

Building Disability Confidence APM Employment Services

Michael Dobbie-Bridges
Strategic Advisor - Disability

Sheree Holdsworth
National Partnerships Manager

August 2023



SOME DISABILITIES LOOK LIKE THIS



SOME LOOK LIKE THIS



Definition of disability

For the purposes of this training, a good definition to draw on to help you conceptualise disability is that provided by the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992, which defines disability as:

- Total or partial loss of a person's bodily or mental functions
- Total or partial loss of a part of the body
- The presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness
- The presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness
- The malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body
- A disorder or malfunction that results in a person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction
- A disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement, or that results in disturbed behaviour

This definition covers a wide variety of impairment, including chronic disease, physical impairments and psycho-social disability. Importantly, it also recognises that not all disability is visible and includes a disability that:

- presently exists; or
- previously existed but no longer exists; or
- **may exist in the future** (including because of a genetic predisposition to that disability); or
- is imputed to a person.

Disability statistics

About 4.4 million people in Australia have disability, or just under 18% of the population

Approximately 90% of the 4.4 million are living with invisible disabilities

1 in 6 Australians are affected by hearing loss

575,000 Australians are blind or have low vision

Over half a million Australians live with an intellectual disability

10% of our population experience some form of learning disability

45% of Australians will experience some form of mental health condition during their lifetime

53% of working age people with a disability are in the labour force compared with 84% of those without

60% of people with disability in Australia live near or below the poverty line

17% of people aged 20 and over with disability have a bachelor's degree or higher (35% without disability)

Inappropriate Language	Appropriate Language
The disabled, the handicapped	People with disability
Normal, able bodied	People without disability
Insane, crazy, nuts, psycho, mental, maniac, lunatic, mental patient, unsound mind	A person with a psychiatric condition, a person who experiences a mental health condition, a person living with a mental health condition, a person who experiences (a specified condition)
Retarded, slow, simple, special needs, feeble minded, imbecile	A person with an intellectual disability, a person with a development disability, a person with a cognitive impairment
Invalid	A person with disability
Epileptic	A person with epilepsy
Dwarf, midget	A person of short stature
Deaf/dumb, mute	A Deaf person or a person who is deaf
Confined to a wheelchair, a person in a wheelchair	A person who uses a wheelchair
Birth defect/deformity/abnormality	A person with disability from birth

Communication tips

At the end of the day however, if you are in doubt about what is okay or not okay to say, just ask the person how they would like you to reference their disability if relevant and required.

Busting Common Myths and Concerns

There is no information or support available for hiring and retaining a person with a disability.

Disability Employment Service providers like APM Employment provide a range of support services to employers hiring persons with a disability including.

- Free recruitment service with access to ready to work job seekers
- Access to training and work-related equipment (if needed)
- Continued support after hiring
- Support to access Funding for workplace modifications (if needed).
- Access to wage subsidies of up to \$10,000 (when you employ an eligible job seeker).

People with a disability are less productive.

People with a disability are usually just as productive at their job as any other employee. They are aware of their capabilities and are unlikely to apply for a job they cannot do.

People with a disability take more sick leave.

There is evidence to support that people with a disability take less sick days than those without.

There are higher recruitment, employment, and training costs for people with a disability.

There are usually no additional costs associated to employing people with disabilities. There is government funding and incentives available for employing people through Job Access or via services such as APM, a Disability Services Provider.

Workers' compensation costs are higher for employees with a disability.

Workplace insurance premiums are not calculated on the characteristics of employees. They are based off the number of accidents at work. There is no evidence that people with a disability are more likely to have workplace accidents than people without. It's about ensuring you have good training and induction, policies and procedures, good support and open communication across your business.

Employing people with Disability is a greater risk

This is really about ensuring that they match is right from the start. It is about understanding the key requirements of the role, making reasonable adjustments where required. There are certain roles that people just can't do. Effective induction, effective train and good support are essential elements.

There are no business benefits for hiring a person with a disability.

There are a range of benefits to employing someone with a disability including

- People with a disability generally stay with you longer than other workers.
- Hiring someone with a disability into your team creates diversity.
- People with a disability often create strong connections to customers.
- People with a disability help boost staff morale.
- Hiring someone with a disability can enhance your company image
- People with a disability are great problem solvers – they overcome adversity every day.

Questions?

Your APM contacts:

Michael Dobbie-Bridges
Strategic Advisor – Disability
0423 228 336
Michael.Dobbie-Bridges@apm.net.au

Sheree Holdsworth
National Partnerships Manager
0409 653 047
Sheree.Holdsworth@apm.net.au

apm.net.au

