



**WESTERN CAPE
ASSOCIATION FOR
PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES**
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Sources

UN Convention on the
Rights of Persons with
Disabilities

WHO World Report on
Disability

NCPPDSA Train-the-
Trainer programme

adding
value
to
lives

Focus on... Overview on disability

What is a disability?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that

"Persons with disabilities include those 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."

An impairment is defined as a significant deviation or loss in body function or structure.

Who are persons with disabilities?

The World Health Organisation's recently released World Report on Disability states that approximately 15% of the world's population has a disability. In South Africa this is calculated as 7,5 million people, or 1 in every 6 persons.

What are the types of disabilities?

Physical

A person with a physical disability is not able to execute distinctive activities associated with movement, both the person himself and objects. Such immobility, resulting from disorder of the muscular or skeletal system, may include disability resulting from congenital conditions, injury or disease, e.g. spinal cord injury, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida, stroke, cerebral palsy, amongst others.

Sensory

Hearing

- Mild : a person can perceive sounds below 50 decibels.
- Moderate : a person can perceive sounds between 50 to 70 decibels.
- Severe : a person can only perceive sounds above 71 decibels.

This is further divided into pre-lingual and post-lingual (hearing loss which occurs before or after the acquisition of speech (Afrikaans, English, Xhosa etc).

Sight

Low vision : Visual acuity of between 6/24 (20/70) and 6/60 in the better eye after correction.

Blindness : Visual acuity of less than 6/60 in the better eye after correction or a visual field of less than 10 degrees.

Intellectual

Intellectual disability is a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior, which covers many everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18 and results from -

- Brain injury or infection before, during or after birth
- Growth or nutrition problems
- Faulty chromosomes and genes;
- Health problems during childhood
- Drug misuse during pregnancy, including excessive alcohol intake and smoking;
- A range of medical disorders

Psychiatric

Mental illness which significantly interferes with the performance of major life activities, such as learning, working and communicating. This typically includes anxiety and mood disorders.

Are persons with disabilities able to be independent?

Many persons with disabilities are able to function independently, but those with severe disabilities may find that they require assistance. In extreme cases, the person may not be able to live alone, or obtain work outside of a protective environment, but this is not the norm.

Are persons with disabilities any different to me?

No! Persons with disabilities are persons first—their disability comes second. They also have feelings, emotions and dreams and want to be accepted for who they are inside, not what they look like.

Who provides support to persons with disabilities?

Many non-profit organisations can assist. You are welcome to contact Western Cape APD to find your nearest APD office.