D2L BRIGHTSPACE

WEBINAR

Creating Inclusive Workplaces

with Canadian National Institute for the Blind

CNIB

May 15, 2025

Meet Your Experts

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Agenda

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WELCOME

Warm hello from Brightspace Community

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INTRO TO GAAD

By Aleks Gligoric, D2L

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CREATING INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES

By Chelsea Masson, CNIB

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PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

By Carin Headrick, D2L

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Q&A

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[INTRO POLL] Quick Check-in

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Welcome!

Global Accessibility Awareness Day

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About Global Accessibility Awareness Day

- Co-founded by Joe Devon and Jennison Ascuncion
- First GAAD was in 2012
- Raise awareness about Digital Accessibility and inspire action

CHALLENGE: Accessibility know-how needs to go mainstream with developers. NOW.

Posted on November 27, 2011 | 67 Comments

First, let's agree on a **Global Accessibility Awareness Day**. This will be a day of the year where web developers across the globe try to raise awareness and know-how on making sites accessible.

Jennison Ascuncion
@Jennison

Replying to @joedevon

@joedevon I plan to tweet re your blog post tomorrow, but wanted to let you know I'm all over your idea of a Global #Accessibility Day.

8:02 PM · Nov 26, 2011

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About Accessibility

1.3 Billion

people worldwide experience significant disability[1]

94.8%

of home pages have WCAG 2 failures[2]

Sources:
[1] WHO Disability Fact Sheet
[2] WebAIM 2025 Million Report

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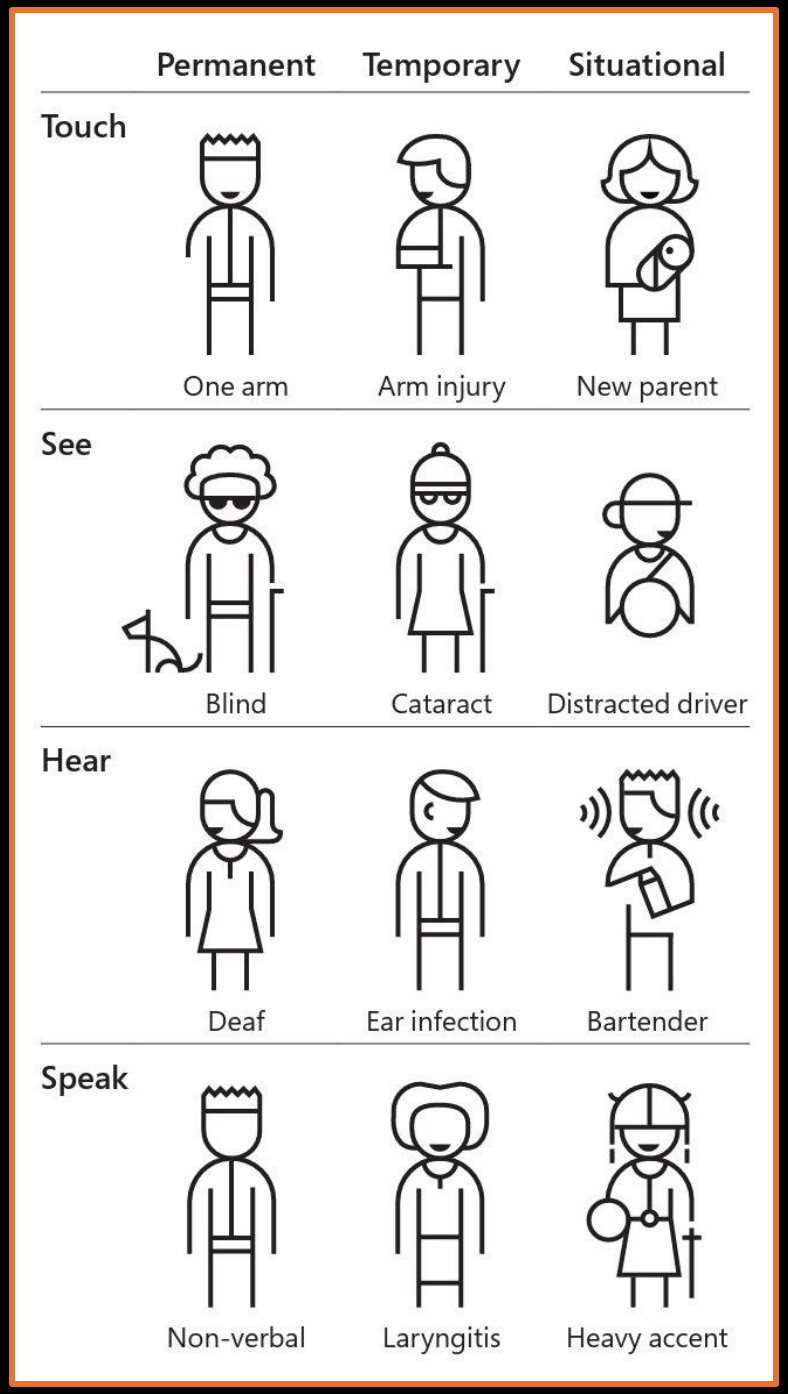
Common Disabilities

- Vision
- Hearing
- Motor
- Cognitive

These disabilities may be permanent, temporary, or situational.

People with disabilities may use assistive technologies (ATs) to help them access digital experiences.



Source: Microsoft Inclusive Guidebook

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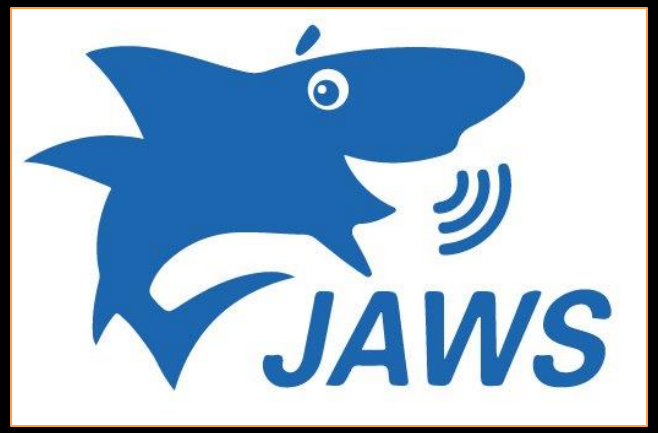
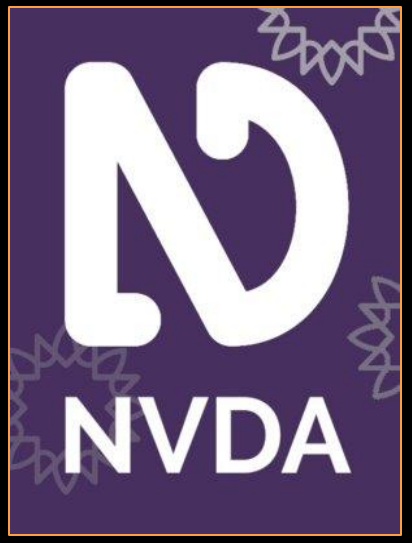
ATs for People with Sensory Disabilities

Screen readers, screen magnifiers, high contrast keyboards





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ATs for People with Physical Disabilities

Alternative keyboards, alternative input using physical devices: sip-n-puff, joystick mouse, roller joystick mouse, jellybean switch, and alternative speech input

DRAGON NATURALLYSPEAKING

ATs for People with Cognitive Disabilities

Programmable keyboards, e-reader, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices

ReadSpeaker

rw read&write

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D2L is Committed to Accessibility in Learning

We deliver a learning experience that meets the needs of all people, regardless of age or ability.

Our inclusive user experience research, design, and development processes mean **we consider accessibility and engage people with diverse abilities at every stage.**

D2L

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Inclusive User Experience Research & Design

Strategic Research & Exploratory Research

Design Exploration

Define & Test Solutions

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Who participates?

People with disabilities & users of assistive technologies (AT)

D2L User Experience Research Database

Fable

- Alternative navigation technologies
- Screen reader
- Screen magnification
- Emotional & cognitive disabilities

Accessibility in D2L's Design System

D2L DAYLIGHT

Accessibility – Dialogs

Focus Management

When opened, focus will be automatically placed within the dialog. The element to be focused will either be the content element having the optional autofocus attribute, or a focusable element identified by the dialog depending on the type of dialog. For `d2l-dialog` and `d2l-dialog-fullscreen`, the first focusable element will be focused. For `d2l-dialog-confirm`, the least destructive action will be focused, which is assumed to be the first non-primary button in the footer.

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CNIB

FOUNDATION

Creating Inclusive Workplaces

About This Presentation

This session will focus on creating inclusive workspaces for individuals with vision loss. While the emphasis is on sight loss, many of these principles apply to all disabilities, with minor adjustments to meet specific needs. The goal is to equip workplaces with the knowledge and strategies to ensure accessibility and inclusivity for all employees.

CNIB COME TO WORK

Who We Are – A Brief History of CNIB

- Founded in 1918 following WWI and the Halifax Explosion
- Over 100 years of advocacy for people with vision loss
- Leaders in accessibility, education, tech, and employment
- Come to Work launched in 2018 – CNIB's fastest-growing program

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Why Inclusive Workplaces Matter - The stats on Inclusive Workplaces

- 35% more innovative than competitors (McKinsey)
- 2.3x higher cash flow per employee (Deloitte)
- 83% more employee engagement (Deloitte)
- 78% better employee retention (Glassdoor)
- 76% of consumers prefer inclusive brands (Accenture)
- 19% higher innovation revenue (BCG)

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Success stories

- Success Stories of Individuals Thriving in Various Careers
- Technology & IT:
- Software Engineer with Sight Loss
  John, a software developer with sight-loss, uses screen readers and coding accessibility tools to build applications at a major tech firm. His employer ensures all development tools are compatible with assistive technology.
- Finance & Business:
- Financial Analyst with Low Vision
  Sarah, who has partial sight, works as a financial analyst. She uses screen magnification software and customized spreadsheets to analyze market trends for her firm.

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The facts about sight loss

- More than 2.1 million Canadians live with some form of sight loss.
- Majority of people with vision loss retain some functional vision

- Common Causes of Vision Loss:
- Age-related macular degeneration (AMD)
- Glaucoma & diabetic retinopathy – 30% combined.
- Other conditions (including congenital blindness) – 20%.
- Sight loss does not dictate skill, work ethic or potential.
- Blindness does not impact your other senses

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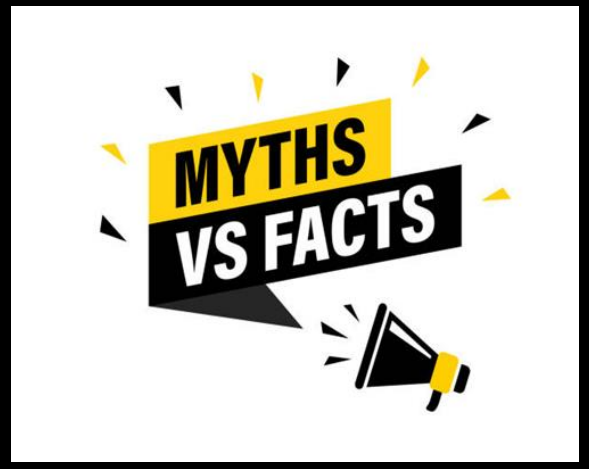
Common Myths vs. Facts About Sight Loss

1. **Myth: Blind people cannot use computers.**
2. **Myth: People with vision loss only work in certain industries.**
3. **Myth: Accommodating employees with vision loss is expensive.**



4. Myth: People with vision loss cannot travel independently to work.
5. Myth: people vision loss needs to feel your face to know who you are
6. Myth: everyone with vision loss uses a guide dog or a white cane

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Communication

Question: How would you introduce yourself to a colleague with sight loss?

Communication cont.

Be Natural

- When talking to someone blind or partially sighted , act like you would with anyone else.
- Introduce yourself by name and wait for them to offer their hand.
- Speak in a normal tone, speed and volume.
- Address them directly. Don’t just talk to the person they’re with or, in the case of someone who’s deafblind, their intervenor.
- Don’t worry about using sight-related phrases like “see you later.”

Be Considerate

- Introduce yourself by name every time you greet someone so they don’t have to guess your voice.
- Verbally acknowledge when someone has entered or left a room or conversation.
- Be specific with directions. Instead of saying, “The door is over there,” say: “The door is on your right, about 20 feet away.”

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Workplace Expectations

- Employees with sight loss are held to the same performance standards as others
- Responsibilities and expectations should be clear and consistent for all
- Professional development and advancement opportunities must be accessible

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Legal Workplace Rights & Accessibility (Canada-Specific

- Under The Accessible Canada Act (ACA) and provincial human rights codes, employers are legally required to provide reasonable accommodations.
- Employers must ensure equal access to job opportunities, workplace technologies, and professional growth without discrimination.
- Duty to Accommodate: Employers must make adjustments unless it causes undue hardship

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Physical Accessibility

- Try to limit clutter on the floor – especially in hallways.
- Keep doors either fully open or closed.
- If someone who is blind or partially sighted is about to run into you, move out of their way or say something like “I am standing against the wall, you can pass on your left”.

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Guide Dog Etiquette

Guide Dog FAQ

- **1. Can a guide dog go into all work areas?**
- **2. What if a coworker is allergic to dogs?**

- **Workplace Policies Related to Service Animals**
- **Guide dogs are legally allowed in all workplaces under the Canadian Human Rights Act and provincial accessibility laws (e.g., the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act - AODA).Employers cannot deny entry to a guide dog unless there are significant health or safety concerns.**
- **Workplace policies should include Guidelines for:**
- **interacting with service animals (e.g., do not distract or pet them).**
- **A process for resolving coworker concerns, such as allergies or fear of dogs.**

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Providing Assistance

- Question: What should you do if you see a colleague who is blind or partially sighed struggling with a new environment?

Being a sighted Guide

- Always Ask First– Never assume. Respect their choice.
- Let Them Take Your Arm. Offer your arm just above the elbow. They walk half a step behind you.
- Communicate Movements. Announce changes
- Never Leave Them in Open Space. Guide to a solid object (chair, wall, railing) before stepping away.
- Deafblind Tip: The ‘X’ Gently trace an X on the back to signal it’s time to move. Stay calm and clear.
- Be a Guide—Not in Control, You’re walking with them, not for them. It’s about support, not taking over.

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Best Practices for Inclusive Meetings & Presentations

- Share documents in accessible formats (e.g., tagged PDFs, readable Word files)
- Use accessible slide layouts and alt text for images
- Creating an Inclusive Environment
- Acknowledge individuals as they enter
- Introduce all attendees, including location/context if in person

- Effective Communication
- Verbally describe all visuals (slides, charts, videos)
- Identify yourself before speaking
- Address participants by name when needed
- Avoid gestures or non-verbal cues without explanation

- Supporting Engagement
- State clearly when the meeting starts and ends
- Leave space for questions and confirm understanding

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Making Workstations accessible

- Come to Work also helps employers learn about assistive technologies.
- These supports are often simple and inexpensive. Employers should talk to applicants and employees about their specific accommodations.

- Assistive tech that makes computers and smartphones more accessible include:
- JAWS and NVDA for screen reading;
- ZoomText for screen magnification;
- Built-in features such as Voiceover on iOS and Talkback on Android
- "Accessibility Check" is another built-in feature on Microsoft Office.

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Get involved become a Mentor

- Support an inclusive workforce by mentoring job seekers with sight loss
- Share your expertise in a flexible, 3-month commitment (1 hour/month)
- Develop leadership and coaching skills within your team
- Help build confidence, skills, and connections for job seekers
- Use of MentorCity – an accessible, goal-driven platform

- To learn more or to sign up as a mentor Visit: cometowork.ca/mentors

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Resources – Not Sure? Ask!

- **CNIB Foundation Programs and Resources:** https://www.cnib.ca
- **Sighted Guide Videos:** https://cnib.ca/en/guiding-someone?region=gta
- **Clear Our Path:** https://www.clearingourpath.ca
- **Accessible Payment terminals:** https://cnib.ca/en/accessible-payment-terminals
- **Guide Dog:** https://cnib.ca/en/guide-dog-legislation
- **Workplace Accessibility:** https://www.cnib.ca/en/sight-loss-info/blindness-work/creating-inclusive-workplace?region=on
- **Frontier Accessibility:** https://frontier-cnib.ca
- **Learn more about today's discussion and engage in Opening Doors to Opportunities – email: cometowork@cnib.ca**

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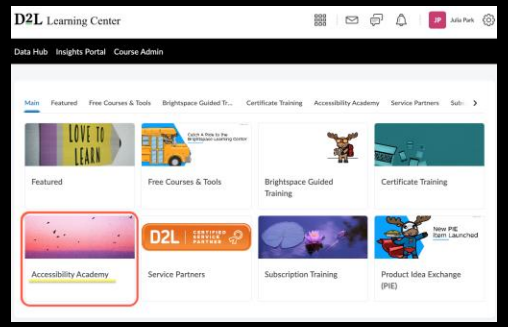

D2L's Accessibility Academy

- 3 Keys to More Accessible Communications
- Accessible Virtual Presentations

Online Accessibility Lab

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[OUTRO POLL] Quick Check-in

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D2L's Accessibility Interest Group (AIG)

First Thursday of every month
(except January and July)

Join AIG

11 a.m. to 12 p.m. ET
Online - Zoom

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Q&A

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Thank you for joining us today

Happy #GAAD!