

DREAM
Employment
Network



Understanding disability

For employers



Easy Read

About this book



This book is about

- the social model of disability



- types of disability



- how to talk about disability



- the benefits of being accessible



- being a flexible workplace



- rights and responsibilities.

Who is this book for?



This book is for **employers**.



Employers give people jobs.



People with disability can share this book with their employers.

More help



This book introduces many important topics.



Helpful links are at the end of this book if you want to learn more.

The social model of disability



The **social model of disability** means

- people with disability **can** participate equally when the community is accessible



- people with disability **cannot** participate equally when the community has **accessibility barriers**.



Accessibility barriers can be found in

- attitudes people have about disability

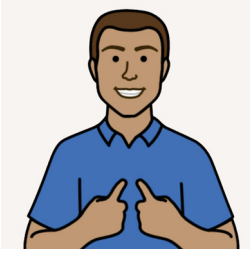


- physical spaces, for example **no** wheelchair ramps



- communications, for example **no** Easy Read or plain language information.

Types of disability



Every person with disability is unique.



Employers **must** treat people with disability as individuals, **not** as types or categories.

Visibility



Disability can be visible.
For example, a person in a wheelchair.



Disability can be invisible.
For example, a person with intellectual disability.

Developing disability



Some people are born with disability.
For example, someone with Down Syndrome.



Some people develop disability later in life.
For example, someone who had a stroke.

Physical disability



Some disabilities are physical.
For example, the body works in a different way.

Intellectual disability



Some disabilities are intellectual.
For example, the brain works in a different way.

Psychosocial disability

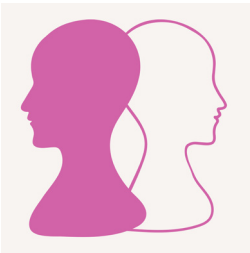


Psychosocial disability is disability caused by mental health challenges.



Some examples of mental health challenges include

- depression or anxiety



- bipolar disorder.



Not everyone with mental health challenges is a person with disability.



Employers **must** respect the different lived experiences of people with psychosocial disability.

Neurodivergence



Neurodivergence includes disability that changes how the brain processes information.

Examples of neurodivergent people include

- people with ADHD

- Autistic people



- some people with Dyslexia



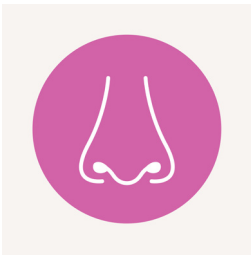
- some people with psychosocial disability.

Sensory disability

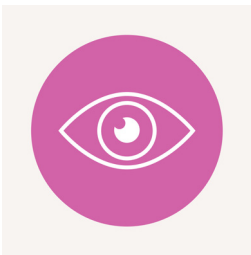
Sensory disability impacts



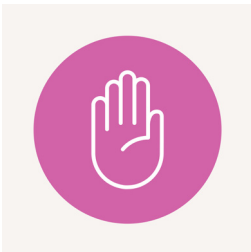
- taste



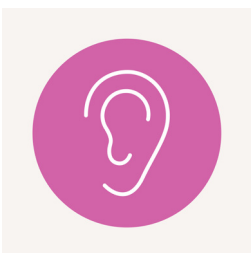
- smell



- sight



- touch



- hearing.



Some people with hearing difficulty choose **not** to be part of the disability community.

d/Deaf people

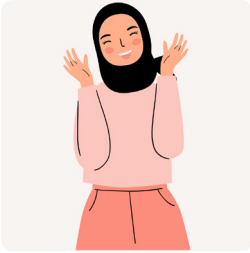


Many people who are d/Deaf choose **not** to be part of the disability community.



There is a strong **Deaf community** that uses sign language. In Australia, this is called **Auslan**.

How to talk about disability



Disability is **not** a bad word.



Many people in the disability community are proud of who they are.



You can say **disabled person** or you can say **person with disability**.



Employers should find out what employees with disability want them to say.

Focus on strengths



Inclusive employers use **strengths based language**.



Strengths based language means you talk about what a person with disability **can** do.



It does **not** help to only focus on the things people **cannot** do.

Asking about disability



Employers can ask if a person needs **reasonable accommodations**.



Reasonable accommodations mean

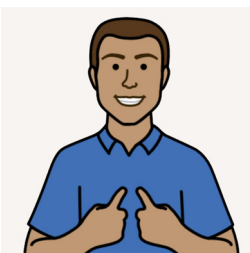
- employers respect employee access needs



- employers make changes to help employees with disability to do their job properly.



Employers should **not** expect people with disability to share everything about their disability.



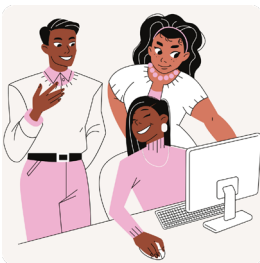
The person with disability should choose what they share, unless it is about reasonable accommodations.

The benefits of being accessible



A diverse group of employees can improve

- how much work gets done



- creativity

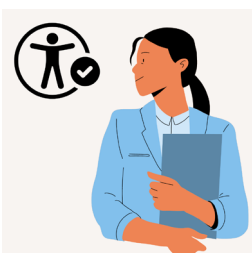


- problem solving.



People with disability

- can bring new ideas



- can help your organisation talk to more customers and different people.

Being a flexible workplace

A flexible workplace means all employees have more choice about



- where they work



- when they work

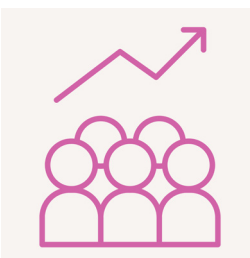


- how much they work.



Being a flexible workplace

- keeps employees happy



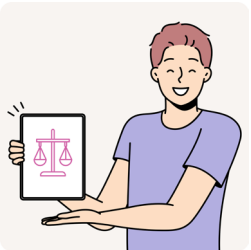
- welcomes more people to apply for jobs at your organisation.



Rights and responsibilities



Employers **cannot** treat people with disability unfairly or favour people **without** disability.



The **Disability Discrimination Act** is a law that protects the rights of employees with disability.



Helpful websites

<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/disability-discrimination>

<https://www.nds.org.au/index.php/disability-types-and-description>

<https://www.yacvic.org.au/ydas/blog/hiring-disabled-young-people>

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=TpkwSQQbFEg>

<https://australiandisabilitynetwork.org.au/resources/recruiting-and-careers>

<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/benefits-employing-people-with-disability>

<https://www.nds.org.au/images/resources/employment/WA-Public-Sector-Disability-Employment-Confidence/Disability-Employer-Resource---Myths-and-Facts.pdf>



Helpful websites

https://cyda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/DREAM_making_adjustments_easy_read.pdf

<https://pwd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/PWDA-Language-Guide-v2-2021.pdf>

https://cyda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/DREAM_reasonable-adjustments.pdf



More information



Email CYDA

YouthactionTeam@cyda.org.au



Call CYDA

0423 833 523



Services to help you call us



If English is **not** your first language

Call **TIS** or the Translating and Interpreting Service

131 450



If you have communication disability

Call the **NRS** or National Relay Service

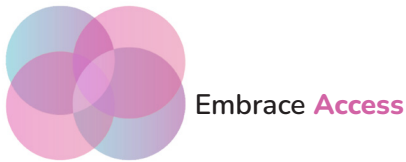
1800 555 660



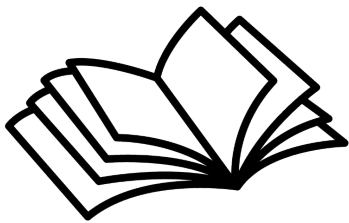
If you use TTY or teletypewriters

Call the **NRS** or National Relay Service

1800 555 677



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CYDA's DREAM resources have been created to provide general information to employers and young people with disability who may be seeking employment. The content has been informed by a co-design process with employers and young people with disability. Funding for the project was provided by the Australian Government's Department of Social Services, as part of a Disability Youth Leadership Grant.

This fact sheet was current as of June 2024 and may not contain the most recent information and updates. Information is provided as a general guide and should not be considered legal or professional advice.

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