

Disability

There are many types of disabilities, such as those that affect a person's:

- Vision
- Movement
- Thinking
- Remembering
- Learning
- Communicating
- Hearing
- Mental health
- Social relationships



Disabilities can affect people in different ways, even when one person has the same type of disability as another person. Some disabilities are visible but others may be hidden or not easy to see.

Anyone can have a disability and a disability can occur at any point in a person's life, such as:

1. An infant can be born with spina bifida, which may affect walking.
2. A child could be in a car crash and have traumatic brain injury, which may affect thinking and remembering.
3. A young adult can have depression or another mental illness, which may make it difficult to manage day-to-day stressful situations.
4. A woman in early midlife can develop multiple sclerosis, which may make it difficult to move around.
5. A college student with epilepsy whose seizures are stimulated by stress may need accommodations with activities such as long tests.
6. A man in late midlife can develop hearing loss, which may affect how he communicates.
7. An older adult can lose eyesight from glaucoma.

Types of Disabilities

Types of disabilities include various physical and mental impairments that can hamper or reduce a person's ability to carry out his day to day activities. "Disability" can be broken down into a number of broad sub-categories, which include the following:

a) Mobility and Physical Impairments

This category of disability includes people with varying types of physical disabilities including:

- Upper limb(s) disability
- Lower limb(s) disability
- Manual dexterity
- Disability in co-ordination with different organs of the body

Disability in mobility can be either an in-born or acquired with age problem. It could also be the effect of a disease. People who have a broken bone also fall into this category of disability.

b) Spinal Cord Disability:

Spinal cord injury (SCI) can sometimes lead to lifelong disabilities. This kind of injury mostly occurs due to severe accidents. The injury can be either complete or incomplete. In an incomplete injury, the messages conveyed by the spinal cord is not completely lost. Whereas a complete injury results in a total dysfunctioning of the sensory organs. In some cases spinal cord disability can be a birth defect.

c) Head Injuries - Brain Disability

A disability in the brain occurs due to a brain injury. The magnitude of the brain injury can range from mild, moderate and severe. There are two types of brain injuries:

- Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

ABI is not a hereditary type defect but is the degeneration that occurs after birth.

The causes of such cases of injury are many and are mainly because of external forces applied to the body parts. TBI results in emotional dysfunctioning and behavioral disturbance.

d) Vision Disability

There are hundreds of thousands of people that suffer from minor to various serious vision disability or impairments. These injuries can also result into some serious problems or diseases like blindness and ocular trauma, to name a few. Some of the common vision impairment includes scratched cornea, scratches on the sclera, diabetes related eye conditions, dry eyes and corneal graft.

e) Hearing Disability

Hearing disabilities includes people that are completely or partially deaf, (Deaf is the politically correct term for a person with hearing impairment).

People who are partially deaf can often use hearing aids to assist their hearing. Deafness can be evident at birth or occur later in life from several biologic causes, for example Meningitis can damage the auditory nerve or the cochlea.

Deaf people use sign language as a means of communication. Hundreds of sign languages are in use around the world. In linguistic terms, sign languages are as rich and complex as any oral language, despite the common misconception that they are not "real languages".

f) Cognitive or Learning Disabilities

Cognitive Disabilities are kind of impairment present in people who are suffering from dyslexia and various other learning difficulties and includes speech disorders.

f) Psychological Disorders

Affective Disorders: Disorders of mood or feeling states either short or long term. Mental Health Impairment is the term used to describe people who have experienced psychiatric problems or mental illness such as:

Personality Disorders - Defined as deeply inadequate patterns of behavior and thought of sufficient severity to cause significant impairment to day-to-day activities.

Schizophrenia: A mental disorder characterized by disturbances of thinking, mood, and behavior.

h) Invisible Disabilities

Invisible Disabilities are disabilities that are not immediately apparent to others. It is estimated that 10% of people in the U.S. have a medical condition considered a type of invisible disability.

Comprehension check

1. Read the introduction and match the cases 1-7 with categories of disability

1 - ____, 2 - ____, 3 - ____, 4 - ____, 5 - ____, 6 - ____, 7 - ____

2. a) Explain the meaning of in-born disability and give the example.

b) Explain the meaning of disability acquired with age problem and give the example.

3. Match the following phrases:

| | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1. complete | a) loss |
| 2. mental | b) graft |
| 3. develop | c) disabilities |
| 4. hearing | d) injury |
| 5. to affect | e) defect |
| 6. physical | f) multiple sclerosis |
| 7. the effect | g) causes |
| 8. incomplete | h) trauma |
| 9. biologic | i) disorder |
| 10. speech | j) dexterity |
| 11. manual | k) illness |
| 12. corneal | l) injury |
| 13. ocular | m) of a disease |
| 14. birth | n) walking |

4. Find the words and phrases that mean:

_____ - a physical or mental handicap, especially one that prevents a person from living a full, normal life or from holding a gainful job.

_____ - passing naturally from parent to offspring through the genes.

_____ - having to do with thought, judgment, or knowledge

_____ – gestural systems of communication, especially employing manual gestures.

_____ - the state of being weakened, or damaged, especially mentally or physically:

_____ - possessed by an organism at birth.

_____ – any disorder characterised by abnormal behaviour or inability to function socially

5. Read the description of ICF and complete the category

International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)

The World Health Organization (WHO) has published the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) in 2001. The ICF provides a standard language for classifying changes in body function and structure, activity, participation levels, and environmental factors that influence health. This helps to assess the health, functioning, activities, and factors in the environment that either help or create barriers for people to fully participate in society.

1. _____ refers to illness, disease, disorder, injury or trauma. It is usually a diagnosis. For example, autism spectrum disorders, spina bifida, and traumatic brain injury.
2. _____ are physical parts of the body. For example, heart, legs, and eyes.
3. _____ describe how body parts and systems work. For example, thinking, hearing, and digesting food.
4. _____ are difficulties completing a variety of basic or complex activities that are associated with a health problem. For example, vision loss, hearing loss, and inability to move one's legs.
5. _____ means doing a task or action. For example, eating, writing, and walking.
6. _____ are difficulties a person may have in doing activities. For example, not being able to brush one's teeth or open a medicine bottle.
7. _____ means being involved in a life situation and fully participating in society. For example, attending school and playing sports. This also means including people with disabilities in all aspects of a communities' political, social, economic and cultural life.
8. _____ are problems a person may have in life situations.
9. _____ are things in the environment that affect a person's life. For example, technology, support and relationships, services, policies, and the beliefs of others.
10. _____ relate to the person, such as age, gender, social status, and life experiences.

Participation, Personal Factors Body Structures, Functional Limitations, Environmental Factors, Activity, Activity Limitations, Participation Restrictions
Body Functions Health Conditions

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