



# What is a disability?

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In this course we are going to talk about disability very broadly. Some people will say they have a disability, while others will not. Some disabilities are readily apparent, others are “invisible.”

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When we talk about “disability,” we mean anyone with:

- mobility, sensory, or communication issues;
- mental illness or mental health issues;
- Deafness or has hearing loss;
- Neurodiverse (or different ways the brain functions) intellectual, cognitive, or developmental disabilities;



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We also include people who have “invisible” disabilities, such as diabetes, traumatic brain injuries or substance use issues.

Other people have medical conditions that result in fatigue or lack of stamina.



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Some Deaf individuals do not identify as having disabilities. They believe that being deaf is not something that needs fixing.

Because many Deaf individuals face barriers in the hearing world, we include the Deaf community in our definition of disability.



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Other individuals may not identify as having a disability. Many older people who experience health or mobility issues do not see themselves as having a disability.

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## ADVOCACY PRACTICE

Generally, it is not useful to try and figure out a person's disability. It is more helpful to simply ask what support each person needs to use any of the services you offer.