

Faculty > DISPELLING MYTHS ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Myth 1: Persons who have disabilities are brave and courageous.

Fact: Adjustment to a disability often requires adaptation to a lifestyle rather than bravery and courage.

Myth 2: Wheelchair use is confining; users of these devices are literally wheelchair bound.

Fact: A wheelchair, like an automobile, is a personal assistive device that enables a person with mobility impairments to get around.

Myth 3: All persons who are deaf or have hearing impairments can read lips.

Fact: Lip-reading skills vary greatly among individuals and are never totally reliable.

Myth 4: People who are blind acquire a “sixth sense”.

Fact: Although most people who are blind develop their remaining senses more than others, they have no “sixth sense.”

Myth 5: The lives of people with disabilities are entirely different from lives of most other people.

Fact: People with disabilities go to school, get married, work, have families, do laundry, grocery shop, laugh, cry, pay taxes, get angry, have prejudices, vote, plan for the future, and dream just as anyone else does.

Myth 6: Most people with disabilities are unable to have sexual relationships.

Fact: Any person can have a sexual relationship by adapting the sexual activity. People with disabilities can have children naturally or adopt them. Persons with disabilities, like any other person, are sexual beings.

Myth 7: People with disabilities always need help.

Fact: Many people with disabilities are quite independent and capable of giving help.

Myth 8: There is little one person can do to help eliminate barriers confronting persons with disabilities.

Fact: Every individual can contribute to change. You can remove barriers by:

- Understanding the need for “handicapped” parking and leaving it for those who need it.
- Encouraging participation of people with disabilities in community activities by making sure that community meeting and event places are accessible.
- Encourage a barrier-free environment.
- Work with SSD to identify ways in which barriers can be removed on campus.

Myth 9: People without disabilities don’t want to be around persons who have disabilities.

Fact: Lack of experience can make people uncomfortable. People, both able-bodied and disabled, must learn to reach out, introduce themselves, and help put others at ease.

Myth 10: People who offer help to persons with disabilities usually know how to give the help needed.

Fact: Good intentions and skills are not necessarily the same. If a disabled person accepts an offer for assistance, he/she must give specific instructions on what kind of help would be useful and how to provide it.

Myth 11: Providing accommodations to persons with disabilities gives them an unfair advantage over individuals without disabilities.

Fact: Accommodations are not intended to give individuals with disabilities an unfair advantage, but rather to help level the playing field for all individuals regardless of their disability.

Myth 12: If you cannot see the disability, it does not exist.

Fact: Hidden disabilities such as AD/HD, learning disabilities, and psychological disabilities, can create significant limitations or difficulties just as physical disabilities do for someone who is blind or in a wheelchair.

Source:

LSU Baton Rouge, Office of Disability Services, website.