

Welcome to
**Disability
Awareness &
Etiquette**

Department of Rehabilitation
Disability Access Services



DOR
DEPARTMENT of
REHABILITATION
Empowerment, Independence & Equity

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Learning Objectives



Disability
Concepts



Empowering
Language



Inclusive
Practices

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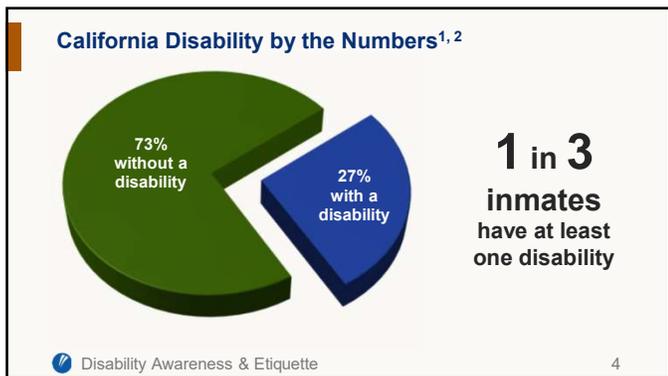
a physical or mental impairment that
substantially limits one or more major life
activities

- Americans Disabilities Act (ADA)

”

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Common Disability Concepts

Disability Terms • Models of Disability

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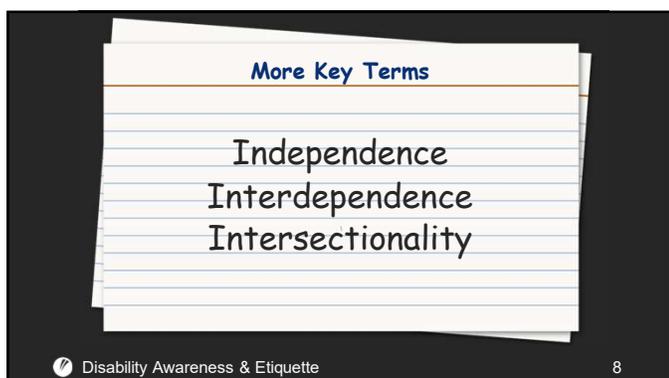
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Disability Terms

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Medical Model of Disability



- Disability as **personal defect**
- Emphasis on what **people cannot do**
- How can we **“fix”** people with disabilities?

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Social Model of Disability



- Disability as **social construct**
- Emphasis on what **people can do**
- How can we **remove barriers?**

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Using Empowering Language

Person-First and Identity-First • Terms to Avoid • Using Your Voice



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Person-First Language

- Person with a disability
- People with disabilities
- Person who uses a wheelchair
- Person who lives with a traumatic brain injury

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Identity-First Language

- Disabled person
- Disabled people
- Deaf person
- Autistic person

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Avoid these Euphemisms

- Physically Challenged
- Special Needs
- Differently-abled
- Handi-capable
- Any other made-up words



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Avoid these Disempowering Terms

- Victim
- Sufferer



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Avoid using Disability Terms in Harmful Ways

Examples include:

- “Fall on deaf ear” or “Turn a blind eye”
- “Crippled by...” or “To a crippling degree”
- “I’m so OCD” or “She’s so bipolar”



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Disability Etiquette

General Considerations • Specific Disability Communities



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Disability etiquette isn't about tiptoeing around us and treating us like strange, delicate flowers. (In fact, that's pretty ableist in and of itself.) It's about treating us like full and equal human beings.

- Emily Ladau,
Demystifying Disability

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Disability Etiquette Do's

- Think before you speak
- Ask appropriate questions
- Keep your hands to yourself
- Talk to people with disabilities like you would talk to everyone else



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Disability Etiquette Don'ts

- Don't talk down to people with disabilities
- Don't help without asking
- Don't stare, but don't look away
- Don't assume you know who has a disability



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Basic Considerations

- Consider access in all programs & services
- Plan for space needs
- Accessible virtual spaces
- Be prepared to hire accessibility professionals



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Mobility Disability Community

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Mobility Disability Basics²



- Severity ranges from **fatigue to paralysis**
- May be present at birth
- May be from an injury, illness or aging
- Major barriers include **inaccessible physical spaces**

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Mobility Disability Etiquette

- Mobility aids are part of **personal space**
- Don't push or touch mobility aids unless asked
- Do not move a person's mobility aid without permission



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Ensure the Space is Accessible



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Blind and Low Vision Basics²

- **Blindness has a wide range** – most people who are blind have some vision
- Variety of causes
- Barriers include:
 - **access to information**
 - **low expectations**

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Tips for Interacting with Blind People

- **Identify yourself**
- Stand on the opposite side of their cane or service animal
- Provide **accessible documents**
- **Offer to read** written materials or assist in filling out forms

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Blind and Low Vision Inclusion Practices

abc
Large Print
Simple Font

Braille

Screen Reader Compatible

Verbal Instruction

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Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community

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Deaf and Hard of Hearing Basics²

- Can range from **mild to profound** (complete)
- Can occur at **any age**
- **d/Deaf** – disability and community
- Major barriers include **language deprivation** and **lack of access**

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Communicating with People who are D/deaf or Hard of Hearing

- Get attention using **visual cues**
- Have conversations where there is sufficient light
- Do not shout or use exaggerated mouth movements
- Use skilled, **in-person** interpreters
- Include a **Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI)** on the interpretation team
- Be patient

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Deaf & Hard of Hearing Inclusion Practices



American Sign Language Interpretation



Assistive Listening System



Realtime Captioning



Open or Closed Captions

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Mental Health Disability Community Basics³



- **1 in 5** American adults experience a mental health disability each year⁴
- May be **chronic** or **acute**
- Common forms include **anxiety disorders** and **mood disorders**
- Major barriers include **stereotypes** and **ignorance**

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Tips for De-Escalating a Tense Situation

- Listen without judgment
- Respect personal space
- Use non-threatening body language
- Stay calm and professional
- Offer supportive words (if you mean them)
- Allow for silence

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Developmental & Cognitive Disability Community

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Bonus Key Terms

Neurotypical
Neurodiverse

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Cognitive Disability Basics²



12%

- Includes disabilities that affect:
 - Acquiring knowledge
 - Executive function
 - Perception
 - Sensory Processing
 - Judgment
- Major barriers include **denial, ignorance, and inferiority**

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Tips for Communicating with Neurodiverse People

- Say what you mean
- Use plain language (especially in writing)
- Give detailed and specific directions
- Be direct when starting and ending interactions
- Expect direct and honest responses
- Do not insist on eye contact

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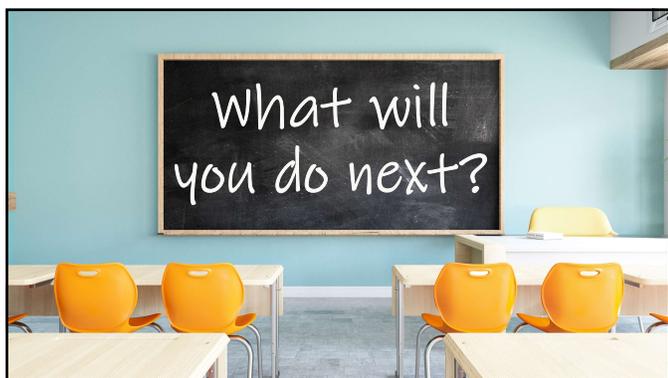
Neurodiversity Inclusion Practices



Environmental Modifications Clear Expectations Flexible Behavioral Expectations Plain Language⁵

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Final Take Aways



Don't Assume Just Ask Listen & Believe

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Thank you for attending!

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References

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