

TYPES OF DISABILITIES, CHARACTERISTICS AND EXPECTATIONS

A disability is any condition of the body or mind that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to perform certain activities and interact with society around them.

There are many types and characteristics of disabilities:

Vision – loss or reduction of vision.

Hearing – loss or decrease of the auditory system which leads to difficulty with speech and language and learning.

Physical or Mobility – a physical or motor disability in which there is total or partial decrease in mobility in one or more members of the body. This could include paralysis, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, amputation.

Intellectual – limitations to one’s cognitive abilities such as information processing, perception, memory, attention, problem-solving.

Psychosocial – impairments in thinking, feeling, or relating to others. They can be intense and constant.

Multiple disabilities – two or more types of disabilities are present at the same time. Such as someone with a physical and intellectual disability.

But the limitations of individuals with disabilities can be minimized with the right tools. An impairment doesn’t mean that it can’t be overcome. That may mean an adaptive golf car for those with mobility disabilities. It may mean allowing a coach for an individual with vision disability to accompany that person on the course for assistance.

Society has certain expectations of people: expectations of education, employment, contributions to the common good. Unfortunately, those expectations often don’t extend from society to people with disabilities. But people with disabilities are problem solvers. They want to be seen, heard, believed, and taken seriously. They want to be respected, and not talked down to. First and foremost, they are individuals just like the rest of society. They just happen to have a disability. We should always use Person First language emphasizing the person versus the disability. We should all ensure that we are inclusive, meaning ensuring that programs include individuals with and without disabilities.

With over 61 million people with a disability in the United States with a discretionary income of over \$21 billion, individuals with disabilities are potential customers. They are going to pay for a green fee, buy something in a club’s golf shop, buy something in the 19th hole. As a result, we should all “Choose to Include”.