

Resources

General

Always ask people who have disabilities what their particular needs are and make reasonable adjustments according to their specific requirements. Two people with the same disability may not have the same needs.

Mobility Difficulties

Mobility difficulties have a range of causes from Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI), arthritis and muscular dystrophy, to cerebral palsy and parkinson's disease. Each have a different effect on a person, and may cause pain as well as fatigue. The person may need to use sticks, crutches or a wheelchair. Co-ordination and balance may also be difficult. A person may experience different levels of difficulty and/or pain at different times in the day, or on different days: such that a student may need to use a wheelchair one day, but may be able to use crutches another day. It must also be noted that pain can also have a considerable negative effect on a person's concentration and stamina.

Support

Campus and accessibility

- Explain to potential visitors about the geography of the campus, and that it may be difficult for users of manual wheelchairs to negotiate the hill.
- Investigate the accessibility in your department: whether an accessibility audit has been completed. Include not only ramps and door and grab handles, but also hand rails alongside stairs or wide open spaces. If in any doubt, contact the DRC.
- Some students may find it very difficult to carry heavy items such as textbooks and folders around campus. They may benefit from the use of shelf or locker space within the department.

Stamina and timing

- Be aware of potential difficulties for students who have to move between buildings in a short time-scale. If they arrive at the second location on time, they may experience pain and/or fatigue.

Lectures

- Some students who experience constant pain may find it useful to be able to stand up and move around during longer sessions. This will not necessarily disrupt sessions if they are allowed to do this at the back.
- During longer sessions, it is good practice to incorporate a short break for all students to move around. This also aids concentration.
- The student may have difficulties with handwriting, or may have pain/fatigue issues when writing notes: where possible, provide handouts to students.

Courtesy

- When talking to students who are wheelchair users, talk to them at eye-level, or with sufficient distance to make good eye contact and do not invade the student's personal space by leaning on the wheelchair.

Information

- Think about the location and quantity of information you place on noticeboards. Students may find it difficult to access important information on noticeboards either placed high up or in amongst many other notices. Consider sending important information via E-mail as well.

For more information, see
Scope www.scope.org.uk

Sensitive Responses to Disability

Think about the words you use.

Avoid	Use instead
the handicapped	disabled people
the disabled	disabled people
Cripple, invalid	disabled person
Spastic	person who has cerebral palsy
afflicted by, suffers from, victim of...	has or with... (the condition or impairment)
mentally handicapped, retarded, subnormal	learning impaired
confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound	wheelchair user
able-bodied	non-disabled
disabled toilet*	accessible toilet*

Source: www.scope.org.uk (*not on the scope list)