

RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION WITH NEURODIVERGENT PEOPLE

Disability etiquette that respects autonomy, communication and safety

Change the approach - not the person.

Speak directly, presume competence, allow processing time and recognise speech, behaviour, gesture, sign and AAC as communication. Use the person's preferred identity language.

AVOID DISMISSIVE LANGUAGE

TRY RESPECTFUL SUPPORT

"Calm down."



"I can see this is a lot. What would help: space, quiet or support?"

"Stop crying."



"It is okay to cry. I am here when you are ready."

"You are okay."



"Are you hurt, overwhelmed or needing help?"

"Look at me when I speak."



"You can listen without looking at me. Take the time you need."

"Use your words."



"You can tell me, show me, point, sign or use your AAC."

"Do not hit."



"I will not let anyone be hurt. Let us make space and keep hands safe."

"Stop yelling."



"I want to understand. Would quieter surroundings or another way to communicate help?"

"Do not get upset."



"Your feelings are valid. Let us work out what your body or environment needs."

"That is enough."



"Do you need a break, more time, space or a different option?"

"I am over this."



"I need a short pause so we can both be safe. I will come back."

NEURODIVERSITY-RESPECTING PRACTICE



Speak to the person



Offer choices



Allow processing time



Do not force touch or eye contact



Protect privacy

Safety boundaries can be clear and respectful: stop harm, reduce demands, create space and support regulation.