



Ability Status

Educate & Motivate!

Social Justice Conversation Cards

K-STATE
Research and Extension



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ENVIRONMENT: Federal Law

What is the Americans with Disabilities Act?

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)

prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, State and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation. It also mandates the establishment of TDD/telephone relay services. The ADA was revised by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, which became effective on January 1, 2009. Congress enacted the ADA Amendments Act to make a number of significant changes to the meaning and interpretation of the ADA definition of “disability” to ensure that the definition of disability would be broadly construed and applied without extensive analysis.

(<https://www.ada.gov/>)

ENVIRONMENT: Community

When meeting a person with a disability, what should you say first?

“Hello,” “Good morning,” or other greeting.

If you are speaking with something who is blind, you may give your name after the greeting, but otherwise focus on the person and not the disability.

ENVIRONMENT: Community

Most people with disabilities are in wheelchairs.

True or False?

False.

Only 10 percent of the millions of people with disabilities use wheelchairs, crutches, or walkers.

Sue, D. W., & Sue, D. (2013). Counseling the culturally diverse: Theory and practice. New York, NY: Wiley.

ENVIRONMENT: Community

People with disabilities are brave and courageous.

True or False?

Kind of a trick question.

Individuals with disabilities react to challenging situations like anyone else does. They demonstrate a variety of reactions in response to their condition. Just like people without disabilities, some adapt well, whereas others have more difficulty. Either way, simply living with a disability does not make one brave and courageous.

Sue, D. W., & Sue, D. (2013). Counseling the culturally diverse: Theory and practice. New York, NY: Wiley.

ENVIRONMENT: Community

What is a culturally sensitive way to refer to someone with a disability?

- A. She is disabled.
- B. She is handicapped.
- C. She is crippled.
- D. She is a person with a disability.

D.

Using person-centered language is key.

The person is not defined by a disability. “Handicapped” is a dated term that often conveys a negative meaning.

ENVIRONMENT: Community

What is the word or phrase with dignity to be used to describe a person with the condition of an IQ under 70?

- A. Mentally retarded
- B. Intellectual disability
- C. Developmental disability
- D. Slow

B and C.

Mental retardation is a medical diagnosis but it is not considered respectful for everyday use when referring to a person with an intellectual or developmental disability.

ENVIRONMENT: Community

What is a culturally sensitive way to refer to a person with a mental illness?

A. He is crazy.

B. He has a psychiatric disability.

C. He is a schizophrenic.

B.

Using person-centered language is key.

The person is not defined by their disability.

ENVIRONMENT: Community

“Normal” is an appropriate term to use when referring to a person without a disability.

True or False?

False.

No one is really “normal.” Using the word “normal” is making a judgment call about people with disabilities.

ENVIRONMENT: Community

Which of these responses is culturally sensitive in regards to people who are blind?

- A. Ask them first if they would like to put their hand on your shoulder or forearm for guidance.
- B. Hold their hand or arm to guide them around obstacles/across the street/down stairs, etc.
- C. If you need to leave a person who is blind, you can do so without necessarily informing them.

A.

Always make a habit of asking first. Just because a person has a disability doesn't mean they need or want help.

ENVIRONMENT: Community

Using words with dignity expresses that the speaker has thought about how to approach a new culture in a sensitive, respectful way.

Which one of these examples demonstrates this?

- A. She is confined to a wheelchair.
- B. She is wheelchair-bound.
- C. She is a wheelchair user.

C.

When a person uses a wheelchair, it is considered an extension of the person. So, it is not preferable to refer to the wheelchair in a negative way or touch it without asking.

www.unitedspinal.org/disability-etiquette/#introduction

ENVIRONMENT: Community

What are the best words with dignity to use to refer to another person?

- A. A disabled person
- B. A person with a disability
- C. A schizophrenic
- D. A person with schizophrenia

B and D.

Using person-centered language is key.

The person is not defined by the disability.

ENVIRONMENT: Community

What are the best words with dignity to use with another person whether they have a disability or not?

A. That's so lame!

B. That's totally NOT okay!

B.

It's best to avoid terms/expressions that refer to different types of disabilities. This can feel alienating. Instead, use another descriptive word that doesn't target others or a specific group.

ENVIRONMENT: Community

What is **NOT** the best word choice to describe another person?

- A. Clean
- B. OCD
- C. Organized
- D. Neat

B.

It's best to avoid terms/expressions that refer to different types of disabilities. This can feel alienating. Instead, use another descriptive word that doesn't target others or a specific marginalized group.

You never know who you may be talking to and what challenges they face. Many disabilities are not visually apparent.

ENVIRONMENT: Community

It is okay to use the word “see” with someone who is blind and “walk” with someone in a wheelchair.

True or False?

True.

Across the board, it is socially acceptable and encouraged to NOT modify common verbs such as “see” or “walk” because doing so can alienate the person you are talking to.

ENVIRONMENT: Community

How can you interact with a person who has a developmental disability?

- A. Try baby talking to help them understand you.
- B. Help them with their decision-making.
- C. Speak to the person in clear sentences.

C.

Using speech that is Clear, Concise, and Consistent (the 3 C's) will improve communication.

ENVIRONMENT: Community

What is the proper way of getting the attention of a person who is deaf or has hearing loss?

- A. Speak louder than normally.
- B. Tap the person on the shoulder.
- C. Extend your hands and clap.

B.

Speaking louder than normal or clapping draws attention to the person who is deaf or hard-of-hearing and could create social alienation and a feeling of awkwardness.

ENVIRONMENT: Community

It is appropriate to pet/speak to/approach a service animal.

True or False?

False.

A service animal is working and should not be treated like a pet. This is confusing to the animal and disrespectful to the owner who depends on the work the animal is doing.

ENVIRONMENT: Community

When speaking with someone with a speech impediment:

- A. Allow the person to begin speaking and then interrupt to finish their sentence once you understand what they are asking.**
- B. Realize that communication may take longer for this person and do not rush them by asking multiple questions at once.**
- C. Pretend to understand everything that the person is saying.**
- D. If the person with a speech impediment has someone with them, direct your conversation to that person instead to ensure clear communication.**

B. Realize that communication may take longer for this person and do not rush them.

The following tips are also useful:

- Allow the person to finish speaking before you speak.
- Face the person and give full eye contact.
- Address the person directly.
- Do not pretend to understand if you do not (it is okay to ask for clarification or for the person to repeat what they said).

Remember: Having a speech impediment does not mean that a person has limited intelligence. Many speech impediments are related to a physical, not intellectual, disability.

Sue, D. W., & Sue, D. (2013). Counseling the culturally diverse: Theory and practice. New York, NY: Wiley.

ENVIRONMENT: Community

When you see a person with a disability who may need assistance, you should:

- A. Assume that they need help and help them.
- B. Ask first.

B.

Always make a habit of asking first. Just because a person has a disability doesn't mean they need or want help.

ENVIRONMENT: Community

What should you do when a person has a seizure?

A. Call 911.

B. Make sure that the person is not going to swallow their tongue by putting something in their mouth like a wallet.

C. Remove any objects from the area that the person may injure themselves on.

A and C.

It is not appropriate or safe to place items in a person's mouth. Call 911 and make sure that the person is clear of any danger. If possible, move items that they might bump their head on to avoid a head injury. Do not try to hold a person in place.

ENVIRONMENT: Community

If you see someone park in a disabled parking spot who has a disabled parking permit but does not appear to have a disability, what should you do?

- A. Report the vehicle to parking services or the police.
- B. Consider that people with disabilities may have permits for reasons that are not always apparent and do not say anything.
- C. Approach the person and ask if they have a disability.

B.

People with disabilities may have permits for reasons that are not always visible. For example, some individuals may appear to walk without difficulty but can only do so for a very short distance. Some disabilities affect mobility differently at different times of the day necessitating accessible parking. Some disabilities have unpredictable effects on mobility.

ENVIRONMENT: Community

When a building is being evacuated, how do you assist a wheelchair user?

- A. Pick the person up out of the wheelchair and carry them out of the building.
- B. Roll the person in the wheelchair down the stairs backward, keeping a firm grip on the handles.
- C. Help the person into the elevator.
- D. Have the person wait in the designated area of assistance for emergency personnel.

D.

Trying to carry someone down the stairs whether they are in their chair or not can lead to serious injuries for everyone involved. Entering an elevator during an evacuation is generally not recommended.

ENVIRONMENT: Community

You are preparing a handout for a meeting and you know that one of the attendees has a visual impairment. How should you prepare that attendee's copy of the handout?

- A. Make the font very large (48- to 60-point font).
- B. Send the handout to a professional for setting in Braille.
- C. Provide the person with a tablet or computer that has software installed to read the handout aloud.
- D. Contact the attendee and ask about their preferred method of accommodation for handouts.

D.

When making an accommodation for any person with a disability, you should always ask their preference rather than making assumptions about what would be most helpful.

ENVIRONMENT: Higher Education

True or False?

In high school, students with disabilities can receive academic accommodations such as extra time on a test or help with notetaking, but in college there are no academic accommodations available.

False.

Students with disabilities can receive academic accommodations in high school and college. The laws that govern each setting vary. In high school, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ensures that students with disabilities have access to the same educational opportunities that students without disabilities have. In college, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against students with disabilities and states that students with disabilities must have equal access to educational opportunities. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protects the rights of persons with disabilities and applies to both high school and post-secondary educational settings. All three acts prohibit discrimination based on disability status in educational settings.

www.idea.ed.gov

www.ada.gov

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/disabilityoverview.html>

ENVIRONMENT: Higher Education

If you suspect that a student has a disability, which of the following is the preferred response?

- A. “Do you have ADHD? You should go to the disability services office and see if they can help you.”
- B. “Are you off your meds?”
- C. “It seems like you are struggling right now. If you feel that you need more support, the university has a variety of resources to assist students. I can help you contact them.”
- D. Accommodate the student as you feel necessary.

C is the most appropriate response. Answer A contains a potentially useful referral by mentioning the disability services office, but speculating or making assumptions about the presence of a disability is not appropriate. It is never appropriate to inquire about medication or lack thereof (answer B). Answer D is also incorrect because providing accommodations that have not been approved by the disability services professionals can cause confusion for the student along with other potential problems.

ENVIRONMENT: Higher Education

As an instructor, you find out that you have a student in your class with a disability who needs several accommodations. You feel that it will take too much time and work for you to accommodate the student. What should you do?

- A. Tell the student that you cannot accommodate them.
- B. Tell the student that you do not believe they will need accommodations in your class.
- C. Call the disability services office on campus for support.
- D. Encourage the student to drop your class.
- E. Don't do anything.

C.

A, B, D, and E are incorrect — if a student is eligible for accommodations, the instructor must work with the disability services office on campus to provide the accommodations not only because the student needs them to be successful but because failure to do so can result in the instructor and the college/university being sued for non-compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Encouraging a student to drop a class due to a disability is considered discrimination and the ADA prohibits this. Answer B is incorrect because an instructor cannot/should not decide whether or not a student needs accommodations.

www.ada.gov

ENVIRONMENT: Higher Education

A student in a class you are teaching brings you an accommodation letter two weeks before the end of the semester. The letter outlines the accommodations that are approved for the student by the college disability services office. What should you do?

- A. State that the student should have notified you at the start of the semester and do not provide the accommodations.
- B. Accommodate the student, contacting the college's disability services office if you need assistance.

B.

Accommodate the student and contact the college/ university disability services office if you have questions. It is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act that colleges/universities accommodate the student in a timely manner, no matter when the student made the request for accommodations.

www.ada.gov

ENVIRONMENT: Higher Education

A student in your class, Lee, needs a notetaker as an accommodation. How do you arrange a notetaker for a student?

- A. Ask students in your class to contact you if they are willing to take notes for another student.
- B. Have the student who needs the notetaker accommodation stand up and ask the class for assistance.
- C. Tell the class that a notetaker is needed for Lee due to a disability and to please share their notes.

A.

The student's name and disability status must remain confidential.

ENVIRONMENT: Workplace

Interviewers should be well-trained about the American with Disabilities Act guidelines.

True or False?

True.

Interviewers who are well-versed in the Americans with Disabilities Act can provide a non-discriminatory and supportive interview and workplace experience for potential employees.

www.ADA.gov

ENVIRONMENT: Workplace

An employer can ask interview questions regarding the nature or severity of a disability, the condition or prognosis, treatment, or leave regarding a disability.

True or False?

False.

This could lead to discriminatory employment practices.

In some circumstances, if an employer knows that an applicant has a particular disability, it may be reasonable for the employer to ask whether the applicant might have difficulties performing particular required tasks, and whether a reasonable accommodation would be needed in order to perform that task. A trained HR professional or legal counsel can assist with determining whether these questions are appropriate.

www.dol.gov/general/topic/disability/ada

ENVIRONMENT: Workplace

Some research indicates that employers believe individuals with physical disabilities are less competent than individuals without disabilities.

True or False?

True.

Many people still believe that having a physical or other type of disability makes a person a substandard employee. These beliefs prevail despite some studies indicating that there are minimal differences in productivity, absenteeism, and cost between disabled and nondisabled employees. Consider how you might respond to an employee with a disability if or when you are in a position of power.

Wang, K., Barron, L.G., & Hebl, M.R. (2010). Making those who cannot see look best: Effects of visual resume formatting on ratings of job applicants with blindness. Rehabilitation Psychology, 44, 68-73.

ENVIRONMENT: Workplace

When an employee with a disability is hired, it is important for the employee to be transparent with coworkers about the type of disability and need for reasonable accommodations so they will understand.

True or False?

False.

Disability status and reasonable accommodations are confidential and do not have to be shared with other staff members. Employers should never require employees to share or make employees feel like they must share their disability status with coworkers.

www.dol.gov/general/topic/disability/ada

ENVIRONMENT: Workplace

Due to need for accommodations, hiring employees with disabilities always requires high-cost investments on the part of the employer.

True or False?

False.

A study conducted by the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), a service of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), shows that workplace accommodations not only are low cost, but also positively impact the workplace in many ways. The JAN study has been on-going since 2004. The study results consistently showed that the benefits employers receive from making workplace accommodations far outweigh the low cost. Employers reported that providing accommodations resulted in such benefits as retaining valuable employees, improving productivity and morale, reducing workers' compensation and training costs, and improving company diversity. These benefits were obtained with little investment. The employers in the study reported that a high percentage (59 percent) of accommodations cost absolutely nothing to make, while the rest typically cost only \$500.

(<http://askjan.org/media/downloads/LowCostHighImpact.pdf>)

ENVIRONMENT: Workplace

If you are meeting with someone who uses a cane, walker, or crutches, it is okay to move those items out of the way once the person is seated.

True or False?

False.

Items such as wheelchairs, canes, walkers, or crutches are considered part of an individual’s “personal space” and should never be moved without the individual’s permission.

<http://ucp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/tips-and-strategies-to-promote-accessible-communication.pdf>, p.10

ENVIRONMENT: Workplace

An employer can ask the following question(s) or make the following statements on a job application or during an interview:

- A. Can you perform the duties of the job with reasonable accommodation?
- B. Inform applicants on an application form that they may request any needed accommodations to participate in the application/selection process.
- C. Do you have a disability?
- D. Can you perform the duties of the job with or without reasonable accommodation?

B and D.

Asking a job applicant to disclose disability status during the hiring process can lead to discriminatory employment practices and is prohibited under the Americans with Disabilities Act. For that reason, employers are not allowed to ask questions related to disclosure of disability status. Employers, can, however, inform applicants that they have the right to request accommodations during the application process.

www.dol.gov/general/topic/disability/ada

ENVIRONMENT: Workplace

Which are examples of interview questions with regard to disability disclosure that should be avoided?

- A. Have you ever been treated for any of the following conditions?**
- B. Have you ever received mental health assistance?**
- C. Are you taking any prescribed drugs?**
- D. Have you ever filed for worker's compensation?**
- E. All of the above**

E. All of the above.

Any of these questions can lead to discriminatory employment practices.

However, there are exceptions to this disability disclosure rule during the interview process:

- Some non-profit and government positions are only available for individuals with a specific diagnosis or disability.
- If the candidate chooses to use state or federal tax credits related to their disability, this would require disclosure to Human Resources.
- There are certain government jobs that cannot be performed if the candidate is diagnosed with a certain disability type. (Ex: Flying a plane and having a certain type of visual impairment.)

www.dol.gov/general/topic/disability/ada

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