

DID YOU KNOW?

- Not every person with a disability wants to be "fixed."
- People with disabilities go to school, get married, work, have families, laugh, cry, vote, plan, and dream like everyone else.
- Do not assume people with mental health disabilities will cause harm. Statistically, they are more likely to be victims of violence rather than perpetrators. Mental health symptoms are not always active or harmful.
- People with blindness or low vision do not all necessarily experience the same degree of vision loss or need the same accommodations; ask them instead of assuming.
- The impact of a disability may vary depending on many factors; people who use wheelchairs may not need them 100% of the time.

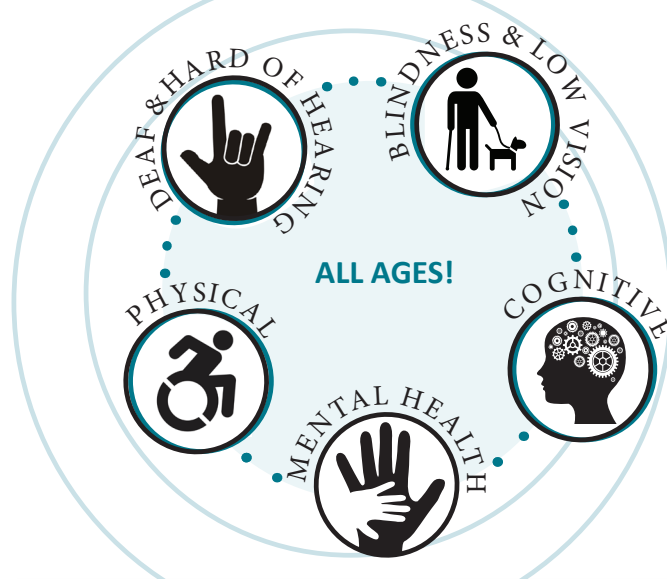
LARGEST MINORITY GROUP IN THE US

(and only minority group anyone can join)

56.7 million people **19%** of the nation's total population

1 in 5 people will acquire a disability during their lifetime

TYPES OF DISABILITIES



WHY IS DISABILITY AWARENESS IMPORTANT?

- Encourages the presumption of competence of people with disabilities.
- Ensures that people with disabilities are treated the same and have the same access as those without disabilities.
- Makes people feel more comfortable and can prevent awkward situations.
- Allows for more effective and integrated interaction with people who disclose disabilities.

NEED MORE INFO? WE OFFER TRAINING

Trainings can be modified to suit the needs or time allowance of your request.

For more resources or to schedule a disability awareness training, please call 719-471-8181 or visit

[theindependencecenter.org/
community-training/](http://theindependencecenter.org/community-training/)

Our Mission

Working with people with disabilities, their families and the community, we create independence so that all may thrive

Main Office:

729 S. Tejon St., Colo. Springs, CO 80903
719-471-8181 | VP: 719-358-2513

A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
theindependencecenter.org

Disability Awareness



**BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN
POSITIVE INTERACTIONS**

PERSON-FIRST LANGUAGE

The words we use can reinforce negative myths or create a positive view of people with disabilities. While we recommend using person-first language in general discussion of disability, we support the choice of all people with disabilities to self-identify in a way that is preferable for them.



TOP 10 TIPS

DO SAY

- Person who is deaf/hard of hearing
- Intellectual disability
- Developmental disability
- Service animal or dog
- Mental/behavioral health condition

Disability

People with disabilities

Accessible parking or restroom

What language do you use to describe yourself? Should I use those terms as well?

Uses a wheelchair, wheelchair-user

Person with a spinal cord injury

Blind/low-vision

DON'T SAY

- Differently-abled
- Challenged
- Handicapped
- Confined to a wheelchair
- Mental retardation
- Mongoloid
- Wheelchair-bound

Deaf-mute

Cripple

Retarded

- The disabled
- Seeing eye dog
- Crazy
- Nuts
- Psycho
- Mentally ill
- Handicapped parking or restroom

Visually handicapped

What happened to you?

- 1 Presume people with disabilities are competent and allow them to tell you if they need support. Every individual is the best judge of what they can and cannot do.
- 2 Ask before you assist and listen for a response – follow any specific directions.
- 3 Use common sense and extend common courtesies to persons with disabilities, just as you treat everyone else. Treat adults like adults.
- 4 Describe and address people with disabilities appropriately. Use “person-first language” and avoid words like handicapped, afflicted, victim, or retarded.
- 5 Be patient. People with disabilities might require more time to express themselves or to move about.
- 6 Relax and be yourself. Don’t worry about using common phrases like “see you later” to someone who is blind.
- 7 Speak directly to the person and maintain eye contact instead of speaking directly to a companion, aide, or interpreter.
- 8 Do not pet, feed, or distract service animals. They are working animals, not pets.
- 9 Help make your community accessible by becoming familiar with what accessibility means for different types of disabilities.
- 10 For those with disabilities: Be patient and appropriately educate those who may not know how to confidently interact with you. Assume positive intent and ask for what you need.