



Module 2 - part 1

IT Can Help **Disability Awareness Training**

This pack intention is to give basic disability awareness training

Table Contents

Disability Awareness Training	3
Who is disabled?	3
A quick start guide video	4
Talk Disability Rights commission	4
Disability language	5
Disability Terminology	5
Avoidable & Usable terms	6
The Social Model of Disability Explained	7
Disability Etiquette	11
Meeting Disabled People	13
Disability Legislation	16
Further reading	18

Disability Awareness Training

Who is disabled?

Under the DDA a “disabled person” is defined as a person with a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial, adverse and long term effect of his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Long term is taken to be a year or more, but allowance is made for remissions in conditions such as multiple sclerosis. It can include people with:

- physical or mobility impairments
- visual impairments
- hearing impairments
- dyslexia
- medical conditions
- mental health difficulties

There are around 10 million disabled people with rights under the Disability Discrimination Act in Great Britain (Source: Disability Rights Commission). In

A quick start guide video

Talk Disability Rights commission

Available on YouTube(web connection required)

Part 1

<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=vSG6LGutkHo>

Part 2

<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=ZpdyIYEmrs8>

Disability language

The words we use when we talk about something can reflect our attitudes and beliefs, which may not be the same as other people's. Over the years disability terminology has developed to become more inclusive and less negative for disabled people. The purpose of this unit is to encourage you to think about disability language and help you to be more aware of the need to use terms which disabled people find acceptable.

Disability Terminology

The ways in which we perceive disability issues or disabled people will affect the kind of language or terminology we use. For example, wheelchair bound and handicapped may seem inoffensive to use when thinking about disability or disabled people, but on the whole the majority of disabled people dislike them. Furthermore, in the past many terms used to describe disabled people depended on the medical model of disability and on seeing the disabled person as incapable or helpless and dependent upon others. For instance, invalid gives the idea that someone is 'in valid' or not acceptable, and handicapped gives the idea of someone who has to go 'cap in hand' for help. Terms like these are not in keeping with the social model of disability, with the University's inclusive language policy, or with the idea of empowering disabled people to take control of their own lives

With this in mind the following table gives some examples of terms which ought to be avoided and those which could be used.

Avoidable & Usable terms

Please Avoid	Please Use
The Disabled	Disabled person/people
Handicapped/Cripple/Invalid	Disabled person
Victim of/Suffering from	Person who has/Person with
Wheelchair bound	Wheelchair user
Epileptic/Asthmatic/Arthritic/Diabetic/Dyslexic/Schizophrenic	Person who has... Person with...
The Blind	People with a visual impairment
The Deaf	People with a hearing impairment
Able bodied	Non-disabled
Spastic Person	with cerebral palsy
Mental handicap/Retard	Person with a learning difficulty

The Social Model of Disability Explained

Introduction

More and more disabled people are talking about the social model of disability. For many, understanding it has changed their lives. SCIL sees it as it's guiding philosophy, but it is still widely misunderstood. This page aims to explain the social model of disability in a way that is easy to understand.

This page serves as an introduction to these concepts. They are usually explored in more detail on [disability equality training](#) courses and personal development courses (available from SCIL and many other organisations run and controlled by disabled people). These courses enable disabled people to relate the principles of the model to their own life.

The social model of disability has changed many people's outlook on life - and it could change yours. If, after reading this, you would like to talk to people whose lives have been dramatically enhanced as a result of the social model, please contact SCIL or your local organisation of disabled people.

A different way of looking at ourselves

The social model of disability enables disabled people to look at themselves in a more positive way which increases their self-esteem and [independence](#).

Disabled people often feel a loss, for all the things they would like to do, but cannot; a loss of goals and dreams that seem unobtainable. Disabled people often feel they are a burden on family and friends, and a problem for doctors who cannot cure them.

This traditional view of disability is called “the Medical Model of Disability”, because it sees people as medical problems. As a result disabled people are expected to see their impairment as their problem, something they will have to make the best of and accept that there are many things they cannot do.

The social model of disability starts from a different perspective. It ignores how “bad” a person’s impairment is. Instead it establishes that everyone is equal and demonstrates that it is society which erects barriers that prevent disabled people participating and restricts their opportunities.

How does the social model of disability work?

The social model looks beyond a person’s impairment at **all** the relevant factors that affect their ability to be a full and equal participant in society.

What else is relevant?

Heavy doors and inaccessible public transport are just two examples of what makes travelling such a hassle - not the fact that someone is disabled. Every disabled person can make their own list of the barriers that limit their participation. When these barriers and other people’s negative attitudes are considered, it is easy to

see how disabled people's opportunities are limited by a multitude of barriers.

The social model of disability states that the solution is to rid society of these barriers, rather than relying on curing all the people who have impairments. (in many case this is not possible or desirable)

For example, people with poor eyesight are given a simple piece of equipment - a pair of glasses. Without them they would be excluded from full participation in society and would therefore be disabled.

Similarly, the social model solution to the fact that a wheelchair user is disabled because they cannot use public transport, is simple - make all public transport accessible to everyone!

Examples of how society could change to allow disabled people to participate equally:

Medical model problem	Social model solution
Painful hands, unable to open jars, doors	Better designed lids, automatic doors
Difficulties in standing for long periods	More seats in public places
Unable to climb steps into buildings	Ramps and lifts in all buildings
Other people won't give you a job because they think you couldn't do it	Educate people to look at disabled people's abilities rather than looking for problems

This social model approach to disability that sees the problem as society's barriers, rather than the person's condition, allows disabled people to lift the blame from their shoulders and place it squarely onto society's. The social model of disability empowers disabled people to challenge society to remove those barriers.

Medical model says:

- You are a sufferer
- You are the problem
- Your disability needs curing
- You cannot make decisions about your life

- You need professionals to look after you
- You can never be equal to a non-disabled person

Disability Etiquette

Along with changes in the language that we use concerning disability there has also been a shift in the way that we treat disabled people. Don't assume that you know how to deal with someone's needs just because you know someone else with the same condition, all people with a disability are individual and so ask them if they need assistance. Empowering those with a disability or learning need to help themselves and we would encourage everyone to see the individual first as no one in society is 'normal' and everyone has needs. By using more appropriate language and behaviour we can all come to accept the social model and so benefit from the widening of participation in our society.

Many barriers for disabled people are created by the negative assumptions and misconceptions held by society. These barriers can be reinforced by behaviour and language which may not seem important but which can perpetuate assumptions and cause unnecessary offence to disabled people.

Depending on how it is used language can reinforce either positive or negative views of disability. As language is constantly evolving this can only be a guide to what is preferred.

Generally the preferred language always describes disabled people in an active rather than a passive role. For example 'wheelchair bound' portrays a negative image of the person, while 'wheelchair user' is an active term which shifts the emphasis from the wheelchair to the person. The word 'special' when referring to disabled people tends to either mean extraordinary or not good enough, and is therefore viewed as patronising. Most disabled people prefer the term 'disabled people', rather than 'people with disabilities,' and therefore this is the term we recommend.

Common Courtesies

1. It is quite acceptable to offer assistance to a disabled person if you want to, but wait until your offer has been accepted before you help. Always ask the person how they would like you to help, rather than assuming that you already know the best way.
2. A wheelchair is part of the body space of the person who uses it. Do not lean on it. Do not crouch down when speaking to a wheelchair user. Attempt to put yourself at the same level by sitting on a chair.
3. Never talk to a disabled person through a companion or personal assistant. Make eye contact in the same way as you can/would with anyone else.
4. Common expressions such as "see you later" or "have you heard about" are acceptable to visually impaired or deaf or hard of hearing people.
5. Remember that some people have hidden impairments such as diabetes or epilepsy. Don't make assumptions just because the impairment is not obvious.

Meeting Disabled People

People who are deaf

1. Do not make assumptions about how a deaf person will communicate. Always ask what the person's preferred method is.
2. If an interpreter is present remember to speak to the person you are meeting rather than to the interpreter.
3. Do not shout when you are speaking directly to a person who is deaf. Sometimes it may help to use written notes, but again ask the person.

Lip Reading

1. Do not assume that everyone who is deaf can lip read. Always ask the person when you first meet them.
2. If they do lip read remember the skill is never wholly tiring. There are some guidelines to follow when meeting a person who is lip reading:-
3. Look directly at them and speak slowly and clearly.
4. Use facial expressions, gestures and body movements to emphasise the words used (only 3 out of 10 words are visible on the lips),
5. Face the light and keep hands, cigarettes and food away from your face when speaking,
6. If you need to attract the person's attention, do so with a light touch on their shoulders or a wave of your hand.

People who are blind or partially sighted

1. Identify yourself clearly first of all and introduce anyone else who is present. Try to indicate where they are placed in the room.
2. When offering a handshake, say something to indicate that you wish to shake hands.
3. When help is needed on unfamiliar ground, offer to help before doing so by saying, "let me offer you an arm". This will enable you to guide rather than propel the person.
4. When offering a seat, first place the person's hand on the back or the arm of the chair so that they are aware of the position of it.
5. When talking to a group, remember to say the name of the person to whom you are speaking.
6. At the end of a conversation do not leave someone talking to an empty space. Say when you wish to end a conversation or to move away.

People with Speech Difficulties

1. Do not correct or speak for a person with speech difficulties. Wait while the person talks and resist the temptation to finish their sentences.
2. If you have difficulty understanding what is being said, don't pretend. Repeat what you understand and the person's reactions will guide you, or ask the person to repeat what they have said.

People with Specific Learning Difficulties – Dyslexia

- People with dyslexia may experience difficulties with reading, handwriting, spelling, organisation of written work, memory,

sequencing and concentration span. Furthermore they may be unwilling to ask for help or clarification because they do not want to highlight their difficulties. Being sensitive to this can help an individual to talk about what support they might require.

- Give people with reading difficulties plenty time to read and understand the text. Do not expect them to read aloud in public or comment at once on a piece of writing.
- Forms can be difficult to fill in. Offer to help the person.
- When giving a task, make sure instructions are clear, written in clear print or delivered at a reasonably slow pace if the task is given orally.
- Usually the oral skills of a person with dyslexia are far stronger than their writing skills. Their contribution to a group discussion will, therefore, be much greater if they do not feel pressured to produce a written account of the discussion or to take notes for the group.

Acknowledgement The above information has been adapted from information produced by the Disability Office at Edinburgh University

Disability Legislation

In the United Kingdom the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (known as the DDA), places statutory duties on organisations, including libraries, to make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of disabled people. The DDA was extended to education following amendments introduced by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001. The legislation has been introduced in three stages:

From 1st September 2002

It is unlawful to treat disabled students less favourably and there is a requirement to make reasonable adjustments.

From 1st September 2003

Institutions are required to provide access to auxiliary aids and services (e.g. sign language interpreters for deaf students).

From 1st September 2005

Institutions are required to make reasonable adjustments to physical features of their buildings and environment (e.g. provide a ramp for wheelchair users).

Disability Discrimination Act 2005

The most recent legislation affecting disabled people in the UK is the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. This expands the definition of disability and introduces new statutory duties on public bodies (including universities) to:

Eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for disabled people Publish a Disability Equality Scheme (from 5th December 2006).

How is the Act applied?

The Act applies to all the activities and facilities institutions provide for students. This includes e-learning and distance learning; learning resources, including libraries and computer facilities; aspects of the physical environment such as buildings, landscaping and equipment; many other services.

Discrimination against disabled students can take place in either of two ways:

- treating them “less favourably” than other people, or
- failing to make a “reasonable adjustment” when they are placed at a “substantial disadvantage” compared to other people for a reason relating to their disability.
- Under the Act, there is a responsibility to make “anticipatory adjustments”. This means that institutions should consider what adjustments future disabled students may need and make them in advance. It is unlikely that every need can be anticipated. However, an access audit can be especially valuable in preparing libraries to make adjustments in advance of them being required.

Further reading

Disability Rights Commission(Now the Equality and Human Rights) - The DRC website is an excellent source of information about disability equality legislation.

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>

Disability Discrimination Act 2005

Here is a link to the Act of Parliament (which includes a link to Frequently Asked Questions).

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/20050013.htm>

Copyright (Visually Impaired Persons) Act 2002

This Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) guide helps to explain recent copyright legislation which has helped to remove some of the barriers experienced by partially sighted people trying to access printed information.

http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/PublicWebsite/public_CVIPsAct2002.hcsp?printPage=1

RNID Factsheets on the DDA

The RNID, the largest charity in the UK for deaf and hard of hearing people, has produced a number of guides on the DDA. Use the above link to access these.

http://www.rnid.org.uk/information_resources/factsheets/your_rights/factsheets_leaflets/

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