



Mayor's Office for
People with Disabilities



Disability Etiquette and Awareness Training

Community Boards

3/9/2023



@NYCDisabilities

nyc.gov/Disabilities



Mayor's Office for
People with Disabilities



Access Check

 @NYCDisabilities

nyc.gov/Disabilities



Mayor's Office for
People with Disabilities



About MOPD

Voice Phone

212-788-2830

Video Phone

646-396-5830

Website

[NYC.gov/Disabilities](https://nyc.gov/Disabilities)



@NYCDisabilities



/NYCDisabilities



@NYC_Disabilities



**Search: Mayor's Office for
People with Disabilities**



Mayor's Office for
People with Disabilities



Today's Agenda

Intro to Disability
Laws and Statistics
Language

The Basics
Disability Types
Resources



@NYCDisabilities

nyc.gov/Disabilities



Mayor's Office for
People with Disabilities



Intro to Disability



Models of Disability
Disability Justice
Disability Glossary



@NYCDisabilities

nyc.gov/Disabilities

The Medical Model of Disability



- Focuses on normalizing people with disabilities so they can fit into society
- How can we fix or cure people with disabilities?
- Emphasis is on what people cannot do

The Social Model of Disability



- Disability is a social construct
- If we remove barriers, we can empower people with disabilities
- How can we enable all people to reach their full potential
- Focus is on what people can do

Disability Justice

- Disability Justice is a movement that centers on the rights of disabled people of color, LGBTQ+, immigrants, formerly incarcerated, homeless, etc.
- Initially conceived by queer disabled women of color Patty Berne, Mia Mingus, and Stacy Milbern because the traditional disability rights movement was centered around the needs of white disabled people.



- Accessibility
- Ableism
- Inspiration
- Independence and Interdependence
- Intersectionality





Mayor's Office for
People with Disabilities



Laws and Statistics

Legal Definition of Disability
Disability in the City



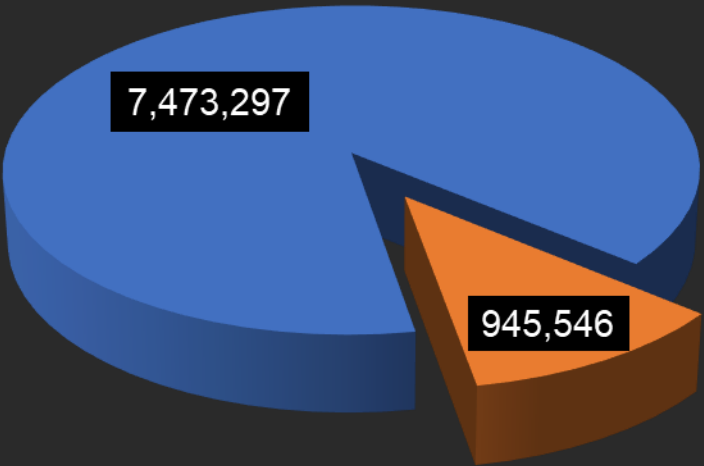
@NYCDisabilities

nyc.gov/Disabilities

Laws

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines disability as “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of having such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment.”
- NYC Human Rights Law defines disability as – any physical, medical, mental or psychological impairment, or a history or record of such impairment.

New York City Statistics



■ Non-Disabled ■ Disabled

People with Disabilities in NYC	945,546
With a hearing difficulty	178,553
With a vision difficulty	198,300
With a cognitive difficulty	357,376
With an ambulatory difficulty	584,631
With a self-care difficulty	269,901
With an independent living difficulty	417,203

*Data from the 2015-2019 American Community Survey



Mayor's Office for
People with Disabilities



Language

Overview
People-First vs. Identity-First
Things to Avoid



@NYCDisabilities

nyc.gov/Disabilities

Disability Language Overview

Empowering Language

- Person-First and Identity-First Language
 - Both are used by the disability community

Offensive Language

- Slurs that come from medical terms such as "Retarded."
- Euphemisms to replace the word "Disability" such as "Special Needs" or "Differently-abled."
- Metaphors such as "Blind-sided" or "fall on deaf ears."
- Negative language such as victim or sufferer.

People-First Language

Put the **Person First**

- Say "Person with a disability" rather than "a cripple"
- Say "People with disabilities" rather than "the handicapped"
- For specific disabilities, say "Person who uses a wheelchair" or "Person who has Cerebral Palsy"
- If you are not sure what words to use, **Just Ask**

Identity-First Language

Many Advocates have Disability Pride and Use Identity-First Language

- Say “Disabled Person” rather than “Person with a Disability”
- Say “Disabled people” rather than “People with Disabilities”
- For specific disabilities, say “blind person,” “Deaf person” or “Autistic person”
- If you are not sure what words to use, **Just Ask**

Avoid Outdated Terms and Metaphors

Outdated Terms

- Handicapped
- Crippled
- Retarded
- Wheelchair Bound
- Visually Impaired
- Hearing Impaired

Metaphors

- Blind-sided or blindness as a metaphor for ignorance
- Stone deaf or “fall on deaf ears”
- The economy was paralyzed by...

Avoid Negative Language and Insults

Negative Language

- Victim
- Sufferer
- Physically Challenged

Insults

- Stupid, dumb
- Idiot, moron
- Cripple, gimp, spaz

Avoid Euphemisms and Slang

Euphemisms

- Differently-abled
- Special Needs
- Handi-capable

Slang

- Retarded
- Crazy
- Lame

Disability Etiquette Basics



Interactions
Accessibility

Interactions

- Do not assume everyone with a disability needs assistance
- Ask before you help – no means no, even if you think differently
 - If yes, ask **how** you can assist before acting
- Always speak directly to the person with a disability, not to their companion or interpreter
- Do not ask personal questions
- Do not assume someone does not have a disability just because you cannot see it

Accessibility Considerations

- Think about access in all your programs and services
- Be mindful when scheduling events and meetings – Ask yourself, “Is this location easy to get to?” And, “Is the meeting space accessible, including the bathrooms?”
- When holding a virtual meeting, ensure that the platform used is accessible. (We have found Zoom to meet our needs.)
- Include access language in event promotions
- Be prepared to hire accessibility professionals (ASL Interpreters, Captioners, Audio Describers, etc.)



Disability Types

Mobility

Blind/Low Vision

Deaf/Hard of
Hearing

Speech

Learning

Developmental
Mental Health



The Mobility Disability Community



Mobility Disability Basics



- A person's wheelchair is part of their personal space
- If you have not been asked to assist someone, pushing or touching their mobility device is inappropriate
- Do not move a person's crutch, cane, or other mobility device if it is in the way. Instead ask them to do so

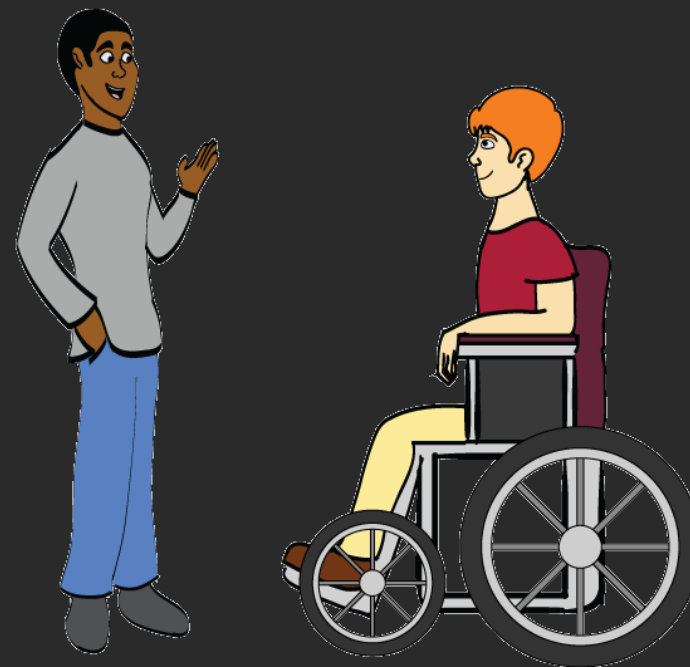
Interacting with Wheelchair Users

When Talking to Someone Who Uses a Wheelchair



Sit

|
O
R
|



Stand at a Slight Distance

nyc.gov/Disabilities

Accessibility of the Space



- Be aware of reach limits - keep often used items within their reach
- Be aware of desk heights and chair positions
- Keep aisles and walkways clear

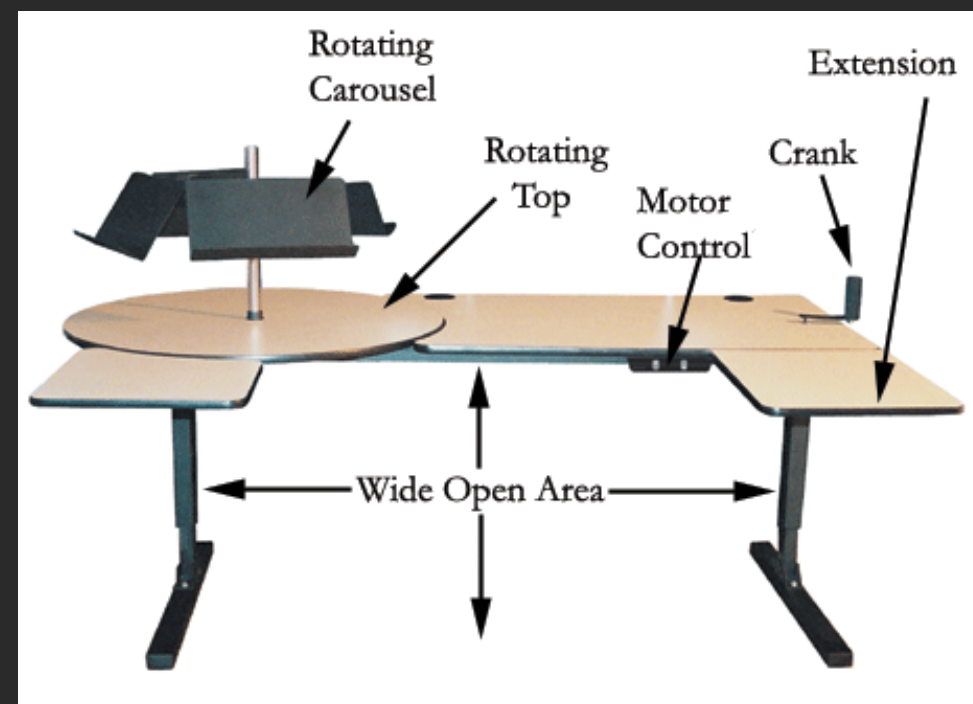
Keep Accessibility Accessible

Keep ramps and accessible doors and entryways to your facility open and unblocked.



Accommodations for Mobility Disabilities

- Adjustable Workstation
- Ergonomic Equipment
- Voice Control Programs
- Headsets
- Flexible Schedule
- Working Remotely



Wheelchair User Resources

- United Spinal Association – unitedspinal.org
- Dana and Christopher Reeve Foundation – christopherreeve.org
- Wheeling Forward – wheelingforward.org
- Axis Project – axisproject.org/programs

The Blind or Low Vision Community



Blind and Low Vision Basics

- Blindness has a wide range – most people who are blind have some vision
- Our hearing and sense of smell are not better – we just pay more attention to them
- The biggest barriers for those who are blind or have low vision are **access to information** and **low expectations**

Interacting with Blind People

- When speaking to a person who is Blind/Low Vision - identify yourself
- When walking with a blind person, stay on the opposite side of their cane or service animal
- You can offer to read written materials and assist in filling out forms
- If you are going to guide a blind person, be prepared to give verbal directions or offer an arm—but find out their preference
- Have print materials available in alternative formats such as large print, braille, or electronic formats

Interacting with Blind People (Part 2)

- If you see a blind person in public, do not make a scene or call attention to them
- If you think someone needs assistance, identify yourself then ask them if they need help
- If they say no, do not insist on helping or just give them instructions anyway
- If they say yes, give them options. Ask, "how can I assist you?"

Human Guide

Physical Guidance

- Find out which arm they prefer to use
- Your arm should be straight and against your body
- Announce narrow spaces, put your arm behind you, and ask them to grab your wrist
- Announce when steps are coming up and which direction they go
- For chairs, have the person touch the back and where they sit



Verbal Guidance

A lot of blind people take pride in their independence and might not want to be physically guided.

In that case, provide verbal directions:

- Avoid vague language such as over there, this way, or that way
- Start with left, right, straight ahead, or behind you
- Give directions like a GPS. Example: "Walk to the end of the block and make a left. Then walk two more blocks and the building should be on your left."

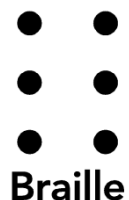
Blind and Low Vision Accommodations

Possible Accommodations



**Large
Print**

18pt. Sans Serif Font
4.5 : 1 Contrast Ratio



English that is
embossed in a tactile
pattern on paper.



Electronic Document
that is Screen Reader
Compatible



Video with a narrative
track describing
important visual
information.

Blind and Low Vision Resources

- Andrew Heiskell Braille and Talking Book Library - nypl.org/locations/heiskell
- National Federation of the Blind – nfb.org
- American Council of the Blind – acb.org
- Visions Services for the Blind – visionsvcb.org
- Lighthouse Guild – lighthouseguild.org

The Deaf/Hard of Hearing Community



Meet Tony

- Born Deaf (genetic)
- 7th generation: Largest Black Deaf family in the USA
- Chicago, Illinois (mainstreamed school with interpreters)
- Rely on hearing aids and ASL interpreters

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Basics

- Not every deaf person communicates in the same way
- Those who identify as “Deaf” (with a capital D) consider themselves members of the Deaf culture, which has its own language, art, humor, and customs
- Members of the Deaf community have the tendency to be very blunt and direct
- For most Deaf people, English is not their first language
 - American Sign Language is its own language
 - When using sign language to communicate, facial expressions, body language, and head movements are important to delivering the full message

Interacting with the Deaf Community

- When you need to get a deaf person's attention
 - Flick the lights, if in a room
 - Lightly tap their shoulder
 - There are differences in the way a Deaf person gets another Deaf person's attention
- Find out if the person prefers sign language, gesturing, writing, or speaking
 - If speaking, speak clearly in a normal volume – no need to shout
 - Communicate where there is sufficient light

Communicating with Those Who are Deaf

- If you are not familiar with sign language, simply communicate by writing or using your phone to type what you are saying. Keep it short and to the point.
- When using an ASL interpreter, maintain eye contact with the person who is Deaf – communicate the same way you would with your hearing peers.
- Show patience

Deaf & Hard of Hearing Accommodations

Possible Accommodations



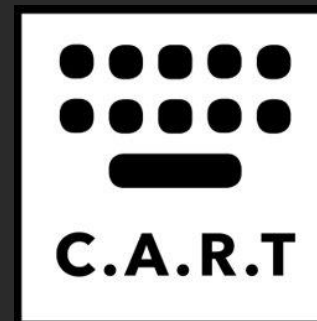
American Sign Language
Interpretation



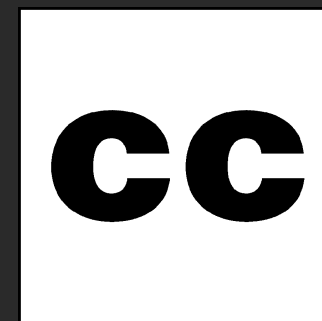
Assistive Listening
System



Induction Loop



Communication Access
Realtime Translation



Open Captions

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Resources

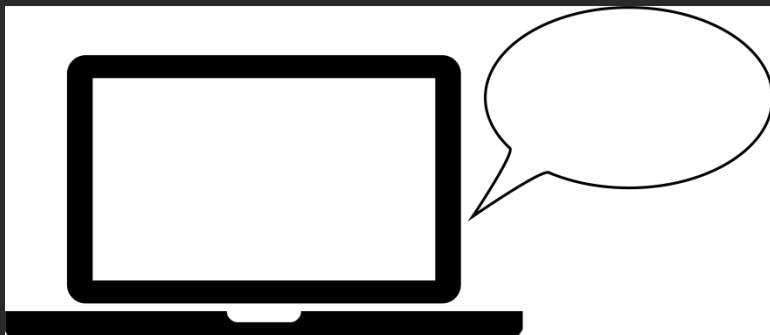
Learning American Sign Language (ASL)

- The Sign Language Center – signlanguagecenter.com
- Lexington School for the Deaf – lexnyc.org
- ASL NYC – aslnyc.com

Speech Disability Community

- Give the person your full attention
- Do not interrupt them or try to finish their sentences
- If you don't understand, tell them and ask if they can repeat themselves
- If after repeating you still don't understand, offer to write or text

Speech Disability Accommodations



Text to Speech Technology

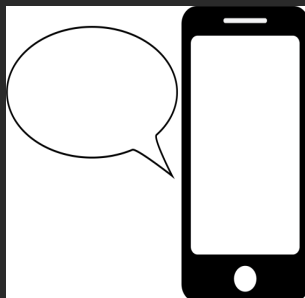
Learning Disability Community

- Disabilities that interfere with a person's ability to receive, express or process information
- Every person with a learning disability is different
- Examples: Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyscalculia, Auditory Processing Disorder, Language Processing Disorder, Nonverbal Learning Disabilities, Visual-Perceptual/Visual-Motor Deficit
- Learning disabilities are most often invisible

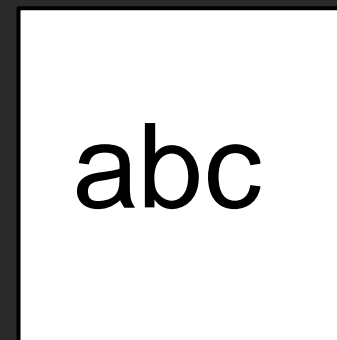
Learning Disability Accommodations



Dictation



Screen-Readers



Spelling and
Grammar Check

Learning Disability Resources

- National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) – nclld.org
- Learning Disabilities Association of America – LDAamerica.org
- LD Resources Foundation – ldrfa.org

Developmental Disability Community

- Developmental disabilities are a group of conditions due to an impairment in physical, learning, language, or behavior areas. These conditions begin during the developmental period, may impact day-to-day functioning, and usually last throughout a person's lifetime.
- Examples: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Intellectual Disabilities, and Spina Bifida
- **Neurodiversity** - the range of differences in individual brain function and behavioral traits, regarded as part of normal variation in the human population
- If you have met one person with autism– you have met **one** person with autism. Each individual has their own set of strengths and preferences in the area of work and communication

People with Autism

When speaking to a person on the **Autism Spectrum**

- Speak in clear, simple sentences
 - Avoid sarcasm, figures of speech, irony, or other expressions
- Ask specific questions – avoid open-ended questions
- When providing instructions, include detail and specificity
- Be direct when starting and ending an interaction
- Anticipate direct and honest responses
- Individuals may not maintain eye contact

Dev. Disability Accommodations

- Quiet Workspace
- Noise-Cancelling Headphones
- Job Coach
- Simple Written Instructions
- Visual Aids for Instruction

Developmental Disability Resources

- NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) – opwdd.ny.gov
- NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DoHMH)
www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/developmental-disabilities.page
- YAI/National Institute for People with Disabilities – yai.org
- National Autism Association (NAA) NY Metro Chapter – nationalautismny.org
- AHRC New York City – ahrcnyc.org
- WellLife Network – welllifenetwork.org
- The Self-Advocacy Association of New York State – sanys.org

Mental Health Disability Community

- Mental health disabilities are a broad range of mental and emotional conditions that affect your mood, thinking and behavior
- Many people have mental health concerns from time to time. But a mental health concern becomes a mental health disability when ongoing signs and symptoms cause frequent stress and affect your ability to function
- The most common forms of mental health disabilities are anxiety disorders, mood disorders and schizophrenia disorders

De-Escalation Techniques

De-escalation techniques are important during periods of anxiety and high stress; consider these tips:

- Be empathic and nonjudgmental
- Respect personal space
- Use nonthreatening nonverbal communication (body language and facial expressions)
- Remain calm, rational, and professional
- Focus on the person's concerns
- Offer supportive words that let the person know you understand what's happening
- Maintain focus on problem solving
- Recognize that a person who is anxious may not be able to focus on everything you say
- Allow silence during communication for reflection and calmness
- Answer questions but ignore targeted aggressive communication directed towards you
- Be mindful of the situation to maintain personal safety

Mental Health Resource

- **NYCWell – Free 24/7 Confidential Counseling Service**
 - Call 888–NYC–WELL
 - Text “Well” to 65173
 - Chat online: nyc.gov/nycwell
- **MOPD List of Mental Health Resources for People with Disabilities**



Mayor's Office for
People with Disabilities



Resources

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

askjan.org



Mayor's Office for
People with Disabilities



Thank You

Contact Information

Eli Ramos Business Engagement Associate, NYC: ERamos1@mopd.nyc.gov
ATWORK

Arthur Jacobs Housing Coordinator AJacobs2@cityhall.nyc.gov

Tony Wooden ASL Direct Supervisor RWooden@mopd.nyc.gov