

Women and mother with disabilities: Self-assessment tool for health care and educational professionals

Thank you for testing yourself through our self-assessment tool! Here we suggest some resources, links and material to deep your knowledges regarding disability, inclusion and rights.

A: Personal Awareness and Knowledge

1. Do you understand what is meant by "inclusion" in the context of special needs?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Somewhat
 - d) I would like to know more

In the context of women with special needs, "inclusion" refers to ensuring that they are fully welcomed and integrated into all aspects of society, including education, employment, health care, and social activities. It involves creating a supportive and accessible environment that respects their individual needs and rights and provides them with equal opportunities to participate and contribute. Inclusion also involves removing barriers and stereotypes that may limit their full participation and inclusion in society.

Here more information can be obtained: https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5#progress_and_info



2. Are you aware of the various types of accessibility (e.g., physical, digital, sensory)?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Somewhat
 - d) I would like to know more

There are the following types of accessibility:

- **Physical accessibility** - ensuring physical environments are accessible for people with disabilities, such as ramps for wheelchair users and grab bars in bathrooms.
- **Visual accessibility** - making content and information accessible for people with visual impairments, such as using screen readers and providing alternative text for images.
- **Auditory accessibility** - providing accommodations for people with hearing impairments, such as closed captioning for videos and sign language interpreters.
- **Cognitive accessibility** - making information understandable and navigable for people with cognitive disabilities, such as using plain language and providing clear instructions.
- **Digital accessibility** - ensuring websites and digital content are accessible for all users, including those with disabilities, through features like keyboard navigation and text-to-speech options.
- **Communication accessibility** - providing accommodations for people with speech and communication disabilities, such as using communication boards or text messaging as alternative forms of communication.

More sources:

- <https://www.handtalk.me/en/blog/accessibility/>
- <https://accessiblecampus.ca/understanding-accessibility/what-are-the-barriers/>

3. Knowledge of Rights: Are you familiar with rights regarding accessibility and inclusion under local laws and international conventions (e.g., the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities)?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Somewhat
 - d) I would like to know more

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is an international human rights treaty that aims to protect and promote the rights of individuals with disabilities. It recognizes that people with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as everyone else and should not be discriminated against on the basis of their disability. The convention covers a wide range of rights, including the right to education, healthcare, employment, and participation in community life. It also promotes accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities in all aspects of society.

See more here:

<https://social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/crpd/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-crpd>

4. Information Sources: Do you actively seek information on inclusion and accessibility from reliable sources (e.g., advocacy groups, official websites)?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Occasionally
 - d) I do not know where to find this information



Here can be explored the following sources, including government websites, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and professional associations:

Government Websites

- European Commission – Strategy on Inclusion:
<https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/european-commission-presents-strategy-for-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2021-2030/>
- Report EU Commission -
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2023-0360_EN.html
- Special needs and inclusive education in Germany -
<https://www.eduserver.de/special-needs-and-inclusive-education-germany-4523-en.html>
- Inclusion of special populations -
<https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/special-populations>
- Inclusion Europe - <https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/>
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): The official website provides comprehensive information on the ADA, including regulations, guidelines, and resources for accessibility. <https://www.ada.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR): This site offers information on laws and regulations related to accessibility and inclusion in education.
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office for Civil Rights: Focuses on healthcare and social services accessibility. <https://www.hhs.gov/ocr/index.html>

Non-Profit Organizations

- The National Center on Disability and Access to Education (NCDAAE): Provides resources and tools for making educational materials accessible. <http://ncdae.org/>
- Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI): Part of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), WAI offers guidelines and resources for web accessibility. <https://www.w3.org/WAI/>

- American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD): Advocacy and resources for accessibility and inclusion. <https://www.aapd.com/>

Academic Institutions

- CAST: An educational research and development organization that provides information on Universal Design for Learning (UDL). <http://www.cast.org/>
- National Center on Accessible Educational Materials (AEM): Offers resources on making educational materials accessible. <http://aem.cast.org/>

Professional Associations

- International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP): Provides certifications, resources, and networking opportunities for accessibility professionals. <https://www.accessibilityassociation.org/>
- Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)**: Offers resources and guidelines on workplace inclusion and accessibility. <https://www.shrm.org/>

Other Useful Resources

- The National Disability Authority (NDA): Provides information and resources on accessibility standards and guidelines. <http://nda.ie/>
- Accessible Technology Coalition: A hub for information on accessible technology. <https://atcoalition.org/>
- Disability:IN: A non-profit resource for business disability inclusion. <https://disabilityin.org/>

B: Physical Environment Accessibility

5. Workplace Accessibility: Is your workplace (or potential workplace) equipped with the necessary accommodations for accessibility?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Not applicable
 - d) I would like to receive support on making it more accessible

6. Transportation: Is public transportation in your area accessible for people with special needs?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Partially
 - d) I would like to receive more information about my surrounding environment and thus how to involve people with disabilities

7. Health Services: Are health services (clinics, hospitals) in your area accessible?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Partially
 - d) I don't know whom to ask

8. Accommodations during the visit: Do you provide necessary accommodations in your setting (e.g., extended time on exams, note-taking assistance)?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Partially
 - d) I would like to receive support on making it more accessible

In case you would like to have the workplace equipped with the necessary accommodations, then the following would be a good source of information:

- **Entrances and Exits:** Ensure that doorways are wide enough (at least 32 inches) and ramps are installed where there are steps. Automatic doors are preferable.
- **Pathways:** Maintain clear, wide pathways free of obstacles. Floors should be non-slip.
- **Elevators:** Install elevators with tactile buttons and audible signals.
- **Signage:** Use large, high-contrast, and tactile signage for easy navigation.
- **Restrooms:** Ensure restrooms are accessible, with grab bars, low sinks, and ample space for maneuvering.
- **Lighting:** Provide adjustable lighting to accommodate individuals with visual impairments or sensitivities.
- **Sound:** Use sound-absorbing materials to reduce noise levels and provide hearing loops or other assistive listening systems.
- **Visual:** Offer visual alarms for emergencies and ensure that critical information is available in braille and large print.
- **Alternative Formats:** Provide documents in braille, large print, and digital formats compatible with screen readers.
- **Assistive Technology:** Ensure availability of devices such as screen readers, speech-to-text software, and hearing aids.
- **Sign Language Interpreters:** Provide interpreters or video relay services (VRS) for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- **Access:** Allow service animals into all areas where the public is allowed.
- **Facilities:** Provide designated relief areas for service animals.
- **Awareness Training:** Train staff on disability awareness and proper etiquette.
- **Emergency Procedures:** Ensure staff know how to assist individuals with disabilities during emergencies.
- **Inclusive Policies:** Develop and implement policies that promote accessibility and inclusion.

- **Feedback Mechanism:** Establish a system for collecting and addressing accessibility-related feedback from users.
- **Web Accessibility:** Ensure websites and online resources comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
- **Digital Kiosks:** Make sure digital kiosks are accessible, with options for audio output and tactile input.
- **Accessible Parking:** Provide designated accessible parking spaces close to the entrance.
- **Transport Services:** Offer accessible shuttle services or provide information about accessible public transportation options.
- **Regular Inspections:** Conduct periodic reviews and updates to ensure ongoing compliance with accessibility standards.

Here some additional information can be found:

- <https://askearn.org/page/creating-an-accessible-and-welcoming-workplace>
- <https://www.uitp.org/news/the-importance-of-public-transport-accessibility-and-social-inclusion/>
- <https://www.handtalk.me/en/blog/accessibility-in-healthcare/>

C: Social and Digital Inclusion

9. Digital Accessibility: Are the websites, applications and digital services of your hospital/body accessible according to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 (e.g., screen reader compatibility, captions on videos, color contrast)?

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat
- I would like to obtain information and support about digital accessibility



10. Online Informative Resources: Are informative contents on websites, applications and digital services of your hospital/body in simplified language (e.g., easy-to-read format or plain language) for people with disabilities?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Partially
- d) I would need information and support about online informative resources that would be appropriate for me



11. How to make an appointment: Is it possible for people with disabilities to autonomously make an appointment on websites, applications and digital services of your hospital/body and specify what aids are required for the visit (e.g., Sign Language interpreter, Social Stories, etc...)?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Somewhat
- d) I would like to obtain more information and support

Social inclusion refers to the process of improving the terms of participation in society for individuals and groups who are disadvantaged, marginalized, or otherwise excluded. It involves efforts to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their background, have equal opportunities to participate fully in economic, social, cultural, and political life. Social inclusion is essential for creating a fair, equitable, and thriving society where everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential and contribute to the community. It requires a collaborative effort from individuals, organizations, and governments to remove barriers and create inclusive environments.

The general aspects of social inclusion relate to: a) Equity and Equality; b) Participation; c)

Accessibility; d) Respect and Dignity and e) Supportive Networks.

The following are believed to be the key advantage of social inclusion: Individual Well-being; and Innovation and Creativity.

Some examples of Social Inclusion Efforts:

- **Inclusive Education:** Schools that accommodate students with diverse needs and backgrounds, providing equal opportunities for learning and development.
- **Accessible Public Spaces:** Designing parks, buildings, and public transport systems that are accessible to people with disabilities.
- **Community Programs:** Initiatives that bring together people from different backgrounds to participate in cultural, recreational, and social activities.
- **Workplace Diversity:** Employers implementing policies that promote diversity and inclusion in hiring, retention, and workplace culture.

Digital accessibility refers to the design and creation of digital content, applications, and services that can be easily accessed and used by all individuals, including those with disabilities. It encompasses a wide range of practices aimed at ensuring that digital environments are inclusive and usable for people with diverse abilities and needs.

The benefits of digital accessibility entail inclusivity, legal compliance, improved usability, broader audience reach and social responsibility.

N	ASPECTS OF DIGITAL	SPECIFICS
0	ACCESSIBILITY	
1	Web Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ensuring websites are usable by people with disabilities, including those who use screen readers, have visual impairments, or have motor disabilities. ❖ Following guidelines such as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).
2	Software and Applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Designing software, mobile apps, and other digital applications to be accessible to individuals with disabilities. ❖ Incorporating accessibility features such as keyboard navigation, screen reader compatibility, and adjustable text sizes
3	Multimedia Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Providing captions and transcripts for audio and video content. ❖ Ensuring that multimedia content is navigable and understandable by people with hearing or visual impairments.
4	Document Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Creating accessible documents in formats such as PDF, Word, and PowerPoint. ❖ Ensuring that documents are readable by screen readers and include features like alt text for images, logical reading order, and accessible tables
5	Assistive Technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Compatibility with assistive technologies such as screen readers, voice recognition software, and alternative input devices. ❖ Ensuring that digital platforms work seamlessly with these technologies to provide an equitable user experience.
6	User Interface (UI) and User Experience (UX) Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Designing intuitive and easy-to-navigate interfaces. ❖ Using consistent layouts, clear labeling, and straightforward instructions to enhance usability.

These are a few sources where one can read more:

- https://delorenzoglob.com/blog_post/how-can-you-make-a-classroom-more-accessible-for-disabled?Lang=En
- <https://slejournal.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40561-019-0113-2>
- <https://elearningindustry.com/what-are-the-best-ways-to-create-accessible-education-and-an-inclusive-environment>
- <https://www.acadecraft.com/blog/how-to-make-education-accessible-to-everyone>

D: Advocacy and Community Involvement

12. Support Networks: Do you work with a network of professionals dealing with maternity issues of people with disabilities?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Somewhat
- d) No but I would like to do it

13. Advocacy Participation: Do you participate in advocacy groups or conferences focused on improvement of disability rights and inclusion?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Occasionally
- d) I would like to but do not have access to

14. Feedback and Reporting: Do you provide feedback or report issues when you notice accessibility barriers in your community?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Sometimes
- d) I do not know how and/or to whom

15. Self-Advocacy: How confident are you in advocating for accessibility needs of people with disabilities?

- a) Very Confident
- b) Somewhat Confident
- c) Not Confident
- d) I need help

16. Continuous Learning: Are you committed to continuously learning about new developments in accessibility and inclusion?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Sometimes
- d) I lack information on where to start



Advocacy participation refers to the active involvement of individuals or groups in advocating for a cause, policy, or change within a community, organization, or government. It involves engaging in activities designed to influence public opinion, policy decisions, or resource allocation to bring about social, political, or environmental changes. The key components and activities associated with advocacy participation are awareness and education; engagement and mobilization; policy influence; coalition building; campaigns and actions; communication and messaging.

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." - Helen Keller

For both healthcare professionals and educators, it is important to receive support from their colleagues: well-being of people is not only a matter of a single subject, so also professionals need a team in which to find support.

It is suggested to look for training related to special needs, accessibility and “social prescribing”. The link below would lead you to “A toolkit on how to implement social prescribing” written by the World Health Organization about the importance of the interaction of all the aspect of life for the well-being of people:

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789290619765>

More clarity on self-advocacy:

<https://www.understood.org/en/articles/the-importance-of-self-advocacy>

Advocacy and Legal Support consists of:

- **Rights Advocacy:** Helping individuals understand and advocate for their rights.
- **Legal Assistance:** Providing support with legal issues, such as guardianship, benefits, and discrimination cases.
- **Resource Coordination:** Connecting individuals and families with resources and services available in the community.

E: Support from Care and Educational Professionals

17. Communication with People with disabilities: Do you feel that you communicate effectively and respectfully with people with disabilities about their health needs?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Sometimes
- d) I need more training about this topic

18. Personalized Care Plans: Do you personalize care plans tailored to specific needs and preferences of people with disabilities?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Partially

19. Training for Professionals: Did you receive adequate training in disability awareness and inclusive practices?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not sure

20. International classification of functioning disability and health (ICF): Do you take your patient's ICF document into account and integrate it with your visit?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) No but I would like



Support from Care professionals: Care professionals can provide a wide range of support to individuals with special needs, ensuring that they receive the appropriate care and assistance to enhance their quality of life. Care professionals play a crucial role in improving the lives of individuals with special needs by providing comprehensive support that addresses their medical, personal, educational, social, and emotional needs. This holistic approach helps individuals achieve greater independence, inclusion, and overall well-being.

No	Type of support	Specifics
1	Medical and Health Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Routine Medical Care: Regular check-ups, vaccinations, and management of chronic conditions. ❖ Specialized Medical Care: Access to specialists for conditions such as epilepsy, cerebral palsy, autism, etc. ❖ Medication Management: Administering medications and monitoring for side effects. ❖ Therapies: Physical, occupational, speech, and behavioral therapy tailored to individual needs.
2	Personal Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Daily Living Assistance: Help with bathing, dressing, grooming, and toileting. ❖ Mobility Support: Assistance with moving around, including the use of mobility aids like wheelchairs, walkers, or prosthetics. ❖ -Nutrition and Feeding: Support with meal planning, feeding, and ensuring nutritional needs are met.
3	Behavioral Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Behavioral Interventions: Developing and implementing strategies to manage and improve challenging behaviors. ❖ Positive Reinforcement: Encouraging positive behaviors through rewards and reinforcement.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Crisis Intervention: Providing immediate support during behavioral crises or emergencies.
4	Occupational and Vocational Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Job Training: Providing training and support to develop job skills and prepare for employment. ❖ Workplace Accommodations: Assisting with obtaining necessary accommodations in the workplace. ❖ Supported Employment: Offering job coaching and on-the-job support to ensure success in employment.
5	Family and Caregiver Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Respite Care: Offering temporary relief to primary caregivers by taking over care responsibilities for a short period. ❖ Education and Training: Educating family members and caregivers on how to provide effective care and support. ❖ Support Groups: Facilitating support groups where families and caregivers can share experiences and resources.
6	Housing and Independent Living Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Independent Living Skills Training: Teaching skills necessary for independent living, such as cooking, cleaning, and budgeting. ❖ Supported Housing: Providing housing options with varying levels of support, from independent living to group homes. ❖ Home Modifications: Assisting with adaptations to make homes more accessible, such as installing ramps, handrails, and accessible bathrooms.
7	Recreational and Leisure Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Activity Planning: Organizing recreational activities tailored to individual interests and abilities. ❖ Inclusive Sports and Hobbies: Facilitating participation in sports, arts, and other hobbies that promote physical and mental well-being.

The Ten Commandments for Communication (by Care and Educational professionals in interacting with people with special needs):

- Speak directly to the person, rather than through a companion or Sign Language interpreter who may be present.
- Offer to shake hands when you are introduced to someone. People with limited use of the hand or with an artificial limb can shake hands, even offering the left hand is an acceptable greeting.
- Always identify yourself, and others who may be with you, when encountering someone with a visual impairment. When conversing in a group, remember to identify the person you are speaking to. When having dinner with a friend with a visual impairment, ask if it is necessary to describe what he or she has on the plate.
- If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen or ask for instructions.
- Treat adults like adults. Call people with disabilities by name only if the same informality is also extended to other people in the group. Never condescend to people in wheelchairs by patting them on the head or shoulder.
- Don't lean on or hold on to someone's wheelchair or pet a service animal. Keep in mind that people with disabilities treat their chairs as extensions of their bodies. People do the same thing with guide dogs and assistance dogs. Never distract an assistance animal from its work without the owner's permission.
- Take it easy. Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use common expressions, such as "See you later" or "Haven't you heard of it?" which appear to refer to a person's disability.
- Listen carefully when speaking to people who have difficulty speaking and wait for them to finish the speech. If necessary, ask short questions that require short answers, or a nod of the head. Never pretend to understand; instead, repeat what you understand at eye level when speaking to a person in a wheelchair or on crutches.
- Tap a deaf person on the shoulder or wave your hand to get their attention. Look

directly at the person and speak clearly, slowly, and expressively to see if the person can read lips. If so, try turning your face to the light and keep your hands, drinks and food away from your mouth while speaking. Never yell at a deaf person. Just speak in a normal tone of voice.

<https://unitedspinal.org/top-10-disability-etiquette/nderstood>

Among the necessary supports, the figure of the caregiver must be considered and included. Indeed, it may be crucial for him/her to support the person with autism in situations of sensory/cognitive/emotional overload (accommodations explained above) that may cause communication difficulties with possible episodes of Meltdown or Shutdown. Stimming may be a strategy implemented by the autistic person to self-regulate and distract him/herself from excessive sensory triggers.

Here are some resources to obtain information and deepen your knowledge on the concepts of Meltdown, Shutdown, Stimming and sensory perception in relation to autism:

- <https://www.leicspart.nhs.uk/autism-space/health-and-lifestyle/meltdowns-and-shutdowns/>
- <https://www.autismspeaks.org/sensory-issues>
- <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/behaviour/stimming/all-audiences>
- <https://www.bradipiinantartide.com/10-informazioni-utili-se-ti-trovi-a-soccorrere-una-persona-autistica/>

Another important document that can improve the healthcare and educational professionals' internal communication is the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). It is a classification that aims to describe the state of health of people in relation to their existential areas (social, family, work) in order to understand the difficulties that in the socio-cultural context of reference can cause disability.

<https://www.who.int/standards/classifications/international-classification-of-functioning-disa>

Additional resources (all pages were checked and visited on 4th July 2024):

- ❖ https://www.pseau.org/outils/ouvrages/ids_water_for_women_gender_equality_and_social_inclusion_self_assessment_tool_2022.pdf
- ❖ https://www.sbcguidance.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/All%20Modules_%20Check%20Yourself_Self-Assessment%20Tool.docx
- ❖ <https://www.nln.org/education/teaching-resources/professional-development-program-teaching-resources/ace-all/ace-d/additional-resources/assessment-of-a-person-with-disability-da31c45c-7836-6c70-9642-ff00005f0421>
- ❖ https://www.fsnnetwork.org/sites/default/files/vaw_tool_2014.pdf
- ❖ <https://www.cbm.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/CBM-ORGANISATION-ENGAGEMENT-ON-DISABILITY-INCLUSION-TOOL.pdf>
- ❖ https://www.cbm.org/fileadmin/user_upload/CBM_disability_and_gender_analysis_toolkit_accessible.pdf
- ❖ <https://www.ungei.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/Right-to-Education-for-Women-and-Girls-with-Disabilities-2021-eng.pdf>
- ❖ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/12/the-empowerment-of-women-and-girls-with-disabilities>
- ❖ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/women-and-girls-with-disabilities>
- ❖ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK326685/>
- ❖ <https://www.cdc.gov/healthequity/features/women-disabilities/index.html>
- ❖ <https://nyulangone.org/locations/initiative-for-women-with-disabilities>
- ❖ <https://www.handtalk.me/en/blog/accessibility-in-healthcare/>
- ❖ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/improving-the-accessibility-of-health-services-in/summary>

- ❖ https://www.inclusionproject.org/training/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjw-O6zBhASEiwAOHeGxbXrR1uwc6Qs3EfMpSsGWKOshNV4d4jIWVcQbQ9w4EnV67r9FgUv1RoC83gQAvD_BwE
- ❖ https://thenoraproject.ngo/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjw-O6zBhASEiwAOHeGxa9qVKzSAm-AdHUrNOAqp4tExFjjlWZ8m9ZEeC5GCiGT1UPZ6gsfCBoCLR8QAvD_BwE
- ❖ <https://attensi.com/learn/insights/how-to-build-a-more-accessible-learning-and-development-program/>



MOMS

MOTHER MATTERS

The right of women with disabilities to motherhood

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