

# National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Part of the Equity Equation

October 19, 2022





## Goals for today

Learn workplace strategies that foster inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of employment.

# What is a disability?

- A disability is an impairment or condition (physical or mental) that can significantly limit a major life activity, or you have a history of record of such condition, you could have a disability
- A condition which impacts how you interact with and/or perceive your environment
- Being perceived by others as having such a condition

# Examples of types of disabilities

## **Mobility Disabilities**

Multiple Sclerosis, Cerebral Palsy, back injury, etc.

## **Sensory Disabilities**

Blind, Deaf, Deafblind, Hard of Hearing

## **Mental/Behavioral Health Disabilities**

Depression, Anxiety, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, etc.

## **Speech Disabilities**

Stuttering, Aphasia, etc.

# Examples of types of disabilities

## **Cognitive disabilities**

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability, Autism, ADHD

## **Respiratory disabilities or Chemical Sensitivities**

COPD, Asthma, etc.

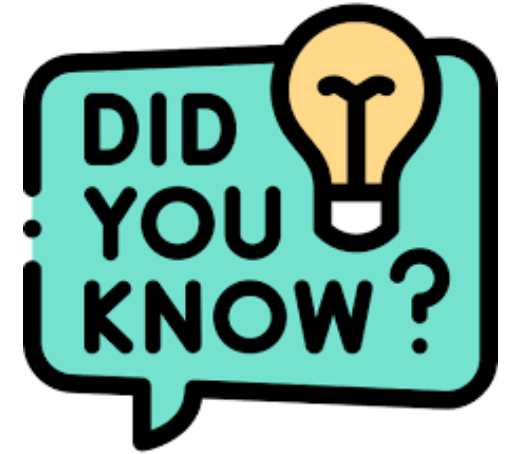
## **Non-Apparent or hidden disabilities**

Mental Health Disability, Epilepsy, ADHD, etc.

# Did You Know That People with Disabilities have?

## National Statistics from 2021

- **Population:** 13.4% - people with disabilities
- **No High School diploma:** 16.4% - youth with disabilities, 7.3% - youth without disabilities
- **Bachelor's Degree +:** 19% - people with disabilities, 41.9% - people without disabilities
- **Employed:** 38.4% - people with disabilities, 75.8% - people without disabilities
- **Annual Earnings:** \$41,716- people with disabilities, \$50,264 - people without disabilities
- **Living in Poverty:** 25.2% - people with disabilities, 11.1% - people without disabilities



[Annual Report for  
Disability Compendium  
2021](#)



# Washington State Data on Disability

- 529,586 (ages from 18-64) are people with disabilities in WA, and the total number of people with disabilities
- Total number of Washingtonians being reported as a person with a disability in 2021 is 1,035,051 -13.6%
- 25.5 %(ages from 18-64) people with disabilities in WA are living in poverty
- Assuming if approx. 65,000 Washington state worker with a disability disclosed, there would be approx. 7,000 state employees with a disability
- Only 3% of state workers disclose their disability
- Washington State ranks 20<sup>th</sup> employing people with disabilities



[2021 Annual Disability  
Compendium](#)

# State HR Management Report Highlights for People with Disabilities:

- People with disabilities are retiring at of those without a disability those with at 4.9% retirement rate compared to those without at 2.6%.
- Self reporting a disability in the Executive branch increased from 3.0% in year 2019 to 3.3% in 2020. **However, the state is still falling short of the 5% target in Executive Order 13-02.**
- Agencies should ensure their recruitment and retention plans include a specific focus on ensuring fair access and inclusion of people with disabilities.
- Agencies should create a safe and inclusive environment so that employees feel safe to disclose their disabilities





## Inclusive Interviewing Practices for People with Disabilities

# How to Recruit More Inclusively

- Participate in career fairs targeting individuals with disabilities, including veterans with disabilities
- Engage current employees or an employee resource group (ERG) or business resource groups (BRG) as referral sources and ask for referrals who would make good job candidates
- Include employees with disabilities on company recruitment teams
- Leverage resources that identify job applicants with disabilities, including databases of individuals with disabilities who previously applied to the company but were not hired



Questions to consider asking yourself about your screening and reviewing process include:

- Is your online application process accessible and can individuals with disabilities easily access it? How do you know?
- Are certain requirements truly required (e.g., is a valid driver's license really needed)
- Is **lived experience** included and valued in the screening and interviewing processes
- Have you sought feedback from individuals with a disability about your application and interview process?



# Tips For More Accessible Interviewing

- Offer topics and questions ahead of time
- Incorporate examples of work, projects, and hands on tasks into questions
- Allow for a pre-interview orientation session
- Limit the number of interview questions
- Ask the candidate how they can perform certain tasks



# Things to Consider When Interviewing

- Neurodiverse candidates may take longer to consider how to answer questions
  - Neurodiverse people do not always follow social norms adjust your expectations
- Candidates with speech-related disabilities may need questions phrased so that short answers can be given.
  - An example of this might start with a closed-ended question, and then followed up by a more open question to get more detail



**To learn more please check out [Disability Inclusion Network Inclusive Recruitment and Interviewing Guide.pdf](#)**

# Scenarios, Etiquette, and Awareness Tips,



# Example Scenario

*Mark brings his service dog to work everyday. Jenny, who is a dog lover, starts bringing in dog treats and often crouches down to talk with Mark's service dog. Mark's dog is working and needs to focus.*

What could be done differently?



# Awareness Tips – Service Animals

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- A service dog is working and is focused on completing tasks for its owner
- Service dogs are not required to wear vests or harnesses that identifies them as a service dog according to the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Do not touch the dog without permission of the user



# Awareness Tips – Sensory Disabilities

**Blind or Low Vision**

1

Verbally identify yourself when you approach the person with a visual disability

2

Offer a guided tour of the workplace with descriptive directions.

3

Provide work-related materials in accessible formats, and send materials out at least a week to three days in advance

# Example employee scenario

**Scenario 1:** *Tom and his interpreter, Joe, are introduced to Sue, an employee from a different unit. Sue says while looking at Joe, “tell him it is nice to meet him.”*

What could be done differently?

**Scenario 2:** *Mary responds to a question asked by Sue. Sue, while looking down at a piece of paper, says something back. Mary explains she is Hard of Hearing and needs to read lips. Sue responds in a very loud voice, “Oh I’m so sorry for you. Never mind, I will talk to someone else.”*

What could be done differently?

# Awareness Tips – Sensory Disabilities Deafblind



1

People who are Deafblind will often need touch (hands allow people who are Deafblind to have access to objects, people, and language that would otherwise be inaccessible to them) to communicate or explore their surroundings

2

Adaptive or assistive technology can be used to enable an individual to do their job

3

Provide a tour of the work site and be sure to conduct safety planning

# Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- When appropriate, provide a qualified sign-language interpreter, CART captioning service, or training videos that are captioned
- Invite co-workers who are deaf or hard of hearing to your social events
- Maintain eye contact and direct your communication to the person who is Deaf when using a sign-language interpreter



# Example Scenario

*Shanda is interviewing for a job. She does not shake the interviewer's hand and makes no eye contact with the interviewer. The interviewer tells their manager Shanda will not be a good fit because she is disrespectful in that she does not shake hands or make eye contact.*

What could be done differently?



# Awareness Tips – Cognitive Disabilities

- Do not assume because they have a cognitive disability that they are not intelligent. Types of cognitive disabilities such as;
  - ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia, and Down Syndrome
- Ask if they prefer verbal or written communications or a combination of methods for training and work situations
- Speak directly to the individual not their companion





# Awareness Tips - Respiratory Disabilities

- Commonly used office products can trigger a reaction for someone with a respiratory disability or chemical sensitivity.
- Encourage employees to use fragrance-free products and to discontinue wearing colognes and perfumes.
- An employee with a chemical sensitivity may need an accommodation that requires a scent free zone.
- For more information or an example of a fragrance-free policy see [WAC 110-300-0240](https://www.wa.gov/legislative/rulemaking/wac-110-300-0240)



# Example Scenario

*Larry was set to give a presentation to his team about a new project. When it came time to do it, Larry's anxiety kicked in and he left the boardroom without saying anything. His supervisor wondered why Larry let everyone down and questioned his upcoming promotion.*

What could be done differently?

# Awareness Tips – Mental Health Conditions and other Non-apparent Disabilities

- Avoid stereotypes and assumptions about how an individual may act
- Allow the individual time to think and answer questions
- In a crisis, stay calm and be a support
- Allow extra time for the person to process what's being said and to respond in interviews and in meetings
- Sponsor awareness-building and anti-stigma campaigns



# Don'ts

- Do not assume a person cannot function on their own or perform a task
- Do not touch, play or distract a service animal without permission
- Do not lean on a person's mobility device
- Do not elevate your speech when interacting with people who have disabilities.



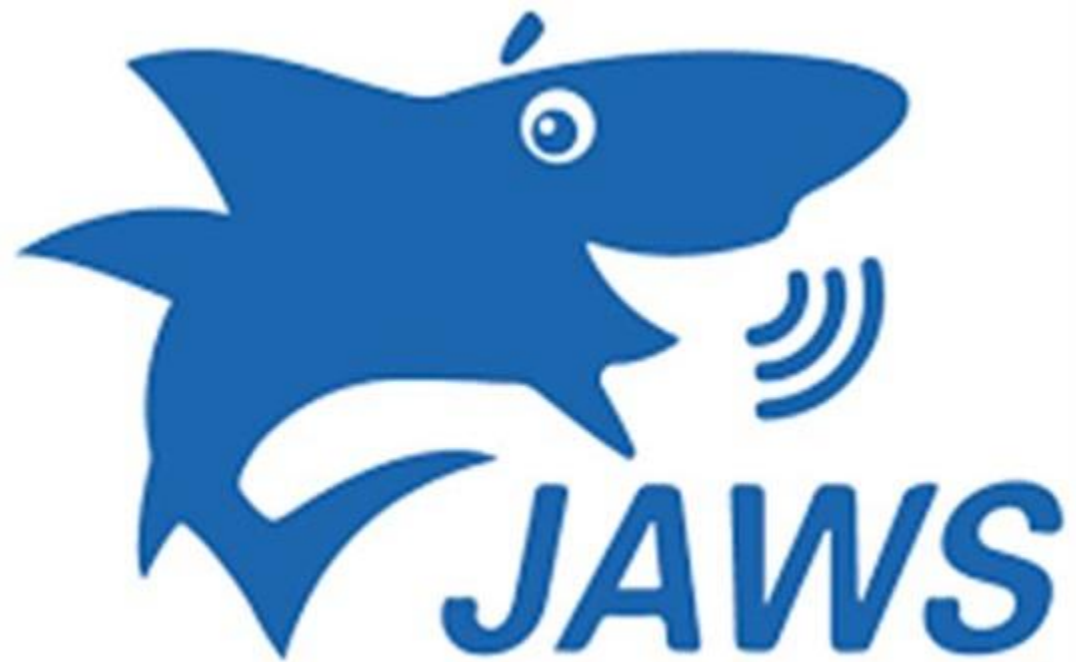
# Do's

- Do ensure that your offices spaces, agency social event venues are accessible
- Talk directly with the person and not to their interpreter
- Use “people first” language, like “a person with a disability, or “identity first” I have Autism
- However, please ask to ensure what the person prefers
- Only mention disability if it is essential to a conversation





## Inclusive Virtual Meeting



Employer is  
planning a virtual  
meeting for their unit  
– **to be inclusive**  
**what should they**  
**do?**

### Prepare and Practice

- Learn the virtual meeting platform (i.e., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WebEx). Practice using its accessibility features.
- Locate accessibility resources in advance





# Virtual Meeting Planning, continued

## Captioning benefits

- Captioning aids in comprehension and focus for all not just participants with low vision
- The transcript option is effective for screen readers
- Using CART is preferred for accuracy



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Communication  
Access Real-  
Time  
Translation



# Virtual Meeting Planning

## Handle Accommodations

- Include how to request accommodations in the meeting announcement
- Sign Language Interpreters
- CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation) . Do not rely on automated captions.
- Distribute materials before meeting for screen reading software and those with cognitive and non-apparent disabilities

# Virtual Meeting Planning, continued

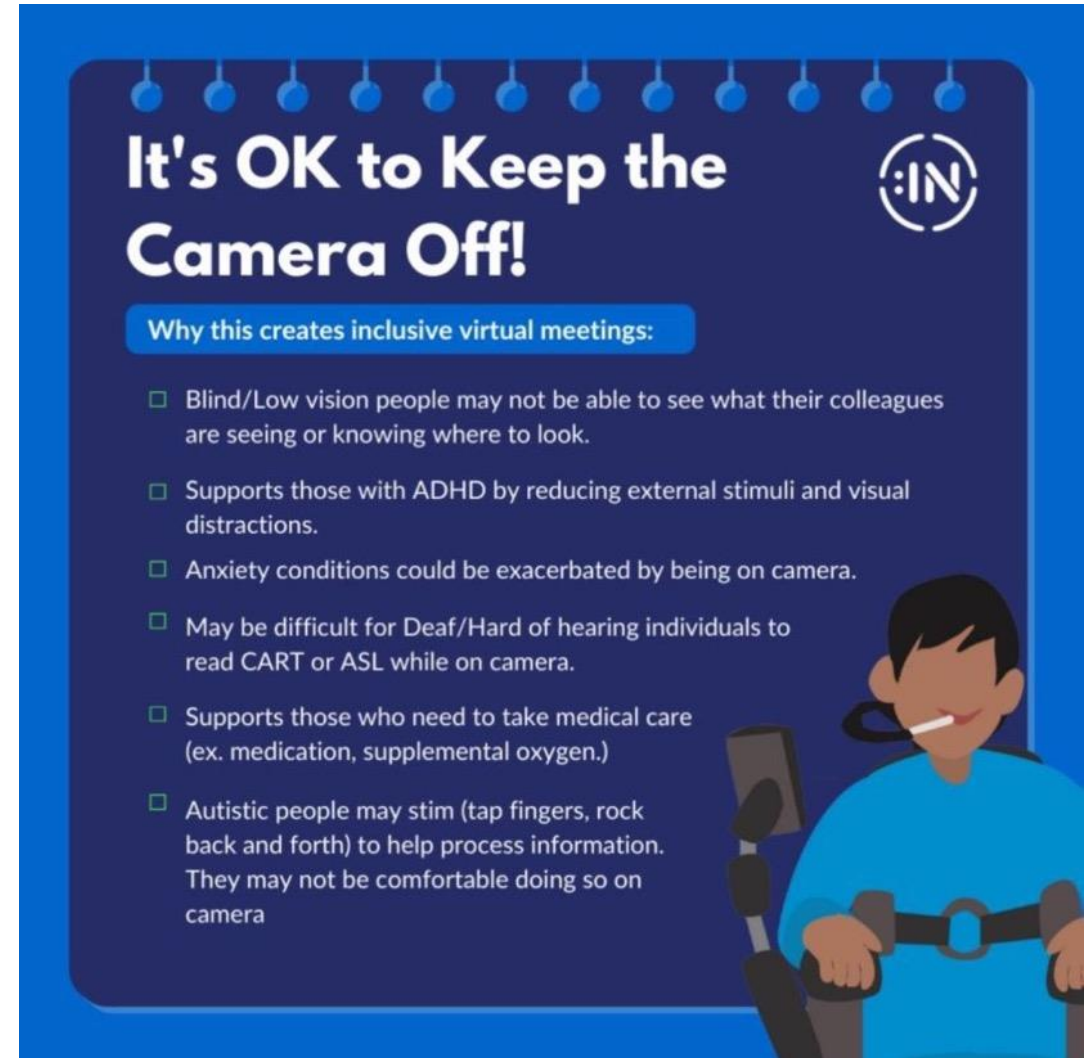



## Meeting conduct and content

- Documents in Accessible or Alternative Format
- Decide meeting details - use the sample checklist in the resource, [\*Tips and Tricks for Inclusive Virtual Meeting Planning\*](#)
- Assign Roles (Host, Moderator, Note Taker, Technical Support, Chat Monitor etc.)
- Check in with attendees before the meeting and during

# Friendly Reminder


- Blind/low vision people may not be able to see what their colleagues are seeing or knowing where to look
- Supports those with ADHD by reducing external stimuli and visual distractions
- Anxiety Conditions would be exacerbated by being on camera
- May be difficult for Deaf/Hard of hearing individuals to read CART or ASL while on camera
- Autistic people may stim without judgment
- Supports those who need to take medical care



**It's OK to Keep the Camera Off!** 

**Why this creates inclusive virtual meetings:**

- ❑ Blind/Low vision people may not be able to see what their colleagues are seeing or knowing where to look.
- ❑ Supports those with ADHD by reducing external stimuli and visual distractions.
- ❑ Anxiety conditions could be exacerbated by being on camera.
- ❑ May be difficult for Deaf/Hard of hearing individuals to read CART or ASL while on camera.
- ❑ Supports those who need to take medical care (ex. medication, supplemental oxygen.)
- ❑ Autistic people may stim (tap fingers, rock back and forth) to help process information. They may not be comfortable doing so on camera



# Inclusive Workplace Strategies

- Make an agency commitment to include persons with disabilities in all level of decision making
- Educate staff about disabilities, accessibility, and inclusion
- Form a disability employee resource group
- Ensure accessible facilities and services
- Provide reasonable accommodations to potential employs through all the stages of recruitment and current employees with disabilities

**EVERYONE is**



**WELCOME!**





# Summary

- Ask your employee how you can best accommodate them
- One solution does not fit all

# Resources

- **Inclusive Recruitment and Interview Guide \*New\***– Provides an overview of what a disability is, the ADA, reasonable accommodations, unconscious biases, recruitment, screening candidates, interviewing tips, and resources: [Disability Inclusion Network Inclusive Recruitment and Interviewing Guide.pdf](#)
- **Disability Inclusion in the Workplace\*New\***– Informs about a variety of apparent and non-apparent disabilities and answers many questions about etiquette and language: [DIN Disability Inclusion in the Workplace.pdf](#)
- **Hosting an Inclusive Virtual Meeting** – Discusses how to make sure virtual meetings are inclusive for people with visual, hearing, mental/learning, and physical disabilities: [DIN's Guide to Inclusive Virtual Meeting Planning.pdf](#)
- [Disability Data from Social Security](#)



# Questions

## Contact us

- DIN email: [din@ofm.wa.gov](mailto:din@ofm.wa.gov)
- DIN web (new): <http://www.dinbrg.org/>

