



Advice for Speakers, Worship Leaders and Hosts

In the UK today, there are more than 1 in 5 people who could be described as disabled. It is therefore right to assume we will have a diverse group of Deaf or disabled conventioners.

Some may have a visual impairment or use a mobility aid. There may be some people with learning disabilities or other additional needs and others who have chronic illnesses. Many will have hidden disabilities.

You will find a basic list on greeting guests who are Deaf, disabled or have additional needs [here](#).

All these conventioners are people just like everyone else and appreciate being treated as such.

There is a disability and additional needs advisor who can support you and is willing to answer any questions - no question is considered silly or rude. Never worry about offending the advisor with your language - use the language you know as this is quicker for finding the support you need.

If You Are Leading Seminars:

In presentations, please remember:

- Use a font of a good size with at least a 1.3pt spacing between lines.
- Don't use all capital letters.
- Always use left aligned text, not centrally - this helps people to track the text.
- Use more slides rather than putting too much text on your slides.
- The provided Keswick Ministries template colour scheme is accessible.
- If you use graphics that are integral to what you are saying (Including a cartoon joke) please explain it as not all will see it.
- Always have some spare copies of your notes or slides:
 - Some guests will have a BSL interpreter who will find a copy of your headline notes helpful. (Especially any words not commonly used in everyday conversation)

- Guests who would normally rely on speech to text would also benefit from this.
- Some of our autistic guest also find notes helpful and will ask if this is the case.

There will be guests who need to sit in specific places - the venue's welcomer can help with these requests.

Some guests need to move around frequently - either to relieve pain or to regulate themselves if there is a lot of sensory stimulation. Please don't be alarmed by this - they are listening just as well as anyone else!

Language:

To us, the following suggestions may not seem important but can have a huge significance for Deaf and disabled people and those with additional needs.

Disabled people are trying to claw back ownership of their own language instead of non disabled people setting language on their behalf. This may appear to be causing issues, but generally, disabled people do recognise there are lots of preferences within the many disability communities.

It's worth noting that the USA is a number of years behind the UK on language, but even there, disabled people are now asking for the language below.

Here's a simple guide for what corporate phrasing in a public setting should be:

Use this.	Don't use this.	Sometimes preferred.
Disabled Person	Differently Abled. Handi-capable. Invalid/Handicapped.	Person with a disability
Additional Needs (but not for physical disability)	Special Needs Differently Abled	The specific disability
Autistic person Neurodivergent	Person with autism High/low functioning	Person with autism (rare)

Person with a learning disability	Retarded.	Additional Needs
Deaf (capital 'D' : Born deaf - generally BSL users) deafened (small 'd': became deaf - uses lip reading, captions and speech to text - generally not BSL users)		

The preferred cover all phrases would be: "Deaf and disabled people and those with additional needs". Or "For those who are Deaf, disabled or have additional needs...."

[If you talk about this on social media, the best phraseology to use is: "*So all of our guests can access our programme....*"]

For shorthand use "Disabled People". Please don't use 'additional needs' for everything and especially not 'special needs'.

(Additional needs is generally a cover all phrase used for children and young people who need extra learning, social or sensory support. Children, young people and adults who have physical disabilities generally dislike the phrase.)

Hosts, Worship Leaders and Speakers

We often give lots of instructions to the people in front of us. Our custom is to ask people to stand to worship and sometimes to pray.

Not everyone can stand, and not just people with mobility difficulties. For some people who have disabilities, chronic illnesses or additional needs, these phrases can feel alienating because they can't do them. This feeling often comes from years of being ignored, but giving the option to not stand can be freeing and add to the feeling of being cared for & remembered. It also shows we recognise that not everyone can stand.

There is much discussion around what phraseology to use, even in the various disability communities, but inclusive language can be:

- "Can I invite you to stand if you are comfortable to do so."
- "Take whatever posture helps you to worship."

- “Stand if you’re able.”

It’s worth noting that a majority of our guests may prefer the phrase ‘stand if you’re able’, but there is a vocal minority outside of the event who campaign for it not to be used.

Some notes on praying that God would take away a disability:

A natural response to disability can be to see it as a tragedy and therefore, out of love and compassion, pray for the ‘suffering’ to be taken away. Many disabled people see their disability as part of who they are and see it as positive rather than suffering.

There is a distinction that is important to remember:

- Disabled people and people with illnesses will often have different views about prayers for healing.

Not all disabled people want prayers to be cured of their disability and are often upset if that’s the only prayer/pastoral care offered to them.

- Always ask what those with an obvious disability want prayer for, never offer prayer for healing unless they ask for it.
- If you feel called to pray for someone, tell them and ask if there is something they want prayer for - don’t assume.
- Don’t touch without permission as this could cause long lasting pain or damage.

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