

What You Need to Know About Customers with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities

People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may have difficulty doing many things most of us take for granted. These disabilities can mildly or profoundly limit one's ability to learn. You may not be able to know that someone has this disability unless you are told, or you notice the way people act, ask questions or use body language.

As much as possible, treat your customers with an intellectual or developmental disability like anyone else. They may understand more than you think, and they will appreciate you treating them with respect.

Here are some tips on serving customers who have an intellectual or developmental disability:

- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do
- Use plain language and speak in short sentences.
- Make sure your customer understands what you've said.
- If you can't understand what's being said, don't pretend. Just ask again.
- Provide one piece of information at a time.
- Be supportive and patient.
- Speak directly to your customer, not to their companion or attendant.