

2024 REACH Book Author Contest

Disability Awareness Info Sheet

Your fictional story must incorporate the theme of **Disability Awareness**.

Disability Awareness is the practice of educating people, acknowledging, and accepting individuals' experiences as they relate to disability. Not all disabilities are the same, and disability awareness recognizes this; celebrating difference and identifying the beauty within our uniqueness. Your book can feature hidden or visible disabilities.

A disability is a physical or mental problem that makes it difficult or impossible for a person to walk, see, hear, speak, learn, or do other important things. Some disabilities are permanent or last forever. Others are temporary or last for only a short time. A disability can be something a person was born with. Or it can be the result of an illness or an accident. Some individuals may have a disability that cannot be seen.



A **physical disability** is a problem with the body. Physical disabilities may affect the eyes, the ears, the muscles, or the interior organs, such as the heart or lungs. Some people with a physical disability may use a wheelchair to move around.

A **mental disability** is a problem with the brain or mind. Mental disabilities include developmental disabilities, mental illness, and learning disabilities, such as dyslexia. A person with a mental disability may have trouble learning or getting along with other people.

Some disabilities don't have physical signs so we cannot always tell if someone has one. Some **hidden disabilities** include autism, mental health, sensory processing disorder, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, partial sight, and hearing loss.

Examples of Physical Disabilities:

- Arthritis
- Amputations and loss of limbs
- Birth defects
- Blindness
- Cerebral Palsy
- Cystic Fibrosis
- Epilepsy
- MS
- Neural tube defects
- Spina bifida



Examples of Mental Disabilities:

- Anxiety Disorders:
 - o OCD
 - o PTSD
 - o Panic disorders
- Behavioral Disorders:
 - o ODD
 - o ADHD
 - o Conduct Disorder
- Bipolar Disorder
- Depression
- Down Syndrome
- Eating Disorders
- Paranoia
- Psychosis
- Schizophrenia



Examples of Invisible/hidden Disabilities:

- Anxiety Disorder
- Autism
- Asthma
- ADHD
- Crohn's Disease
- Deafness & hearing loss
- Dementia
- Dyslexia
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- Fibromyalgia
- Lupus
- Lyme Disease
- PTSD



Do you know someone with a disability?

Research a disability to talk about in your book. Feel free to ask your friends and family for advice that you can learn from.

Remember your character doesn't have to be a person. It can be an animal or a thing that deals with the topic you choose.