Basic Disability Etiquette:

- OFFER assistance but don’t assume you know what they need – they are the expert on what they need and people experience blindness in many ways

ACCEPTABLE TERMINOLOGY:
- A person is blind or has a visual impairment
- Using words like “see” and “look” are okay

REMEMBER to ALWAYS:
- Address an individual by name and introduce yourself
- Let them know if you’re leaving
- Offer your arm, NEVER grab, push, or pull anyone
- Ask before moving an individual’s belongings

Basic Service Animal Etiquette:

- Greet the human before the dog!
- These are working animals, not pets – do not touch, feed, or distract them
- A person who uses a service animal (or cane) may still appreciate a sighted guide so remember to offer
- It is illegal to ask why a person has a service animal (if it is relevant, you may legally ask IF an animal is a service animal. You may also ask what service they are trained to perform.)

Sighted Guide Basics:

- Ask if an individual would like a sighted guide
- Ask how a person prefers to be guided (How would you like to be guided? Would you like me on your right or left? Do you prefer to grab my elbow/shoulder/hand/etc...)
- Give directions in advance (We’re about to turn right down the hallway. This path curves to the left. We’re approaching the end of the line, let’s stop here)
- Give advanced warning for changes in walking surface (We’re approaching a carpeted area. We’re approaching a ramp going down.)
- Use your words! Be descriptive!
- Avoid leaving an individual floating in space

When Sighted Guide Gets Trickier:

- STAIRS: Give advanced notice. Let the individual know how many stairs and whether they go up or down. Walk one step ahead of the individual you are guiding. It can be helpful to count aloud.
- NARROW OR CROWDED WALKWAYS: Give a heads up and shift your body position to allow the individual you are guiding to walk behind you. Walk slowly and be mindful of obstacles.