



PACIFIC DISABILITY FORUM COVID-19 UPDATE

31 March 2020

Communication Guideline

Ref No. COVID-19_PDF_07

Disability Inclusive Communication Guidelines

The points below show various ways you can communicate with persons with disabilities recognising the different impairments:

a. For persons who are blind or have low vision;

- Talk to the person instead of talking to the carer or personal assistant.
- Introduce yourself by stating your name when interacting with those who are blind.
- Be descriptive when explaining directions by stating left or right, up or down.
- Ensure that you read everything in any forms, presentations, brochure, etc. If the document is big, provide a soft copy in word, power point or braille if it can be produced readily and requested by blind persons who can read braille. Avoid sharing documents in pdf, png or jpeg formats as they sometimes cannot be read by screen reading software's.

b. For person who have a speech impairment (they can hear well but cannot speak articulately).

- Ask the person how they wish to communicate with you (each person have different communication needs);
- Use communication board (if provided);
- Use communication devices e.g. tablet, smartphone (if provided);

c. For deaf persons (people who uses sign language as preferred or primary language)

1. Interpreter

- Provisioning of skilled (if relevant, qualified) interpreters are hired by relevant providers and/ or authorities;
- Information should be available through all media channels and on all platforms;
- Interpreters to be physically present and visible on camera (alongside whomever is speaking);
- When having conversation with deaf person, look at the deaf person, not the interpreter (interpreter should be positioned next to speaker and deaf person is positioned opposite interpreter);
- For best practice guide (for media), please refer to <http://2tdzpf2t7hxmqqhq3njno1y.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/WFD-WASLI-Guidelines-SL-access-FINAL-18March20-1.pdf>

2. Written

- Provide written materials (not all will have proficient understanding of written language);
- Simple text messages (for texting message on mobile);
- Written contents of audio resources (TV, radio, etc.);
- Captions on TV, media, and social media.

d. For hard of hearing persons (people who do not use sign language as primary or preferred language)

- Ensure audio contents are available in text formats (print, caption, etc.)
- Avoid significant background noise;
- Speak clearly, don't exaggerate mouth movements;
- Don't speak in loud voice and keep mouth clear of distractions (e.g. toothpick, gum)
- Use hearing loop (if available) (only if person have an equipped hearing aid).
- If all fails, use paper and pen.

e. Persons with psychosocial disabilities;

- Describe contents and concepts in pictures
- Ensure information is available in easy read formats
- Be descriptive when conversing and allow them time to receive and digest information you provide (Focus on the most important points, however, do not withhold any information)
- Be calm and exercise patience

f. Persons with intellectual disabilities;

- Be calm and exercise patience
- Use picture/ icons to describe instructions, processes and concepts
- Be descriptive when conversing and allow them time to receive and digest information you provided (Focus on the most important points, however, do not withhold any information)
- Use simple (or plain) written language - Avoid technical terms but break them down into simple words;
- If applicable, use sign language.

g. Persons with physical disabilities;

- Talk directly to the person with disability, not the carer or personal assistant
- When speaking to persons in wheel chairs do not stand and look down at the person, take a sit and converse with the person with disability on eye level.
- Call the person by their name and do not label them by their impairments or the assistive device they use.

END