

# Welcome to MyCIL!



AN OVERVIEW OF WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO, AND WHO WE DO IT FOR.

# Who We Are.

## MyCIL's Mission Statement.

Our mission is to improve and enhance independent living options for people with disabilities and older adults who want to live independently.

MyCIL advocates for the elimination of architectural, attitudinal and communication barriers so that people with disabilities can determine the services they receive and fully participate in society.

In short, helping people with disabilities live their best lives at home.



## Created by a Movement

Ed Roberts founded the Independent Living movement and is often referred to as the Father of Independent Living.

# How Are CILs Unique?

- ❖ Center for Independent Living: CIL
- ❖ CILs were created by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- ❖ There are 403 CILs in the United States.
- ❖ Centers for Independent Living were created to be run by and for people with disabilities.
- ❖ CILs offer support, advocacy, and information on empowerment in the attainment of independence from a peer viewpoint.
- ❖ Centers for Independent Living are community-based, cross-disability, non-profit organizations that operate according to a strict philosophy of consumer control and choice.
- ❖ A minimum of 51% of our Board and Directors and staff are people with disabilities.

# Centers for Independent Living Provide:

- ❖ Peer Support
- ❖ Information and Referral
- ❖ Individual and Systems Advocacy
- ❖ Independent Living Skills Training
- ❖ Transition

# Systems Advocacy & Community Education

- ❖ Promoting Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- ❖ Advocating for increased Home & Community Based Services.
- ❖ Public speaking to remove attitudinal barriers.

Speaking of Attitudinal Barriers...

How Do You Sleep In That Thing?

**A Guide to Interacting with  
People with Disabilities**



# Presentation Goals:

- ▶ To provide general information about various disabilities, both visible and invisible.
- ▶ To discuss ways to effectively communicate and interact with people with disabilities in the workplace.



# Invisible Disabilities – What Are Those?

You might say to yourself, “I work at MyCIL where more than half our staff have a disability, but how come I only see a few?”

That’s a good question!

It’s because many of us have Invisible or Hidden Disabilities.

These are disabilities not seen physically, but they exist nonetheless.

96% of people with chronic medical conditions live with an illness that is invisible.

Examples of Invisible Disabilities include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ Addiction/Alcoholism
- ❖ Anxiety Disorders
- ❖ Asperger Syndrome
- ❖ Asthma
- ❖ Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD)
- ❖ Auditory or Visual Impairments
- ❖ Bipolar Disorder
- ❖ Brain Injuries
- ❖ Cancer

# Invisible Disabilities (continued)

- ❖ Chronic Dizziness
- ❖ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
- ❖ Crohn's Disease
- ❖ Chronic Pain
- ❖ Cystic Fibrosis
- ❖ Depression
- ❖ Diabetes
- ❖ Fibromyalgia
- ❖ Heart Conditions
- ❖ Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)
- ❖ Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)
- ❖ Lupus
- ❖ Lyme Disease
- ❖ Mental Illness
- ❖ Migraines
- ❖ Multiple Sclerosis
- ❖ Narcolepsy
- ❖ Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- ❖ Personality Disorders
- ❖ Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)
- ❖ Seizure Disorder
- ❖ Spine Disorders

# Invisible Disabilities – Mental Health (continued)

Approximately 44 million adults (over age 18) in the U.S. report having a mental health condition, representing about 18.5% of the U.S. population.

The National Institute of Mental Health estimates that:

18% have an anxiety disorder (including post-traumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic disorder and generalized anxiety disorder)

9.5% have depression

4% have attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder

2.6% have bipolar disorder

1% have schizophrenia

About 18% of workers in the U.S. report having a mental health condition in any given month. This means that psychiatric disability is one of the most common types of disability covered under the ADA.

# Invisible Disabilities – Mental Health (continued)

## Myths and Misperceptions

**Myth:** Individuals with mental health conditions cannot work in stressful or demanding jobs.

**Fact:** Many individuals with psychiatric disability can and do work effectively. How the condition impacts work life varies considerably and there is no “one size fits all.”

**Myth:** Individuals with mental health conditions have weak personalities or had bad childhoods.

**Fact:** Mental health conditions are brain disorders. They are not caused by a flawed personality or poor parenting.

**Myth:** Individuals with mental health conditions pose a danger to others in the workplace.

**Fact:** Despite the flashy headlines, there is no credible evidence that individuals with mental health conditions pose a danger to others in the workplace. In fact, people with psychiatric disability are far more likely to be victims than perpetrators of violence.

**Myth:** Individuals with mental health conditions cannot work until they are completely recovered.

**Fact:** Workplace accommodations enable many with psychiatric disabilities to work effectively with their disability.

# Visible Disabilities

## Should I or Shouldn't I?

- Don't assume everyone with a disability needs assistance.
- Individuals with disabilities want to be treated like everybody else.
- Offer assistance only if someone appears to need it.
- If you do assist someone, ask how you should assist before acting.
- Do not touch.
- Always speak directly to the person with a disability, not to their companion or interpreter.

## Tips Regarding Wheelchair Users (1 of 2)

- ▶ Keep ramps and wheelchair accessible doors to your building open and unblocked.
- ▶ Place items within reach.
- ▶ Provide a clear path of travel.
- ▶ When talking to someone who uses a wheelchair, sit at their level. It will make you comfortable as well.

## Tips Regarding Wheelchair Users (2 of 2)

- ▶ If you offer a seat to a person with a mobility impairment, keep in mind that chairs with arms are easier to use.
- ▶ Don't censor yourself. It's okay to say: "Are you walking to the office next door?"

## Tips Regarding People with Low Vision<sub>(1 of 2)</sub>

- ▶ Many people who are blind travel unassisted, though they may use a cane or service animal.
- ▶ Identify yourself before you make physical contact with a person who is blind.
- ▶ People who are blind need their arms for balance, so offer your arm – don't take theirs – if they need to be guided.
- ▶ If the person has a service animal, walk on the opposite side.



# Tips Regarding People with Low Vision (2 of 2)

- ▶ As you walk, describe the setting, noting any obstacles, such as stairs, cracks in the sidewalk, protruding objects.
- ▶ Give specific directions. Do not use visual information. (*Turn right at the end of the street as opposed to Turn right at the convenience store.*)
- ▶ If you leave someone who is blind, let them know.
- ▶ Don't pet or touch service animals.
- ▶ Offer to read written information (menus, bank statements, etc.)

# Tips Regarding People Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (1 of 2)

- ▶ When an exchange of information is complex, use a qualified Sign Language interpreter.
- ▶ Follow the person's cues to find out if they prefer Sign Language, gesturing, writing or speaking.
- ▶ Text messages for effective communication.

# Tips Regarding People Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (2 of 2)

- ▶ When using an interpreter, look directly at the person who is Deaf/H of H and maintain eye contact.
- ▶ Make sure you get their attention (wave your hand, flicker the lights, tap them on the shoulder.)
- ▶ When talking, face the person.

# Questions?

- ▶ Keith Williams, Advocacy & Outreach Coordinator
- ▶ ext. 303 [kwilliams@mycil.org](mailto:kwilliams@mycil.org)
  
- ▶ Bob Fox, Peer Counselor & Skills Trainer
- ▶ ext. 306 [rfox@mycil.org](mailto:rfox@mycil.org)