



# Disability Awareness Training – Briefing Document

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes

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# Workshop Overview



This interactive workshop builds foundational understanding of disability and inclusion, explores lived experiences, and equips participants with practical tools to challenge ableism and create more accessible environments.

# Learning Objectives



- 01** Understand key models of disability and how they shape attitudes.
- 02** Explore the diversity of impairments and access needs.
- 03** Identify and challenge ableist language and behaviour.
- 04** Gain confidence in using inclusive communication and practices.
- 05** Commit to at least one change that can be implemented immediately.





# Welcome & Grounding

Duration: 10 minutes

## Content:

- Brief introductions (name, role, pronouns, audio description)
- Access check-in (e.g. "What do you need to engage comfortably today?")
- Shared group agreements (e.g. respect, confidentiality, no pressure to share, honor lived experience)

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## Activity: "What Does Disability Mean to You?"

Prompt:

"What words, thoughts, or feelings come to mind when you hear the word 'disability'?"

- Invite participants to take 1–2 minutes to write down a few words or ideas individually.
- Then share in pairs or small groups.
- Bring the group back together and invite a few volunteers to share. Capture key words on a flipchart or virtual whiteboard if possible.

Purpose:

- Surfaces existing perceptions, biases, or curiosity
- Allows people to hear a range of perspectives
- Provides a baseline that the rest of the workshop can build on or challenge

# Understanding Disability

Duration: 15 minutes

## Content:

- Social Model vs. Medical Model
- Medical model sees disability as a problem within the person that needs to be fixed.
- Social model sees disability as caused by barriers in society — physical, attitudinal, or systemic.
- Example: A person using a wheelchair isn't disabled by their body, but by a building with no lift.
- Disability as a Cultural and Political Identity
- Disability isn't just medical — for many, it's a source of identity, community, and pride.
- Disabled people have their own culture, language, and history of activism.
- Intersectionality and Ableism
- People experience disability differently based on race, gender, class, etc.
- Ableism = discrimination against disabled people. It can be visible or subtle (like low expectations or assuming helplessness).





# Understanding Disability

Duration: 15 minutes

## Activity: Model Mindset Swap

Instructions:

1. Read two short scenarios:

- Scenario A: Someone with anxiety is told they're being "difficult" for not joining a large meeting.
- Scenario B: A wheelchair user can't access a second-floor training with no lift.

2. In small groups, discuss:

- How would this be seen through the medical model?
- How would the social model reframe it?

3. Share key points with the group.



# Overview of Impairment Types

Duration: 15 minutes

**Disability is diverse and not always visible.**

**Common types include:**

- Physical: mobility, chronic pain
- Sensory: blind, low vision, D/deaf
- Neurodivergent: autism, ADHD, dyslexia
- Mental health: anxiety, depression, PTSD
- Chronic illness: fatigue, fluctuating conditions
- Cognitive/learning disabilities: processing, memory
- Many people have multiple or invisible impairments

Activity: Myths & Assumptions Poll

Ask a few true/false or yes/no questions:

- "You can always tell if someone is disabled."
- "All disabled people want to be cured."
- "Disability always means using a wheelchair."
- Discuss the answers as a group and challenge assumptions.





# Language: Do's and Don'ts

Duration: 20 minutes



## Words matter. Avoid ableist or outdated terms.

- Don't say: "handicapped," "suffering from," "wheelchair-bound"
- Use: "disabled person," "person with..." (check preference)
- Avoid euphemisms like "differently-abled"
- Respect identity-first or person-first language — ask, don't assume
- Focus on access, not pity or inspiration



## Activity: Language Swap

- Small groups match harmful phrases to better alternatives.
- Discuss: Why do these words matter?
- Share examples from work or media you've seen.





# Inclusive Practices

Duration: 20 minutes



## Content:

- Inclusion is about removing barriers and normalizing access
- Ask everyone what they need — don't wait for disclosure
- Inclusive meetings: send info in advance, allow breaks, use captions
- Avoid assumptions — access needs vary
- Make flexibility part of your culture

## Activity: Scenario Fix

Groups are given a workplace example (e.g. a team event, job interview).

They identify what's inaccessible and suggest 2–3 ways to improve it.

# Q&A and Reflection

Duration: 10 minutes

## Activity: Personal Commitment

Each person writes down one thing they'll change or do differently.

Invite volunteers to share.

Open the floor for final questions or reflections.







# Contact Information

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