

# Let's talk about ableism.

## **What is ableism?**

Ableism is a type of prejudice and discrimination directed toward people with disabilities. It includes attitudes, beliefs, and practices that demonstrate a preference for being nondisabled.

## **What does ableism look like?**

Ableism comes in many forms. It can be a direct insult, like making fun of someone or it can be more subtle. Sometimes a comment that on the surface sounds kind reveals underlying ableism. This is because many people have unconscious biases about disability.

## **What are some examples of ableism?**

- Using terms that are insulting, patronizing or negative like the “R word,” “wheelchair bound,” “deaf-mute,” “special needs,” or “victim of...”
- Making assumptions that someone is less competent or that they need assistance based on disability.
- Designing inaccessible buildings, training materials, and websites.
- Creating policies that are discriminatory.

# What can we do about ableism?

- Listen to and amplify the voices of disability activists.
- Learn more about disability, ableism, and disability rights.
- Examine your own nondisabled privilege.
- Notice and work to alter your biases and assumptions.
- Design things with accessibility in mind.
- Speak out when you see ableism.
- Work collaboratively with people with disabilities, but do not take over.
- Invite disability activists and accessibility advocates to speak within your organizations.
- Support organizations that work actively to create access and eliminate ableism.



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