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Every employee deserves to feel included and have the accessibility resources that they need to do their best work, whether they have a disability or not. For employees with a disability, employers need to provide reasonable accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). It is not only the right thing to do, but it will often benefit other employees on your team.

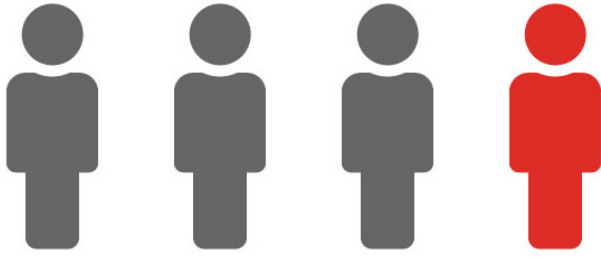
What is Disability?

Disability isn't just about a diagnosis. According to the [World Health Organization](#), "disability results from the interaction between individuals with a health condition, such as cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, and depression, with personal and environmental factors including negative attitudes, inaccessible transportation and public buildings,

and limited social support." Disability is quite diverse, and can be related to physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental health conditions. This covers things like hearing or vision loss, anxiety, autism, ADHD, chronic illness, and other health diagnoses. Creating a more supportive, accessible environment helps reduce these barriers and creates more opportunity for everyone.

The Gap Between Disability and Disclosure

You won't always know whether an employee has a disability. While about [1 in 4 employees identify as having a disability](#), most organizations report that only 1 in 25 employees have disclosed one. Many people choose not to disclose, and many disabilities aren't immediately visible.



Whether you're a supervisor or a team member, you play a role in fostering a culture where discussing disabilities and requesting accommodations feels safe and supported.

Apparent Vs. Non-Apparent

Apparent disabilities are more easily recognized, such as when a person uses a cane to navigate their environment due to vision loss. Non-apparent disabilities are harder to identify. These can include mental health conditions like depression or anxiety; neurodivergent conditions such as autism, ADHD, or dyslexia; and chronic illnesses like diabetes, asthma, lupus, or multiple sclerosis.

Supporting Employees with Non-Apparent Disabilities

According to *The Anti-Ableist Manifesto* by Tiffany Yu, here are six strategies to support people with non-apparent disabilities:

1. If someone reveals a disability or tells you more about it, affirm them by saying, "I didn't know that; thank you for telling me."
2. Proactively ask people, "Do you have what you need to fully participate?"
3. When you offer support, do not expect or demand that the person disclose their disability or give you the full details.
4. Rethink and reimagine what acceptable styles of working and socializing look like to you and allow space for a diversity of behaviors.
5. Check in when you make plans with others to see if your plans work for them.

6. Constantly build your awareness and make an effort to understand what people with non-apparent disabilities go through.

It is important to support all workers with disabilities. Ask if they have what they need to do their best work; be flexible and willing to try something new or different. Check back regularly to see if any adjustments are needed. Finally, continue to be curious about how you can best support your employees with disabilities.



LOOKING FOR MORE RESOURCES?

The Village EAP provides specific resources that are catered to supervisors, such as **Crisis Management Services, Formal and Informal Referral Help, Training Solutions, and more!**

**Not finding what you need?
Give us a call at **800.627.8220!****

To search through an A-to-Z list of Disabilities, Accommodations, and Related Topics, visit the Job Accommodations Network (JAN) website at askjan.org.