

Breaking Assumptions

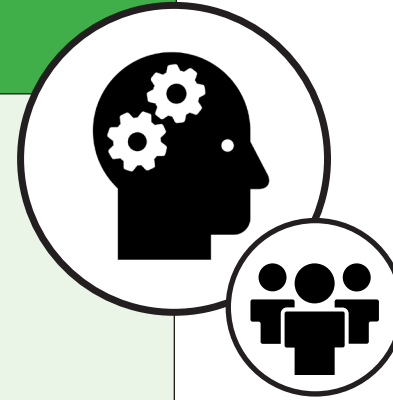
An **Employee's Tool Kit** for Empowering
and Accommodating Colleagues with **Disabilities**



February 2020



1) Purpose



Mass General Brigham recognizes that each individual's disability, whether visible or invisible, is unique.

The **Employee's Tool Kit*** serves to:

- **Educate** about disability and disability inclusion.
- **Conceptualize** disability as an important element of diversity, equity and inclusion.
- **Emphasize** the importance of disability inclusion in the workplace for the Mass General Brigham System.
- **Share** internal and external disability resources.

Note: This Toolkit is not an employment policy, nor do its contents constitute required steps in the accommodation request process.

Breaking Assumptions

An **Employee's Tool Kit** for Empowering and Accommodating Colleagues with **Disabilities**

- 1) Purpose
- 2) Introduction to Disability
- 3) Our Commitment to Employees With Disabilities
- 4) Process Flow Chart for Accommodation Requests
- 5) Supporting Our Employees
- 6) Work Without Limits Disability Etiquette Guide
- 7) Disability Resources



* Please also review our companion **Manager's Tool Kit** to learn more about the following disability-related issues:

- Process for employees requesting accommodations
- Guidelines for managers to support their employees with disabilities

Special Acknowledgments

Mass General Brigham *Breaking Assumptions: A Tool Kit for Empowering and Accommodating Colleagues with Disabilities* Steering Committee

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2) Introduction: What is a **Disability**?

What is a Disability?

You may feel that you cannot define disability, but you know it when you see it. That is not always the case. There may be visual clues, such as a wheel-chair, guide dog, or cane. However, some disabilities are not immediately apparent or observable. Certain chronic illnesses, low vision, speech impairment, intellectual impairments, or mental health diagnoses may qualify as disabilities even if not immediately apparent.

“**Disability**” is a broad term that can be used to encompass a wide range of conditions that may occur at any time across the life span:

Physical disabilities like mobility impairments often come to mind first, but other less visible disabilities include intellectual and sensory disability, or those related to chronic illness or trauma.

Mental health disabilities are less visible, often intermittent and episodic, but no less disabling.

Intellectual disabilities occur with varying levels of severity on a spectrum.

Blindness and low vision or deafness also occur on a spectrum and may be complete or partial.

Chronic illness can fluctuate and be very debilitating, as with chronic pain.



It is important to note that “disability” is a defined legal term and that not all medical conditions or impairments constitute a “disability” under laws providing protection for individuals (i.e. the Massachusetts Fair Employment Practices Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, Fair Housing Act, or Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). Whether a person’s medical condition or impairment constitutes a “disability” under law is an individualized assessment.

What is **Disability Inclusion**?

According to the [CDC](#), Disability Inclusion is “the full integration of people with disabilities into everyday activities.” It involves practices and policies designed to identify and remove barriers—physical, communication, and attitudinal—that hamper an individual’s ability to participate fully in society.

Why is Disability Inclusion so Important?

The inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace spans several areas. It may include working with our internal colleagues with disabilities, but also recognizing that employees may be caring for a family member with a disability. It is important to recognize that all of these aspects help us to conduct business as a disability-friendly organization^{1,2}.

At Mass General Brigham and its affiliated institutions, we are committed to ensuring that all employees are treated with dignity and respect. We recognize that one critical aspect of diversity is disability in all its various forms. Therefore, Mass General Brigham is dedicated to ensuring that staff with disabilities are treated fairly, by providing reasonable accommodations where possible and educating employees around this important aspect of diversity.

Mass General Brigham constantly works to create an environment that embraces diversity and inclusion. Our lived experiences and inherited characteristics not only shape our per-

spectives but provide Mass General Brigham with unique insights to better serve our patients with similar backgrounds. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 in 3 Americans living with a disability do not have a usual healthcare provider. From cost, lack of adequate services, inaccessible physical spaces, and lack of health worker cultural competence, people with disabilities face additional barriers to receiving quality healthcare compared to people without disabilities. Employees with disabilities bring a fuller understanding of what living with a disability or chronic condition means for a patient and how it shapes their health. When valued and utilized, these unique perspectives of staff with disabilities allow us all to provide better care to our patients.

¹Okoro, C., Hollis, N., Cyrus, Al., & Griffin-Blake, S. (2018). “Prevalence of Disabilities and Health Care Access by Disability Status and Type Among Adults - United States, 2016.” *MMWR. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 67(32), 882-887.

²Lindsay, S., Cagliostro, E., Albarico, M., Mortaji, N., & Karon, L. (2018). “A Systematic Review of the Benefits of Hiring People With Disabilities.” *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, 28(4), 634-655.



2) Disability in the **Workplace** and at **Home**

“Americans with disabilities are active and contributing members of our society, and they must have the opportunity to develop the skills they need to compete and obtain jobs in the 21st-century workforce. By reducing physical barriers and false perceptions, our country meets our commitment to millions of Americans with disabilities, and benefits from their talents, creativity and hard work.”

– President George W. Bush, October 2004, National Disability Employment Awareness Month Announcement Proclamation; Washington, D.C.



Disability in the Workplace

While the world is not always a welcoming place for people with disabilities and stigma still exists, we can work to reverse that stigma. People who do things differently are resilient, creative and persistent. These qualities are all highly sought after in the job market. It is a business imperative to be knowledgeable and comfortable working with colleagues with disabilities as more organizations realize the importance of hiring this underrepresented group.

Benefits of Inclusion

In addition to being the right thing to do, including people with disabilities in the workplace provides a business advantage in multiple ways:

- Expanding the talent pool
- Diversifying the employee base
- Creating an inclusive culture
- Retaining current employees
- Developing innovative goods and services
- Expanding the customer base
- Enhancing the company’s brand
- Improve quality and outcomes
- Improving market share
- Garnering community and political support
- Enhancing productivity
- Satisfying accreditation standards
- Qualifying for grants/funding
- Complying with federal regulation

Disability at Home

Many of our colleagues have a family member with a disability, which they may or may not disclose at work. Managing work and home responsibilities can be challenging with the onset or flare up of symptoms. Further along in this document is a resource guide of local organizations to provide guidance, expertise, advice etc. Managers and employees are encouraged to read and bookmark these pages as they will be very helpful should assistance be needed.

The Mass General Brigham Employee Assistance Program (EAP)



The [Mass General Brigham Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) provides connections in situations where employees are also caregivers. EAP can help employees find community services, counseling, [respite care](#), legal and financial assistance, and caregiver support groups as well as exploring flexible work arrangements.



3) Our **Commitment** to Employees with Disabilities



If an employee has a disability, Mass General Brigham wants to ensure that they are **fully supported** at work and have the same benefits and opportunities as all our employees.

If a new employee or a staff person is recently diagnosed with a disability, it is important to understand their rights and what assistance and reasonable accommodations they can expect from Mass General Brigham, their manager, Occupational Health Services (OHS), Human Resources (HR), the Mass General Brigham Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and colleagues. This section reviews self-reporting, confidentiality, and how to request reasonable accommodations as an employee with a disability.

Disclosing a Disability

Depending on the disability, deciding how, when, and if a person shares this information with others is not just a professional consideration, it is a deeply personal choice. For some, it can be a struggle, especially if a person is recently diagnosed, has a non-visible impairment, a disability that may have a stigma associated with it, or if they have faced discrimination in the past. In consideration of the disability and a person's comfort level with sharing this information with others, the Mass General Brigham System commits to ensuring that all employees can work with OHS and HR to determine if a reasonable accommodation is needed to fulfill their work-related responsibilities in a professional manner and a safe environment.

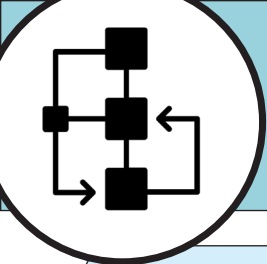
As a general rule, a disability should be disclosed when an impairment is preventing the employee from performing a job-related function, applying for a job, or gaining equal access to a benefit of employment, like a meeting room, cafeteria or other shared spaces.

An individual is not required to disclose specific information about a disability in asking for an accommodation to their manager, such as a diagnosis. However, they do need to specify that a medical condition is affecting their job performance and therefore need an accommodation. A manager cannot decide if an accommodation is reasonable, only OHS and HR can

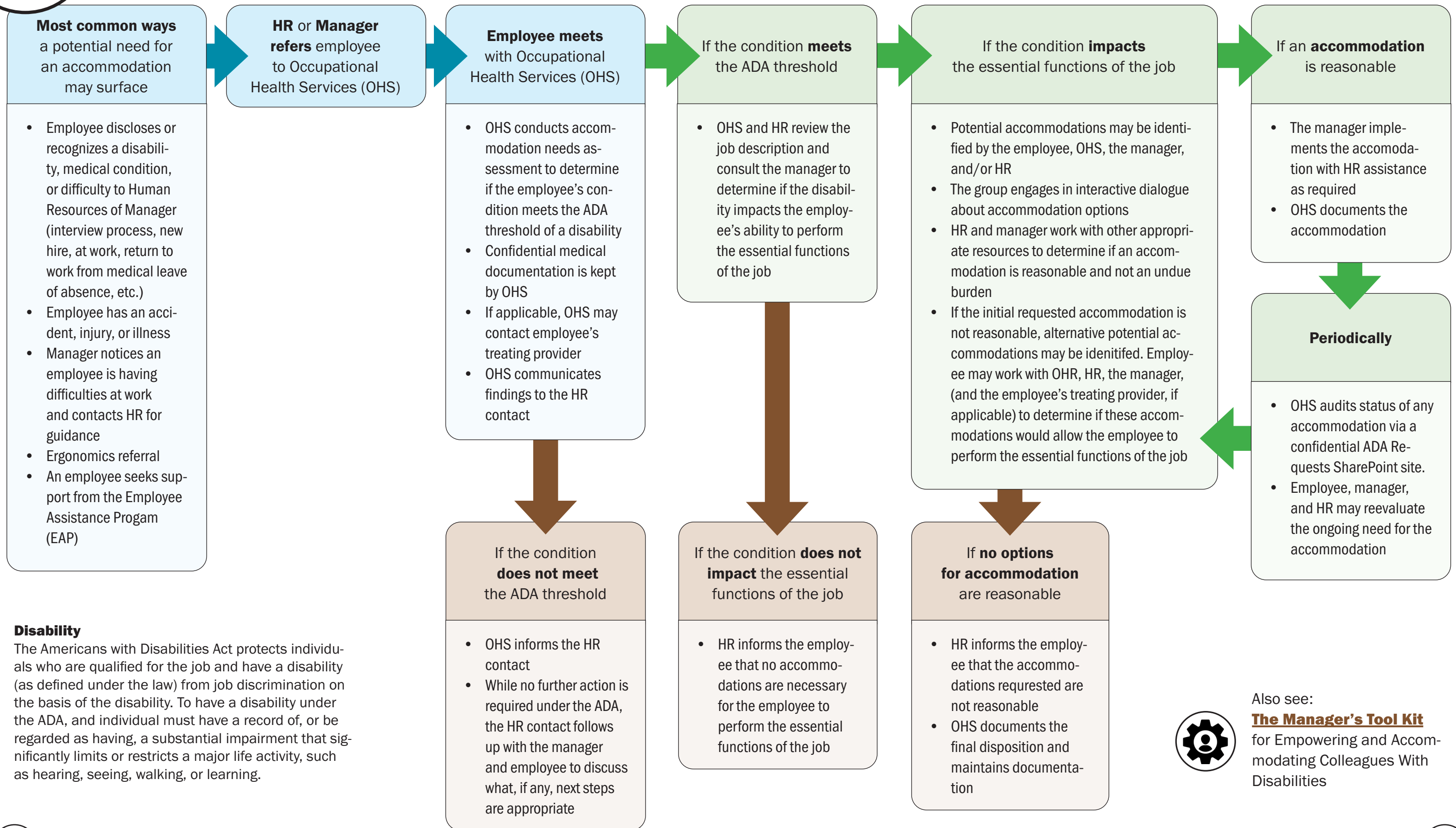
An employee is not required to disclose specific information to their manager, such as a diagnosis, when requesting an accommodation.

consider this request. If an accommodation is needed, an employee should contact OHS directly or work with their manager and their assigned HR Business Partner to contact OHS. OHS will meet with an employee, discuss the process of requesting an accommodation and work with them through this process.

Prior to their employment, most employees who work in the Mass General Brigham System have an **Occupational Health screening** where OHS staff will ask the person if they have a disability which requires an accommodation at work. Mass General Brigham employees and Partner Community Physician Organization employees may not have OHS screenings, so Human Resources should be contacted if an accommodation is requested. Human Resources should refer the employee to OHS if needed. Additionally, with large onboarding employee groups, like Medical Residents, occupational health screening may be done remotely.



4) Process Flow Chart for Processing Accommodation Requests





5) Supporting Our Employees: **Reporting and Confidentiality**

Mass General Brigham's goal is to ensure that **all** employees can bring their **full selves** to work.

Self-Reporting a Disability

A part of an employee being able to fully express their identity is being able to safely disclose if they are a person with a disability within the Mass General Brigham System. Even if their condition does not require an accommodation, Mass General Brigham encourages staff to self-report their disability through PeopleSoft. By confidentially sharing their disability with Mass General Brigham, the organization can have a fuller picture of workforce demographics and the number of employees with a disability working in the system. Moreover, when an employee self-reports a disability, it ensures that Mass General Brigham can better serve our colleagues with disabilities. This information is kept confidential by Human Resources and will not affect employment status. Disclosing a disability through PeopleSoft will not trigger an accommodation request.



Reporting can be done quickly through the **PeopleSoft Employee Self Service**. To access this section of PeopleSoft, log in to follow this path: **Employee Self Service > myDetails > Disability** (from left-hand navigation)

As noted in the "Definitions" section, you are considered to have a disability if you have a physical or mental impairment or medical condition that substantially limits a major life activity, or if you have a history or record of such an impairment or medical condition.

Disabilities include, but are not limited to:

- Blindness or low vision
- Deafness
- Impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair and other assistive mobility devices
- Cerebral palsy
- Cancer
- HIV/AIDS
- Multiple sclerosis
- Diabetes
- Limb differences

Disabilities may include mental health conditions, such as:

- Substance Use Disorder
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Major depression
- Bipolar disorder
- Post-traumatic stress disorder

Confidentiality

The ADA mandates that an employee's medical and disability information be kept confidential and only shared with staff on a "need to know" basis. For example, if an employee's disability is an impairment which requires specific changes in routine or schedule, work space or technology, a supervisor may need to be aware that reasonable accommodations are required for their employee. However, the manager does not need to know the employee's specific impairment or condition. If the impairment is a medical condition, like seizures, which would necessitate staff training or an in-work care plan, a supervisor may need to know the specific disability and how to best provide assistance. However, this does not mean that everyone on the person's team or department "needs to know" about the person's disability.

OHS, the employee and Human Resources, should discuss who "needs to know" prior to any disclosures of an accommodation or disability to a supervisor or colleague(s). This ensures that the employee is fully aware and in control of who knows about their disability.



5) Supporting Our Employees: **Accommodations**



Requesting an Accommodation

Concerns about how and when to request an accommodation are understandable. Under the ADA, a person can request an accommodation at any time during their application process or while they are employed. A person can request an accommodation even if they did not ask for one when applying for a job or after receiving a job offer. A person with a disability is encouraged to request an accommodation, if they feel like their condition is affecting them from successfully accomplishing the responsibilities of their job.

An employee should contact OHS or their HR Business Partner if they have questions about the information presented here within the toolkit. If an employee would like to request an accommodation or needs assistance with obtaining accommodations, OHS and HR can support them in that process. OHS may ask an employee to provide documentation from their health care provider to initiate this interactive process.

If an employee does not want to request an accommodation but would like some guidance or support regarding disability related questions, Mass General Brigham's [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) is well-equipped to provide resources and assistance to staff.

People First Language

The words we use communicate ideas, attitudes and beliefs. Knowing the impact of certain language helps you avoid unintentionally offending someone. “People first” language focuses on the person and not on a disability or some other characteristic or limitation. Notice how these examples are factual and emphasize the whole person:

- Say “a person who is blind” instead of “a blind person”
- Refer to someone as “a person who has cancer” and not “a cancer victim”
- A person is not “confined to a wheelchair” – instead, they “use a wheelchair”

It is a good idea to avoid words and phrases that suggest people are helpless. For example, “suffers from,” “challenged,” and “victim” are to be avoided. It is also very important to address adults with disabilities as you would any other adult. Avoid changing the pitch of your voice or using terms of endearment such as “honey” or “sweetheart.”

“People first” language focuses on the **person** and not on a disability or some other characteristic or limitation.





General Definitions

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.

In the employment setting, the ADA requires reasonable accommodations that are not unduly burdensome to the employer as they relate to three aspects of employment:

1. Ensuring equal opportunity in the application process.
2. Enabling a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of a job.
3. Making it possible for an employee with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment.

Accessibility

Accessibility is an evolving concept: defined as the freedom of choice in entering, approaching, communicating with or making use of a situation. The goal of accessibility is to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life. (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).

Accommodation

An alteration of the environment, curriculum format, process or equipment that allows an individual with a disability to gain access to content and services and/or complete assigned tasks. In a workplace, these modifications may enable an individual with a disability to successfully perform their job tasks to the same extent as people without disabilities. An employer's obligation to provide a reasonable accommodation in the workplace is governed by the ADA and state law

Service Animals

Service Animals are defined by the (ADA) as dogs and miniature horses that are trained to do work or perform tasks to assist individuals with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack.

The work or task a service animal has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Animals whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support and do not perform a task do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.



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Introduction

Disability etiquette is nothing more than ensuring that effective communication and positive interactions occur with everyone you meet. The needs and abilities of people with disabilities vary from person to person, even among individuals who are considered to have a similar type of disability. Some people require no more assistance than anyone else, while others may in fact need some assistance with certain things at certain times. A positive interaction often involves little more than taking a bit of extra time with someone. For example:

- Moving to a quiet place to talk to someone who has a hearing or speech disability
- Arranging an alternative meeting place for someone who uses a wheelchair
- Personally escorting someone who has a visual disability to their meeting location

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Tips for Engaging People With Disabilities

- **Trust your instincts** about offering assistance if you think it will be helpful. **Ask** “Can I assist you?” then let the person take the lead by telling you what they need. **Listen** to them and respond according to their instructions. If they decline assistance, do not insist on helping.
- **Look at** and **speak directly** to an individual with a disability, rather than the person who may happen to be with them.
- **Ask permission** before moving a person’s mobility aids or adaptive devices out of reach.
- Feel free to decline a request if you are not comfortable with it or are not able to comply.
- **Don’t let your fear of doing or saying something “wrong”** prevent you from getting to know a person with a disability. Say “Hello” and engage in the same conversation topic that you would, with any other person.



While our tips apply to all people with disabilities, there are some specific guidelines for interacting with people with learning, mental health, cognitive, vision, hearing, speech, mobility and hidden disabilities as well as with service animals.

1. Learning Disabilities

A learning disability is a neurological condition that may interfere with a person’s ability to store, process, or produce information. Learning disabilities should not be confused with intellectual disabilities, autism, deafness, blindness, and behavioral disorders.

Things to keep in mind when you meet someone who has a learning disability:

- Speak directly to the person and use clear,

concrete, and task-specific language in a normal speaking voice.

- Be patient and flexible. You may need to repeat information more than once or provide written directions or instructions.
- People with dyslexia or other reading disabilities have trouble reading written information. Give verbal explanation or allow extra time for reading.
- If the area is loud and distracting, consider moving to a quieter area



2. **Mental Health Disabilities**

A mental health disability is a medical condition that can disrupt a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning. Mental health disabilities can affect persons of any age, race, religion or income and are not the result of personal weakness, lack of character or poor upbringing. Mental health disabilities are treatable, and recovery is possible.

Things to keep in mind when you meet someone who has a mental health disability:

- Take the necessary time to listen to the person. Be calm and respectful. Be empathetic and flexible.
- Consider moving the conversation to a less crowded and quieter place.
- Stress can affect a person's ability to function. Try to keep the pressure of the situation to a minimum.
- Some people may not use eye contact or may be easily distracted. This should not be interpreted as rude.
- People who have mental health disabilities have different ways of coping with the condition. Treat each person as an individual. Ask what will make him or her most comfortable and respect his or her needs to the maximum extent possible.
- Although rare, if a conversation becomes confrontational, do not escalate, seek assistance. In a crisis, stay calm and be supportive as you would with anyone. Ask how you can help and find out if there is a support person who can be sent for.

A slow response or lack of response does not necessarily mean the person is not aware of you or what you said.

3. **Cognitive or Intellectual Disabilities**

A cognitive or intellectual disability can affect a person's understanding, memory, language, judgment, learning and communication functions. These disabilities include individuals with intellectual disabilities, head injury, strokes, autism, and Alzheimer's disease.

Things to keep in mind when you meet someone who has a cognitive or intellectual disability:

- Offer information in a clear, concise, concrete manner. Added forms of visual communication such as gestures, facial expressions, pictures, diagrams or demonstrations are sometimes helpful.
- If you are not being understood, adjust your method of communicating. For example, demonstrate what you are trying to communicate verbally. When necessary, repeat information using different words or a different form of communication. Allow time



- for the information to be fully understood.
- A slow response or lack of response does not necessarily mean the person is not aware of you or what you said. Allow time for people to process your words, respond slowly or in their own way.
 - Make sure the person understands your message.
 - When offering help, wait until your offer is accepted before doing anything.
 - Do not assume all people can read well or read at all. Use simple pictures or drawings to show instructions.
 - Treat and interact with the person who has an intellectual disability as an adult.



4. Visual Disabilities

There is a wide range of people with vision impairments, from people who are completely unable to see to those who have some limited eyesight. Often, there is no way for a casual observer to determine if someone does, in fact, have a vision impairment. People with vision impairments may or may not wear glasses, have a service animal, or use a cane. Many people feel uncomfortable using certain words around people with a vision impairment. However, you should not worry about that. In everyday conversation it is natural to use words like “look,” “see,” or “watch.” As a matter of fact, many people with vision impairments use these words all the time in their everyday language: “I was watching this show on TV last night...”

Things to keep in mind when you meet someone who has a visual disability:

- When you meet a person using a service animal or cane, make your presence known and identify yourself so they know where and who you are. Speak directly to the individual and do not yell. Also, let them know when you are leaving simply by saying something such as, “It was nice seeing you. I need to be leaving now.”
- Offer assistance. If the offer is declined, do not insist on helping.



- If people want assistance in reaching a destination, ask them what you can do to be most helpful. Many people may want to take your arm or shoulder for guidance. While walking, advise them of any upcoming obstacles or changes in surface level.
- When giving directions, give specific, non-visual information. For example, tell the person to “walk two blocks and then take a left.” Don’t tell them to “walk down to the red brick building and then take a left.”

Just as there is a wide range of hearing loss, individual communication needs **vary** as well.

5. Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Hearing disabilities range from being deaf to people who are hard of hearing. And just as there is a wide range of hearing loss, individual communication needs vary as well: some people may use sign language or read lips; some people use speech; some use hearing aids; some people communicate in writing by hand, while some use technology. There are also people who use pantomime; and others may just need you to speak clearly. The best way to have an effective conversation is to ask how they prefer to communicate. As in all successful communication, there needs to be good eye contact and a well-paced conversation that is both respectful and balanced.

Things to keep in mind when you meet someone who is Deaf or hard of hearing:

- Be prepared with pen and paper but remember that some individuals who have been deaf from birth may never have learned written English.
- If someone is using an interpreter, speak directly to the person, not to the interpreter.

- Do not assume that people can read your lips (aka speech read); this is a skill that is not always easily acquired.
- If a person does speech read, make sure that you face them and that your mouth is not obstructed when you speak.
- Make sure that the communication is understood on both sides; repeat your understanding of the discussion for verification.
- Never pretend that you understand what is being said when you do not. If the communication is technical in nature, or you are having trouble communicating, consider putting the conversation on hold until an interpreter can be secured.
- Be patient. Some individuals may need you to repeat yourself more than once or may need to speak to you in a space without background noise.
- Identifying yourself as a speaker by raising your hand so that the individual can see who is speaking. Each time a new person begins speaking or the speaker changes, raise hand again to identify who is now speaking.



6. Mobility Disabilities

Everyone should assist in ensuring that pathways are accessible as individuals who use a wheelchair or other mobility device may need to use the pathway at any time. An accessible pathway is one that is wide enough for a wheelchair to pass through and is not blocked by chairs, boxes or other items. When you see someone with a mobility disability, do not make any assumptions about that person's ability.

There is a wide range of physical abilities that may require different degrees of assistance. Some people do not use a wheelchair exclusively; they may also use a cane, crutches or a leg brace. There are also other people who do not use any assistive devices but would still be considered to have a mobility disability; for example, someone with a heart condition.

Things to keep in mind when you meet someone with a mobility disability:

- Feel free to ask the person if assistance is needed and how you can be of help. If they decline assistance, do not insist on helping.
- Never lean on, touch, or push a person's wheelchair; it's part of their personal space.
- When giving directions to a person using a wheelchair, consider things such as stairs,



- curbs, and steep hills. Keep accessible entrances, elevators, and parking spaces in mind.
- When giving directions to a person using crutches or a cane, ask if they would prefer the shortest route (which may include stairs) or a route that uses an elevator (but may be further away).
- When accompanying a person who uses a wheelchair, be prepared to point out wheelchair seating or to remove a chair.

7. Non-Visible Disabilities

There are many people with non-visible disabilities that can range from chemical sensitivities to diabetes. Given their situation, they may require some assistance. If a person tells you assistance is needed, do your best to provide it – even if it takes a little extra time.

Service Animals

Guide dogs are working animals and need to stay focused on assisting their owners. It is the service animal's responsibility to keep their owner safe. Unless given explicit permission by the owner, service animals should not be pet.

Things to keep in mind with regards to service or guide dogs:

- People with service animals are allowed to go everywhere that people without service animals go. This includes restaurants, movie theaters, rest rooms and all other locations that may be frequented by members of the public.
- People with service animals are not required to carry any special proof or ID pertaining to the service animal.
- A service animal must be under control by its owner at all times.
- If a person has a guide dog, walk on the side opposite the dog.

The Bottom Line

If you normally greet people with a handshake, greet people with disabilities with a handshake. With your words - and actions - treat people with disabilities just as you would treat anyone else. People with disabilities are people first. What is important to remember is that we are all different and need to be recognized for what we are capable of doing, not for what we may require assistance to accomplish.



7) Disability Resources

Mass General Brigham

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) **Services, Information**

EAP is a voluntary workplace-based consultation, short-term counseling, information and referral program for employees and their household members. Professional, licensed EAP counselors provide private, confidential and safe assistance for all types of work/life, family or personal concerns. EAP services include free, confidential consultations; short-term problem focused counseling and community referrals for treatment or other assistance and is a liaison between the workplace and community resources.

The EAP also provides consultation and training to the workplace regarding the impact and resolution of behavioral/mental health and productivity problems, and it provides consultation and support to workgroups impacted by [critical incidents and adverse medical events](#). Mass General Brigham's EAP demonstrates best practices in providing services, including continuous [quality improvement](#).

Massachusetts General Hospital: Disability Program / **Advocacy, Information, Services**

The MGH Disability Program is part of the Office of Patient Advocacy, providing support and services to patients and visitors with disabilities. The program actively partners with clinicians and other departments, ensuring the highest level of care for patients.

Occupational Health Services (OHS)

OHS provides health care that focuses on the prevention and treatment of health conditions related to work and ensures that individuals are healthy and safe to perform their job activities. OHS also coordinates wellness activities to promote health, wellbeing and productivity. The OHS is part of Workplace Health and Wellness, which also includes Ergonomics and the Workers' Compensation Division.

Local

Access Boston / **Advocacy, Information**

A citywide transportation plan for people with disabilities developed by the Boston Transportation Department.

Boston Center for Independent Living **Advocacy, Services**

BCIL is a non-profit organization that has provided services to people with disabilities since 1974, when it became the second independent living center in the country. The organization was created by people with disabilities seeking full integration into society. BCIL accomplishes this by empowering people of all ages with a wide range of disabilities with the practical skills and self-confidence to take control over their lives and become active members of the communities in which they live. At the same time, BCIL engages in advocacy and community organizing to promote access and change within society.

Easterseals

Advocacy, Services, Information

Easterseals Massachusetts provides essential programs and services to children and adults with disabilities throughout the state. Their mission is to ensure that children and adults with disabilities have equal opportunities to live, learn, work and play.

City of Boston Disabilities Commission

Advocacy, Services, Information

Their mission is to increase opportunities for people with disabilities by facilitating full

and equal participation in all aspects of life within the City of Boston. This includes reducing architectural, procedural, attitudinal, and communication barriers as well as promoting equity in housing, education, employment, transportation, and civic activities.

Disability Law Center / **Advocacy**

The Disability Law Center (DLC) is the Protection and Advocacy agency for Massachusetts. DLC is a private, non-profit organization responsible for providing protection and advocacy for the rights of Massachusetts residents with disabilities. DLC receives federal, state and private funding but is not part of the state or federal government.

Disability Policy Consortium / **Advocacy**

Redefining the role of government as it affects the lives of people with disabilities.

Institute for Human Centered Design

Services, Information

IHCD is committed to advancing the role of design in expanding opportunity and enhancing experience for people of all ages, abilities and cultures through excellence in design.

Perkins School for the Blind

Services, Information

Perkins is a progressive, multi-faceted organization committed to improving the lives of people with blindness and deafblindness all around the world.



7) Disability Resources

State

Massachusetts Commission for the Blind **Advocacy, Information**

MCB provides the highest quality rehabilitation and social services to Massachusetts residents who are blind, leading to their independence and full community participation.

The Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) **Advocacy, Information**

The MCDHH is the principal agency in the Commonwealth on behalf of people of all ages who are Deaf and hard of hearing.

Massachusetts Office on Disability **Advocacy, Information**

The Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) works to ensure the full and equal participation of all people with disabilities in all aspects of life by working to advance legal rights, maximum opportunities, supportive services, accommodations, and accessibility in a manner that fosters dignity and self-determination.

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission **Advocacy, Information**

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) helps individuals with disabilities to live and work independently. MRC is responsible for Vocational Rehabilitation, Community Living and eligibility determination for the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) federal benefits programs.

Work Without Limits **Advocacy, Services, Information**

Founded in 2009, Work Without Limits is a network of engaged employers and innovative, collaborative partners that aims to increase employment among individuals with disabilities. In 2012, Work Without Limits set a 20-year goal to position Massachusetts as the first state in the nation where the employment rate of people with disabilities is equal to people without disabilities. Work Without Limits, a program of UMass Medical School, provides training and consultative services to individuals with disabilities, family members, employ-

National

American Association of People with Disabilities / Advocacy

The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) is a convener, connector, and catalyst for change, increasing the political and economic power of people with disabilities. As a national cross-disability rights organization, AAPD advocates for full civil rights for the over 60 million Americans with disabilities by promoting equal opportunity, economic power, independent living, and political participation.

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) **Advocacy, Information**

For almost 100 years, the ACLU has worked to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of the United States.

Disability:IN **Advocacy, Services, Information**

Disability:IN is a national non-profit that helps business drive performance by leveraging disability inclusion in the workplace, supply chain and marketplace.

Job Accommodation Network **Services, Information**

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is the leading source of free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues. Working toward practical solutions that benefit both employer and employee, JAN helps people with disabilities enhance their employability, and shows employers how to capitalize on the value and talent that people with disabilities add to the workplace.

Office of Disability Employment Policy **Advocacy**

To develop and influence disability employment-related policies and practices, ODEP sponsors the following four policy development and technical assistance resources.

Mass General Brigham
OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

