

Disability Awareness

Building confidence in
positive interactions

The Independence Center (The IC)

- The local home of civil rights for people with disabilities
- Founded by people with disabilities who saw a need for independent living services and home health services in the community
 - In 1987, home health services began
 - In 1994, The Independence Center (A Center for Independent Living) joined home health
- Center staff embody a wide range of visible and hidden disabilities
- Over 50% of staff (to include those in leadership positions) and board members must have a disability

Independent Living Philosophy

A belief that all people, regardless of disability, can be presumed competent to:

- Make their own decisions
- Direct their own lives
- Choose where they live
- Access all opportunities in the communities in which they live

Social Model vs. the Medical Model

	Social Model	Medical Model
Problem:	Dependence on others; attitudes and environments create limitations for people with disabilities	Physical or mental impairment; perceived limited skills or abilities
Source of Problem:	Attitudes: disability is a common part of the human condition	Attitudes: individual needs to be “fixed”.
Solution to Problem:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Barrier removal• Civil rights and advocacy• Consumer control over services• Peer models and support• Self-help	Treatment from professionals



Think about your personal experience with disability.

Are you

- a person with a disability?
- a family member or loved one of a person with a disability?
- a neighbor of people with disabilities?
- Prepared for changing capacities in the future?

The Americans with Disabilities Act Definition of Disability:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that **substantially** limits one or more major life activities, such as
 - caring for oneself, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working
- or a record of such impairment, or a person who is regarded as having such impairment.

True or False

The largest
minority group
in the United States
is people with
disabilities.

True.

People with disabilities

US' largest minority group

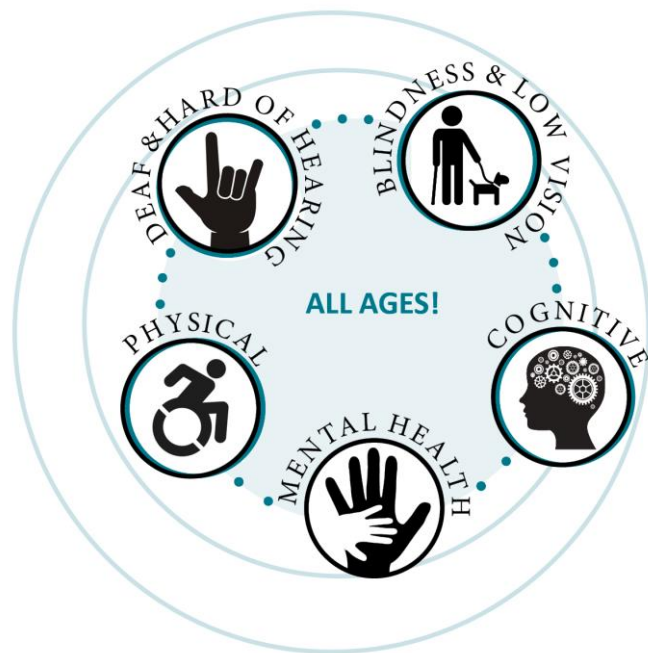
- 56.7 million people
- 19% of nation's total population

Only minority group anyone can join

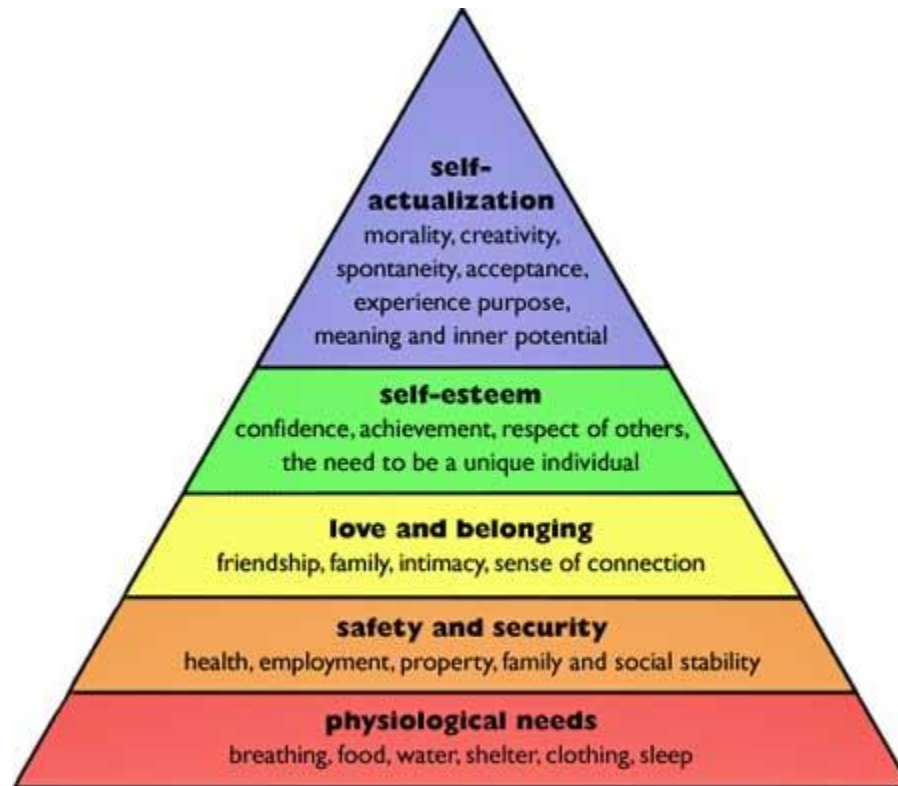
- Accident
- Injury
- Illness

1 in 5 people:

Will acquire a disability during lifetime



Why is Disability Etiquette important in the arts?



True or False

The largest barrier
for people
with disabilities
is structural design

False.

Attitudes about disability are often the biggest barrier.



The Dignity of Risk

- Respect each person's autonomy and self-determination to make choices for themselves; they are the expert on their lives, motivations and solutions
- All adults have the right to make their own choices, even if professionals believe those choices endanger the person's health or longevity.
- We all have the right to fail in the pursuit of our own life goals; failures teach us how to grow and improve

Self-Advocacy:

- Making decisions about your own life and expressing them assertively
- Finding information so that you can understand and improve barriers to your choices
- Being aware of your rights and responsibilities

For those with disabilities:

- Be patient and appropriately educate those who may not know disability etiquette.
- Assume positive intent and ask for what you need.

True or False

Refer to the person,
rather than
the person's disability,
first.

General Notes On Language:

- Use “person-first language” – “person with a disability” rather than “disabled person”, as people with disabilities are not defined by their disability
- The words we use can reinforce common myths or create a positive view of people with disabilities.
- We support the choice of all people with disabilities to self-identify in a way that is preferable to them, though the following recommendations are those least likely to cause offense

True.

Person First Language

Do say	Don't say
Disability	Differently abled, challenged, handicapped
People with disabilities	The disabled, handicapped
Person who uses a wheelchair, wheelchair-user, power wheelchair	Confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound, electric chair
Person who is Blind/low-vision	Visually handicapped, visually impaired
Person with an intellectual disability	Retarded, mental retardation, Mongoloid
Service animal or dog	Seeing eye dog
Person who has a mental health condition	Crazy, nuts, psycho, mental illness
Accessible parking or restroom	Handicapped parking or restroom
How should I describe you or your disability?	What happened to you?

True or False

Most disabilities are
visible
and therefore easily
detected.

False.

Invisible or Hidden disabilities

- ADHD
- AIDS/HIV
- Alcoholism
- Allergies
- Arthritis
- Asthma
- Cancer
- Chronic fatigue
- Color blindness
- Deaf
- Hard of Hearing
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- Fibromyalgia
- Heart Conditions
- Hemophilia
- Hepatitis
- Intellectual
- Mental Health Conditions
- Migraines
- Multiple Chemical Sensitivity
- PTSD
- Sleep Disorders
- TBI

True or False

Ask before assisting
a person
who has a disability.

True.

Disability Etiquette Basics

- **Ask before you assist and listen for a response – follow any specific directions.**
- Presume people with disabilities are competent and allow them to tell you if they need support. Every individual is the best judge of what they can and cannot do.
- Persons with disabilities are not “super human” simply for performing ordinary tasks – they have learned another way of doing them

True or False

It is inappropriate to ask a person who uses a wheelchair to “go for a walk”.

False.

Don't worry about using common phrases like:

- “Did you hear about...”
- “See you later”.
- “Walk a mile in my shoes”.
- “Do you need a hand?”



Extend common courtesies to persons with disabilities, just as you treat everyone else.

- Treat adults as adults
- Shake hands with those who use prosthetics
- Be patient

Tour Tips – Questions to Ask

- Is there anything I can be aware of to make this tour more accessible to you?
- Can I make any accommodations to support your group?
- Do you have any communication or mobility needs that I should be aware of? We're happy to accommodate.

True or False

Look at, and speak to
the interpreter,
rather than the person
who is deaf.

False.

Etiquette & People Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing



- If person uses an interpreter: speak directly to person you are communicating with, rather than interpreter.
- Face a deaf person when you are speaking to them so that they can read your lips
- If person is hard of hearing, use a customary tone of voice unless otherwise requested & speak slowly and clearly
- Gently tap on person's shoulder or wave to get their attention.
- Do not over enunciate, eat or chew gum when talking.

Etiquette & People with Intellectual disabilities

- Use clear, concise language; sometimes visual cues can be helpful.
- Provide directions one step at a time.
- Delayed response does not necessarily indicate a person doesn't understand what you said. Allow time for individual to process your words and finish their own sentences.
- Do not assume all people can read; use images or simple instructions when possible.

Etiquette & People with Psychiatric disabilities

- If a person becomes upset or anxious, they may be confused or overwhelmed. Speak in a normal, calm tone of voice, repeat necessary information and reassure as appropriate.
- People with psychiatric disabilities are not more likely to be violent.
- Do not assume that people with psychiatric disorders also have cognitive disabilities, are less intelligent than the general population, or are unable to cope with stress.
- Allow people with psychiatric disabilities to make independent choices about their medication and treatment

Etiquette & People Who are Blind or Have Low Vision

- Identify yourself when you enter or leave a room or conversation or begin moving the tour group.
- Use eye-contact, the same as you would a person with acute vision.
- Keep walkways free of obstructions. Keep your doors either all the way closed or all the way open. Inform persons about furniture or structural changes.
- Offer to read information for persons who are blind.
- Learn the sighted-guide technique.

Sighted Guide Tips



OFFERING ASSISTANCE



- ② Touch the visually impaired person's arm with your elbow on the side he/she prefers to use.



- ① Position yourself slightly in front of the person you are guiding. Ask which side you should stand on.

- ③ He or she can then take your arm above the elbow

Activity:

Guide the trainer through the obstacles using only verbal directions.

True or False

People with disabilities
consider their mobility
devices
to be part of their
personal space.

True.

Etiquette & People with Mobility disabilities

- Treat the assistive device as a part of that person's body – do not lean on, over or move equipment without permission
- Don't assume the wheelchair is a tragedy. Rather, look at it as a means of freedom.
- “Accessible” parking should not be used by those without the approval to do so. **Tour Tip: Plan an accessible route beforehand.**
- Interact with persons who use wheelchairs at eye level when possible. **Tour Tip: Stand 3-4 feet away, ensure sight is not blocked for wheelchair users as much as possible.**
- Provide people with disabilities with priority use of accessible elevators and restrooms.

Remember:
Ask before you help and
wait for a response.

Etiquette & People with Speech disabilities

- Be patient.
- Don't pretend to understand!
- If speech is difficult to understand, ask person to repeat what they said.
- If in doubt, repeat what you heard.
- Ask person to write what they said.

Etiquette & People with TBI

- Be aware of the person's fatigue, exhaustion and overload – slow the stream of information
- Give summaries and ask for confirmation of understanding – “Are you with me?” “Making sense?”
- Simplify choices and do not expect multitasking
- Positively reinforce.

Service Animals

- Do not pet or play with a service animal, as they are working animals, not pets.
- Do not offer food to the service animal or encourage your pet to interact with them.
- Know the difference between “service animals” and “emotional support animals” and the laws that allow them access.
- Know the two questions you can ask a person about their service animal: 1) Is the dog or service animal required because of a disability? 2) What task is it trained to perform?

What Access Looks Like:

- Clutter free counters
- Obstacle free paths of travel
- Accessible equipment is available and staff are familiar with its use
- Magnifying glass or printed information in large print (18 or higher Sans Serif font)
- Accessible restrooms and elevator have easily accessible entry buttons and are well-maintained
- The provision of interpretation is smooth and clear
- No loose gravel outdoors or deep pile carpeting indoors



What Access Looks Like

- Sensitivity and customer service training for all personnel implemented in day-to-day interactions
- Signage is clear and between seating and standing height
- Make reasonable accommodations for those who have to stand in lines
- Unlocked accessible entrance during business hours
- Selecting hypo-allergenic fragrance-free products: air fresheners, cleaning materials, hand cleansers
- Prompt snow removal from accessible parking spaces and routes

Discussion Questions:

- What are some new ways you've identified to meet the varied needs of our participants?
- What will you stop doing?
- What will you start doing?
- What do you need in order to make these changes?
- What questions do you still have?

Resources



- Full-Length Disability Etiquette Handbook
<https://www.unitedspinal.org/pdf/DisabilityEtiquette.pdf>
- Rocky Mountain ADA Center –
www.rockymountainada.org, 719-358-2460, or 719-444-0268 (V/TTY)
- Job Accommodation Network –
www.askjan.org, 800-526-7234, or 877-781-9403 (TTY)
- “Guidelines for Reporting and Writing About People with disabilities”-
<https://adata.org/factsheet/ADANN-writing>

Contact and Additional Trainings

729 S. Tejon Street
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Phone: 719-471-8181
Fax: 719-471-7829

Video Phone (Deaf & Hard of
Hearing): 719-358-2513

Operating Hours:
8:00am – 4:30pm
Monday – Friday

Additional trainings provided by The Independence Center:

- Disability Awareness
- Workplace Accommodations
- Employer Etiquette for People with Disabilities
- Service and Assistance Animals
- Assertive Communication: Self Awareness and Skills
- Motivational Interviewing