

Night to Shine volunteer helpful hints and tips

Effects of Developmental Disabilities

- Developmental disabilities effect a person's daily life.
- It could make it more difficult for a person with a developmental disability to function in their daily life, support themselves economically, and live independently.
- A person with a developmental disability might have a very hard time functioning with things we take for granted every day like mobility, learning, talking to and understanding people, expressing themselves and self-direction.
- There are some developmental disabilities that effect an individual's support needs more than others.
 - These include: Intellectual Disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder or genetic disorders like Down Syndrome.
 - How severe the disability also plays a part in this.

Supporting People with Developmental Disabilities

- Each person's support needs are different based on their level of independence with specific skills.
- Supporting a person to achieve a task or goal is not only about helping them but also about teaching them how to do the task so that each time they are supported in that task it is a teaching moment.
- Every interaction is an opportunity to teach.
- The ultimate goal in providing support is to increase the person's ability to become more independent in his/her daily life.
- Support must be offered in a way that allows for individual choice.
- People with disabilities should receive the same level of respect as those without disabilities.

Prompting to Provide Support

- Prompting is assistance given to help the person perform a task or behavior.
- Types of Prompts
 - Gestures: involves gesturing or pointing to direct the person's attention to the task/behavior to be performed.
 - Examples: pointing to an object, touching an object, facial expressions, and body language
 - Visual: involves using visual cues to direct the person's attention to the task/behavior to be performed.
 - Examples: pictures, text, flashcards, objects, and videos
 - Verbal: verbally directs the person to perform the task/behavior.
 - Modeling: demonstrate the task/behavior so that the person can imitate it.
 - Physical: physically guide the person's movements to perform the task/behavior
- Give the person enough time (generally 3-5 seconds) to respond to the given prompt.

When Providing Support Remember to:

- Ask first and use accommodations as needed. Do not assume people need help. They are the experts on their needs and how to best meet them.
- Keep an open mind. Don't make assumptions about the person's abilities.
- Speak at the person's language level.
- Be direct. Make eye contact and speak to the person directly.
- Speak like yourself. Use your normal volume and pace, unless they ask you to speak louder or slower.
- Ask for help. If you don't understand what the person is saying or communicating, ask the person to repeat it or offer another form of communication.
- Speak clearly, listen well. Use clear sentences, simple words, and concrete concepts. Avoid using jargon and slang language.
- Be willing to learn from the person.