

Disability awareness update



More than one in eight Americans lives with a severe disability¹. These may include challenges with hearing, vision, reasoning, understanding, walking, climbing stairs, self-care or living independently.

Some disabilities are obvious — but others are not. Disabilities can include:

- Injuries like a broken arm or leg
- Traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- Learning issues like dyslexia, auditory or visual processing
- Loss of vision or hearing
- Chronic illness such as diabetes, heart disease or asthma
- Mental illness such as depression or bipolar disorder

Ways to help

Many people want to assist those with disabilities but may not know how to offer help. Here are some suggestions:

- 1. Use proper words and phrases.** Remember that a person has a disability – he or she is not the disability. For example, you'd say "John has epilepsy" rather than "John is epileptic."
- 2. Ask before helping.** People with disabilities are often quite independent. Don't assume they need your help. Never grab or touch them without asking. You may catch them off guard or even get in their way.
- 3. Show respect.** If someone is in a wheelchair or has a service dog, be respectful of boundaries. Don't pet the dog or interfere with the person's movement. Also, they may have an aide with them. If you want to ask or say something, remember to address the person, not his or her helper.

Treat people with disabilities as you'd like to be treated — with kindness, consideration and respect.

¹Mercado, Mia. [How Many Americans Have A Disability? A New Survey Indicates the Number Is Higher Than You Think.](#) Bustle. Accessed May, 2019.

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