

UNPACKING AND ADDRESSING ABLEISM

What is Ableism?

A **disability** is when a person's body or mind interacts with society in a way that creates challenges, and it can happen at any point in life. There are many types of disabilities, impacting a person's life in different ways.

Ableism is when people think those with disabilities are less valuable or capable than those without disabilities, leading to unfair treatment and the expectation that everyone should aim to do things the same way. This can include stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, and systemic oppression against people with disabilities, reinforcing negative biases and marginalization.

Types of Ableism

Hostile Ableism

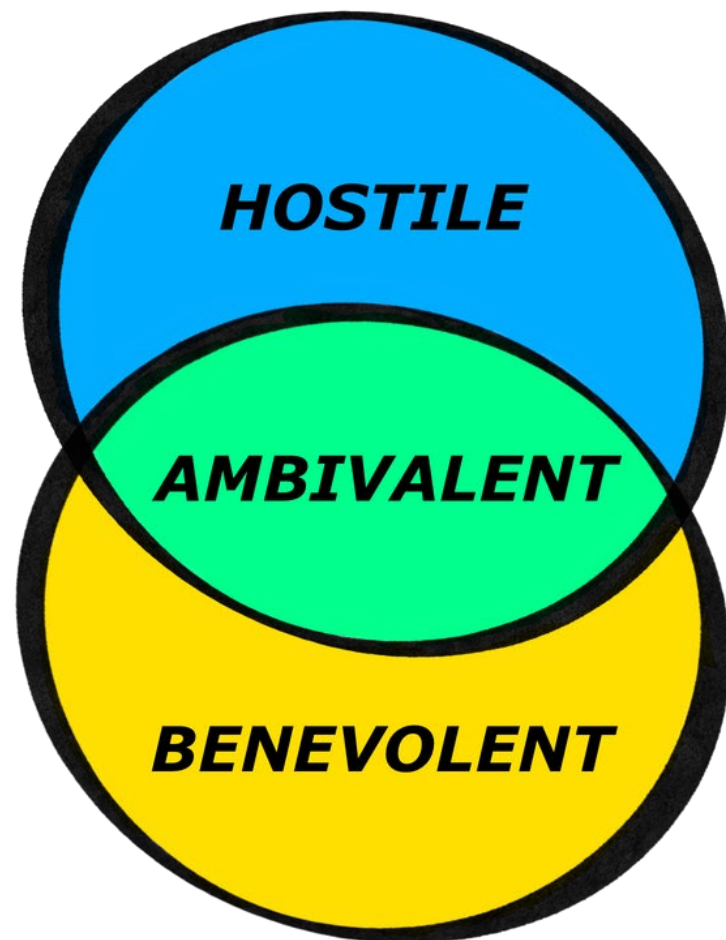
When people are mean or aggressive to those with disabilities on purpose. For example, by making fun of them or through violence.

Benevolent Ableism

When people treat those with disabilities in a way that seems kind but is actually condescending. For example, acting overly protective or giving unneeded praise for normal tasks.

Ambivalent Ableism

When people have mixed feelings about disabilities, sometimes being kind but also feeling awkward or uncomfortable. For example, by offering unwanted help and, when rejected, seeing the person with a disability as rude or ungrateful.



Accessibility versus Accommodations

Accessibility is **preventative**. It's about designing things from the start to be usable by everyone, so that no individual faces barriers to participating.

Accommodations, on the other hand, are **reactive**. They are adjustments made after something has already been designed, to help individuals overcome specific barriers that the original design didn't address.

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Inclusive Language

When it comes to people-first language versus identity-first language, the key is to respect and use the preference of the individual you are referring to or addressing. If unsure, it's always best to ask the person directly how they prefer to be addressed or described.

People-First

Emphasizes the individual before their condition or disability. For example, "person with ADHD."

Identity-First

Recognizes the disability as an integral part of the person's identity. For example, "autistic person."

ACTION Framework

A

Address problematic rhetoric.

When someone says or does something hurtful, you can directly tell them it's not okay or help them understand why it's wrong.

C

Cultivate empathy.

Listening to and understanding one another's struggles helps create a supportive community where everyone feels valued.

T

Take the time to learn.

Take the time to do your own research and learn from people with disabilities and their experiences to try and understand their needs.

I

Identify privilege.

If you have privilege or power, use it to help and support people who face unfair and discriminatory treatment.

O

Open to taking action.

Push for better accessibility in your community, raise awareness, and support programs that promote inclusion.

N

Notice implicit bias.

Recognize and work on changing your biases and unconscious judgments to reduce the negative impact of our interactions.