



University of Colorado **Denver**



Accessibility

People think accessibility is just ramps and elevators

What Accessibility Actually Is:

- Accessible Services—public, institutional, business, and customer service
- Accessible Buildings and Housing
- Accessible Education—multiple modes of delivery, inclusion without segregation
- Accessible and Inclusive Cultural and Community Events
- Equal Employment Opportunities

Accessibility = Equity



Combating Ableism

What is Ableism?

Lack of Compliance: With disability laws and resistance to providing accommodations that make educational, workplace, and social settings accessible to all.

Making Them an Inspiration: Expecting people with disabilities to be inspirational.

Lack of Physical Access: Ramps, elevators, blocking accessible entrances and spaces.

Inaccessibility: Inaccessible websites, inaccessible documents and information. Lack of closed captioning, audio descriptors, braille etc.

Making Assumptions: The assumption that people with disabilities need or want help and need to be pitied.

Making Fun of, Patronizing, or Shunning People with Disabilities: Talking down to instead of talking directly to them or for them.

Asking Invasive, Personal Questions: Questioning if someone is disabled because they don't have visible signs of a disability.

Pushing Against Ableism

- Believe people when they disclose a disability and do not ask invasive questions.
- Do not block accessible spaces or use them for your convenience. Do not touch a person's equipment without asking first.
- Report barriers to access. Request close-captioning be activated in meetings and classes you attend.
- Avoid microaggressions such as: "you don't look disabled;" "he's acting crazy;" "blind leading the blind."
- Do not treat accommodations as if they are special treatment rather than methods by which people with disabilities receive deserved equal access.



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Watch Your Language!

Ableist Language

Assigning Inspiration: "You are inspiring" or "brave"

Pity: "I'll pray for you," or "I'm sorry you are . . ."

Impositions: Asking a person to explain their disability.

Dismissive Language: "Differently-abled," "handicapable," "special needs" and "afflicted by" instead of "disabled."

Condescending Language: Comments that individuals with disabilities are less able, less intelligent, or are burdensome individuals. This often happens when able-bodied people or institutions are asked to provide accommodations.

Derogatory Language: "They are (acting) psycho, crazy, OCD," "moron," "retard," "cripple," "turn a blind eye" and "falling on deaf ears."

Objectification: Referring to objects they use "wheelchair bound" rather than the person

Non-Ableist Language

1 Person First Language (PFL): Puts the person first ("he has autism"; "person with a disability") and has been adopted as a general rule in professional spheres to show respect

2 Identity-first Language is embraced by many people within the disability community. A "disabled person" may view their disability as fundamental to who they are just like their race and sexuality

3 One size does not fit all. Whenever possible, ask how a person prefers to identify themselves rather than making assumptions or imposing your own beliefs.



What is Disability?

A physical or mental condition that substantially limits or interferes with a major life activity including independent living, education, employment, and social/interpersonal interactions.

Types of Disabilities

Mobility and Physical – spinal cord injuries, amputation, arthritis

Sensory – blindness, deafness

Cognitive, Intellectual, & Learning Disorders – ADHD, ASD, dyslexia

Mental Health – depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety

Chronic Medical Conditions – Lupus, Crohn's, diabetes

Temporary Disabilities – Injuries, pregnancy complications

Hidden/Invisible Disabilities – Many disabilities are not visible to onlookers, including mental health conditions, cognitive, autoimmune & chronic pain disorders.

Our Disability Community

15-20% of the people attending any institution or workplace are disabled, while less than 5% will identify as having a disability for fear of stigma and discrimination. 41% of students and 27% of employees on our campus self-identify as having a disability. 85% of disabilities reported by students and faculty are hidden.

In any classroom or meeting you are likely in the presence of at least one person with a disability.