



Invisible Disabilities

It is a disability that may not be immediately obvious, hidden, or not easily visible.

The disability doesn't have physical signs. Sometimes there may be a visible limp, facial expression, or other similar indications of the disability flaring up and causing problems, but not an everyday physical sign.

Disabilities, Disorders, Syndromes, or Diseases included in invisible disabilities include but are not limited to learning difficulties, mental health, mobility, speech, visual or hearing impairments. They can also have asthma and other lung conditions and chronic illnesses such as diabetes and sleep disorders. Physical, mental, or neurological conditions that are not visible from the outside and significantly impact day-to-day life would be included.

Since they are not visible, it leads to misunderstandings, false perceptions, and judgments. Just because someone has a *disability* does not mean they are *disabled*. A person can still live a fully active life, including work, family, sports, and hobbies. This doesn't mean they don't struggle throughout their day. It can even get to the point that they have little or no energy for other things because they have dedicated so much to their basic daily needs. Others are unable to maintain gainful or substantial employment due to their disability, have trouble with daily living activities, and need assistance with their care. Some of these factors could be because they have multiple invisible disabilities.

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, an individual with a disability is 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.

(If you want to know the background to the act: It was signed into law on July 26, 1990, by President George H.W. Bush. It is one of America's most comprehensive pieces of civil rights legislation that prohibits discrimination and guarantees that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to participate in the mainstream of American life. ADA.gov)