

digital toolkit

fishers disability
awareness month



How to Be An Ally for Disability Inclusion

What is an Ally?

Ally – (verb) - to associate or connect by some mutual relationship, as resemblance or friendship.

The Anti-Oppression Network defines an allyship as “an active, consistent and arduous practice of unlearning and reevaluating, in which a person of privilege seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalized group of people.”

In summary, an ally is someone who supports the cause of a marginalized group and uses their privilege to learn from that group and amplify their cause.

How Can I Be an Ally for Disability Inclusion?

- Educate yourself
 - Check out the statistics below to learn more.
 - Read through our Ally Language Guide & FAQ and integrate these behaviors into your everyday life.
 - Actively listen, and don't be afraid to ask questions.
- Treat people with disabilities with respect, and don't use condescending language.
- Avoid making assumptions about someone's disability. Realize every disability is on a spectrum.
- Don't be afraid to intervene if you observe discriminatory behavior. Be an advocate.
- Be prepared to make mistakes and learn from them. Be open to changing your behavior.

What Else Can I Do?

- Join us for our virtual Fishers Disability Awareness Month [events](#).
- Take the [Ally Pledge](#).
- Download our [ally digital toolkit](#) and utilize these resources to show your support. Show your support on social media using #FishersDisabilityAwareness.
- Show your support with ally t-shirts, stickers, yard signs, and more. These kits are available on a first-come, first-served basis beginning March 1 in the Fishers City Hall breezeway (1 Municipal Drive) Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Educate Yourself

According to the [CDC](#):

- 61 million adults in the United States live with a disability. That is 26%, or 1 in 4 adults.
- 2 in 5 adults ages 65 and older have a disability.
- 1 in 4 women have a disability.
- 2 in 5 non-Hispanic, American Indians/Alaska Natives have a disability.
- 1 in 3 adults with disabilities, ages 18 to 44 years, do not have a usual health care provider.
- 1 in 3 adults with disabilities, ages 18 to 44 years, have an unmet healthcare need because of cost in the past year.

- 13.7 percent of people with a disability have a mobility disability with serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs.
- 10.8 percent of people with a disability have a cognition disability with serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions.
- About 1 in 54 children has been identified with [autism spectrum disorder](#) (ASD) according to estimates from CDC's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) [Network Stats on Disabilities](#).

According to the [2018 US Disability Status Report by Cornell University](#):

- Employment rates in Indiana for people without disabilities was 81.6% in 2018, while the rate for individuals with disabilities was 36.9%.
- 27.9% of individuals with a disability were living below the poverty line in Indiana in 2018, compared to 9.8% of individuals without a disability.

Thank you for being an ally!

Language Guide & FAQ

- **Use people-first language**
 - The person should come before the disability. Instead of “disabled person”, use “person with a disability.” Some individuals in the autism community have embraced terms like autistic, referred to as [Identity-First language](#). While person-first language has long been the standard, it's okay to ask which type of language is preferred.
- **Avoid condescending language**
 - Terms like “challenged,” “special,” “handi-capable,” and “differently-abled” are condescending. Avoid sensationalist language and labeling people with disabilities as inspirational or brave, or someone who should be pitied.
- **Don't define a person by their disability**
 - Avoid terms such as “wheelchair bound,” “confined,” or “suffers from.”
- **Use “disability” instead of “handicap”**
 - Avoid the term “handicapped” to describe a person with a disability, or when referring to something like accessible seating or parking.
- **Avoid comparative language**
 - Avoid words like “normal,” “typical,” “healthy,” or “able-bodied” when referring to someone without a disability.
- **Don't use patient terms in normal conversations**
 - It's only appropriate to refer to someone with a disability as a patient if the conversation is in a medical setting.
- **Avoid offensive terms in all situations**
 - Words like “freak,” “psycho,” “spaz,” “crazy,” “imbecile,” and “retard” are offensive, hurtful, and derogatory.
- **Don't be afraid to ask**

- If someone is willing, ask them how they wish for you to refer to (or not refer to) their disability, and what their disability is like for them because all disabilities are on a spectrum.

FAQ:

- **What is considered a disability?**
 - The [ADA](#) defines a person with a disability as “a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.”
- **What is ableism?**
 - According to the [Center for Disability Rights](#), ableism is “a set of beliefs or practices that devalue and discriminate against people with physical, intellectual, or psychiatric disabilities and often rests on the assumption that disabled people need to be ‘fixed’ in one form or the other.”
- **How should I interact with someone with a disability?**
 - Relax! Don’t be afraid to ask questions and remember that they are not defined by their disability.
- **Should I offer to shake hands?**
 - Yes! If someone is unable to shake hands, still greet them with a smile and a hello.
- **How do I speak to someone in a wheelchair?**
 - Make eye contact and focus on the person, not the wheelchair or a caregiver. If the conversation lasts more than a few minutes, find a place to sit to get on the same eye-level as the person who uses the wheelchair. Do not hang, lean, or touch someone’s wheelchair unless invited to do so.
- **How do I communicate with a person with hearing loss?**
 - Face the person directly and keep your hands away from your face. Speak distinctly and slowly, but don’t shout. If the person has trouble understanding a phrase or word, find a different way of saying the same thing instead of repeating yourself. If the individual is using an interpreter, be sure to speak to the person instead of their interpreter.
- **How should I interact with someone who is blind?**
 - Greet the individual verbally and identify yourself and others who may be with you. It’s okay to offer assistance with navigating, but don’t assume the individual needs help.
- **Can I pet a service animal?**
 - No, you should not pet or play with a service animal.
- **Is it ok to use accessible parking spots if I don’t have a disability?**
 - You should never use parking spots intended for people with disabilities.