



# RUDERMAN SYNAGOGUE INCLUSION PROJECT



RUDERMAN  
FAMILY FOUNDATION



## **10 Commandments to Help You Promote Inclusion in Your Community**

*By Matan Koch, RSIP Consultant and CEO, Capitalizability*

1. Treat a person with a disability just as you would treat someone else. People with disabilities have exactly the same hopes, dreams, fears, desires, and even hobbies as anyone else. Every interest of a friend without a disability might be shared by a friend with a disability, and any treatment that would upset a friend without a disability, like being shouted at or condescended to, will also likely offend a friend with a disability.
2. We are all in community together. If you encounter anyone – with a disability or otherwise – who appears to be in need of assistance, ask them if they need anything. If they say they need help that you feel you can comfortably provide, do it. Always follow any instructions closely and never provide help without asking!
3. Learn the accessibility features of your local community. Then become a force in making them known to people who could use them, and keep them in good condition for their use.
4. Whatever language you choose to use when referring to people with disabilities, make sure that it is language that celebrates the person, recognizing that they, too, are created in the image of God, and, as such, have wonder and value to bring to the world. Be respectful without being pitying. Respect how people would like to be addressed. If you don't know their preference, ask!
5. Listen to and respect the communications needs of others as they are expressed, whether it's a deaf person who is reading lips and can benefit from even speech and a clear line of sight to your mouth, or an autistic person who expresses the preference not to make eye contact. You can't always anticipate someone's preferences, but if you know them you can always respect them.



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6. Act in respectful anticipation of the needs of others to make your community as welcoming as possible. Keep walkways clear so that those with visual and motor impairments can move around easily. Respect scent-free policies so that people with allergies and sensitivities can be as comfortable in our spaces as you are, and be mindful of allergy policies to keep everyone safe.
7. Respect the privacy of others. Their choice to share any medical conditions, disabilities, or treatments they may be undergoing is a personal matter. The only information that you need is to understand how you can welcome and assist them, and that is something to ask directly.
8. Respect the bodily autonomy of people with disabilities, including their adaptive equipment. Most people would not grab the arm of a sighted person without permission to propel them to their seat; similarly, you should wait for an invitation to take the hand of a blind person. Just as you wouldn't pick up an ambulatory person and bodily place them elsewhere in the room, you also shouldn't push a person's wheelchair without permission.
9. While you should always do your best to communicate in a way that will be best understood by your audience, remember that your audience of adults with disabilities, whether those disabilities the physical, sensory, mental or intellectual, are adults, and treat them as such.
10. Never forget that a person with a disability is a person who has joined your community for his or her own reasons. Make sure that you honor that by helping them to participate the way they want, treating them with respect and dignity, and listening to what they have to say.