

# Overcoming Barriers to Inclusion and Access in the Workplace

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One of 10 regional centers across the U.S. that make up the ADA National Network

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**[southwestada.org](http://southwestada.org)**

# What we'll cover:

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- **Removing barriers to access and inclusion**
- **Creating a culture of access**
- **Discussing and responding to individual requests**





# Barriers to Employment

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# Common Barriers

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- Perceptions of disability
- Physical access
- Digital access
- Policies / Procedures



# How Society Sees Disability

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- Pity
- Needy
- Expensive
- Inspirational
- Stereotypes
- Doubt
- Compliance issue/  
Fear of litigation



**DISABILITY**

Rethinking creative solutions justice  
usability embrace difference options  
pride Reframing diversity  
equality  
participation Redesigning =  
inclusion design partnerships  
equity transformational Reclaiming  
IMAGINE

## Rethinking Disability

Disability as diversity

Diversity among people who  
identify as disabled

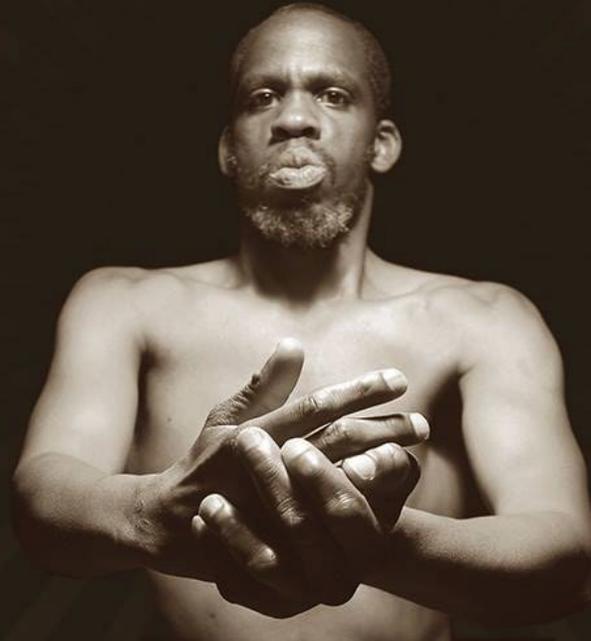
**ALL BODIES ARE UNIQUE AND ESSENTIAL.**

**ALL BODIES ARE WHOLE. ALL BODIES HAVE  
STRENGTHS AND NEEDS THAT MUST BE MET.**

**WE ARE POWERFUL NOT DESPITE THE COMPLEXITIES  
OF OUR BODIES, BUT BECAUSE OF THEM.**

**WE MOVE TOGETHER, WITH NO BODY LEFT BEHIND.**

**THIS IS DISABILITY JUSTICE.**



Written by Aurora Levins Morales, Patty  
Berne and Micah Bazant for Sins Invalid.

# Relocating the Problem of Disability

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**Disability isn't the problem.  
What's a problem is  
convincing others that it's  
not a problem.**

Lais Kari, a proofreader who is blind



# Guiding Questions

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**1**

**How can we create an inclusive work environment that minimizes the need for individual accommodations?**

**2**

**How can we create an environment in which people feel comfortable requesting accommodations and disclosing disability?**

# Being Proactive: Self-Assessment

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- **Assess where you are as an organization**
  - **Administrative / leadership**
  - **Digital environments**
  - **Instructional environments**
  - **Physical environments**



# Being Proactive: Planning

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- **Select some goals to work on to improve access and inclusion**
  - **Perception of disability**
  - **Administrative / leadership**
  - **Digital environments**
  - **Instructional environments**
  - **Physical environments**



# Being Proactive: Communicating Your Commitment

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- **Communicate your commitment to access and inclusion**
  - **In your college, department or unit**
  - **On your website**
  - **On brochures**
  - **On event announcements**



# Campus-Wide Accessibility Statements

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- **University of Arizona:**  
<https://www.arizona.edu>
- **University of Arkansas at Little Rock:**  
<https://ualr.edu/disability/accessibility/>

# Website Accessibility Statements

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## Simple statement:

We are committed to creating an accessible website. If you encounter any barriers that result from the design of this site, please do not hesitate to contact us at [email].

## Utah State University:

<http://accessibility.usu.edu>

# Accessibility Statements on Events

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## Requesting Disability-Related Accommodations:

\_\_\_\_\_ values the inclusion of people with disabilities in our programs and activities. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate barriers to your full participation in this event, please contact (name, sponsoring organization) at (phone and email).

Please notify the us by \_\_\_\_\_ (date) to request a sign language interpreter at the event.

# Brochures and Printed Materials

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This document is available in alternative formats upon request by contacting (name, campus department) at (phone number and email). An electronic version is available online: (Website address here).

# Being Proactive: Practicing Cultural Humility

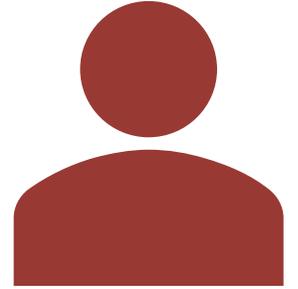
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- Examine biases
- Think through the language that is used to discuss disability and access
- Learn from disability activists



# Responding to Individual Requests

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1. Recognize an accommodation request.
2. Remain open and open-minded. Don't shut down the conversation.
3. Respect confidentiality and privacy.
4. Recognize that most people know what works best for them.
5. Consult with others if needed.
6. When possible to resolve the barrier easily, just do it.

# What is an Accommodation Request?

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A request for an accommodation doesn't have to include the words "disability" and "accommodation". It may look more like this:

- I don't want to take leave so often but with my back pain, I'm finding it difficult to sit at my desk for long periods of time.
- With my hearing loss, the noise coming from the conference room next door makes it hard for me to hear on the phone.



# Interactive Process

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“An informal dialogue between the employer and employee used to identify the precise limitations resulting from the disability and determine potential reasonable accommodations that could overcome those limitations.”



# When to Ask About Accommodations

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**Should I ask an employee if they need an accommodation even if they have not asked for one?**

- If you know the person has a disability AND there is an apparent need, you MAY ask, but you don't have to.

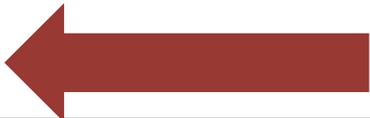
**If you are unsure if the person has a disability or the disability has not been disclosed and the person is not performing up to standard, you might consider asking:**

- Is there anything we can do to help you improve your performance?
- What would help you do this better?

# Confidentiality and Privacy

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- Have conversations about disability, access and accommodations in a private location.
- Do not share information with others about the employee's disability or accommodations unless you have permission or there is a real need for that person to know.
- Gather as little medical documentation as needed to support the need for the accommodation.
- Protect documentation.



# Finding Simple Solutions

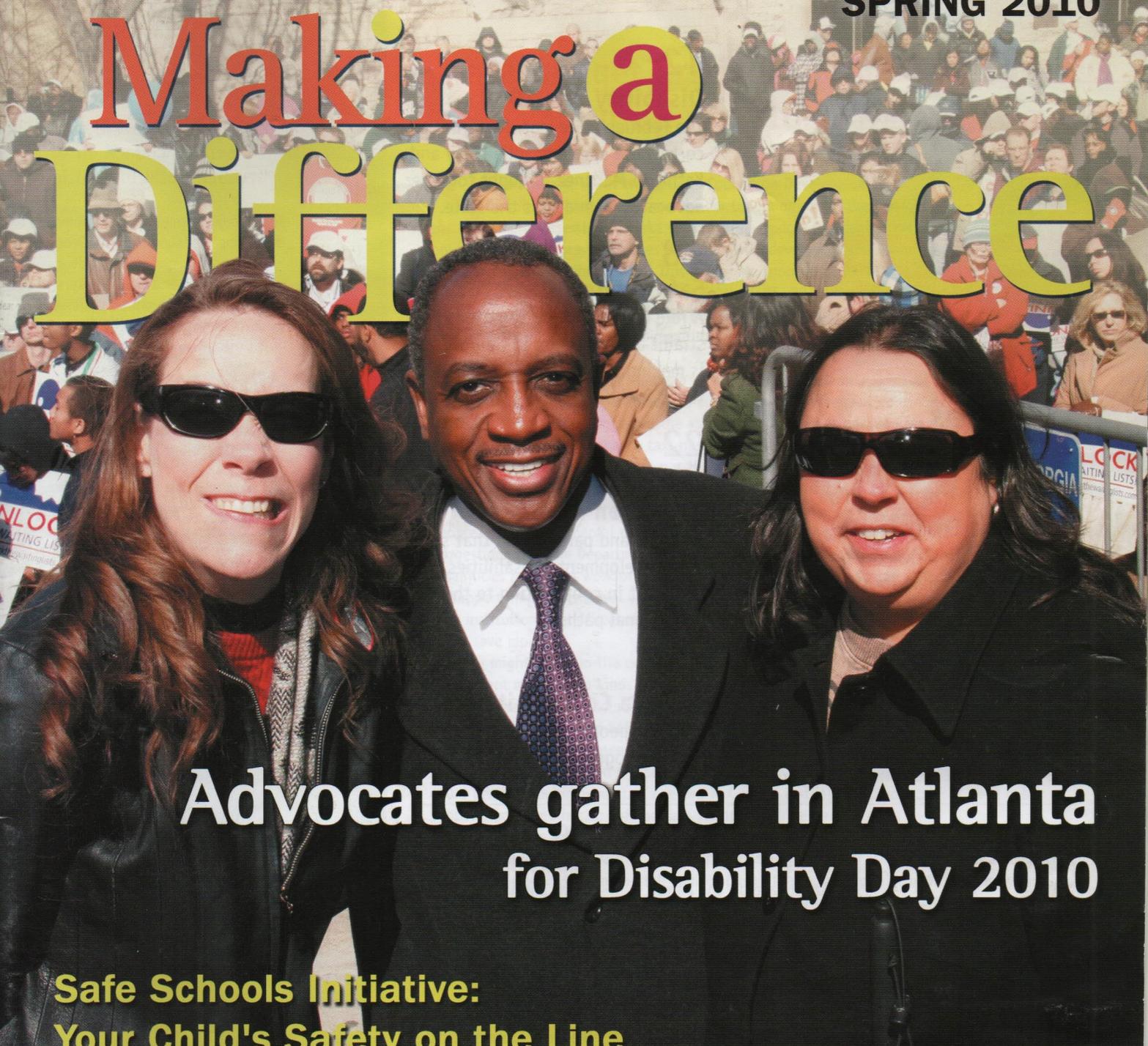
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## *Kathy Martinez*

**Advancing employment opportunities and expectations for people with disabilities strengthens not only America's economy, but our moral fiber.**





SPRING 2010

# Making a Difference

Disability Day 2010 in Atlanta

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Advocates gather in Atlanta for Disability Day 2010

Safe Schools Initiative:  
Your Child's Safety on the Line



## Resources

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[exploreaccess.org/workplace-access-resources/](https://exploreaccess.org/workplace-access-resources/)

# Contact Us

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