

We offer the following equipment and support for people with physical disabilities:

Physical disability	The support for physical disabilities is based on the student individual need. However the following may be available:
	• Manual Wheelchair
	• Electronic wheelchairs
	• Crutches
	• A joystic mouse controls.
	• Railing on the walls of buildings.
	• A hoist
	• Commode

➔ **ALSO LOOK OUT FOR OUR OTHER TIP SHEETS ON TOPICS SUCH AS:**

- Student's Concession Guides
- Disability Unit information leaflet
- Test and Exam Tips
- Learning Disorders
- Neurodevelopmental Disorders
- Hearing Impairment
- Physical Disabilities

➔ **KEEP IN TOUCH**

We pride ourselves at being accessible to our students and other university stakeholders in pursuit of holistic support for our students. To this, we have multiple platforms to be reached on.

Visit us on your campus

APK - PsyCaD-CRing 1
 APB - PsyCaD-Impala Court
 DFC - PsyCaD-House no. 2 (next to the student centre)
 SWC - PsyCaD-Adelaide Tambo

Or

Call us

011 559 3745 (APK)
 011 559 5752 (SWC)
 011 559 6042 (DFC)
 011 559 1318 (APB)

Or

Send us an email: disabilityunit@uj.ac.za
Visit our Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/DisabilityPsyCaD>

If you require a copy of this leaflet in an alternative format e.g. Braille, large print, audio, etc – please email Mr. Eric Mhlanga.

DISABILITY SERVICES — TIP SHEET —

Physical Disabilities: People in wheelchairs



This tip sheet explains the rules of etiquette when talking with a person in a wheelchair.

People with physical disabilities often encounter a lot of obstacles when it comes to their physical environment as a result of lack of accessible and wheelchair friendly routes and entrances. These often lead to exclusion and isolation for most people living with physical disabilities.

It is important to keep in mind that a person with a physical disability, is still a person, they are not their disability.

The first rule of etiquette when interacting with people in wheelchairs, or power chairs, is to remember that one should not focus on their disability. Instead, focus on the person.

Always respect a person's dignity, individuality and desire for INDEPENDENCE.

Always ask the person using the wheelchair if he or she would like assistance BEFORE you help. It may not be needed or wanted.

A person's wheelchair is part of his or her body space and should be treated with respect

People who use wheelchairs have varying capabilities and here are more helpful tips to help you when interacting with a person who uses a wheelchair.

- Some person who use wheelchairs can walk with aid or for short distances. They use wheelchairs because they help them to conserve energy and to move about with greater efficiency.
- Don't classify or think of people who use wheelchairs as "sick." Wheelchairs are used to help people adapt to or compensate for

the mobility impairments that result from many non-contagious impairments.

- Don't pet guide dogs or other service animals as they are working animals.
- It is appropriate to shake hands with a person who has a disability, even if they have limited use of their hands or wear an artificial limb.
- If your conversation lasts more than a few minutes, consider sitting down, etc. to get yourself on the same eye-level as the person who uses the wheelchair. It will keep both of you from getting a stiff neck!
- If you have children, they will stare, it's their nature. Talk to the child about disabled people, and help them to understand why people use wheelchairs. Don't discourage children from asking questions of a person who uses a wheelchair about their wheelchair. Open communication helps overcome fearful or misleading attitudes.
- Bathroom breaks matter. If you plan a gathering or meeting and observe someone in a wheelchair, ensure the person knows and has access to a bathroom.
- REARRANGE furniture to create a clear path for wheelchairs.
- Don't hang or lean on a person's wheelchair because it is part of that person's personal body space.
- Speak directly to the person in the wheelchair, not to someone nearby as if the person in the wheelchair did not exist.
- If conversation lasts more than a few minutes, consider sitting down or kneeling to get yourself on the same level.

- Don't belittle or patronize the person by patting them on the head.
- Give clear directions, including distance, weather conditions and physical obstacles that may hinder the person's travel.
- When a person using a wheelchair "transfers" out of the wheelchair to a chair, toilet, car or bed, do not move the wheelchair out of reaching distance.
- Be aware of the person's capabilities. Some users can walk with aid and use wheelchairs to save energy and move quickly.
- It is ok to use terms like "running along" when speaking to a person who uses a wheelchair. The person is likely to express things the same way.
- Don't discourage children from asking questions about the wheelchair.
- Don't assume that using a wheelchair is in itself a tragedy. It is a means of freedom that allows the person to move about independently.
- Only push or lean on a WHEELCHAIR with permission
- YIELD and give way to wheelchairs on the move.