Understanding what disabilities are can help us better serve individuals and groups who need specific accommodations as well as appreciate the differences between one another. Reflecting on the cultural, societal, and political shifts in the way we interact with people with disabilities encourages us to be humbled and critical of ourselves, our thoughts, and our actions.

**WHAT DOES DISABILITY MEAN?**
Disability is defined as a physical, mental, cognitive, or developmental condition that impairs, interferes with, or limits a person’s ability to engage in certain tasks or actions or participate in typical daily activities and interactions.

**EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT DISABILITIES**
Some types of disabilities include intellectual (Down syndrome), physical (paraplegia), acquired brain injury (stroke), neurological (epilepsy), deafblind, vision, hearing, speech, psychiatric (schizophrenia), and developmental delay (in children 0–5 years).

**WORDS NOT TO USE**
- “the disabled”
- “wheelchair-bound”
- “cripple”
- “deaf-mute”
- “crazy” or “psycho”
- “retard/retarded” or “slow”
- “special needs”

**WORDS TO USE**
- people with disabilities
- uses a wheelchair
- unable to walk
- Deaf
- mental disability or behavior disorder
- developmentally disabled
- accommodations are needed

**SOME MORE INFORMATION**
- In the U.S., the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed on May 21, 1992.
- Over 1 billion people in the world have some form of disability, that is 1 in 7 people.
- Children with disabilities are almost four times more likely to experience violence than non-disabled children, and adults are 1.5 times more likely.
- Adults with mental health conditions are at nearly four times the risk of experiencing violence.

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**
Understanding what disabilities are can help us better serve individuals and groups who need specific accommodations as well as appreciate the differences between one another. Reflecting on the cultural, societal, and political shifts in the way we interact with people with disabilities encourages us to be humble and critical of ourselves, our thoughts, and our actions.

**TO LEARN MORE, PLEASE CHECK OUT:**
- United Nations – International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- National Disability Services
- Colorado State University – Inclusive Language
- "Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution" on Netflix
- Rolling Warrior by Judith Heumann

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**
CELEBRATED ON DECEMBER 3RD
PROCLAIMED IN 1992 BY THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**“Mother of Disability Rights”**
- Contracted polio at 18 months old and left unable to walk
- Stars in “Crip Camp,” movie on Netflix
- At 22 years old, she was refused a teaching license by the Board of Education because she was physically handicapped.
- Heumann sued the Board of Education on basis of discrimination, which settled without a trial.
- Led by Heumann, 80 activists staged a sit in on Madison Avenue, stopping traffic.

Judith (Judy) Heumann
(Dec. 18, 1947-Present)
- "Mother of Disability Rights"
- In the U.S., the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed on May 9, 1992.
- Over 1 billion people in the world have some form of disability, that is 1 in 7 people.
- Children with disabilities are almost four times more likely to experience violence than non-disabled children, and adults are 1.5 times more likely.
- In the U.S., the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed on May 9, 1992.