7.1.7 The Institution has disabled-friendly, barrier free environment

The Constitution of India ensures equality, freedom, justice and dignity of all individuals and implicitly mandates an inclusive society for all including persons with disabilities. In the recent years, there have been vast and positive changes in the perception of the society towards persons with disabilities. It has been realized that a majority of persons with disabilities can lead a better quality of life if they have equal opportunities and effective access to rehabilitation measures. The Government of India has enacted three legislations for persons with disabilities viz. i. Persons with Disability (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, which provides for education, employment, creation of barrier free environment, social security, etc. ii. National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disability Act, 1999 has provisions for legal guardianship of the four categories and creation ofenabling environment for as much independent living as possible. iii. Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 deals with the development of manpower for providing rehabilitation services. Did you know that we can discriminate or offend persons with disabilities by the way we speak to them, or by the way we behave around or towards them? For example, to say to the companion of a person who is blind, "Ask him if he wants a drink", is discriminatory and offensive. The correct way is to simply speak directly to the person who is blind. This brochure provides some tips and helpful do's and don'ts for effectively interacting with persons with disabilities.

Do's and Don'ts

DO SAY THIS: Person with special abilities, divyang.

DON'T SAY THIS: Disabled person; crippled person; the handicapped; handicapped person;

DO SAY THIS: He/ she is born special with divine body.

DON'T SAY THIS: Defective, defect, deformed. These words are offensive, dehumanizing, degrading and stigmatizing.

DO SAY THIS: He is a wheel-chair user; she uses a wheelchair; he walks with crutches;

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DON'T SAY THIS: He is wheelchair bound; she is confined to a wheelchair; he is crippled; she is an invalid; most people who use a wheelchair or mobility devices do not regard them as confining. They are viewed as liberating; a means of getting around.

DO SAY THIS: Deaf or hard of hearing. Deafness refers to a person who has a total loss of hearing. Hard of hearing refers to a person who has a partial loss of hearing within a range from slight to severe.

DON'T SAY THIS: Deaf and Dumb—this is as bad as it sounds. The inability to hear or speak does not indicate lack of intelligence.

DO SAY THIS: Person who has a mental, developmental, or intellectual disability. Or, he has a learning disability.

DON'T SAY THIS: She is retarded, stupid or an idiot. He is mental. These labels are insensitive and offensive.

DO SAY THIS: Person without disability; Able-bodied; able to walk, see and hear.

DON'T SAY THIS: Normal or healthy (example, "He uses a wheelchair and his wife is normal" or "his wife is healthy"). When used as the opposite of disabled, normal implies that the person with a disability is abnormal or is unhealthy. Many people with disabilities have excellent health.

DO SAY THIS: A person who has (name of disability); Example: A person who has cerebral palsy.

DON'T SAY THIS: Afflicted with, suffers from. Most people with disabilities do not regard themselves as afflicted or suffering continually. A disability is not an affliction.

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