



# Supporting and Serving Individuals with Disabilities



*Individuals with disabilities' voices, opinions and dreams matter! Value them and show the same respect you would to someone without a disability!*



## Relationship Building

- **Get to know the person as an individual outside of their disability**
- **Build relationships- not acquaintances**
- **Ask the individual what is needed to help them succeed**
- **Communicate often, not just when there are concerns**
- **Ask the individual what their strengths and weaknesses are**
- **Provide opportunities to engage at all levels**
- **View the individual as an equal partner**
- **Work collaboratively to solve problems**
- **Treat individuals with hidden disabilities with the same consideration you would individuals with visible disabilities**

# Listen



- **Individuals' voices, opinions and dreams matter**
- **Value and respect individuals with disabilities the same you would a person without a disability**
- **Individuals with disabilities are just like anyone else**
- **Ask what barriers there are in accessing and participating equally in your program and services**
- **Ask individuals what they need, and understand that they may not know exactly what they need- there may need to be a time of "discovery"**
- **Listen to those that know the individual, they bring valuable information and insight**

# Perception

- **Don't judge individuals based on your perception of what disability is**
- **Individuals with disabilities want the same opportunities as a person without disabilities**
- **Disability does not define an individual's capabilities**
- **Most don't realize individuals with disabilities have strengths and gifts that can surpass someone without disabilities**
- **Never assume a person with a disability is not capable of participating fully**
- **Assume all have great knowledge**
- **Provide assistance when requested**
- **Disabilities can be seen or hidden disabilities**



# Knowledge



- Use youth-friendly language
- Provide information and community resources and assist in accessing them
- Aid individuals in understanding rights and responsibilities
- Provide choices when possible
- Chunk information into small and understandable steps
- Provide positive reinforcements and breaks
- Use trauma-informed practices
- Allow individuals to voice any needs or concerns they may have

# Research

- Research the disability
- Keep in mind that disabilities affect every person differently
- Research how a disability can affect a person's everyday life
- Use one-page profiles to introduce individuals so people know what does and does not work for the individual



# Supported Decision- Making

Individuals with disabilities may need assistance making decisions. **Supported Decision-Making (SDM) allows individuals with disabilities to make choices about their own lives with support from a team of people they choose. Individuals with disabilities choose people they know and trust to be part of a support network to help with decision-making.**

Check out [KY-SPIN's Equity and Inclusion for Individuals with Disabilities Infographic](https://tinyurl.com/4xky42s7)  
(<https://tinyurl.com/4xky42s7>)





**Accessibility encompasses many things, physical accessibility is just one type.**

- **What does the individual need to access and participate equally in your program, it will be different for each person**
- **What social/emotional/behavioral supports may be needed**
- **Have simplified reading materials.**
- **Screen readers/FM systems**
- **Provide interpreters and translated materials when requested**
- **Offer different ways for individuals to communicate. (Examples: email, texts, or phone.)**
- **Provide accessible parking, entrances/exits, wheelchair ramps, and round tables, if possible**
- **Assigning a staff member to the individual to assist with accommodations**
- **Use spacious, comfortable rooms for events and meetings to accommodate appropriate spatial needs**



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