

THE ROLE OF PERSONAL ASSISTANT

As a helper, your role is to provide me with the help I need so that I can live in the way I choose. This means it is my responsibility to tell you what assistance I need, when I want the assistance and how I want you to assist me. It is your responsibility to ask what I need, to listen and respond positively to any reasonable request/instructions I give. I encourage you to ask me to clarify anything I say or any instruction I give if you are uncertain what to do.

Assisting me when I am out and/or with friends requires particular skill and sensitivity on your part. Put simply, in this situation, your role is to be there for me if and when I need assistance, not to be part of whatever the social occasion is. Therefore, it is important that you take a very low profile, that you wait for me to tell you what I need, and try not to interrupt me if I'm in the middle of talking with friends.

Often when you are assisting, me when I am out, I will ask you to leave me and come back after a certain amount of time. It is often a good idea to come prepared with a book or something to do. Unless I give you permission to do otherwise, please do not drink alcohol when you are out with me, even during periods when you are 'hanging around'.

Because people 'out there' often have negative attitudes about disabled people, some people might approach you and ask you what I need/what my name is/where am I going etc. Please reply by asking the person to talk to me directly - do not speak for me because, as I know you realise, I am capable of talking for myself!

Please do not talk about me, or any aspect of my life with anyone that you meet when I am out with you. I would ask you to respect this whether I am in earshot or not!

One of the reasons why I am so directive - and have written so much here about assisting me when I am out/with friends is because I have to strike a delicate balance between having someone with me so that I can cope physically without relying on friends, and getting 'space' and privacy with my friends. Remember, what for you is work is for me my social life!

YOUR TASKS

The tasks I will ask you to do will vary, according to my needs and will include: -

Personal tasks - which are done each day

Help with dressing

Help with showering

Help in and out of bed

Help using the toilet

Help with getting from bed to chair

Household tasks - done on a regular basis throughout the week

Cooking and preparing a meal and drinks

Keeping the kitchen clean and tidy

Household cleaning and tidying

Laundry

Changing bedding

General tasks - done as and when I ask

Support to attend physiotherapy

Going to local shops \ assisting me to go out shopping

Pumping up wheelchair tyres

Watering plants indoors and outdoors

Paperwork such as filing papers, writing letters or envelopes that I dictate to you - if possible using the computer

Sewing on buttons

Cooking and preparing food for others e.g. when I have friends round

Light household maintenance - e.g. changing light bulbs

Social activities - done as and when I ask

Attending meetings

Going to the cinema/plays

Going to classes

Going shopping

Going swimming

Meeting friends