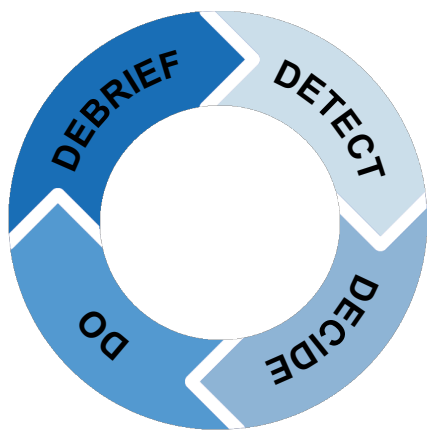


## INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE OF DIFFERING ABILITIES

Fear of doing the wrong thing can affect interactions between people with and without disabilities. Review the TEAM Belong handouts, *Know Your Disability Etiquette* and *How You Can Make a Difference*, to familiarize yourself with basic disability etiquette. Then use the suggestions below to help overcome fears and raise your comfort level when interacting with people of different abilities.

### **The 4D Approach to Reacting to Disability Differences**

- **Detect**: You notice another person's difference and detect your internal feelings and thoughts.
- **Decide**: You decide to circumvent any urge to freeze or escape and decide on the most useful actions for the situation.
- **Do**: You behave according to your plan.
- **Debrief**: You reflect on what worked and what didn't and how to act next time.



Using the above steps takes only seconds. When you feel unsure of yourself, the 4D Approach will help lower your anxiety level and will help you interact more confidently with people who happen to have disabilities.

**What do you say when you meet a person with a disability?  
How about, "Hello!"**

Source: Nancy B. Miller and Catherine C. Sammons, *Everybody's Different: Understanding and Changing Our Reactions to Disabilities*. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company, 1999.