

I am a person first and I have a disability

When you deal with me
treat me just as you would any other person—
with respect and courtesy.

Please look me in the eye,
and speak directly to me, not to my companion.

I am used to living with my disability
but I appreciate your help when I need it.

If I have trouble seeing or hearing or moving easily
please remember that it is my eyes
or ears or muscles that do not work
as well as yours.

Beyond that, I have the same
needs and wants,
hopes and desires

as you do.

I have problems and fears, just like you
but I also have strengths

that sometimes even I don't recognize.

I need to talk to you about those abilities
and I need you to listen.

But most of all, I need you to remember—
I am a person first!

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