

# 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***





# What is Ableism?

## *Ableism may look like:*

**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.

## *Combating 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.



# Watch Your Language!

## *Ableist Language*

Ableist language is language that may intend to, or inadvertently discriminates against disabled individuals.

This includes:

- Derogatory language such as “they are (acting) psycho, crazy, OCD, etc.”
- Saying things like “I’ll pray for you,” or “I’m sorry you are...” implying they need to be pitied.
- Terms such as “moron, imbecile, gimp, or cripple”
- Idioms such as “turn a blind eye, blind review, dead and dumb, falling on deaf ears, don’t act crazy or retarded”
- References and attention to objections rather than people - for example: “wheelchair bound” vs “someone who uses a wheelchair”
- Using the term “ability” instead of “disability” thereby erasing identity
- Terms such as “differently-abled,” “victim of,” and “afflicted by” that deny or denigrate disability identity
- Asking a person to explain their disability
- Telling a person they are an inspiration
- Comments that individuals with disabilities are less able or intelligent; or create burdens as often happens when able-bodied people and institutions are asked to provide accommodations

## *Non-Ableist Language*

**1 Person First Language (PFL):** is putting the person first and was adopted as a general linguistic rule in professional spheres as showing respect - “he has autism; person with a disability.” Scholars often prefer person-first language.

**2 Identity-first Language** is embraced and actually preferred by many people within the disability community. For example, a “disabled person or deaf individual” may view their disability, just as their race and sexuality, as an element of who they are.

**3 Both are correct — 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.

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# 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.

