

WISCONSIN



DWD

Disability Awareness

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Welcome!

- What is Disability Awareness?
- Why is it important?
- Person-first language and communication
- Disability etiquette
- Hidden disabilities



What is Disability Awareness?

Mindfulness

Inclusion

Respect



Legal Perspective

- Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- Wisconsin's Fair Employment Law



Human Perspective

- 1 in 5 Americans experience a disability
- 1 in 4 of today's 20 -year-olds experience a disability
- People with disabilities make up the largest minority group in the U.S.
- Disability will affect you or someone close to you at some point in your life



Person-First Language

A linguistic prescription and philosophy that acknowledges that a person with a disability is a person, first and foremost, who is not defined by their disability



Person-First Language (Cont.)

- Puts the person first, not the disability
- Means the disability is no longer the primary, defining characteristic of the person
- Is an objective way of talking about disabilities
- Reduces stereotypes by focusing on the person instead of the disability



Person-First Language (Cont.)

Not Person-First

- Wheelchair -bound, confined to a wheelchair
- Blind person
- The handicapped, the crippled
- Brain -damaged
- Normal, healthy, whole, or typical people
- The mentally ill

Person-First

- Person who uses a wheelchair
- Person who is blind
- People with physical disabilities
- Person with brain injury
- Person without disabilities
- Individuals diagnosed with mental health conditions



Words to Avoid

- Retarded
- Stupid
- Slow
- Dumb
- Idiot
- Useless
- Crippled
- Crazy

- Deformed
- Incapable
- Lazy
- Freak
- Whacko
- Mongoloid
- Midget
- Looney

- Insane
- Gimp
- Dim
- Invalid
- Moron
- Nuts
- Psycho
- Special



Words to Avoid (Cont.)

“What’s wrong with "retard"? I can only tell you what it means to me and people like me when we hear it. It means that the rest of you are excluding us from your group. We are something that is not like you and something that none of you would ever want to be. We are something outside the "in" group. We are someone that is not your kind. I want you to know that it hurts to be left out here, alone.”

– **Joseph Franklin Stephens** , Special Olympics Virginia Athlete and Global Messenger



Offensive/Derogatory Humor

- We all like to laugh and enjoy a good joke, but humor can often be based on stereotypes and use offensive language
- Similar to racist or sexist humor, disability shaming humor should be avoided

Examples



Disability Etiquette

Awareness and acceptance of individuals' different abilities, needs, preferences, or language to respectfully engage with individuals with disabilities.



Disability Etiquette Resources

- <https://askjan.org/topics/disetiq.cfm>
- https://www.easterseals.com/explore_-resources/facts_-about_-disability/disability_-etiquette.html
- http://www.disabilityawarenesstraining.com/resources/disability_-etiquette



Disability Etiquette Basics

- Ask before you help
- Be sensitive about physical contact
- Think before you speak
- Talk to the person with the disability, not a companion
- Respond graciously to requests
- Don't make assumptions



Disability Etiquette Best Practices

- Don't push or touch a person's wheelchair; it's part of their personal space
- When talking to a person who uses a wheelchair, grab your own chair and sit at their level
- Don't use a desktop attached to someone's wheelchair as a table for your personal items or ask the person to carry or hold your items
- People who use canes or crutches need their arms to balance themselves – don't grab them



Disability Etiquette Best Practices (Cont.)

- Never move someone's crutches, cane, or other mobility aid without permission
- Don't touch a person's cane or guide dog
 - The dog = Working
 - The cane = Personal space
- Be aware of reach limitations and item placement
- If possible, avoid occupying bathroom stalls or other spaces designed for people with disabilities



Disability Etiquette Best Practices (Cont.)

- Offer a handshake when appropriate; a person with a disability might offer the left hand instead, or might decline that's okay! –
- When using a sign -language interpreter, look directly at the person who is Deaf and maintain eye contact to be polite
- If individuals are using sign -language to communicate, it's ok to walk past or through them; standing and waiting is similar to 'eavesdropping'



Disability Etiquette

- Person with a Speech Disability needs your full attention; don't interrupt or finish the person's sentences
- Don't pretend you understood the person if you didn't – ask them to repeat



Guiding Exercise

- Ask before helping or touching
- Hold their elbow or upper arm, they need their hands free to balance or use a white cane
- Give simple instructions to changes in environment
- Continue conversation as normal

Practice



Invisible Disabilities

- Gastrointestinal Disorders
- Sleep Disorders
- Migraine Headaches
- Bipolar Disorder
- Vision Impairments
- Heart Conditions
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Arthritis
- Lupus
- ADHD
- Chronic Pain
- Hearing Loss
- Diabetes
- Lyme Disease
- Cancer
- AIDS/HIV



Disability and Culture

- Disability doesn't discriminate
- Social class and income can have an impact
- Some disabilities have their own culture



Stereotypes: What to Avoid

- Viewing people with disabilities as “inspiration”
- Treating a person with a disability like a burden, dependent, or as an object of pity
- Representing a person with a disability as having “special gifts” because of that person’s disability



Contact Us

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