



# Tools for Life: Your Assistive Technology Act Program

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Tools for Life

Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation | College of Design

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# Your Presenters Today



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# Agenda



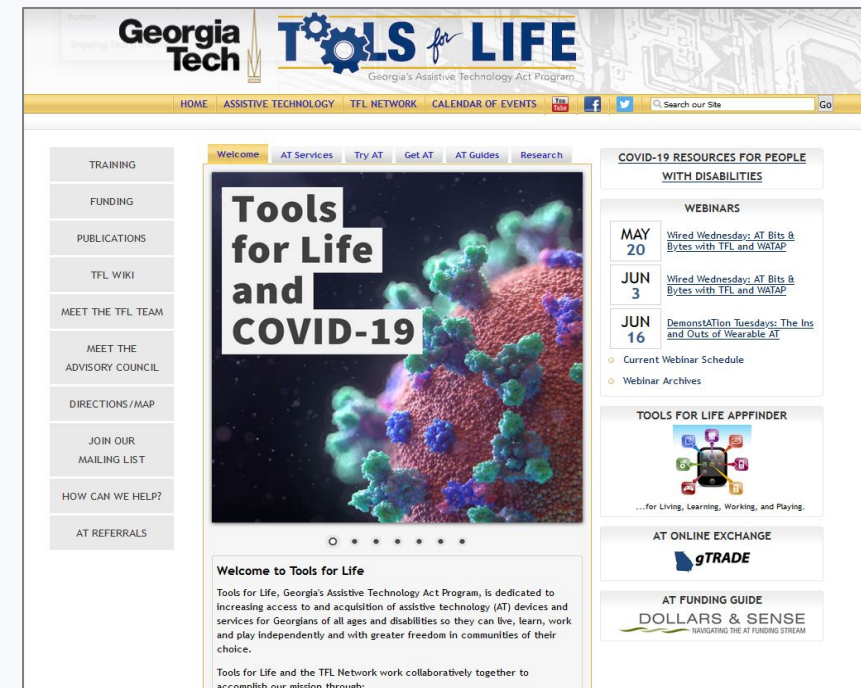
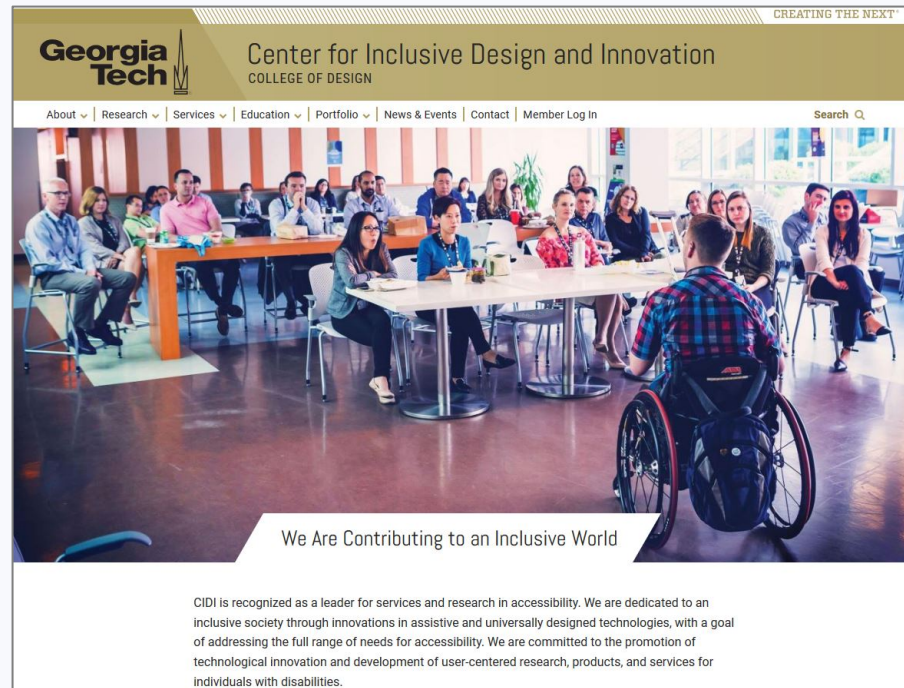
- ✓ Introduction to the Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation and Tools for Life
- ✓ Guiding Principles
- ✓ Assistive Technology Strategies, Solutions, and Resources
- ✓ Exploring Disability Awareness and Culture
- ✓ People First Language
- ✓ Q&A

# Georgia Tech: CIDI and TFL



The Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation (CIDI) focuses on services and research in the world of accessibility. Research initiatives focus on accessible education, accessibility in the workplace, assistive technology, technology and aging, and much more. Services include Braille production, captioning and described media, digital accessibility, E-text, and assistive technology services (TFL).

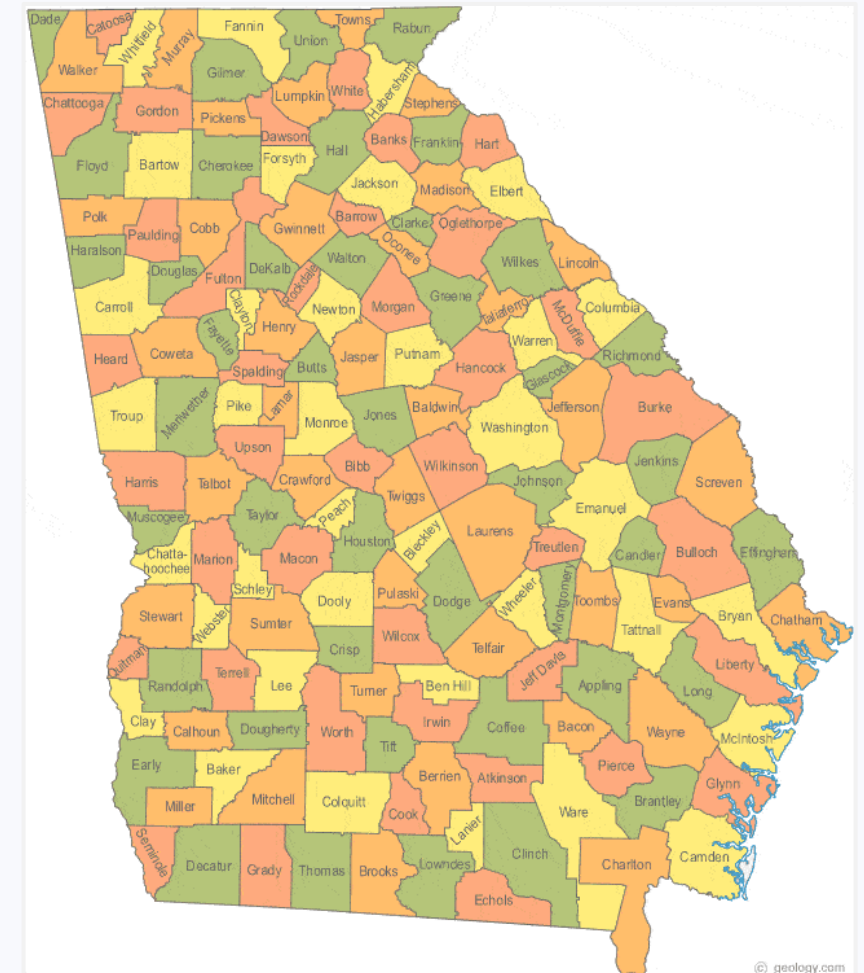
Tools for Life (TFL), Georgia's Assistive Technology Act Program, increases access to acquisition of assistive technology devices and services so Georgians of all ages and disabilities can live, learn, work, and play in the communities of their choice.





# Tools for Life Network

- Assistive Technology Resource Centers
- Outreach Centers
- Centers for Independent Living
- Aging and Disability Resource Centers



# Tools for Life Core Services

As the Assistive Technology Program in Georgia, we are charged with core activities:

1. Information & Assistance
2. AT Assessments
3. AT Demonstrations
4. AT Equipment Lending
5. Training (Individuals and Groups)
6. Funding Education & Solutions
7. AT Reuse



# Guiding Principle and Public Law



Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to:

- A. live independently;
- B. enjoy self-determination and make choices;
- C. benefit from an education;
- D. pursue meaningful careers; and
- E. enjoy full inclusion and integration in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of society in the United States.

*Public Law 108-364*





# Assistive Technology Strategies, Solutions, and Resources



# What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive Technology (AT) is any item or piece of equipment that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of life, including at school, at work, at home, and in the community.



# Why Assistive Technology?

For a person without a disability, assistive technology makes life easier.

For a person with a disability, assistive technology makes life possible.

***Tip: USE AT! We have yet to meet a successful person who doesn't use any AT.***



# Team Approach

- Person with the disability
- Circle of support/Family of choice
- Teachers
- Case Managers
- Technologist
- Occupational Therapist
- Speech-Language Pathologist
- Physical Therapist
- Engineer
- Neighbors
- Bus drivers





# AT Demos and Lending Library



# AT demos

- Free of charge!
- Learn about different devices
- What will work best?
  - Consumer's choice
  - Assist in making informed choices



## AT lending library

- Try before you buy!
- Loans are usually 3 to 4 weeks
- Training on items before borrowed, if needed

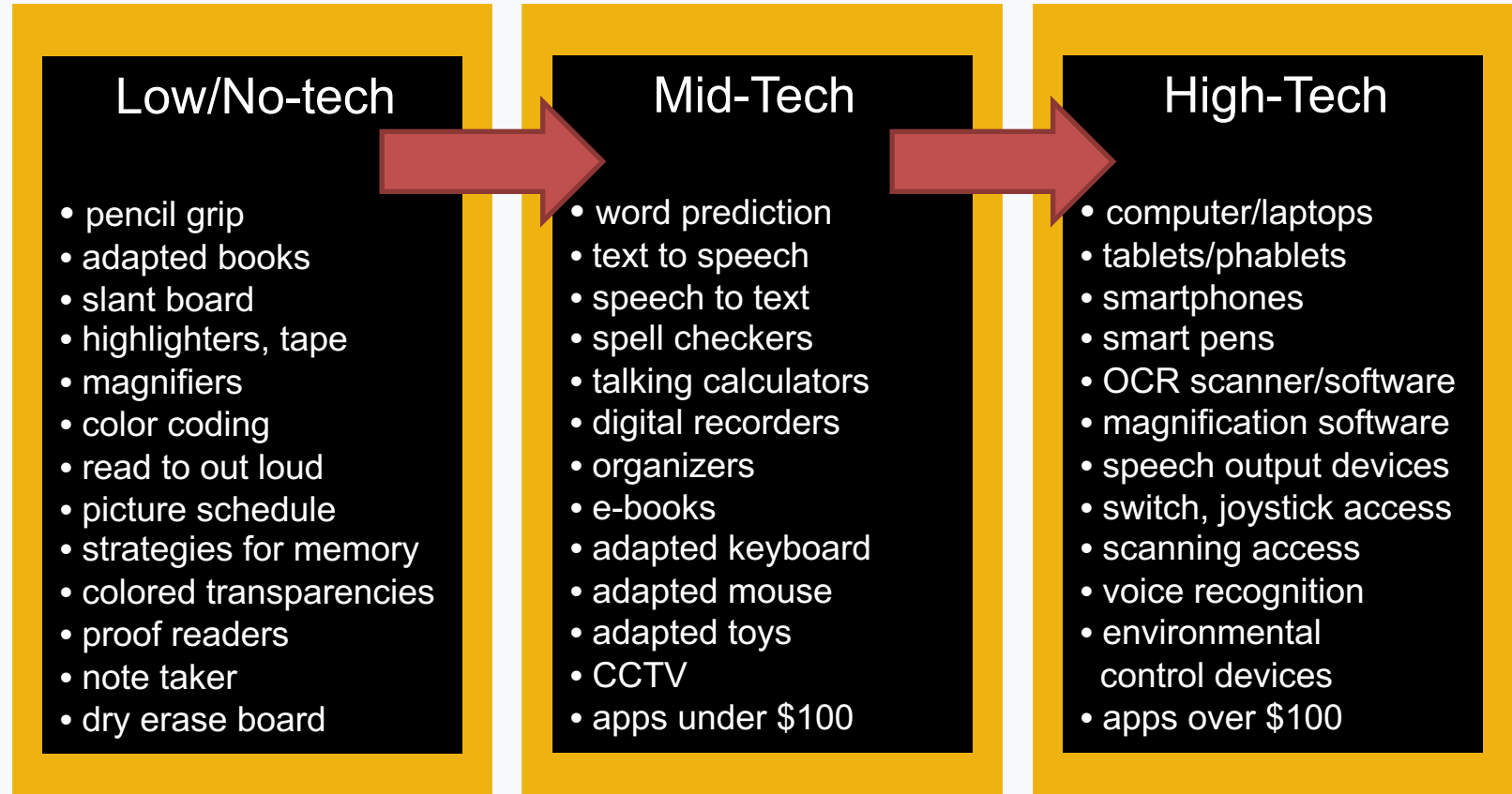




# Assistive Technology Continuum

## Observations and “Hanging out with Intent”

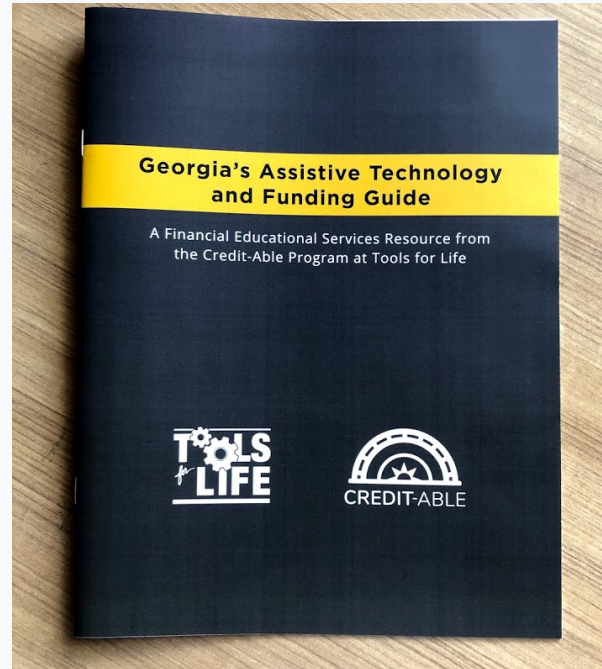
Assistive  
Technology is a  
***continuum of  
tools,  
strategies, and  
services*** that  
match a person's  
needs, abilities,  
and tasks.



# Funding Resources



- Georgia's Assistive Technology and Funding Guide
- gTRADE and EdTRADE
  - Direct exchange between users
- Dollars & Sense
  - Online resource for developing a funding strategy





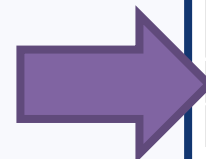
# Training and Outreach



# Information, Assistance, and Training



- Phone
  - (404) 894-0541
- Email
  - [info@gatfl.gatech.edu](mailto:info@gatfl.gatech.edu)
- How Can We Help?
  - Online form
  - Gives us information on what kind of assistance is requested
    - Demos
    - Funding resources
    - Trainings



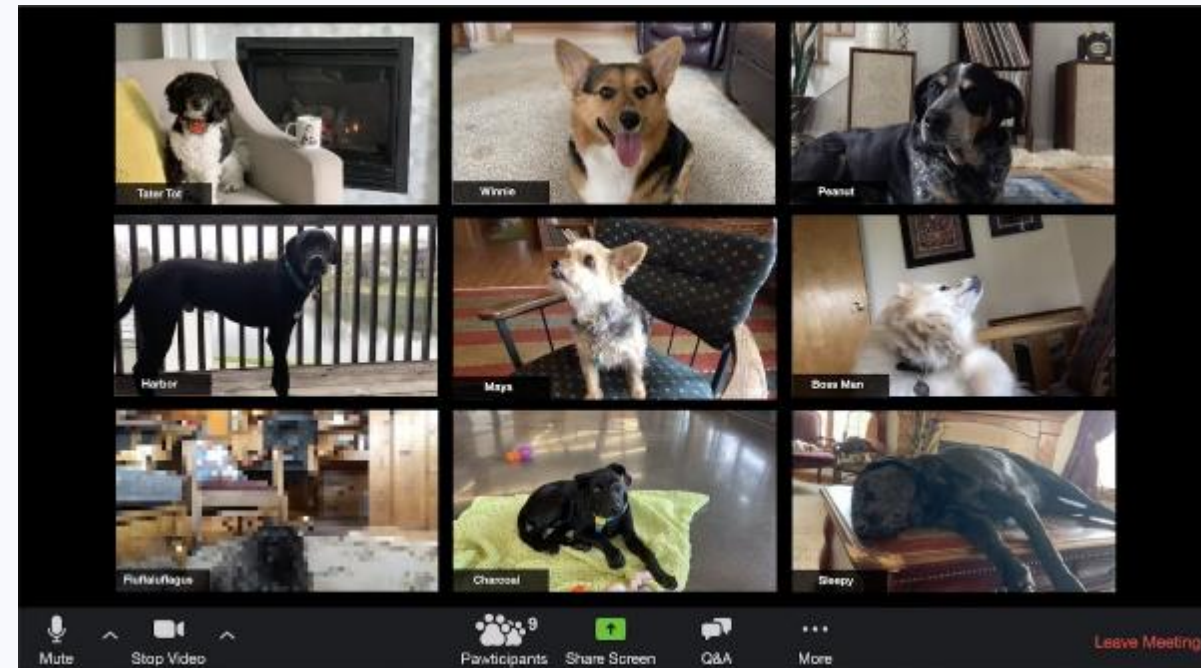


# We're Always Online

We have been actively working on translation of in person trainings, tours and conferences to virtual.

The benefit that we always offer some online component for each of our trainings. Accessibility!

- Tours of the AT, Access, and AAC Labs
- Conferences with breakout sessions
- Virtual exhibit hall





# Who Are We Serving?

Exploring Disability Awareness

# Who We Serve

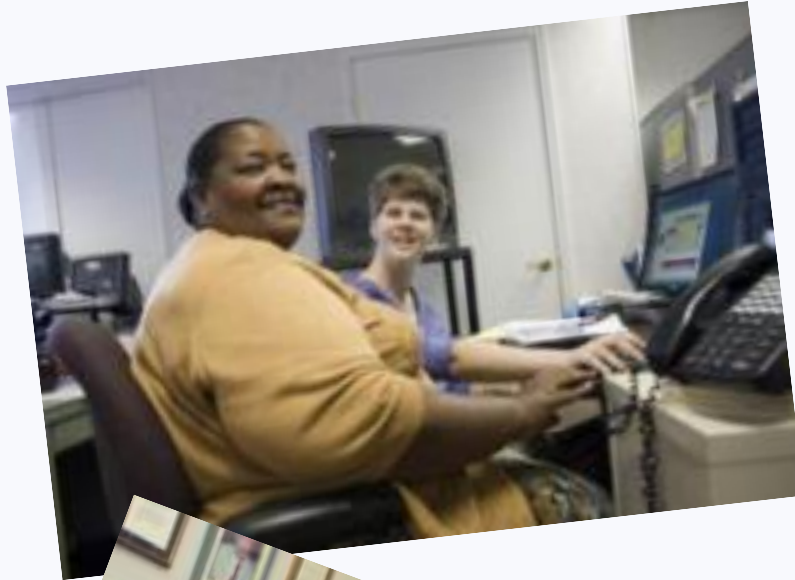


Over 60,000,000 individuals in the United States have disabilities which affect their ability to:

- See
- Hear
- Communicate
- Reason
- Walk
- Perform other basic life functions



# Who Are We Serving? Every 1 in 4



- People with disabilities are the largest minority group in America
- This group cuts across racial, ethnic, religious, gender and age boundaries
- Anyone can become a member of this minority group at any time



## Disability Employment Statistics for January 2021

*Ages 16 years and older*

- **Labor Force Participation Rate**
  - People with disabilities: 19.6%
  - People without disabilities: 66.4%
- **Unemployment Rate**
  - People with disabilities: 12%
  - People without disabilities: 6.6%

# The Importance of Disability Awareness



- There are more than one billion people with disabilities in the world who must overcome challenges every day – including stigmatization. As a society, we are all different and must recognize the importance of acceptance.
- Disability awareness is important when it comes to breaking stereotypes and overcoming preconceptions regarding disabilities.
- Learning about disabilities, the ADA, and taking part in awareness activities and events is a step towards breaking these barriers and promoting change.

Disability  
is often a  
consequence  
of the  
environment

# What is Disability Culture?

- Disability Culture embodies a broad definition.
- The words "disability" and "culture" are each value-laden and have different connotations.
- We all identify with more than one culture





# Medical Model of Disability

- Under the medical model, impairments or differences should be 'fixed' or changed by medical and other treatments, even when the impairment or difference does not cause pain or illness.
- People with disabilities are to be adapted to fit into the world as it is.
- The emphasis is on dependence.
- Focus is on the impairment, rather than the needs of the person.
- Often, institution is the norm where basic needs can be met.



# Medical Model: Barriers

- Environmental and design barriers make it difficult to have a successful future whether it is in work, school, leisure and entertainment facilities, transport, training, higher education, housing or in personal, family and social life.
- Practices and attitudes are seen as "disabling."



# Social Model of Disability

- Disability is caused by the way society is organized, rather than by a person's impairment or difference.
- Views that the position of disabled people and the discrimination against us are socially created and has little to do with our impairments.
- Restructuring society
- Explores ways of removing barriers that restrict life choices for disabled people.
- When barriers are removed, disabled people can be independent and equal in society, with choice and control over their own lives.

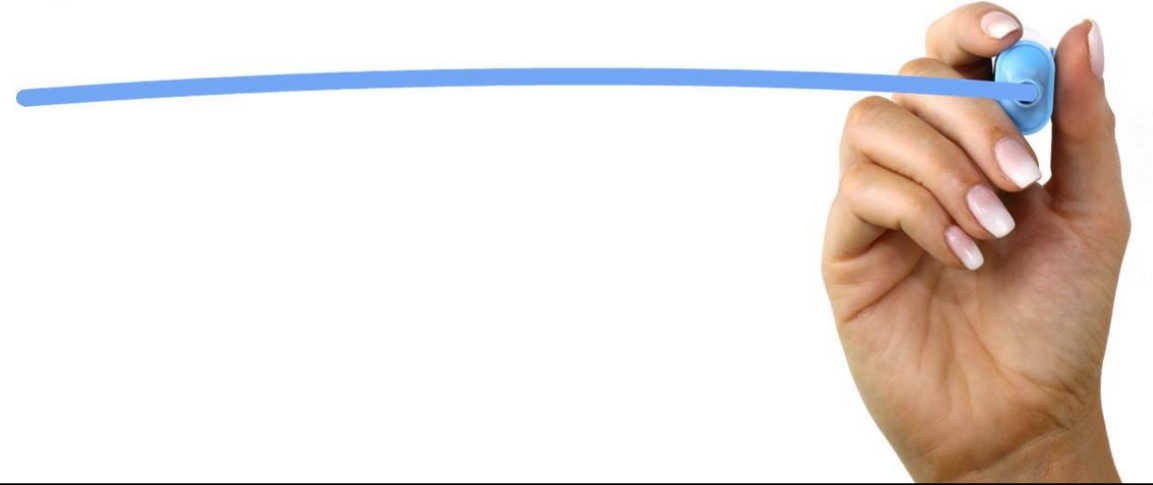




# Social Model: Solutions

- Traditional medical model did not explain their personal experience of disability or help to develop more inclusive ways of living.
- Encourages people with disabilities to redefine what "disability" means to them.
- Perpetuates confidence and self-esteem.

SOLUTION



# Common Ways People with Disabilities are Viewed and Treated



- Unfortunately, and inaccurately, people with disabilities are often viewed as:
  - victims, or objects of pity
  - horrible or grotesque
  - burdens, either on society or on their families and caregivers
  - evil, or some threat to the comfort and safety of others
  - unable, or assumed to be unable, to do things
  - having multiple disabilities (such as assuming a person who uses a wheelchair also has an intellectual disability)
  - childlike
  - "special"
- Such misconceptions are based on insufficient or inaccurate information about people with disabilities and can perpetuate inappropriate interactions.

# The Power of Language

- Language is continually evolving, and that includes language related to people with disabilities.
- Staying current is important, not to show that you are “politically correct” but to communicate effectively and with respect.

**“The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug.”**

***Mark Twain***



# It's not about political correctness!



As early as 1993, the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, offered guidelines for referring to people with disabilities that are consistent with what we now call people first language.

*Tip! Emphasize abilities, not limitations. When talking or writing about people with disabilities, show them as active participants in society.*

# What is Value-Laden Language?

- What you say and write may enhance the dignity of people with disabilities or inadvertently reflect stereotypes and negative attitudes.
- Some words and phrases don't recognize the broad range of capabilities of people with disabilities.



# Value-Laden Language

Promotes:

Distance

Stereotypes

Pigeon-holes

Reduces sense of:

Self-worth

Power

Self-direction



# Value-Laden Language: Promotes Distance

We vs. They

Good vs. Bad

Strong vs. Weak

High vs. Low (expectation)

Sick vs. Well

Superior vs. Inferior

# Avoid Words that Evoke Pity or Fear

<b>burden</b>	<b>deformed</b>	<b>disfigured</b>	<b>imbecile</b>
<b>maimed</b>	<b>moron</b>	<b>palsied</b>	<b>pathetic</b>
<b>pitiful</b>	<b>poor</b>	<b>spastic</b>	<b>stricken with</b>
<b>suffers from</b>	<b>tragedy</b>	<b>victim of</b>	<b>cripple</b>
<b>invalid</b>	<b>incapacitated</b>	<b>deaf and dumb</b>	<b>slow or retarded</b>
<b>lunatic</b>	<b>challenged</b>	<b>physically challenged</b>	<b>afflicted with</b>

# Value-Laden Language and Handicapped



"Handicapped" is an archaic term that evokes negative images of pity, fear, and more.

A legendary origin of the "H-word" refers to a person with a disability begging with his "cap in his hand."



# On the term “wheelchair bound”

“It isn’t a device that binds us or limits us: it is an ally, an accommodation.”

- *Simi Linton*

# Using People First Language is Crucial

People First Language puts the person before the disability, and it describes who a person is not what a person has.



# Putting the Person First

Refer to the person first, then the disability.

- Robert has Parkinson's.
- Mary uses a wheelchair.
- Evan is deaf.
- Sandra has epilepsy.
- John has a multiple sclerosis.
- Kelly is paralyzed.

Designed to stress personhood

- Person with \_\_\_\_\_
- Person who \_\_\_\_\_
- More common approach
  - Frequently preferred by most schools, parents, and relatively neutral organizations and groups



# Avoid Euphemisms

- Mental problem
- Physically challenged
- “Different”
- Physically inconvenienced

Be specific but respectful.  
Euphemisms are condescending  
and they avoid the real issues.



# Appreciate the Accomplishments



- We should appreciate the accomplishments of successful people with disabilities but avoid portraying them as heroic or superhuman.
- Doing so raises the expectation that all people with disabilities should be high achievers.
- People with disabilities don't need or want to be pitied, nor should they be deemed "courageous" or "special" as they accomplish daily activities or work.

# Language Dos and Don'ts

- If a person says they prefer a certain type of language, use that when talking to or about them, regardless of your own preference



- Using derogatory slurs and terms, even as a “joke”
- Using language which is negative or stresses pity or tragedy
- Using language which is patronizing or condescending



**A change in language and attitude can change everything!**

Our Language  
and Attitude



Our Actions



Our Work Culture  
and Environment



Assistive Technology strategies and solutions can help support individuals with a variety of disabilities in the workplace. AT helps to bridge the gap and provide solutions to problems with:

- ✓ speaking
- ✓ hearing
- ✓ seeing
- ✓ moving around
- ✓ getting places
- ✓ memory
- ✓ cognition (thought processes and understanding)
- ✓ daily living activities, such as dressing and preparing meals
- ✓ socializing



# Questions?



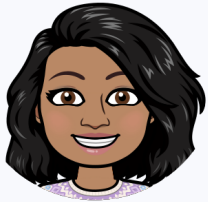
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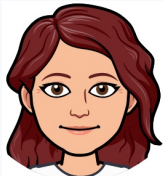
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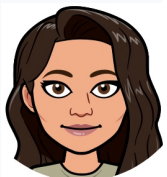
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