

Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance and Inclusion Month (JDAIM), was established in 2009 to promote efforts to promote awareness and foster inclusion of people with disabilities in Jewish Communities worldwide.

The letter A, Acceptance is recognizing and embracing people who they are without judgement or bias. Beyond tolerance, it affirms the inherent worth of every individual. The challenges include social barriers, stigma, and lack of representation. We call upon our clubs, synagogues and communities to support equitable policies, education and advocacy.

Disability Definitions:

Impairment _ a significant deviation, loss or loss of use of any body function in an individual with a health condition, disorder or disease

Disability- activity and limitation and/or participation restrictions in an individual with a health condition, disorder or disease.

An example – loss of a limb is impairment.

The disability may be related to a specific job/ activity function.

Restriction vs limitation- what a person can't do, and what a person should not do.

Limitation – boundary or constraint that reduces the individual to attain a full outcome. Limitation describes what you can't do because of an injury or disease

Restrictions- and limitation that are imposed by an external force.

Restriction is what a person should not do due to an illness or disability.

Accommodation

Arrangement or compromise – adapting -provide what is needed

Activities of Daily Living – bathing, feeding, dressing, sexual activity

Instrumental Activities of Daily Living -child rearing, health management, caregiving

Functional Assessment or History considers the functional impact of the condition, disorder or disease.

Disabilities can be:

Physical- loss of a limb

Sensory- hearing, blindness

Intellectual – cognitive

Developmental- depression, anxiety

Chronic Disease- Multiple Sclerosis, diabetes

And visible disabilities – loss of a limb,

There are invisible disabilities – Migraine
If you don't look sick, it doesn't mean that you are not.
Many of these people can be misunderstood – there can
Be more than meets the eye. That is not obvious to others.

Accommodation - adapting and adjusting to one's impairment to be able to carry out the task.

Disability can be temporary or permanent.

Sociocultural influences and the specific context to where the disability lies,
May determine the individual response, and the accessibility where activities
may take place.

In addition to creating a safe space, individuals should not be placed in situations
where they can experience further harm. The approach is one of biopsychosocial.

Disability Etiquette: Know the proper language
Don't refer to someone as a "disabled person", but "a person with a disability"
People with disabilities want to be treated with the same respect as those without disabilities.

There is an ethics code of disability: Act with respect for individual rights of freedom of
expression, self-determination, and decision making in accordance with relevant laws
and conventions.

The ADA- American Disabilities Act – 5 principles:
Patient autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, justice and veracity.

Jewish traditions and values emphasize the importance of equal access and
full participation for people with disabilities in all aspects of life.

Leviticus 19:14 - You should not insult the deaf, or place a stumbling block before the
blind.

One other term: handicap – an obstacle or disadvantage that makes a task or situation
more difficult. A person may have a handicap where an assistive device may be
needed to complete a task.

Maintaining good communication with a person who has an impairment or disability
Will benefit everyone. People need to know that a physician and a patient may
perceive the world differently.

There has been discrimination against people with a disability. The Bible refers to the
person with a disability as being "unclean" They could not perform the function of a

priest or make sacrifices. Leprosy resulted in the need for social exclusion. The New Testament indicates that they are close to G-d, and are examples of "faith and grace".

There are many Disability Systems which may have varying degrees of definitions of disability. They were developed to protect individuals from loss of income.

Social Security Disability – inability to engage in any substantial gainful activity due to a medically determinable physical or mental impairment.

TZEDEK – This is a very good opportunity to engage youth with developing new initiatives – This can include Climate Change, Antisemitism, Gender Issues, Physical and Mental Disabilities, Substance and Mental Health,

JDAAIM is based upon learning and listening to people, advocating for disability rights, and promoting inclusion, respecting the principles of Kavod HaBriyot, by honoring the dignity of all of G-d's creation.

The NY metro strongly supports JDAAIM and encourages everyone to work with their clubs and community to support programs, and raise awareness and champion the rights of all Jews to be included without limitation.

With individuals having chronic conditions, it can lead to loneliness, depression and social isolation. Stereotypes and stigmatization can significantly worsen those conditions.

JDAIM recognized the challenges faced by the Jewish people with disabilities. Promoting events such as workshops, lectures, panel discussion, and support groups gives people the opportunity to engage with people in the community, to be more welcoming.

What can you do?

Listen to people – learn the proper language.

Ask someone what they need – don't be afraid to ask

Show empathy and respect by reaching out – creating a safe place

Start a committee or group to educate and understand everyone's needs and wants... Engage the clergy and lay leadership to speak out... and be inclusive – no "other"

Encourage the clergy to ask in some manner- "stand if you are able

"Gender – how are you called up to the Torah for a transgender

person. Location in the sanctuary for someone in a wheelchair

Hang a mezuzah that is accessible 9 or hang a second one at a lower

level. Organize events – accessible sports events

Volunteer with disability organizations

Create a buddy system
Inclusive services
Awareness posters Parent and sibling support groups
Honor members who are contributing to Jewish life
Advocate for local proclamation.
Large print prayer books....

KOL YISRAEL AREVIN ZEH'LA-ZEK- All Jews are responsible for each other. It is a guiding principle in Judaism and emphasizes the importance of making commitments to each other and one self, and caring for one another- stand up for one another, volunteer, make positive change, and promise each other.-

Each person has strength and weakness and can contribute to the community. Welcome that person and make them feel that they belong. Ask them what they need. At the same time, respect their privacy and autonomy.

In Summary:

Raise Awareness to those in the Jewish Community
Promote acceptance and a sense of belonging
Encourages Action – make spaces more acceptable and inclusive
Educate about the barriers faced by individuals with disabilities
Highlight universal acceptance in your club and synagogue
Celebrate the contributions and potential of all individuals,
Regardless of their disability

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