

Heritage Month Toolkit

July (Disability Pride Month)

A branch of JEDI work at CIVHC, the Inclusive Language subcommittee distributes educational materials on topics related to monthly heritage and community observances. The words we use to describe and communicate with our communities hold great importance. Using inclusive language that reflects our values as an organization helps historically excluded communities feel included and safe in showing up as themselves, as well as illustrates our dedication to greater equity by fostering mutual understanding. The use of inclusive language also equips us to better understand and communicate with our teammates, and helps foster belonging in our workplace by breaking down barriers and building trust.

Overview: Disability Pride Month

Observed every July to commemorate [the landmark ADA legislation passed in 1990](#) and to [honor the experiences and achievements of the disability community](#).

Disability History, Close to Home:

- In July 1978, [19 disabled activists spent 24 hours blocking Denver roads to protest RTD's lack of accessible vehicles](#). Watch the mini-doc [here](#).

Further Reading:

- Read about [Section 504](#): the first time in history that disability was defined by a [social model of disability](#) rather than a medical model.
- With roots as far back as the 1500s, [ableism is discrimination which views able-bodied people as 'normal'](#) and thereby people with disabilities as inferior.
- Learn about [fiscal cliffs](#) and the systemic efforts to keep disabled people poor, such as [\\$2,000 limits for most savings](#) accounts.

Missing Spotlight: Invisible Disabilities

- ➔ [Out of the 26 million Americans with severe disabilities, 7 million of them use mobility aids.](#)
- ➔ As we have seen with many of our toolkit spotlights, having a disability is not inherently a problem, but it [becomes a huge challenge when navigating an inhospitable society](#).
- ➔ Using her own experiences, lawyer Liz Travis Allen compiled [a guide to requesting accommodations](#) for invisible disabilities.

In the Numbers

CO APCD Data:

CIVHC provided data from the CO APCD to support discussions around [HB 23-1136](#) which was passed to help [Coloradans access prosthetic care for physical activity and exercise](#).

National Trends:

[How Data Collection Plays a Key Role in Advancing Health Equity](#)

[Increasing Data Equity Through Accessibility](#)

➔ *Tip: [members of marginalized communities are often forced to be advocates for their most basic needs and rights. Navigating the world with a constant need to calculate \[how to be seen as a full human being and to avoid retaliation is an exhausting experience, one we can be mindful of by \\[completing self-led learning before asking marginalized people to educate us on their personal experiences.\\]\\(#\\)\]\(#\)](#)*

Inclusive Language Highlight: Peer Focus

With a topic as global as disability, we want to highlight what this means for us here at CIVHC. It is [not uncommon to default to thinking](#) there are not people with disabilities in the room if there are not people with [visible disabilities](#) in the room, but that is rarely the case with [1 in 13 Americans having a disability](#).

-Invisible Disabilities: disclosing illness can be an [isolating experience](#) and [many people fear they won't be taken seriously](#). Statistics show [the difference an accessible & inclusive workplace can make](#) for everyone working there.

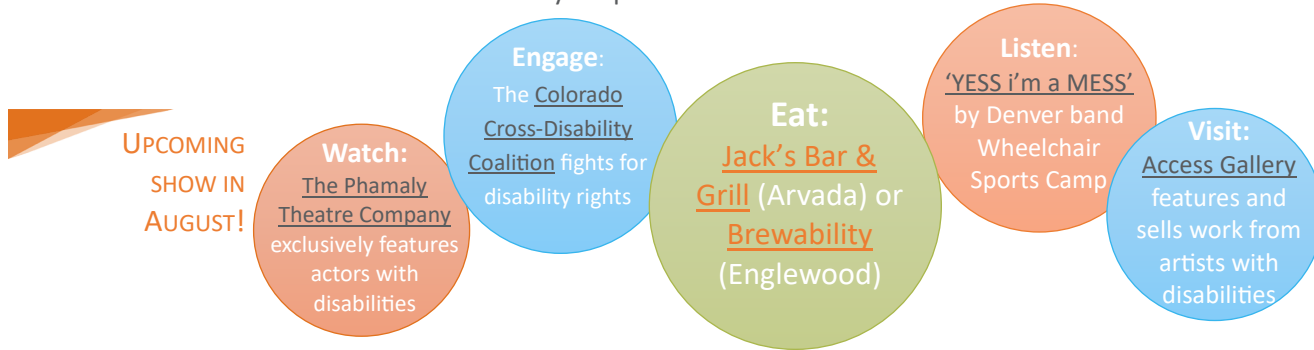
-Accommodations: there are [countless reasons someone may be hesitant to tell their workplace that they have a disability](#) or share details with close coworkers. [Asking for workplace accommodations is a federal right](#) that can be exercised at any time.

-Adults with disabilities report experiencing [frequent mental distress almost 5 times as often](#) as adults without disabilities, and [ableist interactions contribute to that distress](#). There are [many factors that contribute to ableist behaviors, including in the workplace](#).

Removing ableist language from our vocabulary is a constant practice. Terms such as [crazy/insane](#), [lame](#), and [crippling](#) uphold the ableist belief that people with disabilities are inferior and [their experiences automatically have negative value](#).

CIVHC is proud to be embedded in community

Here are some local options to celebrate the community.
Please feel free to share your personal recommendations in the General Slack channel!



Look through the [Science & Cultural Facilities District resources](#) for more!

What to do when you HEAR non-inclusive language

Consider taking these three steps when you hear language that is not inclusive. Remember, be intentional and do not overreact or shame others. Mistakes happen and can be teaching moments.

Inquire

INQUIRE: Seek to understand where the individual is coming from.

"I noticed you used the phrase...What does that mean to you?"

Inform

INFORM: Help educate the individual on the historical context or negative connotations associated with the word(s) or phrase(s) they used.

"I see, thank you for explaining. To me that word/phrase means..."

Empathize

EMPATHIZE: Focus on how it made you feel, not anyone else.

"It made me feel uncomfortable because..."

What to do if you SAY a non-inclusive word or phrase

Forgive

FORGIVE: Acknowledge what you said and forgive yourself. Apologize to an individual(s), if appropriate.

Start Over

START OVER: Recognize that you used a word or phrase that you are trying to remove from your vocabulary. Consider saying, "Let me start that sentence or thought over."

Understand

UNDERSTAND: Reflect on why you said it. Was it the first thing that came to mind or were you in an environment where it was being used?

Share

SHARE: Tell someone what you said. Consider identifying an accountability buddy to help you remove non-inclusive language from your vocabulary.

Practice

PRACTICE: Make a list of words or phrases you want to remove from your vocabulary and alternative words or phrases you can use instead. Actively practice changing your language.

Flowcharts via Deloitte's [Inclusive Language Resource Blog](#)

Additional Resources:

- Intersectionality: [Policing Black Disabled Bodies](#) (American Progress) and [Black Disabled History](#) (WID)
 - Read about [overlaps in the neurodiverse experience and the LGBTQIA+ experience](#)
- Explore: [decades of groundbreaking work from 'the mother' of the Disability Rights Movement, Judy Heumann](#)
- Support: [The Wayfaring Band travels the country with adults experiencing IDD to build a culture of inclusion](#)
- Subscribe: [YouTubers Squirmy & Grubs](#) share beautiful insight on inter-abled relationships and married life
- Every state has a [Protection & Advocacy System](#), created to offer free legal support to disabled Americans