

Disability

The term "**disability**", as it is applied to humans, refers to any condition that impedes the completion of daily tasks using traditional methods. National governments and global humanitarian agencies have narrowed this definition for their own purposes.

Demographics of disability

Many books on disability and disability rights point out that the disabled community is one of very few groups of people that one doesn't have to be born into, as disability can develop later in life as well. Some disability rights activists use an acronym, TAB, humorously to point this out: TAB stands for "temporarily able-bodied" as a reminder that many become disabled as they join the ranks of the elderly.

In most areas of the world, but especially in developed countries, the number of people with disabilities is growing and becoming a more significant percentage of the population because medicine is allowing more people to live who might have otherwise died in less advanced times.

Physical trauma both arising from accidents and violence, particularly war and its subsequents (e.g., land mines in places such as Cambodia) lead to often serious and body-altering physical injury, such as the removal of a limb.

Psychological trauma can also lead to a range of disabilities.

Types of disability

"Disability" can be broken down into a number of broad sub-categories, which can include the following:

- Physical impairments affecting movement, such as muscular dystrophy, post-polio syndrome, spina bifida and cerebral palsy.
- Lack of or amputation of limbs or other body parts
- Sensory impairments, such as visual or hearing impairments.
- Neurological impairments, such as epilepsy or dysautonomia.
- Cognitive impairments such as Autism or Down Syndrome.
- Psychiatric conditions such as depression and Schizophrenia.

Some disabilities are not obvious to outside observers; these are termed invisible disabilities.

A person may be impaired either by a correctable condition such as myopia, or by an unchangeable one such as cerebral palsy. For those with mild conditions, related impairments can improve or disappear with the application of corrective devices. More serious impairments call for adaptive equipment.

A list of disabilities can never be complete or finalized because individuals, organizations, and governments define disabilities differently.

The evolution of a movement

Historically, disabilities have often been cast in a negative light. An individual thus affected was seen as being a "patient" subject either to cure or to ongoing medical care. His condition is seen as disabling; the social reactions to it are justified, and the barriers unavoidable. This position is known as the medical model of disability.

Over the past 20 years, a competing view known as the social model of disability has come to the fore. In this model, disability is seen more as a social construction than a medical reality. Disabled activists, such as Tom Shakespeare (2002), argue that although their impairments may cause them pain or discomfort, what really *dis-ables* people as members of society is a socio-cultural system which does not recognise their right to genuine equality.

Both the medical and social models agree, to a point, that facilities and opportunities should be made as accessible as possible to individuals who require adaptations. Dismantling physical barriers, or setting up adaptations such as wheelchair ramps, is known as "fostering accessibility".

A human rights based approach has been adopted by many organizations of and for people with disabilities. In 2000, for example, the United Nations Assembly decided to start working on a comprehensive convention for the rights of people with disabilities. Since 2002 the "UN Ad-Hoc meeting" gathers every six months to discuss the content of this UN convention. These meetings are open for Non-Government-Organisations and Disabled Peoples' Organisations.

An approach that has led to tangible improvements in the lives of people with disabilities in many countries has been the Independent Living Movement. The term "Independent Living" was taken from 1959 California legislation that enabled people disabled by polio to leave hospital wards and move back into the community with the help of cash benefits for the purchase of personal assistance with the activities of daily living. With its origins in the US civil rights and consumer movements of the late 1960s, the movement and its philosophy have since spread to other continents influencing disabled people's self-perception, their ways of organizing themselves and their countries' social policy.

The disability rights movement began in the 1970s and is largely responsible for the shift toward independent living and accessibility.

The language and terminology of disability

Many people use the term *disability* to replace the designation handicapped. While these two designations are often used interchangeably, proponents of the social model of disability use the latter term to describe the social and economic consequences of the former; i.e., an individual with a disability is said to be "handicapped" by the bias of society towards ability (e.g., a building without an elevator handicaps a person who uses a wheelchair). Similarly, in the United Kingdom, people within the disability rights movement commonly use the term "disabled" to denote someone who is "disabled by society's inability to accommodate all of its inhabitants."

The Person First Movement has added another layer to this discourse by asking that people with disabilities be identified first as individuals. For example, within this movement the term "woman who is blind" is preferred over "blind woman."

Some people with disabilities support the Person First Movement, while others do not. People who are Deaf in particular may see themselves as members of a specific community, properly called the Deaf culture, and so will reject efforts designed to distance them from the central fact of their identity. This is a view that is becoming increasingly prevalent within other disabled communities, that are becoming self-aware and self defining by seeing their impairments as a central part of their upbringing, education, personality & Lifestyle.

The American Psychological Association style guide devotes a large section to the discussion of individuals with disabilities, and states that in professional writing following this style, the person should come first, and nominal forms describing the disability should be used so that the disability is being described, but is not modifying the person. For instance, "people with autism," "man with schizophrenia," "girl with paraplegia." Similarly, a person's adaptive equipment should be described functionally as something that assists a person, not as something that limits a person. "A woman who uses a wheelchair" -- she is not "in" it or "confined" to it, and she leaves it at the very least for sleeping and bathing. "A communication aid user." "A girl who uses a ventilator." "A man who takes antipsychotic medications to optimize his daily functioning."

Many people with disabilities especially dislike "disabled person" or "the disabled," as this implies that one's overall "personness" is defective, while "person with a disability" acknowledges the disability without implying anything about the overall person. However, according to the "social model", as it is society that disables a person, the reality of being a "person with a disability" is not really possible because it is impossible for an individual to "have" a society, therefore the term "disabled person" does not signify the lack of one's own "person-ness" but points an accusing finger at society for excluding those with impairments.

List of Disabilities

A **disabled** person is one who has a condition called a **disability** that interferes with his or her ability to perform one or more activities of everyday living. For example, locomotion (indoors and going outside), getting dressed, communicating with others.

This definition is based on the one given in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The equivalent UK legislation is the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995.

- Physical disability
 - Mobility impairment
 - Paralysis
 - Amputation
 - Multiple sclerosis
 - Parkinson's disease
 - Cerebral Palsy
 - Muscular dystrophy
 - Arthritis
 - Rheumatoid arthritis
 - Osteoarthritis
 - Stroke
 - Spina Bifida
 - Visual impairment
 - Blindness
 - Low vision
 - Color blindness
 - Cataract
 - ...
 - Hearing impairment
 - Chronic disease
 - Cancer
 - Autoimmune disease
 - AIDS
 - Multiple sclerosis
 - ...
 - Renal failure
 - Cystic fibrosis
 - Tuberculosis
 - Diabetes
 - Hypoglycemia
 - Chronic fatigue syndrome
 - dysautonomia
 - ...
 - Spinal cord injury
 - Traumatic brain injury
 -
- Mental disability
 - Learning disability
 - Alzheimer's disease
 - Phobia
 - Agoraphobia
 - Acrophobia
 - Aleurophobia
 - ...
 - Anxiety disorder
 - Depression
 - Bipolar disorder
 - Obsessive compulsive disorder
 - Schizophrenia
 - Neurosis
 -
- Developmental disability
 - Dyslexia
 - Down syndrome
 - Attention deficit disorder and ADHD
 - Hyperactivity
 - Autism
 -
- Other disabilities
 - Substance abuse
 - Alcoholism
 - Nicotine addiction
 - Illegal drug abuse
 - Prescription drug abuse
 - ...
 - Senility

Communication Disorder

A **communication disorder** is a disease or condition that partially or totally prevents human communication. The defect can be in producing, receiving or understanding the communication.

Examples of communication disorders:

- autism -- a developmental defect that affects understanding of emotional communication
- aphasia -- loss of the ability to produce or comprehend language
- blindness -- a defect of the eye or visual system
- deafness -- a defect of the ear or auditory system
- dyslexia -- a defect of the systems used in reading
- dyscalculia -- a defect of the systems used in communicating numbers
- expressive language disorder -- affects speaking and understanding where there is no delay in non-verbal intelligence.
- mixed receptive-expressive language disorder -- affects speaking, understanding, reading and writing where there is no delay in non-verbal intelligence.
- speech disorders such as
 - stuttering
 - oesophageal voice

Invisible Disability

An **invisible disability** is a disability that is not (always) immediately apparent to casual observers; that is, it is not visible to the naked eye.

Examples

Those with joint problems may not use mobility aids on good days or at all. Invisible disabilities can also include chronic illnesses such as renal failure and diabetes. Some people with visual or auditory impairments who do not wear glasses or hearing aids may not be obviously impaired. (Some may wear contacts or have a cochlear implant instead.) Other examples include Asperger syndrome, brain injuries, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, epilepsy, and repetitive stress injuries.

Psychiatric disabilities

People with psychiatric disabilities make up a large segment of the invisibly-disabled population covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Examples include: People with psychiatric disabilities make up a large segment of the invisibly-disabled population covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Examples include:

- Major depression
- Bipolar disorder
- Clinical depression
- Anxiety disorders
- Schizophrenia
- Personality disorders (when discussing mental impairments)

Dietary disabilities

- Crohn's disease
- Coeliac Disease
- Diabetes
- Fructose malabsorption
- Hypoglycemia
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Metabolic syndrome
- Lactose Intolerance
- Lactulose Intolerance
- Dietary Fructose Intolerance
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Food allergies (the most common are peanuts, milk, eggs, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, soy, and wheat)

Multiple chemical sensitivity

Referred to as an environmental illness, multiple chemical sensitivity can cause an allergic-type response to synthetic substances such as pesticides, perfumes and detergents. Several cities now issue statements requesting that one limit the use of personal fragrances when attending a public function in order to make public space more accessible to individuals with this disability.

Discrimination

Whereas with a visible disability, people may be too willing to "help" or interfere, those with invisible disabilities must seek out any help or risk going without assistance. However, those with invisible disabilities are often still covered by disability law.

Persons with these kinds of disabilities are often accused of faking or imagining their disabilities. People can also misunderstand and sometimes mistake illness or impairment as something else. For instance, one might feel animosity towards a person who takes a lift/elevator up one floor, by assuming they are lazy, without realising that the person has an unobvious disability which makes it difficult for them to climb stairs (such as a knee problem or lack of depth perception).

Excerpts from Wikipedia

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disabilities>