

Carers, helpers, personal assistants, enablers....whatever you want to call them, as a disabled young person you are likely to receive support from one source or another.

One of the biggest changes as you grow up is trying to become more independent and do more without your parents or a family member to help.

There are a number of points that a new employee should be aware of and my sister Alex and I have come up with a few of the most important that we have come to recognise through our own personal experiences. Alex recently gave a talk to some students at Chichester College who are training to become carers and she used the points we had thought of to help them.

<u>A GOOD HELPER SHOULD</u>	<u>A GOOD HELPER SHOULD NOT</u>
<p>Always come down to the disabled persons height</p> <p><i>When having a conversation with a disabled person, make sure you have eye contact with them.</i></p>	<p>Stand above the disabled person's height</p> <p><i>It can be uncomfortable for the disabled person to have to look up all the time, or even impossible.</i></p>
<p>Always talk to the disabled person directly</p> <p><i>Remember that assisting them is the reason you are there and if you need to find something out ask the disabled person!</i></p>	<p>Talk over the disabled person as if they are not there</p> <p><i>If you are in a group with the disabled person, make sure they are included in the conversation and not just sat on the edge.</i></p>
<p>Look happy in your job!</p> <p><i>Make sure you seem as if you are enjoying your job, even if you are tired or have other things on your mind.</i></p>	<p>Seem tired while on the job</p> <p><i>It is important to give off the right vibes to the disabled person and not make them feel they are annoying or a burden.</i></p>
<p>Always check before taking action e.g. when tidying up.</p> <p><i>It is important to remember that the disabled person may like things done or set out in a certain way, so that it is easy for them to find things.</i></p>	<p>Presume what the disabled person wants</p> <p><i>Remember that the disabled person may not want things done in the same way every time even if they like a routine.</i></p>
<p>Stand or sit away from the disabled person if they are happily occupied</p>	<p>Stand behind the wheelchair and lean on it</p>

<p><i>It is important to respect the disabled person's space if they want to be alone.</i></p>	<p><i>If the disabled person is busy, try to look for a job to do, or bring you own activity to do while your assistance is not required.</i></p>
<p>Respect the disabled person's privacy at all times</p> <p><i>Be sensitive to the mood the disabled person is in - don't make them talk if they want to be quiet.</i></p>	<p>Come into the disabled person's private space e.g. their bedroom uninvited</p> <p><i>Remember that the disabled person has feelings and that they may not want you there just yet.</i></p>
<p>Remember you are at work, and not available for chatty calls on your mobile.</p> <p><i>Emergency calls are different, but make your friends and family aware of when you are at work.</i></p>	<p>Talk on mobile phones to other friends while doing the job at the same time</p> <p><i>Remember you are at work – the disabled person can't always leave the room and may not want to hear your conversation.</i></p>