

# Disability Myths and Myth-Busting Facts



**Myth #1: People with disabilities are brave and courageous.**

**FACT** Adjusting to a disability requires adapting to a lifestyle, not bravery and courage.

**Myth #2: All persons who use wheelchairs are chronically ill or sickly.**

**FACT** The association between wheelchair use and illness may have evolved through hospitals using wheelchairs to transport sick people. A person may use a wheelchair for a variety of reasons, none of which may have anything to do with lingering illness.

**Myth #3: Wheelchair use is confining; people who use wheelchairs are “wheelchair-bound.”**

**FACT** A wheelchair, like a bicycle or an automobile, is a personal assistive device that enables someone to get around.

**Myth #4: All persons with hearing disabilities can read lips.**

**FACT** Lip-reading skills vary among people who use them and are never entirely reliable.

**Myth #5: People who are blind acquire a “sixth sense.”**

**FACT** Although most people who are blind develop their remaining senses more fully, they do not have a “sixth sense.”

**Myth #6: People with disabilities are more comfortable with “their own kind.”**

**FACT** In the past, grouping people with disabilities in separate schools and institutions reinforced this misconception.

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**Myth #7: Non-disabled people are obligated to “take care of” people with disabilities.**

**FACT** Anyone may offer assistance, but most people with disabilities prefer to be responsible for themselves.

**Myth #8: Children should never ask people about their disabilities.**

**FACT** Many children have a natural, uninhibited curiosity and may ask questions that some adults consider embarrassing. But scolding curious children may make them think having a disability is “wrong” or “bad.” Most people with disabilities won’t mind answering a child’s question.

**Myth #9: The lives of people with disabilities are totally different than the lives of people without disabilities.**

**FACT** People with disabilities go to school, get married, work, have families, do laundry, grocery shop, laugh, cry, pay taxes, get angry, have prejudices, vote, plan and dream like everyone else.

**Myth #10: It is all right for people without disabilities to park in accessible parking spaces, if only for a few minutes.**

**FACT** Because accessible parking spaces are designed and situated to meet the needs of people who have disabilities, these spaces should only be used by people who need them.

**Myth #12: People with disabilities always need help.**

**FACT** Many people with disabilities are independent and capable of giving help. If you would like to help someone with a disability, ask if he or she needs it before you act.

**Myth #13: There is nothing one person can do to help eliminate the barriers confronting people with disabilities.**

**FACT** Everyone can contribute to change. You can help remove barriers.

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