

# International Day of Persons with Disabilities

## REFLECTION WORKBOOK

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December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023



Curated by the ICES EDI Committee  
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# 1 BACKGROUND

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International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1992. Since then, this important day has been recognized annually on December 3<sup>rd</sup> around the world. The purpose of the IDPD is to "promote an understanding of disability issues and to mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities." ([United Nations](#))

This workbook is split into five sections thematically: Ableism, language, invisible disabilities, accessibility at ICES, and allyship and research. We invite you to reflect on these topics using the resources and reflection questions below, as well as to download a copy and use the space provided to note down your personal reflections. Please note that this is a non-exhaustive and introductory workbook intended to prompt self-reflection and discussion. We encourage you to continue on your own learning journey beyond the resources provided here – not only on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, but every day.

Special thanks to Drs. Hilary Brown and Yona Lunsky for their support in the development of this workbook. In addition, we want to sincerely thank Elizabeth (Public Advisory Council Member) for sharing her expertise and experience with us.

With gratitude,  
The EDI Committee

## 2 ABLEISM

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### Resources:

- a) [Intro to Disability & Intersectionality](#)
- b) [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Practice: Ableism and Accessibility](#)

### Reflect & Discuss:

- Reflect on the meanings of *ableism* and *accessibility*. Can you think of an example of ableism you have witnessed or personally experienced? What about an example of someone (a colleague, friend, or organization) embodying what it means to be accessible?
- Complete the module above on Ableism and Accessibility and share one key learning with a colleague or your team.

# 3 LANGUAGE

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## Resources:

- a) [Disability Language Guide \(Stanford Disability Initiative Board\)](#)
- b) [The Evolution of Disability Language: Choosing Terms to Describe Disability](#)

## Reflect & Discuss:

- Some people can feel very uncomfortable about offending someone or getting it wrong when talking about disability. Are there things you ignore or shy away from when it comes to aspects of disability or the language you use for fear of offending someone? What are some key takeaways from these resources that you can apply to your language going forward?
- As the second resource above states, “person-first language places the person before the disability (e.g., ‘person with autism’ or ‘person with spinal cord injury’)” and “identity-first language, sometimes referred to as disability-first language, places the disability first in phrasing (e.g., ‘disabled person,’ ‘autistic person,’ or ‘amputee’)” (Erin E. Andrews, Robyn M. Powell, Kara Ayers). Reflect on the history and purpose of person-first vs. identity-first language styles, keeping in mind that different people have different preferences.

## 4 INVISIBLE DISABILITIES

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### Resources:

- a) “During my active teaching career at the University of Victoria, in course outlines I always included a brief paragraph explaining I had a hearing disability and asking students to bear with me. I then said a few words about the many people living with invisible disabilities, and the importance of being kind. Without exception, after every single class one or more students thanked me, disclosing they too had invisible disabilities—everything from debilitating autoimmune diseases to substance use struggles.” (Elizabeth, Public Advisory Council Member)
- b) [Invisible Disabilities \(AMI: Accessible Media Inc.\)](#)

### Reflect & Discuss:

- Reflect on the quote above. It is important to sign post that you care about being accessible in your work, whatever the topic and whoever the team. How comfortable are you doing this?
- Are there opportunities in your day-to-day work to be more mindful of invisible disabilities? What impact might this have on your colleagues and organizational culture at ICES?

# 5 ACCESSIBILITY AT ICES

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## Resources:

- a) [Creating Inclusive Workplaces for All | Catarina Rivera](#)
- b) [Creating Accessible Content](#) & [Accessibility Features and Tools](#)

## Reflect & Discuss:

- What can we be more mindful of when participating in or hosting meetings to ensure they are accessible to all?
- What specific tools can you implement to make your day-to-day work and interactions more inclusive and accessible? Discuss with your team and propose at least one action to implement going forward.

## 6 ALLYSHIP AND RESEARCH

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### Resources:

- a) [Health Equity in Focus Speaker Series: Dr. Hilary Brown & Laurie Proulx](#)
- b) [Inclusive Research with Dr. Yona Lunsky | Podcast on Spotify](#)

### Reflect & Discuss:

- Sometimes we make assumptions about who would be interested in our work or what they would understand. In your work, can you think about assumptions you might make about disability?
- Visit the ICES [Community Engagement](#) intranet page to better understand why community engagement is an essential part of being an ally when doing research. Share any insights or learnings with your team.

# 7 RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

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## REFERENCES:

- [Accessibility Features and Tools, MSFTEnable](#)
- [Creating Accessible Content, MSFTEnable](#)
- [Creating Inclusive Workplaces for All, Catarina Rivera](#)
- [Community Engagement, ICES Public Engagement & Knowledge Translation Team](#)
- [Disability Language Guide, Stanford Disability Initiative Board](#)
- [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Practice, Experiential Learning Hub, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching \(TMU\)](#)
- [Erin E. Andrews, Robyn M. Powell, Kara Ayers, \*The evolution of disability language: Choosing terms to describe disability\*, Disability and Health Journal, Volume 15, Issue 3, 2022](#)
- [Health Equity in Focus Speaker Series, Dr. Hilary Brown & Laurie Proulx](#)
- [Inclusive Research with Dr. Yona Lunsky, IDD: Get to know me \(Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre\)](#)
- [Intro to Disability + Intersectionality, The Disability Services Center at UCI](#)
- [Invisible Disabilities, AMI: Accessible Media Inc.](#)
- [2023 International Day Of Persons With Disabilities \(IDPD\), Division for Inclusive Social Development, United Nations](#)

## FURTHER READING:

- [Being Heumann: An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist by Judith Heumann](#)
- [Demystifying Disability: What to Know, What to Say, and How to Be an Ally by Emily Ladau](#)
- [Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories from the Twenty-first Century by Alice Wong](#)
- [Far from the Tree: Parents, Children, and the Search for Identity by Andrew Solomon](#)
- [The Pretty One: On Life, Pop Culture, Disability, and Other Reasons to Fall in Love With Me by Keah Brown](#)
- [Sitting Pretty: The View from My Ordinary Resilient Disabled Body by Rebekah Taussig](#)
- [We're Not Broken: Changing the Autism Conversation by Eric Garcia](#)