



## **Commit to Inclusion of Individuals with Disabilities in Public Health Practice**

Some practical tips to be inclusive and other ways to support involvement of the disability community are:

- Language matters. Use terminology that is inclusive.
- Treat adults with disabilities as adults. Baby talk is not appropriate.
- Speak directly to people with disabilities, not to their aide or sign language interpreter. Talk at eye level; if necessary, sit in a chair to be on the same level as a person who uses a wheelchair.
- Listen patiently and attentively to a person who has difficulty speaking; do not try to finish their thoughts for them.
- Remember that a person's mobility equipment is part of their personal space. Don't move a wheelchair, cane, or scooter without their permission.
- Not all disabilities are visible or apparent, but this does not make them any less real.
- Be mindful that people with cognitive or psychological disabilities have varying ways of coping with their conditions.
- Please note it is considered offensive to pretend to have a disability, and disability simulation experiences should be done for design/navigational purposes only.
- If you are unsure how to interact with a person with disabilities, ask them!
- Make sure people with disabilities are part of the solution, included in planning and hiring processes.
- Ensure your space is physically and programmatically accessible.
- Ensure all program registration and sign-up forms are accessible and include questions about accommodations so people can fully participate.
- Utilize a standard message on all websites and written materials stating that yours is an inclusive agency that provides accommodations for individuals with disabilities as needed.