

“It Starts with Me”

Communities are strongest when they bring together a diverse set of voices, perspectives and backgrounds. (St. Albert Social Master Plan)

Community & Social Development is featuring a series of ‘snapshots’ intended to help you learn more about the people in our community and workforce who risk exclusion.



These Snapshots are not all-encompassing and may not include all people who risk exclusion. How a group of people identify themselves will expand far beyond a snapshot. Also, each of us could identify with more than one group, and our individual personalities make each person unique.

Understanding Disability

According to [Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability 2012](#):

- 13.7% of the Canadian population or 3.8 million Canadians aged 15 years and older report having a disability,
- More than 8 out of 10 persons with disabilities use aids and assistive devices, and
- The prevalence of disability increases steadily with age: 2.3 million working-age Canadians (15 to 64), or 10.1%, reported having a disability in 2012, compared to 33.2% of Canadian seniors—those aged 65 or older.

St. Albert is a diverse community. Based on the above statistics, approximately 7,400 people 15 years and older in our community are living with a disability (2016 St. Albert Census). One in seven people over the age of 15.

Physical disability – Any degree of physical disability, deformity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by injury, birth defect or illness. This includes but is not limited to, epilepsy; paralysis; amputation; lack of physical coordination; visual, hearing and speech impediments; and physical reliance on a guide dog, wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device.

Mental disability – Any mental disorder, developmental disorder or learning disorder, regardless of the cause or duration of the disorder.

International Day of Persons with Disabilities December 3

Take a moment to think about your neighbourhood, workplace, places you go to play and shop. What do we need to do better with these two Articles* in mind?

- Article 8. Countries need to find out and get rid of whatever stops people with disabilities from getting where they want to go, doing what they want to do and getting the help that they need.
- Article 16. Countries need to make sure that the minds and bodies of people with disabilities are just as important as the mind and bodies of everybody else.

**There are 33 Articles in The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and Canada ratified the Convention in 2010 with the intent of Canada providing persons with disabilities the same opportunities in life as all Canadians. Article 8 & 16 in plain language is from John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights <http://jhcentre.org/>*

An abelist society isn't an inclusive society (taken with permission <http://www.rickhansen.com>)

These days, you often hear the word 'ableism' talked about online, but the Oxford English Dictionary actually traces the word's first use back to 1981 and defines it as "discrimination in favour of able-bodied" people.

That discrimination can take various forms, but in the broadest sense, it can be broken down into physical and attitudinal barriers against people with disabilities. These barriers help enable an abelist society that keeps people with disabilities from being a part of their communities and living life to its fullest.

Physical barriers

There's no wheelchair-accessible entrance or elevator in a building. Many modern buildings have these facilities, but older buildings often don't. This lack of accessibility limits the choices people with disabilities are able to make regarding where they live, work, or visit.

Attitudinal barriers

Saying someone "is disabled". Everyone is a person before they are anything else. A person's disability does not define who he or she is anymore than having blue eyes instead of brown does. Using person-first language like 'Lily has a disability' is more appropriate than 'Lily is disabled'.

Credits: *The Rick Hansen Foundation, November 28th Blog Post 'An abelist society isn't an inclusive society'*
<http://www.rickhansen.com/Blog>

To Learn More:

- [Understanding disability](#) reads from the **St. Albert Public Library**
- **Alberta Human Rights** To learn more about Protected Areas and Grounds under the Alberta Human Rights Act including disability: http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/HR_in_AB_audio6.asp
- Community & Social Development, City of St. Albert – [Diversity and Inclusion](#)

Acknowledgements:

[Equity & Inclusion Lens Handbook](#) - City of Ottawa and CAWI



Welcoming & Inclusive Communities
Together we shine



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