

DISABILITY INDEPENDENCE, EMPOWERMENT &amp; FAIRNESS

# INTERSTATE CONNECTIONS



## General Disability Etiquette - Let's redefine the face of ability!

### Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

#### Use respectful language.

**Do:** Avoid using terms like “retarded,” “slow,” or “deficient.” Use “person with a developmental disability” or “person with intellectual challenges.”

**Don't:** Use derogatory language or make assumptions based on stereotypes.

*These “Think Again” reminders are courtesy of ILICIL Independent Lifestyles, Inc. in Sauk Rapids Minnesota.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS JUST FOR YOU!

### My Tools for Life

February 23–24<sup>th</sup>

Boise State University, Student Union Building

Registration is open for a two-day event supporting youth with disabilities as they prepare for life after high school. The conference focuses on employment, independent living, self-advocacy, and leadership.

Find out more here: <https://idahoat.org/tools-fair>



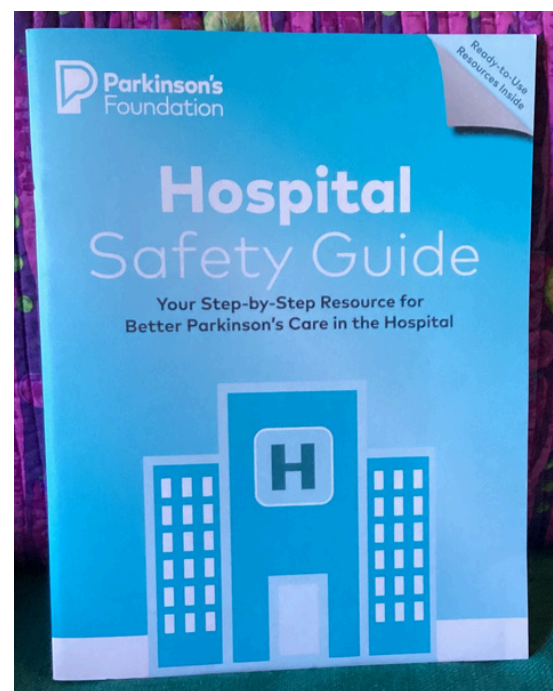
*Find more accessible events at [www.dacnw.org/events](http://www.dacnw.org/events)*

## How to Plan a Hospital Visit to avoid challenges and complications

### NEWS FROM DAC NW

For those with Parkinson's disease, or other chronic health issues, a stay in the hospital can present a challenge. There can be problems that you do not expect or are not prepared to handle, said Pam Kohlmeier, MD, JD, FACEP ("Dr. Pam") in her recent talk to the **Peer2Peer Parkinson's** support group, but you can help diminish stress and improve safety by careful planning.

Everyone knows to bring their health insurance card when they go to the hospital, said Dr. Pam, but there are other important items to take: a copy of your most recent medical history; a list of your medications; and copies of all applicable legal documents: medical advance directive, living will, POLST form, and a health



care power of attorney. Put the information in a binder separated by categories, such as legal documents, labs, doctor visits, test results, medications, medical devices, etc. Make two copies, leave one at home as a backup. Or you can save this information on your cellphone.

Medication dispensing is an issue that should also be prepared for, says Dr. Pam. Doctors, nurses, and other clinical staff do not always know what medications are unsafe for people with Parkinson's, including which drugs may interact with Parkinson's medications. There are drugs that when given to a person with Parkinson's can make them sick or can cause bad reactions with the ones they are already taking. The **Hospital Safety Guide**, a free publication published by the Parkinson's Foundation, provides a tear-out list of safe and contraindicated medications specific to Parkinson's disease. It's designed to decrease the risk of harmful interactions.

Tear out or photograph the safe and contraindicated medications list from the Guide to bring to show the medical staff. Be sure they put a copy in your records, and make sure any doctor in charge of your hospital care sees it. Always keep a copy in your wallet to share anytime you have a hospital or medical office visit.

Another challenge can occur when a hospitalized Parkinson's patient seeks to stay on the strict schedule of their Parkinson's medications. The hospital staff may not realize how important the timing of the Parkinson's medication is. Bring your own prescription meds to ensure the medication is available (not all hospitals have these medications on hand). Let the medical staff know you have them. Some hospitals may let you administer the medication yourself while others will want the medical staff to give them to you. Ask your doctor to write in your chart that you should be allowed to keep your own medication so that you can be sure they are taken on schedule. The doctor should emphasize that your medications are taken on time. Let the hospital staff know if you have swallowing issues or use a device, such as Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) or Duopa pump.

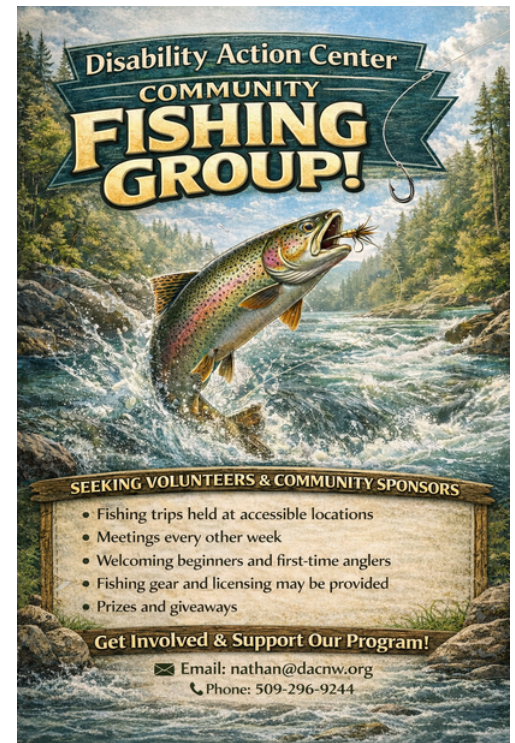
Careful planning can help you avoid misunderstandings that could compromise your care. You and your healthcare providers ultimately want the same thing--for you to have a healthy and safe experience while in the hospital.

## DAC NEW Peer Support Groups

### News from DAC NEW - Spokane

Peer support is considered one of the pillars of the Independent Living Movement and an essential element for the self-determination of disabled people. According to the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), the Independent Living Movement is founded in the belief that people with disabilities, regardless of the form, have a common history and a shared struggle, that we are a community and a culture that will advance further banded together politically.

It is through this common history and shared struggle where the need for peer support comes into play. Sharing experiences with someone who understands helps builds a sense of belonging and shows individuals they are not alone, combating loneliness. Peer support can also offer practical, non-clinical guidance from people who understand navigating disability, which helps to foster self-determination and community inclusion.



### Tabletop Role Playing Games Peer Support Group (TTRPG)

Do you enjoy tabletop role playing games? Curious about how to play? Looking for a way to connect, tell stories together? Join the TTRPG Peer Group for an inclusive and accessible adventure-filled experience!

Beginner friendly environment - no experience needed. A welcoming space where everyone can join and participate. Accommodations such as interpretation, live captions, screen reader friendly materials and more are available on request. Please note we may need one or two weeks' notice to arrange accommodations.

Anyone can join whether you are a seasoned Dungeon Master or have never rolled a d20 - you are welcome here. For more information or to join the group, call or text Nathan at 509-296-9244. This group meets virtually on the Roll20 platform every Sunday at noon. Registering for a Roll20 account is free.

### Fishing Peer Group

Weather permitting, come spend a relaxing day by the water and connect with others in the community.

- Free fishing experiences every other week
- Fishing gear will be provided by DAC if needed. Participants are encouraged to bring their own if possible.
- No fishing license required for individuals with disabilities.
- Great conversation, fresh air and new friends.
- Hosted at accessible locations that are served by the STA and Paratransit.

To register or for questions call: (509) 606-4639 or email [nathan@dacnw.org](mailto:nathan@dacnw.org).

## News from DAC NEW – Spokane – continued

**Talk-O Tuesday Virtual Drop-In Peer Support Group**

Each week on Tuesday from 4PM-6PM, DAC NEW offers Talk-O Tuesdays. This virtual drop-in peer support group offers an accessible, safe space for sharing experiences and connecting with others facing similar challenges. Each week offers a menu topic to help guide the discussion. This virtual peer group meets using Microsoft Teams. After registering and agreeing to the group rules, a Teams link will be emailed to the participant. The facilitator is a DAC NEW staff member that is available to guide shared lived experiences as a person with a disability. To register, please go to [Talk-O Tuesday](#). Participants only need to register once for the Teams link. For more information call: (509) 606-4639 or email [erin@dacnw.org](mailto:erin@dacnw.org).

**Talk-O Tuesday Discord Peer Support Group**

The Talk-O Tuesday virtual peer group is attached to a Discord group for 14–24-year-olds. Complete this short [Google Form](#) to receive the Discord invite to the Peer Group. For more information call: (509) 606-4639 or email [nathan@dacnw.org](mailto:nathan@dacnw.org). Registering for a Discord account is free.

**JOKE OF THE MONTH**

A mom texts her son. “Hi Son. What does IDK, LY and TTYL mean?” He texts back, “I don’t know, Love you, and talk to you later.” The mom replies, “It’s ok, don’t worry about it. I’ll ask your sister.”



## NW ADA CENTER ~ Idaho

### ADA Question of the Month

**QUESTION:**

**Should I look to hire people with disabilities in my business?**

**ANSWER:**

**Yes! The ADA provides protections against disability discrimination.**

In the past three and a half decades, disability employment has strengthened the workforce and economy and our national security through domestic manufacturing. The ADA catalyzed essential shifts in accessibility and workplace rights, and more recently, the post-pandemic rise of flexible work arrangements and new technologies have opened doors to even greater opportunity.



Disability employment has a broad national impact. People with disabilities contribute daily to many privately owned businesses, to government efficiency and military readiness, which remains vital in today's uncertain global climate. Our economic and defense capacity is only as strong as our workforce, and that workforce should reflect the full breadth of our country's talent.

This impact is especially meaningful for our nation's veterans. More than 2,800 veterans with disabilities are employed through SourceAmerica's network. For them, disability employment honors their dignity, builds independence and provides upward mobility, while reducing reliance on government assistance, strengthening the economy and bolstering our defense.

There are still barriers to disability employment. The biggest is outdated perceptions that continue to restrict access to meaningful work.

For additional information contact Dana Gover, MPA, ADAC, Training & Technical Assistance Consultation

Northwest ADA Center-Idaho Email: [dananwadacenteridaho@gmail.com](mailto:dananwadacenteridaho@gmail.com) ADA TA

Hotline: voice and text

208-841-9422

# Step-by-Step Home Cleaning Guide

## for People with Disabilities by Sara M at Sanitair LLC

Keeping a clean and organized home supports physical health, emotional wellbeing, and dignity. For people with disabilities however, home cleaning can feel overwhelming due to mobility limits, fatigue, pain, or accessibility barriers. This does not mean that a safe and hygienic living space is out of reach. With the right strategies, adaptive tools, and thoughtful home layout, cleaning can become manageable and empowering. Cleaning is not about doing everything at once. It is about creating a system that works for you.



### Understanding Your Physical Needs and Limits

Everyone experiences physical challenges differently, so your approach should reflect your mobility, strength, balance, and endurance. Some people may use a wheelchair full time, others may have limited grip strength, chronic pain, or fatigue that fluctuates day to day. Take time to identify tasks that are easy, tasks that require modifications, and tasks that should be outsourced. This honest assessment is a strength, not a limitation. It allows you to focus your energy where it matters most.

### Creating an Accessible Cleaning Plan

Instead of traditional deep cleaning days, break tasks into small, achievable steps. A daily or weekly checklist can help prevent buildup while reducing physical strain. For example:

- One surface per day rather than an entire room
- Sitting while cleaning when possible
- Using timers to avoid overexertion

Planning cleaning around your best energy periods, such as mornings or after rest, can make a significant difference.

### Wheelchair Accessibility at Home and Cleaning Ease

An accessible home plays a major role in how easily you can clean. Clear pathways, wider doorways, and furniture spacing allow smoother movement and reduce the risk of injury. For cleaning purposes, ensure that:

- Cleaning supplies are stored at reachable heights
- Trash bins are easy to access and empty
- Light switches and outlets are reachable from a seated position

Using wall-mounted organizers and pull-down shelves helps keep essentials within reach. Accessibility improvements not only support cleaning but also enhance overall safety and independence.

### Choosing the Right Adaptive Cleaning Tools

Modern adaptive tools can dramatically reduce physical effort. Consider the following options:

- Lightweight cordless vacuums
- Long-handled dusters and mops
- Spray bottles with trigger-free designs
- Robotic vacuums for daily floor maintenance

These tools help conserve energy and allow you to clean more efficiently. Even small upgrades can have a large impact over time. We will have more next month!

## The 5 C's of Caregiving

### SELF-DIRECTED PA SERVICES

When it's time to interview a new in-home caregiver, are you looking at the 5 C's of caregiving?

This often refers to Simone Roach's nursing model and can form a framework for quality care. The original 5 have been adapted for in-home care.

**Caring/Compassion:** Can the caregiver show empathy, patience, and caring? This often starts with self-care. Compassion can refer to focusing on the moment such as sharing a cup of tea, listening to stories, or creating a safe, comfortable environment.

**Competence:** Does the caregiver possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and clinical judgment and/or do they show ability and willingness to learn?

**Connection:** Can they be present in the moment, avoid distraction and maintain a bond of dedication?

**Clarity/Communication:** Are they capable of clear, consistent, and kind communication to help you set realistic expectations and reduce frustration? You can emphasize the need for plain language, provide actionable steps, and reduce anxiety for you both.

**Consistency:** Can they offer a steady approach to your care and routines? Beyond just having the same person, quality care needs to be predictable and standardized for support.

**Courage/Commitment:** Will they be able to find the strength to continue and be dedicated? There are many daily challenges, family dynamics, etc. It's important that they find purpose in caregiving, and that they practice self-care.

The 5 C's remind us that caregiving doesn't require perfection - just intention!



**Services YOU control!**

## VETERANS WITH DISABILITIES

### HigherGround USA – Ketchum Idaho

Higher Ground USA operates programs and adaptive sports for people with disabilities. Through recreation, therapy, and lasting support, they bridge the gap between disability and belonging.

They have a Veterans & First Responders program as well. They offer recreational and adventure activities like skiing, kayaking, mountain biking, fishing, and climbing.



From weeklong retreats to day and weekend events, participants connect with the outdoors and build community through shared experiences.

They offer a range of recreation programs including skill-building sports lessons, weekend clinics, and school partnerships. The programs combine outdoor activities with therapeutic processes to help individuals develop essential skills for success.

Upcoming events include skiing or snowboarding at the Sun Valley ski resort in Sun Valley, Idaho for male or female veteran couples. They are the exclusive provider of adaptive snow sports for Sun Valley and offer 1:1 instruction for individuals with permanent disabilities and includes adaptive equipment.

Applications are required to attend these programs. Eligibility requires a permanent disability and a primary address in Idaho. Participants must present an Idaho State-issued ID and documentation verifying the disability. The documentation should confirm the disability is permanent, describe how it limits daily life, and specify the nature of those limitations.

You can apply [here](#).



**VETERAN-  
DIRECTED  
CARE**

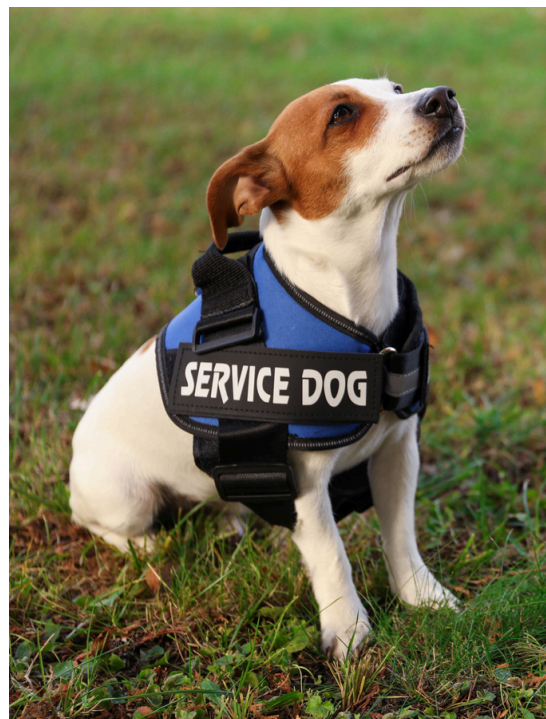
**Questions about Veteran Directed Care?  
Call Spokane 509-434-7000  
Or Walla Walla 509-525-5200**



## Service Animal Roles are Expanding Young Adults – Next Chapter

Across the country, organizations are working to train service dogs for a variety of roles. Some serve as Autism service dogs, trained to comfort and even sit down to keep young children from “running”. Others can detect the change in insulin drops in people with diabetes. And still others help with a variety of mobility issues and even help the blind or deaf to see and hear.

These groups do important work and in the state of Minnesota, they have a new law that protects people who train service dogs from paying more in rent. That law should increase the number of volunteer trainers and available dogs.



The biggest need is mobility dogs who assist by pushing elevator or door buttons, taking laundry out of the dryer or washer, and protect people with balance issues from falling. Seizure-assistance dogs can sense when you are about to have a seizure and provide help and comfort.

They can be taught to retrieve or pick up things from the floor. Some can even pick up a coin or credit card!

Most service dogs are golden or labrador retrievers and are bred for the job. But even rescue pups can be trained! It's estimated that the complete training, which is more than 2 years, costs around \$45,000. So supporting organizations that do this will help all people with disabilities!



### Rewriting the narrative of what's possible!

#### QUOTES TO MAKE YOU THINK

**“As a disabled man, let my life be a reflection of the endless amount of ability that exists in each and everyone of us.”**

**~ Robert M. Hensel**

## Finding Purpose and Confidence Through Work: Diane's Story

### News from LINC

When Diane decided she wanted to return to work, she didn't know where to start—but she knew she wanted to make a difference. A naturally caring and highly sensitive person, she had always been drawn to nursing and helping others. With encouragement from her Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor, she learned about the Ticket to Work program, which opened the door to new possibilities.



Through the program, Diane discovered she didn't have to do it alone. She found a team that believed in her—people who helped her navigate training, communication, and the confidence-building steps needed to reach her goals. She completed her Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training through CWI's medical assistant program and spent four intense weeks interning full-time in the Treasure Valley. It was tough, but she pushed through and succeeded. At the end of Diane's internship, she was offered a full-time position.

After successfully working for over one year, Diane needed to take some time off for health reasons under FMLA. Diane's Ticket was transferred to LINC's Ticket to Work program in December of 2024, where she connected with Kelli. Together, they worked on requesting reasonable accommodations for her return to work—ensuring Diane had the support she needed to thrive.

Now, Diane is again employed, regaining her confidence and independence. She's proud of her skills—taking vitals, talking with patients, and offering comfort and care. She no longer relies on food stamps and feels empowered knowing she's supporting herself through meaningful work.

Diane's story is one of resilience and heart. She learned how to ask for help, take breaks when needed, and keep moving forward. Her journey shows that with the right team, training, and determination, it's possible to turn challenges into success—and serve others while finding your own strength.

To find out more about LINC's Ticket to Work program, visit <https://www.lincidahoworks.org/> email us at [ticket@lincidaho.org](mailto:ticket@lincidaho.org), or call 208-336-3335 and ask to speak to a Ticket to Work specialist.



## Empowering Independence!

## BLUEPATH -

### Accessible businesses for the whole family



The Children's Museum of Eastern Oregon has hands-on educational exhibits and activities, both online and at our museum. Let your child's imagination soar with our wide range of interactive experiences. It is a not-for-profit play place, offering a wide range of educational exhibits and activities for children of all ages. Located on Main Street in downtown Pendleton, our hands-on exhibits expose children to a world of imagination while enlightening their minds to real world learning.

Admission is \$8 and children 1 and under are free. They can reduce the fee to \$7 per child and adults are free when there is a minimum of 10 children attending. Be sure to book ahead!

They can even host birthday parties and other events there, from the basic where you bring everything to a full service party where they provide everything.

And by checking BluePath before you go, you can learn things like: they have on-street parking only, and the restroom in the back of the building is the most accessible. There are lots of photos posted so you can make an informed decision on whether the business is accessible to you.



**Find YOUR path!**

## **LIFE HACKS For Disability – Tips for hearing loss**

### **Assistive technology can help you to do everyday tasks!**

#### **Bone Conducting Headphones**

These work differently than regular headphones. Instead of sending sound through the ear canal, they send sound through the bones of the head. The vibrations go straight to the inner ear, where the brain hears them. Lightweight, weatherproof and comfortable to wear, they keep your ears open for safety.

**Around \$80 from Raycon Global**



#### **Bed Shaking Smoke Alarm**

SafeAwake identifies the sound of a smoke alarm and activates an intermittent bed shaker, a low frequency sounder, and a visual flashing light to alert a sleeping person who may not be able to hear the smoke alarm in case of a fire emergency. Plug in power supply and a battery back up in case of a power outage. Large test button so you can be assured it's working.

**\$400.00 from Safeawake**

**Stuff to make life easier!**



## CONTACT YOUR LOCAL CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING



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207 South Broadway  
Blackfoot, ID 83221  
208-785-9648 VOICE  
208-785-2398

250 S Skyline Ste 1  
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