



Disability Awareness

Definitions:

▶ Disability: a physical, mental, cognitive, or developmental condition that impairs, interferes with, or limits a person's ability to engage in certain tasks or actions or participate in typical daily activities and interactions. 1 in 4 U.S. adults have a disability.

<https://youtu.be/zKyjshcxbI0>

▶ Examples of disabilities: Amputation, cerebral palsy, paralysis, spina bifida, stroke, Autism, Dementia, Anxiety, Depression, Substance Abuse, Mental Illness, Asthma, Down Syndrome, Diabetes, Epilepsy, Dyslexia, Intellectual disability, hard of hearing/deafness, low vision/blindness, Cancer, ADHD, Chronic pain, PTSD, etc.

- ▶ **Accessibility:** A place that can be easily entered or reached by people with disabilities
- ▶ **Adaptation:** may be used to describe an alteration of environment, curriculum format, or equipment that allows an individual with a disability to gain access to content and/or complete assigned tasks. (ramps, wide doorways, IEP)
- ▶ **Accommodation:** modifications or adjustments to the tasks, environment or to the way things are usually done that enable individuals with disabilities to have an equal opportunity to participate (braille text, speech to text, video phone)
- ▶ **Invisible Disability:** disabilities that are not always obvious to the onlooker, but can sometimes or always limit daily activities, range from mild challenges to severe limitations, and vary from person to person.
- ▶ **Person-first language:** puts the person before the disability, and describes what a person has, not who a person is.

Disability Etiquette

- ▶ What is disability Etiquette?
- ▶ Basic disability etiquette involves treating people with disabilities with respect.
- ▶ Why is it so important?
- ▶ Disability etiquette promotes goodwill and respect among all people. It helps make society more inclusive for everyone

Disability Etiquette Tips

- ▶ Talk about abilities instead of limitations. Saying, “Caroline is wheelchair-bound,” makes it sound like she can’t do much. Instead, you could say, “Caroline uses a wheelchair to get around,” which emphasizes her ability to get places. Unless it’s really relevant, don’t even refer to the person’s disability. The best way to describe Caroline may be to say, “Caroline is a great artist,” which focuses on one of her abilities
- ▶ Don’t use words that imply a person with a disability is afflicted with or suffers from their disability. Also avoid referring to them as special or exceptional.
- ▶ Don’t talk about “fixing” or “making the person better.” They might feel just fine, just like a red-haired person might like how her red hair makes her different.
- ▶ When you’re talking with someone with a hearing loss, it’s okay to tap the person on the shoulder or wave your hand to get his or her attention.

Disability Etiquette Tips (cont.)

- ▶ Sometimes you might be talking to someone who uses an interpreter, a translator or a personal assistant. Look at the person with the disability when you're talking to her, not the interpreter, translator or personal assistant
- ▶ When meeting a person who is visually impaired, always identify yourself and others who may be with you.
- ▶ Don't assume a person with a disability can't do things. They might use assistive devices or technology to talk, to walk, or even to drive a car. They might have strengths in many different areas
- ▶ If you want to help someone with a disability—perhaps it looks like he needs help pushing his wheelchair up a ramp—ask first before giving help. Many people with disabilities are very capable of taking care of their own needs.
- ▶ If you're talking to someone with a speech disability, give the person extra time to talk and try not to rush them. Be patient and don't speak for the person.

Disability Etiquette Tips (cont.)

- ▶ If you're with someone who uses a guide dog or some other kind of service animal, do not pet or talk to the animal. These animals are working and shouldn't be distracted.
- ▶ Don't touch a person's body or any equipment that person uses—such as a wheelchair, cane or walker.
- ▶ Use person first language
- ▶ The most important thing is to be yourself. People with disabilities are just like people without disabilities. They also want to do their best, have fun and live productive lives. Talk about things that you and your friends are interested in. Don't worry about using ordinary phrases, such as “see you later” to a person who is blind or “got to be running along” to someone who can't walk.

Myths and Misconceptions:

Myth: All disabilities can be seen

Fact: About 90% of all disabilities are hidden, that's 20% of American adults that have hidden disabilities

Myths and Misconceptions:

Myth: People with disabilities are brave, courageous, and inspirational for living with their disability.

Fact: Adjusting to a disability requires adapting to a lifestyle, not bravery and courage. Of course, people with disabilities can be brave and courageous, just like someone without disabilities can; be mindful about how you use those terms as they are often seen as offensive when applied to a person with a disability for simply existing.

Myths and Misconceptions:

Myth: People with disabilities always need help.

Fact: Many people with disabilities are independent and capable of giving help. If you would like to help someone with a disability, ask if he or she needs it before you act.

Myths and Misconceptions:

Myth: Wheelchair users are confined to their wheelchair.

Fact: Wheelchair users typically do not view themselves as “confined” to their wheelchair. In the same way, a person without a disability is not described as confined to their car. A wheelchair, like an automobile, is a form of mobility that contributes to a person’s independence.

Myths and Misconceptions:

Myth: People with disabilities cannot lead a full and productive life.

Fact: People with disabilities are capable of fully participating in community life. The challenge is to focus on a person's ability, not their limitations. Researchers at Dawson College and MacKay Centre in Montreal remind us: "Mechanics who are blind, nurses who are wheelchair users, teachers who are hard of hearing, painters without arms, and chemists with shaky limbs -it's all been done!"

Myths and Misconceptions:

Myth: All people who are Deaf can read lips and use ASL.

Fact: A common assumption that is made about people with hearing loss is that they can read lips. Since the sounds that we use for forming words are not always visible on lips, lip-reading is not completely reliable. In fact, people with hearing impairments often use a combination of facial expressions and body cues to ascertain the message that friends are sharing with them.

Myths and Misconceptions:

Myth: People who are blind acquire a “sixth sense”.

Fact: Although most people who are blind develop their remaining senses more fully, they do not have a "sixth sense."

Myths and Misconceptions:

Myth: Mental illnesses cannot affect me or my family.

Fact: Mental illnesses are surprisingly common; they affect almost every family in America. Mental illnesses do not discriminate—they can affect anyone.

Myths and Misconceptions:

Myth: People with disabilities are not reliable employees

Fact: not coming into work is one of the main reasons employers worry about hiring someone with a disability. But it has been shown that people with a disability are much less likely to take sick leave or time off (nearly 40%)! Not only that, but employees with disabilities also often stay with a company longer.

Myths and Misconceptions:

Myth: People with disabilities can only do simple, repetitive jobs or can only do light duty work.

Fact: People with disabilities have a variety of skills to offer, which differ from individual to individual, as with everyone else.

Professions that provide services:

- ▶ Social Workers- trained professionals who are devoted to helping people and communities work through challenges they face in everyday life. Social workers practice in a wide variety of settings, united in their commitment to advocating for and improving the lives of individuals, families, groups and societies.
- ▶ Counselors- help clients identify goals and potential solutions to problems which cause emotional turmoil; seek to improve communication and coping skills; strengthen self-esteem; and promote behavior change and optimal mental health.
- ▶ Medical professionals- Drs, nurses, CNA's, Techs
- ▶ Therapist- Physical, Occupational, Speech
- ▶ Educational- teachers, aides, advocates

Famous People Who Have Disabilities

- ▶ Franklin D. Roosevelt- President of the US, contracted Polio and his legs became paralyzed, was a wheelchair user
- ▶ John Nash- World-famous mathematician, won Nobel prize, Professor at MIT and Princeton, had movie made after him called “A Beautiful Mind”, Disability was Acute Paranoid Schizophrenia
- ▶ Frida Kahlo- Mexican Painter, cultural icon, contracted Polio and was one leg shorter and thinner than the other, spent most of her life with severe pain
- ▶ Stephen Hawking- one of the most famous scientist in the world, had ALS, was a wheelchair user, had computer that would speak for him
- ▶ Stevie Wonder- Singer and Pianist, is blind
- ▶ Walt Disney- Pioneer of animated cartoon films, had a learning disability
- ▶ John F. Kennedy- President of the US, had asthma

Famous People You Might Know With Disabilities

- ▶ Muhammad Ali- Legendary boxer, had Dyslexia
- ▶ Johnny Depp- American Actor, has visual impairment
- ▶ Elon Musk- Entrepreneur (Tesla, SpaceX, Twitter), has ASD
- ▶ Robin Williams- actor and comedian, was diagnosed with ADHD, Parkinson's, Lewy Body Dementia, and substance abuse
- ▶ Daniel Radcliffe- Harry Potter actor, has Dyspraxia (Neurological condition)
- ▶ Millie Bobby Brown- Stranger Things actress, partial hearing loss
- ▶ Howie Mandel- TV Host and comedian, has OCD and ADHD
- ▶ Jennifer Aniston- Actress, has Dyslexia
- ▶ Lindsay Lohan- Actress, has Asthma
- ▶ Elton John- Musician, has Epilepsy

