

# DISABILITY ADVOCACY 101

Disability Resource Center - University of Louisville

disABILITY  
advocate  
recognize disability,  
emphasize possibility



# AGENDA

- ① Disability Overview
- ① Medical vs. Social Model of Disability
- ① Strategies for Being an Advocate

# DISABILITY OVERVIEW

**Definition of Disability**

**Disability Examples**

**Disability Status**



## DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

- ⊙ “A physical or mental impairment that significantly limits one or more major life activities” (Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990)
- ⊙ What constitutes a major life activity?
  - ⊙ Seeing
  - ⊙ Hearing
  - ⊙ Walking
  - ⊙ Standing
  - ⊙ Lifting
  - ⊙ Speaking
  - ⊙ Learning
  - ⊙ Reading
  - ⊙ Concentrating
  - ⊙ Thinking
  - ⊙ Communicating
  - ⊙ Much more!



# DISABILITY EXAMPLES

- ⊙ You may be able to determine that some individuals have a disability from seeing or casually interacting with them.
  - ⊙ Blindness
    - An individual who is blind may be seen utilizing a cane or a service dog to navigate around campus.
  - ⊙ Deafness
    - An individual who is deaf may be seen utilizing an American Sign Language interpreter in class.
  - ⊙ Physical Disability
    - An individual with a physical disability may be seen utilizing a wheelchair to move around campus.



## DISABILITY EXAMPLES

- ⊙ More often, you will not be able to determine that an individual has a disability by seeing or casually interacting with them. Disabilities of this type are sometimes referred to as hidden disabilities. Examples include:
  - ⊙ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
  - ⊙ Learning Disabilities – Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyscalculia, etc.
  - ⊙ Psychological Disabilities – Depression, Anxiety, Bi-Polar Disorder, etc.
  - ⊙ Autism Spectrum Disorder
  - ⊙ Chronic Health Conditions – Lupus, Multiple Sclerosis, Diabetes, etc.
  - ⊙ Traumatic Brain Injuries
- ⊙ The vast majority of individuals with disabilities on the University of Louisville campus have hidden disabilities.



# DISABILITY STATUS

- ⊙ Disability differs from many other minority groups in that today you may be part of the majority, but tomorrow you could be in the minority as a person with a disability.
- ⊙ Any one of us could become a person with a disability at some point in our lives. We could develop a psychological disorder, a chronic health condition, or be in an accident which causes a traumatic brain injury or physical disability.

# MEDICAL VS. SOCIAL MODEL

**Medical Model**

**Social Model**

**“Part of Me, Not All of Me” Video**



## MEDICAL MODEL

- ⊙ The Medical Model is the way that society often views people with disabilities. The Medical Model believes:
  - ⊙ Disability is inherently negative and makes a person deficient or abnormal.
  - ⊙ Curing the person and returning them to “normal” is the solution to disability.
    - “No one wants to live with a disability, so we must fix them.”
  - ⊙ Responsibility is placed on medical professionals to cure a person with a disability rather than on society to be more accessible.
- ⊙ Scholars believe that an overemphasis on the medical model excludes people with disabilities from being full participants in society.



## SOCIAL MODEL

- ⊙ The Social Model is the way that people with disabilities often see themselves. The Social Model believes:
  - ⊙ Disability is a difference, like gender, age, or race.
  - ⊙ Having a disability is just a part of the person; it's not good or bad.
  - ⊙ Issues arise from the interaction between the individual and an inaccessible society.
  - ⊙ A change in society will help solve disability-related problems.
  - ⊙ Change can come from anyone -- a person with a disability, an advocate, or anybody who believes people with disabilities should be included equally in society.



# PART OF ME, NOT ALL OF ME

- © Video: [Part of Me, Not All of Me](#)

# STRATEGIES FOR BEING AN ADVOCATE

**Language**

**Recognizing and Reducing Barriers**

**Universal Design**

**Event Planning**



# PERSON FIRST LANGUAGE

- ① One way to be an advocate for individuals with disabilities is with the language that you use.
- ① People with disabilities are just that – **PEOPLE** who happen to have disabilities. When describing someone as a person with a disability, it is in good taste to use language that puts the person first.



# PERSON FIRST LANGUAGE EXAMPLES

## Say This

- ⊙ People with disabilities
- ⊙ Woman who uses a wheelchair
- ⊙ Man with a mental health condition
- ⊙ People without disabilities

## Not That

- ⊙ The handicapped or disabled
- ⊙ Wheelchair-bound woman
- ⊙ Emotionally disturbed or mentally ill man
- ⊙ Normal, healthy people



# THE R-WORD

- ⊙ Unfortunately, the word “retarded” has not yet been taken out of our culture’s vocabulary of insults. Be an advocate by not using this word inappropriately, and spreading the word that its use as an insult is not acceptable.
- ⊙ Video: [Not Acceptable R-Word PSA](#)



## RECOGNIZING AND REDUCING BARRIERS: STICKS

- ⊙ Sticks in the sidewalk are not a problem for some of us. We might be able to see the stick and step over it. For some persons with disabilities, however, a stick may be a barrier.
- ⊙ An individual who is blind may not notice the stick and could trip over it. A person who uses a wheel chair may not be able to navigate over or around the stick.
- ⊙ Reduce this barrier by picking up a stick when you see it on the sidewalk and moving it out of the way.





## RECOGNIZING AND REDUCING BARRIERS: BICYCLES

- ◎ Many students, faculty, and staff travel to and around campus on bicycles. We love what this is doing for our environment!
- ◎ Bicycles can, however, become a barrier for some persons with disabilities. Never lock your bike on the railing of an access ramp. You could inadvertently be denying access to someone who cannot navigate around your bike!
- ◎ Prevent this barrier by always locking your bike on one of the provided bike racks.





## RECOGNIZING AND REDUCING BARRIERS: SERVICE DOGS

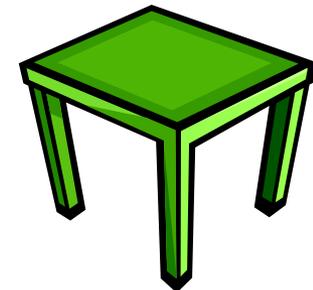
- ◎ Some people with disabilities may use a service dog. These dogs are not pets -- they are working animals.
- ◎ If you see someone using a service dog, the dog may seem friendly, but you should not pet the dog. Petting a service dog while it is working can undo its training. Only pet a service dog if you have been given permission by its owner.





## RECOGNIZING AND REDUCING BARRIERS: TABLES

- ⊙ The Disability Resource Center sometimes places tables in classrooms for students with disabilities to use. The table will be marked with a sign stating where it should be and when it is being used.
- ⊙ If the table has not been placed for you, do not use it during the designated time. Please **DO NOT** remove the table from the room.
- ⊙ Also, if you notice someone having difficulty navigating in a room full of desks, offer to help.





# UNIVERSAL DESIGN

- ① Universal Design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.



# UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR INSTRUCTION PRINCIPLES

- ⊙ Flexibility in use
  - ⊙ Example: A museum allows each visitor to choose to read or listen to a description of the contents of display cases.
- ⊙ Simple and intuitive
  - ⊙ Example: Control buttons on science equipment are labeled with text and symbols that are simple and intuitive to understand.



# UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR INSTRUCTION PRINCIPLES

- ⦿ Perceptible information
  - ⦿ Example: A video presentation projected includes captions.
- ⦿ Tolerance for error
  - ⦿ Example: The “undo” feature on a word processor allows the user to easily correct mistakes.
- ⦿ Low physical effort
  - ⦿ Example: Doors to a lecture hall open automatically for people with a wide variety of physical characteristics.



# UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR INSTRUCTION PRINCIPLES

- ① Size and space for approach and use
  - ① Example: An event space that is designed with ample room for individuals to navigate around, whether they are walking or using a mobility device.



# EVENT PLANNING

- ⊙ As a student, faculty, or staff member, does your department or student organization ever hold events? If so, this is an excellent opportunity to use universal design and be an advocate!
- ⊙ Planning your events with accessibility in mind prevents unintended barriers to access and shows individuals with disabilities that they are welcome.



# WHEN PLANNING YOUR EVENT

- ① Identify funding sources for accommodations that involve a cost.
- ① Make all accessibility arrangements well in advance of the event.
- ① Feel free to contact the Disability Resource Center at (502) 852-6938 for assistance in planning an accessible event.



# WHEN MAKING EVENT ARRANGEMENTS

- ⦿ Designate a person who will be responsible for any accommodation requests.
- ⦿ Put a standard “accessibility contact statement” on all your publicity, including flyers, print ads, web pages, radio, and TV spots. The statement should invite persons who require accommodations to make requests by contacting the designated person. Here is a sample “accessibility contact statement”:
  - ⦿ “If you have a disability and require accommodation to participate in this event, please make your request by contacting Mary Jones at 555-5555 or (email address). Please make your request by (specific date) to allow sufficient time to secure the requested accommodations.”
- ⦿ Schedule events in wheelchair accessible buildings and rooms.
- ⦿ Be sure that attendees have easy access to accessible restrooms.
- ⦿ Be sure that attendees have access to appropriate parking.



# WHEN MAKING EVENT ARRANGEMENTS

- ⊙ Provide seating toward front of room for attendees who are using sign language interpreters or real-time captionists.
- ⊙ Situate sign language interpreters near the event speaker and within clear sight of deaf attendee(s) so that both the speaker and the interpreter can be viewed simultaneously.
- ⊙ Provide advance copies of written materials and outlines for sign language interpreters when possible.
- ⊙ When possible, all media shown (videos, etc.) should be captioned for viewing by persons who are deaf.
- ⊙ Be prepared to provide materials in alternative format upon request (preferably before the scheduled event). Alternative format (such as Braille, large print, or electronic version) may be required by persons who are blind or visually impaired.



# WHEN CONFIGURING YOUR EVENT SETUP

- ⊙ Notify attendees who have requested accommodations that the requested accommodations are in place.
- ⊙ Identify and publicize the location of accessible restrooms.
- ⊙ Be sure to walk through your event venue to be sure that automatic door openers and elevators are operational.
- ⊙ Verify that paths of travel are clear and free of steps for wheelchair access.
- ⊙ Be aware of lighting or any visual obstructions that could hinder visibility.



# FINAL STEPS AND THANK YOU!

- ⦿ Complete this module of the Disability Advocacy Program by telling us one way that you will be an advocate for persons with disabilities at:  
<http://www.louisville.edu/disability/advocacy/101>
- ⦿ If you are interested in having your name added to our online list of advocates, please let us know when you complete the above form.
- ⦿ Thank you for participating in this Disability Advocacy 101 module. Your commitment to improving access and making a more inclusive environment for persons with disabilities is greatly appreciated.

# QUESTIONS?

CONTACT THE DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER AT  
502-852-6938 OR CPGETT01@LOUISVILLE.EDU.