disparage or oppress individuals with disabilities, to give it a positive meaning as an expression of solidarity and pride in one's identity. For example, "crip" is short for "cripple," a term which was once acceptable before it was turned around and used to discriminate against people with disabilities. Some people with disabilities are now reclaiming the word "crip" to describe themselves. While it may be appropriate for someone who is a member of a group to use a term in a reclaimed way, it may not be appropriate for someone outside of the group to use a reclaimed word. If a person with a disability tells you to use the same word, they use to describe themselves, it is acceptable to use the wording the person uses to respect that person's own identification. If you are not sure what words to use, just ask.

Service Animals

A service animal is an animal that performs tasks for an individual with a disability. Service animals help individuals with disabilities in a variety of ways, in addition to improving their handlers' mobility, functioning, and safety. Because of their specific training and role in the life of their handler, it is important to observe some simple rules of etiquette when interacting with an individual with a service animal to respect their working relationship and help ensure the safety of both the service animal and handler.

Service animals are not pets under the law, and pet restrictions to do not apply to them. Service animals are allowed to go anywhere an employee or member of the public is allowed. When determining whether an animal is a service animal, an employee can only ask two questions:

1) Is the animal required because of a disability?
2) What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

All other questions are prohibited, including:

- Questions about the individual's disability.
- Requests for medical documentation.
- Requests for special identification or training documentation for the animal.
- Requests that the animal demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

- Questions about why the animal is not wearing a vest or if the animal is registered as a service animal. There is no requirement that a service animal wear a vest identifying it as a service animal, and there is no national or state registry of service animals.

When interacting with a handler and their service animal, employees:

- Should not touch, talk, feed, or make noises to the animal while the animal is working. You should allow the animal to concentrate and perform its tasks for the safety of its handler.
- Should not treat the animal as a pet.
- Should not engage with the service animal in any way when a service animal is working.
- Should ask the handler if petting or talking with a service animal is permitted.
- Should not ask "Are you disabled?" or "Are you sick?"
- Should not assume that service dogs only serve individuals who are blind or have low vision. There are individuals with other disabilities that require the assistance of a service animal.
- Should not ask "Why do you get to have your dog at work?" or "Can you show me what tricks it does?"
- Should speak to the handler, not the animal.
- Should not give the service animal commands.
- Should give service animals and handlers the right of way.
- Should not try to take control in situations unfamiliar to the animal or handler but should assist the handler upon their request.
- Should not walk on the same side as the animal when walking with a service animal and their handler.
- Should not attempt to grab or steer the person while the service animal is guiding. You should ask if the handler needs your assistance and, if so, offer your arm to help guide them.

<div align="center">**Etiquette for Specific Disabilities**</div>

A. Visual Disabilities

- "Blind" does not necessarily mean that a person lives in total darkness. A person's vision may be 20/200 or worse to be legally blind.
- **Saying Hello and Good-bye:**
  - o Identify yourself by name when you approach a person with a visual disability and tell them when you are leaving the conversation or area.
  - o Use the person's name when speaking to them so they know you are speaking to them and not someone else in the room.
  - o Do not assume that people with visual disabilities see you
  - o Do not assume that individuals with visual disabilities are rude or not friendly just because they do not say hello to you when walking by you as they likely do not see you and are focused on navigating where they are going.
  - o Do not assume that people with visual disabilities will remember your voice.

- o It is rude to ask a person with a visual disability, "Do you remember my voice?"

- **Communication:**
  - o Use a normal tone and volume of voice. It is rude and unnecessary to shout at individuals with visual disabilities.
  - o It is okay to use vision references such as "see" or "look."
  - o Avoid phrases such as "the blind leading the blind," "What are you... blind?" "I'm not blind, you know."
- **Orientation:**
  - o It is polite to indicate your position with a light tap on the shoulder or hand and state at the same time why you are tapping the person. However, some people may not like being touched so you can also state your position related to their position if it is clear the person knows what you are stating is directed at them.
  - o Avoid visible cues and hand gestures – waving, handshakes, making eye contact with someone, and pointing at something. Instead describe what it is you are trying to do with your hands.
  - o Do not use vague directional phrases or words. For example, instead of saying "it's over there," say "it is to your right."
  - o Use descriptive phrases that relate to sound, smell, and distance when guiding individuals with visual disabilities.
  - o Do not assume people who walk up to get closer to something to read it, are walking slowly, or are looking around are acting suspiciously or are under the influence. Individuals with visual disabilities are treated differently when people assume that everyone can see perfectly.
- **Mobility Assistance:**
  - o When guiding a person who is blind or low vision, offer your arm instead of grabbing their arm. As you walk, tell the person where you are going, make note of steps or slopes, doors, or other obstacles. You can also offer your shoulder or elbow and allow the person with the vision disability to direct you.
  - o Do not grab, propel, or attempt to lead the person.
  - o Do not clutch the individual's arm or steer the individual.
  - o Walk as you normally would.
  - o Do not grab or try to steer the cane of an individual with a visual disability.
- **Presentations and Meetings:**
  - o Give individuals with visual disabilities a brief description of the surroundings if giving a presentation. For example, if you are comfortable doing so, state your appearance including hairstyle and color, skin color, age range, type and color of clothing, what is behind or around you, if you wear glasses, etc.
  - o Provide any materials to individuals with visual disabilities before the presentation or meeting electronically and ensure the materials can be read by screen readers. Scanned documents that are scanned as images cannot be read by screen readers and need to be converted to readable documents using optical character recognition (OCR) in programs such as Adobe Acrobat Pro DC. Word documents and PDF documents that have been converted from Word documents are usually screen readable. PowerPoint presentations should be saved as a PDF

for easier use with screen readers. If unsure if a document is screen readable, you can always use OCR on the document.

- o For in-person meetings, include accessibility information in the invite, such as where the elevators are located and how to navigate to the meeting location.
- o Use high contrast colors (white text on black backgrounds) to ensure individuals with visual disabilities can see materials being presented electronically. Can also convert color scheme on computers to high contrast mode quickly and easily using operating system shortcuts to ensure what is on the screen is easier to view. For a Windows computer, press the left Alt + left Shift + Print Screen keys.
- o Provide a brief description of what is on slides.
- o Make sure to describe where in the materials something is located if you jump around to different pages so that a person using a screen reader can follow along. Provide sufficient time for a person using a screen reader to navigate and review those materials before proceeding.
- o Always inquire about the format in which individuals with visual disabilities prefer information – audio, large print (font size 18 or larger), braille, or electronic. Do not assume what format an individual uses or prefers.
- o Direct your comments, questions, or concerns to individuals with visual disabilities, not to their companion.
- o If presenting on a virtual platform, some platforms are more accessible than others so make sure to choose an accessible platform. Resources about what platforms are accessible can be found at the end of the Guide.
- o If you are reading for individuals with visual disabilities:
  - ▪ First describe the information to be read.
  - ▪ Use a normal speaking voice.
  - ▪ Do not skip information unless requested to do so.
- **Navigation:**
  - o Be familiar with the route of travel to a location. Provide descriptive directions that do not require the person to rely on visual references. When appropriate, note if Braille signage is posted on walls and doors.
  - o Inform an employee who is blind or has low vision of structural changes or hazards they may need to be aware of in the event of new construction or workplace modifications.

B. Intellectual Disabilities

- Treat an individual with an intellectual disability the same as you would anyone else. If engaging in a conversation with an individual with an intellectual disability, bring up the same topics of conversation as you would with anyone else such as weekend activities, vacation plans, the weather, or recent events. Adults with intellectual disabilities should be treated and spoken to in the same fashion as other adults. Do not "talk down" to a person with an intellectual disability. Assume that an adult with an intellectual disability has had the same experiences as any other adult.
- Neurodiversity describes the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many ways. There is no one "right" way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and differences are not deficits. The word neurodiversity refers to the diversity

of all people, but it is often used in the context of the autism spectrum, ADHD, and other neurological or developmental conditions. Stigma, a lack of awareness, and lack of appropriate infrastructure (such as office setup or staffing structures) can cause exclusion of people with neurodevelopmental differences. To assist a person with one of these disabilities:

- o Offer small adjustments to an employee's workspace to accommodate any sensory needs.
- o Offer a quiet break space, communicate expected loud noises (like fire drills), offer noise-cancelling headphones.
- o Avoid sarcasm, euphemisms, and implied messages.
- o Provide concise verbal and written instructions for tasks, and break tasks down into small steps.

- Learning disabilities refer to several conditions that may affect the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding or use of verbal or nonverbal information. These conditions affect learning in individuals who otherwise demonstrate at least average abilities essential for thinking and/or reasoning. Learning disabilities result from impairments in one or more processes related to perceiving, thinking, remembering, or learning. Learning disabilities range in severity and may interfere with the acquisition and use of oral language, reading, written language, and mathematics. Learning disabilities may also involve difficulties with organizational skills and social interaction.

- Don't assume that a person with an intellectual disability lacks skills, such as reading, writing, and the ability to do mathematics. While an individual's disability may significantly impact these areas, many people with intellectual disabilities have at least some level of these skills.

- Everyone can make valuable contributions regardless of their ability to perform particular skills. Provide opportunities for people with limited skills to contribute verbally and take what they have to say seriously. Ensure that people who have difficulties reading or writing have equal access to written materials (for example, by taping them or having someone review the materials with them orally). Use pictures or easily identifiable photographs to identify rooms, tasks, or directions.

- Use clear language that is concise and to the point. You may have to repeat yourself several times for the individual to take in all the information. "Walk through" the steps of a task or project. Let an individual perform each part of the task after you explain it.

- When a person with an intellectual disability is accompanied by another person such as a caregiver or family member, do not direct questions and comments to them unless the person with the intellectual disability tells you to direct questions to the person accompanying them. Speak directly to the person with the intellectual disability. Also, don't allow someone else to speak for the person with a disability.

- Do not assume that because someone has an intellectual disability, such as a learning disability, that they have below-average intelligence. The individual may have above-average intelligence, but may have difficulty receiving, expressing, or processing information.

- Ask the person if they prefer verbal, written, or hands-on instruction, or a combination of methods in training and work-related situations. For example, if providing verbal instructions, it may be helpful to follow-up with an e-mail that clarifies your request.

- Allow the individual time to think and answer questions independently.

C. Individuals with Mobility Disabilities

- "My Chair, My Body" - Wheelchairs are not footstools, stepladders, or fire hazards. People who use a wheelchair, walker, crutches, or a cane often consider this equipment to be an extension of their body. They are part of an individual's personal space and should be treated with the same dignity and respect as a person's body. Do not lean on them, push them, or move them or the walker, crutches, or cane without asking the person for permission.
- Talk face to face. If an individual uses a wheelchair, sit down and/or position yourself at the same eye contact level.
- Always ask if you can help before you assist. If your offer is accepted, ask for instructions, and follow them.
- When given permission to push a wheelchair, push slowly at first. Wheelchairs can pick up momentum quickly.
- Personally check locations of events for accessibility in advance. Use a checklist. If barriers cannot be removed, alert individuals with mobility disabilities before the event so that they can make decisions and plan ahead.
- Do not make assumptions about limitations based on appearance or the use of assistive devices. For example, individuals who use mobility aids such as canes, walkers, or wheelchairs have different limitations and may use a mobility aid regularly or only as required by their daily limitations. Also, people who appear to be mobile may require accommodations such as accessible parking because they are unable to walk long distances due to a medical condition (e.g., a person with asthma or a heart condition).
- Be aware of the worksite and its accessible and inaccessible elements for employees and public visitors.

D. Mental Health Conditions

- The wide range of behaviors associated with mental conditions vary based on the individual and their specific condition.
- A mental health condition affects a person's thinking, feeling, behavior or mood and is not the same as an intellectual disability. However, some people who have an intellectual disability also have mental health conditions.
- Do not assume that individuals with mental health conditions:
  - Necessarily need any extra assistance or different treatment. Treat people with mental conditions as individuals.
  - Take or should take medication.
  - Are not capable of working in a wide variety of jobs that require a wide range of skills and abilities.
  - Do not know what is best for them or have poor judgment.
  - Are unable to cope with stress.

E. Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- People who are deaf utilize their vision skills for communication. People who are hard of hearing seek ways to retain their listening and speaking skills but may use their vision skills for communication too.
- There are a wide range of hearing loss and communication methods people prefer. If you do not know the individual's preferred communication method, just ask.
- Pay attention to cues such as whether the person uses sign language, is reading lips, writing, or gesturing. Do not be afraid to say that you do not understand if you have trouble understanding the person's speech. It is better to find another way to communicate, such as through writing notes, than to pretend to understand.
- Speak using a normal tone of voice unless asked to raise your voice.
- To get the attention of a person who is hard of hearing, call their name. If there is no response, you can lightly touch them on the arm or shoulder or wave your hand.
- To get the attention of a deaf person, either tap three times lightly on their shoulder, stomp/tap on the floor, or make a waving gesture to them.
- When using an interpreter:
  o Always address your comments, questions, and concerns directly to the person with whom you are talking, never to the interpreter.
  o Always face the individual, and not the interpreter.
- Use facial expressions and body language to communicate the emotion of a message, such as displeasure or approval.
- Watch the individual's eyes to ensure understanding - do not depend on affirmative head nodding only.
- If possible, use email, text messages, or pen and paper to communicate when interpretation is not available. Communication boards and pictograms/icons can also be used.
- Not all people who are deaf can read lips. If you are interacting with a person who is deaf:
  o Speak clearly, slowly, and expressively to determine if the person can read your lips.
  o Do not exaggerate your speech.
  o People who read lips generally only understand 20-25% of what is being said.
  o Be sensitive to the needs of people who lip read by facing the light source and keeping hands, cigarettes, and food away from your mouth when speaking.
  o Take turns when talking during a meeting so the person who is deaf or hard of hearing can read lips.
  o Wear a clear face covering if working with a colleague or member of the public who is deaf or hard of hearing so they can read your lips.
- If you are asked to repeat yourself several times, try rephrasing your sentence.
- When providing information that involves a number or an address, consider alternative ways to provide it; writing or emailing are great ways to ensure accuracy and decrease frustration.
- Have pencil and paper available and use them if necessary.
- Talk with the individual about their preferred method of communication for job training or complex work-related situations. When appropriate, provide a qualified sign-language

interpreter, Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) service (instant translation of spoken words to text), or training videos that are captioned.

- Remember to include employees who are deaf or hard of hearing in casual conversation and social events. Provide a sign-language interpreter for employer-sponsored social events, when appropriate.
- If wearing a face covering, make sure your voice is loud and clear enough for a person who is hard of hearing to clearly hear you as the face covering may distort and make your voice harder to hear.

F. Individuals with Speech Disabilities

- Take your time, relax, and listen.
- Do not try to rush the conversation or second-guess what a person has to say.
- It's okay to say, "I do not understand."
- Do not pretend you understand what is being said if you do not. Instead, repeat what you have understood and allow the person to respond. The response will clue you in and guide your understanding.
- Solicit and provide feedback. If necessary, repeat your understanding of the message to clarify or confirm what the person said.
- Do not ignore a person with a speech disability because of your concern that you will not understand them.
- Do not interrupt a person with a speech disability. Be patient and wait for the person to finish, rather than correcting or speaking for the person.
- If necessary, ask short questions that can be answered with a few words, a nod, or a shake of the head.
- Face the individual and maintain eye contact. Give the conversation your full attention.
- If the individual is accompanied by another individual, do not address questions, comments, or concerns to the companion.
- Do not assume that a person with a speech disability is incapable of understanding you.
- Some people with speech disabilities have difficulty with inflections. Do not make assumptions based on facial expressions or vocal inflections unless you know the individual very well.
- Do not play with or try to use someone's communication device. Such devices are considered an extension of an individual's personal space and should be respected as such.
- If you are having trouble communicating, ask if an individual can write the message, use a computer, or dial 711 to be connected to telecommunication relay service.
- Provide questions in advance, if possible, to allow the individual time to prepare and deliver responses effectively.

G. Individuals with Autoimmune, Respiratory, or Chemical Sensitivities

- Products that are commonly used in the workplace (e.g., air fresheners, cleaning products, markers) can trigger a reaction for someone who has a respiratory or chemical sensitivity. Use fewer toxic products when possible.

- When providing food for employees or the public, be aware that some people with autoimmune conditions may only be able to eat gluten-free foods so there should always be a gluten-free option.
- Encourage employees to use fragrance-free products and discontinue wearing fragrances and colognes in the workplace. Fragrances, colognes, and fragranced personal products can make some people very ill.
- Make a commitment to maintaining good ventilation and indoor air quality. This can benefit all employees.
- Do not make assumptions based upon appearance. For example, a person with asthma may not appear to be limited but may need accessible parking because the person is not able to walk long distances or be in the cold or humidity for long periods of time.

Disability Recruitment

Individuals with disabilities have consistently been the most unemployed and underemployed population in the United States. They represent a diverse untapped labor pool offering valuable skills, qualifications, and assets for employers. Several recruitment strategies can increase NYCEM's access to potential applicants.

A. Job Postings

- Post job openings with local disability organizations and college and university career centers. Advertise vacancies within disability-related publications, websites, and job fairs.
- Include details about the job location in all postings and highlight accessible features of the location, if appropriate.
- Indicate the availability of flexible working conditions, including telecommuting or flexible scheduling.
- Only include qualifications in job postings that are required for the available position. Require equal qualifications of all job applicants, regardless of disability.
- Advertise the organization as an equal opportunity employer and encourage individuals with disabilities to apply.
- Establish internship and mentoring programs targeted towards youth with disabilities.
- When posting a position, ensure flyers are accessible.

B. Scheduling Interviews

Employees should:

- Let applicants know accommodations will be provided upon request and who to contact for more information.
- Schedule interviews at an accessible location. If the workplace is inaccessible, be prepared to conduct the interview at an alternate accessible location.
- Be familiar with travel directions to the interview location, including the path of travel into the building.

- Notify applicants in advance with the names of all interview participants.
- Be aware that an applicant with a disability may need to arrange for transportation following the interview. Provide the applicant with an estimate of interview duration and expected end time.

C. Greeting the Interviewee

Employees should:

- Be aware of the interview location's accessible features including restrooms, drinking fountains, and telephones.
- Use a normal tone of voice when welcoming the interviewee. Only raise your voice upon request.
- Call the person by their first name only when extending similar familiarity to other interviewees.
- Always introduce yourself and other interview participants. Offer to shake hands, if appropriate.
- Speak directly to the interviewee instead of any companion, personal attendant, or interpreter, when greeting the person for the interview.

D. Interviewing Candidates

Employees should:

- Always ask similar questions of all interviewees, regardless of disability. Throughout the interview, emphasize abilities, achievements, and interviewee qualities.
- Treat all interviewees with respect.
- Select an interview location with adequate lighting.
- Speak directly to the interviewee instead of any companion, personal attendant, or interpreter throughout the meeting.

New Employees with Disabilities and Current Employees with New Disabilities

Several actions can be taken to ensure new employees with disabilities and existing employees who develop disabilities are welcome at NYCEM including:

- Review physical features of the work environment. If any create potential barriers for employees with disabilities, adjust as necessary.
- Identify assistive technologies available to increase workplace accessibility.
- Provide alternate formats (e.g., large print, electronic, Braille) of all necessary work-related documents including benefits information, employee manuals and policies, and professional development materials, as needed.
- Prepare co-workers and supervisors for the arrival of a new employee with a disability, when appropriate. This preparation can include training and orientation to disability-

specific issues. Such training should not be used to single-out the person with the disability. An overall disability awareness initiative is best.

- Remember to include employees with disabilities in emergency evacuation planning, procedures, and practices.

Resources and Guides

A. MOPD Resources - https://www1.nyc.gov/site/mopd/resources/digital-accessibility-guides.page

- Resources include guides for:
  - o Virtual accessible meetings
  - o Web and application accessibility
  - o Accessible social media
  - o Accessible slide decks
  - o Accessible PDFs
  - o Accessible documents
  - o Audio description and captioning guide

B. DoITT Accessibility Information - https://blueprint.cityofnewyork.us/accessibility/

C. NYCEM Disability Access and Functional Needs (DAFN) Teams Channel - Click Here for Link to Teams Channel

- Resources include NYCEM DAFN related:
  - o DAFN policies
  - o DAFN resources
  - o Monthly roundtable information
  - o ESF specific DAFN materials
  - o BCID litigation materials
  - o DAFN activation materials

D. Federal Disability Resources and Information - ADA.gov