

Disability Defined

dis·a·bil·i·ty

Disability results from the interaction between an individual's health condition or impairment and environmental and attitudinal factors (such as inaccessible technology, social stigmas, or building barriers)

Disability Examples

- Physical/Mobility
- Blind/Low Vision
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Sleep Disorders
- Speech Disabilities
- Anxiety Disorders
- Autism
- ADHD
- Epilepsy
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Post Traumatic Stress
- HIV/AIDS
- Chronic Migraines
- Chronic Illness
- Mental Health
- *And More!*

Disability Statistics

75%

of disabilities are non-apparent.

(Source: [U.S. Census \(non-apparent disability estimate\)](#))



~15-20%

An estimated 15–20% of the global population is neurodivergent.

(Source: [Northwestern Medicine](#))



15%

of working-age adults live with a mental health condition.

(Source: [World Health Organization, Lyra Health](#))



~40%

By 2040, up to 40% of the global workforce is expected to identify as neurodivergent.

(Source: [Everway](#))



Medical Model: *Emphasis on individual's limitations*



United States Definitions	<p>In the US, there is no single, universal definition of disability; instead, disability is defined differently depending on the legal, programmatic, or data-collection purpose for which it is used.</p> <p>Federal and state definitions typically focus on limitations and intentionally tailor definitions to align with their specific objectives—such as civil rights protection (ADA), eligibility for benefits (Social Security Disability Insurance and Department of Veterans Affairs), public health surveillance (CDC), or population measurement (US Census Bureau's American Community Survey)—resulting in distinct but overlapping definitions.</p> <p>The definitions focus solely on health conditions and individual limitations without accounting for the fact that many limitations arise because society is designed without keeping the needs of individuals with disabilities in mind.</p>
United Nations Definition	<p>Disability is defined as persons who have long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.</p>
World Health Organization Definition	<p>A disability is any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions).</p>
Definitions Across Multiple Countries	<p>The EU Member States treat disability as a matter of equality, participation, and non-discrimination, not diagnosis. Countries including Canada, Australia, Norway, Iceland also have definitions or policies that emphasize universal design, participation, and structural responsibility, rather than individual impairment.</p> <p>Check out our Global Directory for more information on disability definitions in each Country.</p>

Social Model: *Emphasis on society's limitations*

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