

ADA Access  
and Public  
Entities  
Past, Present,  
future!

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# A brief History: People with Disabilities

- Americans with disabilities are a group of approximately 40.7 million people that today striving to lead independent, self-affirming lives and who define themselves according to their personhood their ideas, experience beliefs, hopes and dreams—above and beyond their disability.
- Since the mid 1900s, people with disabilities have pushed for the recognition of disability as an aspect of identity that influences the experiences of an individual, not as the sole-defining feature of a person.
- The most obvious barrier was institutionalization of people with disabilities. Until the 19th century many people with disabilities were locked in poorhouses or jails if their families could not care for them. Essentially, they were incarcerated to keep them separate from society.

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# A brief History: People with Disabilities

Ableism is the discrimination of and social prejudice against people with disabilities based on the belief that typical abilities are superior. At its heart, ableism is rooted in the assumption that disabled people require 'fixing' and defines people by their disability. Like racism and sexism, ableism classifies entire groups of people as 'less than,' and includes harmful stereotypes, misconceptions, and generalizations of people with disabilities.

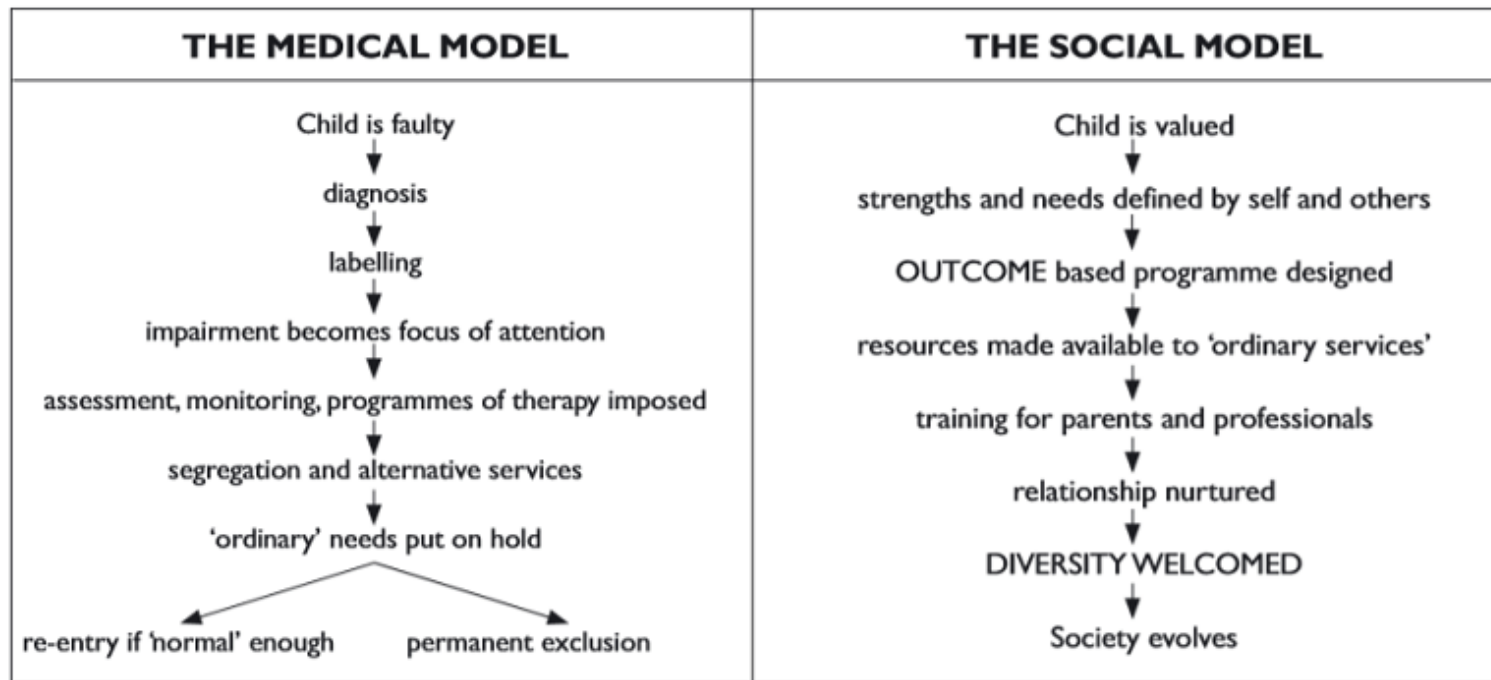
Examples:

- Lack of compliance with disability rights laws like the ADA
- Refusing to provide reasonable accommodations
- Failing to incorporate accessibility into building design plans
- Buildings without braille on signs, elevator buttons, etc.

How to advert ablism

- Listen to people when they request an accommodation
- Don't assume you know what someone needs
- Learn more about being a good disability ally
- Make sure people with disabilities are at the table when decisions are being made

# A brief History: People with Disabilities



A brief History:  
Disability Rights  
Movement

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# Disability Rights Movement: The Road to Equal Access and Equal Treatment

- By the 1960s, the civil rights movement began to take shape, and disability advocates saw the opportunity to join forces alongside other minority groups to demand equal access and equal opportunity for people with disabilities. Following a similar pattern to many other civil rights movements—challenging negative attitudes and stereotypes, rallying for political and institutional change, and lobbying for the self-determination of a minority community.
- Disability rights activists mobilized on the local level demanding national initiatives to address the physical and social barriers facing the disability community. Parent advocates were at the forefront, demanding that their children be taken out of institutions, and placed into schools where their children could have the opportunity to engage in society just like children who were not disabled

# Disability Rights Movement: The Road to Equal Access and Equal Treatment

## **The Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

- In the 1970s, disability rights activists lobbied Congress and marched on Washington to include civil rights language for people with disabilities into the 1972 Rehabilitation Act. In 1973, the Rehabilitation Act was passed, and for the first time in history, civil rights of people with disabilities were protected by law.
- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) provided equal opportunity for employment within the federal government and in federally funded programs, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of either physical or mental disability

# The passage of The ADA

## The Road to Equal Access and Equal Treatment

### **Capitol Crawl Protest**

On March 12, 1990 disability rights activists arrive at the U.S. Capitol and demand the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Over 1,000 protesters from 30 states to protest the delay in passing the Act. After a day of rallies and speeches, over 60 activists abandoned their wheelchairs and mobility devices and began crawling the 83 stone steps up to the U.S. Capitol Building. Protestors chant "What do we want?" "ADA!" "When do we want it?" "NOW!" Other activists remained at the bottom encouraging the crawlers. "I want my civil rights.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is signed into law.**

President George H.W. Bush signs landmark legislation prohibiting the discrimination of people with disabilities in all areas of public life including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public.

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The passage of The ADA The Road to Equal Access and Equal Treatment

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# Five area (Titles included)

- Title 1 – employment access
- Prohibits disability discrimination in all employment processes
- Title 2. Accessibility in public entities
- Physical and program accessibility in state/local govt. entities
- Title 3. Accessibility in businesses
- Physical and program accessibility in restaurants, hotels, stores, places of business
- Title 4. Telecommunications
- Accessibility of telephone and communications systems for the public
- Title 5. Miscellaneous
- Protection from retaliation

# ADA Summary

Cannot discriminate against a qualified individual with a disability in:

- Services, procedures, goods, and programs
- Employment process (application, hire, promotion, dismissal)
- Government services carried out by contractors
- Activities of State and local judicial branches
- Public Transportation

# Responsibilities in Brief

- Must modify policies, practices, and procedures to avoid discriminating against or excluding people with disabilities UNLESS to do so would cause a fundamental alteration
- Must look at the accessibility of programs, services, and activities as a whole
- Not required to remove barriers from each existing facility; but still must ensure access to the benefits and services of a program or activity

# Why Continue to ensure access for people with disabilities

- **In many countries, it's the law.** Fifty-five countries have either passed specific laws concerning the rights of people with disabilities, Since 2000, more than 1countries 80 have passed legislation inspired by the ADA.
- **It makes good business and economic sense.** For commercial operations of any kind, accessibility means that people with disabilities can become customers, increasing sales volume and profits. Furthermore, if a firm is a good place for customers with disabilities to do business, their reputation will be affected positively.

# Why Continue to ensure access for people with disabilities

- **We are building a more accessible world** by ensuring that buildings, schools, and public spaces were equipped with ramps, elevators, and curb cuts. It made travel easier by requiring operators to make accommodations, such as offering wheelchair lifts, airport shuttle service, and rental cars with hand controls. It also led to the rise of interpreters and closed captioning in public communications.
- **People with disabilities add diversity to the community, and that diversity enriches the community.** If they can integrate into the community, they will have the opportunity to make more friends and more people will have the opportunity to know them.
- **Access for people with disabilities improves access for everyone.** Making public spaces and facilities physically accessible for people with disabilities also makes them more accessible for people who may not have disabilities, including families with baby strollers, skateboarders, and bicycle riders. Making ramps a built-in feature of the environment benefits everyone.

# Ways to ensure access for people with disabilities

- DEMAND ENFORCEMENT

Where there are laws, they must be enforced in order to have any effect. In the United States, the law essentially covers what is required for accessibility, but it's not always enforced. First of all, there are no ADA inspectors who make random visits to see whether facilities are accessible, although some state agencies may do that for entities they fund or oversee. Thus, in most cases, ADA standards aren't brought into play until someone challenges a business, agency, or institution in the courts.

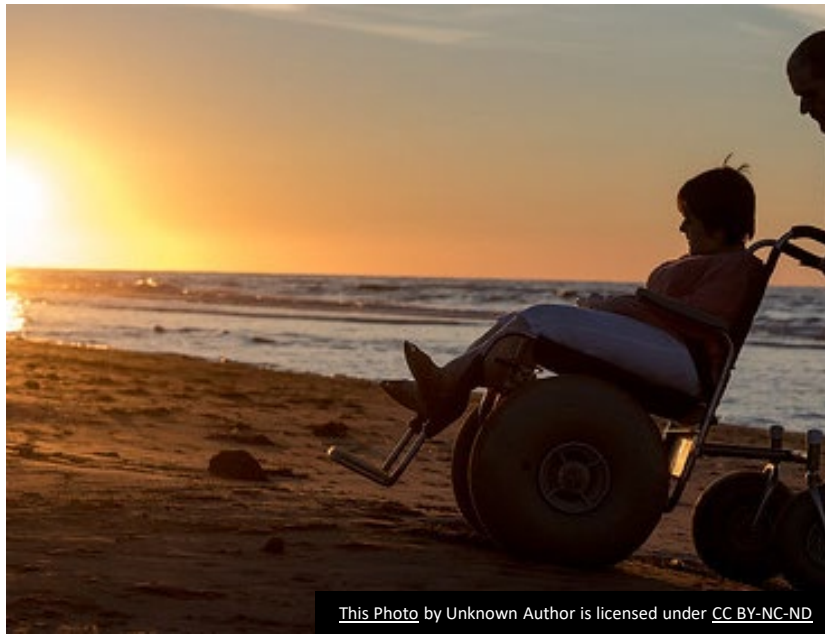
Each state, most entities have an ADA Coordinator. That person is usually the place to start with a complaint or a demand for enforcement. If you get no satisfaction, go to the next level.

# Ways to ensure access for people with disabilities

- Work with other advocates and organizations to ensure opportunities for people disabilities
- WORK WITH LEGISLATORS TO PASS LAWS THAT GUARANTEE EQUALITY OF ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
- WORK WITH ARCHITECTS, DEVELOPERS, BUILDING INSPECTORS, EMPLOYERS, EDUCATORS, AND MAJOR ENTITIES, ETC. TO MAKE THEM AWARE OF THE CONCERNS AND NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
- ENLIST THE MEDIA TO HELP CHANGE ATTITUDES AND EXPECTATION
- CALL ATTENTION TO LACK OF ACCESS WHETHER YOU HAVE A DISABILITY OR NOT
- KEEP AT IT INDEFINITELY –ADVOCACY NEVER STOPS AND WE MUST CONTINUE TO FIGHT FOR ACCESSIBLE, INTEGRATES COMMUNITIES AND LIVES!



# An inclusive society for people with disabilities



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## 1. View the Disability Community as a Valuable Consumer

It's still progressive to see the disability community as a targeted audience and consumer. We're the biggest minority population in the world, yet the most under represented when it comes to marketing products.

## 2. Employ People with Disabilities- They are Ambitious and Want to Work

But when it comes down to it, employers need to see a person, including his/her disability, as an asset and not a potential liability.

## 3. Increase Disability Representation in Political Setting

## 4. Integrate Disability History in School Curriculums

**5. Promote Social Inclusion in Schools** Our overall cultural consciousness on how we treat and interact with disability needs to change, beginning in elementary schools. We need to celebrate our peers for their differences.

**6. Employ More Actors with Disabilities in Mainstream Media** - We need to see more actors with disabilities playing actual character roles of people who have disabilities.

**Universally Accessible Design** - creating an environment or community so that it can be accessed by all people no matter their age, size, ability or disability. Creating spaces and programs that work as much as possible for all

Empower yourself and others by realizing that your voice can make a change for generations to come. **We need to become the voices that challenge.** If you never raise your voice, then nothing will occur and no change will happen. Join me in raising your voice so we can see a fully inclusive society and celebrate each other for who we truly are – simple, natural, human beings want to live, laugh, and roll.

# ADA Access and Public Entities : Past, Present, future!

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