



## CUSTOMER SERVICE COUNTS! TIPS FOR STAFF, DOCENTS, AND VOLUNTEERS

If you interact with the public, you are the person the guest will remember. And first impressions count!

Here's what people with disabilities had to say about their good experiences at arts and cultural institutions. What made it a good experience was not just the exhibits, it was the way these guests were treated.

Experience	Tip
<i>"The tour guide made me feel at ease. She was not perfect, but she really tried."</i>	Relax! Don't be afraid of making a mistake. If you are not sure what to do, ask.
<i>"I felt like a normal person having a normal conversation, not like I couldn't speak for myself."</i>	Your guest is a <u>person</u> , not a disability or a problem. Treat every guest with the same respect. Speak directly to the guest with the disability, not to the companion or friend if there is someone else there.
<i>"She sat down so she was eye to eye with me in my wheelchair, and she asked me if I wanted her to push me. She was respectful."</i>	Respect personal space, which includes wheelchairs, canes, crutches, and walkers. Don't touch the person or the person's belongings without asking.
<i>"He didn't know how to help me get around, so I showed him how I would hold his elbow. Some people grab my arm and start pulling me!"</i>	Ask! If you don't know what to do or how to help, ask the guest how you can be of assistance and allow yourself to be coached. Also, learn how to use sighted guide technique to assist people with visual impairments. It's easy to do.



## ABS Awareness Month 2014 - Quick Tips

Experience	Tip
<p><i>“When I got to the information desk, they had a large print map and when I asked if there was someone who could take me through the exhibit, the woman at the desk knew who to call. That was a pleasant surprise!”</i></p>	<p>Know what is available at your institution. Do you have information in large print? Are there special accommodations or tours for people with disabilities? Are there touch exhibits or other interactive exhibits? Are there experts or go-to people to assist people with disabilities? Know where to find these materials and how to reach these people.</p>
<p><i>“I went to the museum because I heard from a friend that they had a special pen that I could use at each stop in the exhibit that would explain what I was seeing. When I got there, there was only one pen and it didn’t work. They found new batteries and it was OK, but I wish they had the pen ready and that they had more than one. What if I had come with other people who needed a pen?”</i></p>	<p>Be sure your special equipment works and resources are readily available. If your institution advertises that there are special resources and accommodations for people with disabilities, be sure you can deliver.</p>
<p><i>“I was really impressed with the docent! She knew a lot. She could answer all the questions the group had, and was able to give me more detailed information about what was in the paintings.”</i></p>	<p>If you are going to provide tours for people with disabilities, become an expert on the exhibit. Learn how to provide verbal descriptions, facilitate touch tours where possible, and employ multi-sensory teaching strategies. Practice with different people (those with and without disabilities) and ask for feedback so you can perfect your technique.</p>
<p><i>“I had such a great time that I went back the next weekend with my husband. It was interesting to hear him describe the art to me.”</i></p>	<p>All guests can be repeat customers. Giving the guest with a disability a great experience can result in return visits for the guest and his friends and family.</p>