

5. Assisting People Who Require Consideration for Conveying and Understanding Information

You may also find yourself assisting a person who has an intellectual, mental, or developmental disorder; who has difficulty speaking due to speech impairment; or who has difficulty understanding written or spoken language due to linguistic impairment. In any case, remember to find out first how each person wants to be assisted.

1) Assisting a person with an intellectual impairment

Inconveniences and worries experienced by persons with an intellectual impairment:

- Difficulty in understanding maps, written information, or what the interlocutor says, or clearly expressing themselves, thus failing to convey their wishes and feelings
- The manifestation of impairment varies from one person to another: some have difficulty reading and writing, interacting with others, learning something new quickly, or actively seeking help or information.
- Being mistaken about their willingness to communicate with others because of their behavior, such as speaking about a subject that preoccupies them at the moment in a one-sided manner, immediately repeating their interlocutor's words, and so on

- Being unaware of risks facing them or their own behavior annoying others due to difficulty in being attentive to the surroundings

Address gently

A person may be seen shouting out or behaving dangerously. Address him/her gently, saying, “May I help you?”

Speak plainly, slowly, and patiently, repeating if necessary

Examples of paraphrases made easier to understand

Would you mind waiting for a little while?

→Please wait here for three minutes.

Do you mind if I lend you a hand to help you carry that thing?

→May I carry your baggage with you?

Do you mind moving that thing over there?

→(Concrete and short) Please pick up your XXX from the floor.

In some cases, you can communicate better by using visual information (drawings, gestures, etc.) at the same time. In any case, the basic rule is to communicate slowly, patiently, and repeatedly.

You can confuse a person with an intellectual impairment by providing several pieces of information at the same time. Be sure to keep your message concise. You can also confuse a

person with an intellectual impairment by telling him/her to do two or more things at one time. Remember to tell one thing to do at one time.

A person with an intellectual impairment can become panicked if his/her interlocutor speaks in a loud voice. Remember to talk slowly, with a calm attitude.

If the person become panicked, observe calmly while ensuring safety and without exciting him/her further until he/she regains his/her composure. If the person is an adult, remember to keep a respectful attitude toward him/her, without treating him/her like a child.

2) Assisting a person with mental disorder

Inconveniences and worries experienced by persons with mental disorder:

- The manifestation of impairment varies from one person to another: many are vulnerable to stress and fatigue; some suffer from headache or visual or auditory hallucination.
- Extremely nervous when experiencing something new or when something changes in the environment; tendency to feel anxiety
- Some prefer to do things at their own pace; some have difficulty flexibly responding to the surroundings.

Address gently

Remember to address them with a gentle facial expression and gentle words. A facial expression, manner of speech, or gaze that can be perceived as harsh or severe can cause them great stress in some cases.

Speak plainly, slowly, and patiently, repeating if necessary

Remember to address them in a respectful manner, speaking slowly with a smile and patiently, and repeating if necessary.

If necessary, try to communicate by asking concrete Yes/No questions. In some cases, you can communicate more effectively if you lead the person to a quiet place and slowly engage in conversation.

In the event of an epileptic fit or other emergency, immediately notify the Headquarters.

3) Assisting a person with developmental disorder

Inconveniences and worries experienced by persons with developmental disorder:

- Persons with autism or high functioning pervasive developmental disorders (Asperger syndrome and high functioning autism) usually have difficulty in non-verbal communication (“reading” others’ attitudes, facial

expressions, and body language), and some have a strong fixation on a particular matter or are extremely averse to a specific kind of sound, voice, or light.

- Persons with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) have difficulty controlling their emotion or behavior and paying full attention to their interlocutor; they can surprise others around them with their abrupt action or speech.
- Persons with learning disabilities have difficulty organizing and distinguishing different types of verbal or visual information they have received, requiring more time than average to perform certain tasks, or causing them to repeat the same mistake.

Address gently

Remember to address them with a gentle facial expression and gentle words. A facial expression, manner of speech, or gaze that can be perceived as harsh or severe can cause them great stress in some cases.

Speak plainly, slowly, and patiently, repeating if necessary

Talk slowly and patiently, repeating if necessary, using plain and concrete words and positive expressions. If you are not immediately understood, try paraphrasing with simpler words. If you encounter difficulty in verbal communication, try using visual information (drawings, maps, gestures).

A person who has a strong fixation or certain personal habits may appear selfish or simply annoying. Remember to keep a calm attitude; speaking in a loud voice can only be counterproductive. A person with developmental disorder who has a problem may not be able to explain his/her situation well; be gentle, and listen patiently.

If the person become panicked, observe calmly while ensuring safety and without exciting him/her further until he/she regains his/her composure. Take him/her to a quiet place nearby, if any.

In the event of an epileptic fit or other emergency, immediately notify the Headquarters.

4) Assisting a person with aphasia, higher cerebral dysfunction, or cognitive impairment

Inconveniences and worries experienced by persons with aphasia:

- Difficulty in linguistic activities, such as speaking, writing, listening to others
- Difficulty in understanding what has been heard; some have difficulty in understanding fast talkers or roundabout sentences.
- Difficulty in finding words to express themselves, ending up saying wrong words or speaking in a halting manner

Use “accessible” language

Speak in short sentences, using simple expressions. You can often communicate more effectively by using drawings and gestures. To obtain information, reformulate your questions so that they are concrete and only require a Yes/No answer, which are usually easier to handle.

Inconveniences and worries experienced by persons with higher cerebral dysfunction:

- Due to brain damage in an accident or illness, difficulty in learning new things, prone to fatigue, difficulty in understanding the surroundings or the meaning of pictographs, signage, etc.; partially defiant spatial perception; inability to control emotion in some cases
- Difficulty in initiating conversation or taking action in some cases

Use memos, communicate slowly and patiently

To convey important information, write it down on a piece of paper and hand it to the person (make sure to write down the time and date and your name).

If you are not understood well, try to rephrase by using simpler and more concrete words or drawing pictures or using other visual expression.

If the person is emotionally unstable, lead him/her to a quiet

place, and wait until he/she regains his/her composure to talk.

Inconveniences and worries experienced by persons with cognitive impairment:

- Difficulty in learning new things, unreliable temporal and/or spatial perception
- Getting easily confused by something new; difficulty in recalling one's name and address in some cases
- Cognitive impairment Dementia can occur in persons in their 40s and 50s.

Attention and care

Notify the Headquarters if you notice a person who seems to be lost and from whom you cannot obtain his/her address or other information.