INVISIBLE DISABILITIES IN THE WORKPLACE

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Outline

DEI: CENTERING DISABILITY

REDEFINING DISABILITY

BARRIERS TO INCLUSION

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCLUSION

DEI: Centering Disability

Diversity

A diverse workplace means that an organization employs a diverse team of people that mirrors the society it exists and operates in. Diversity refers to the various elements that make individuals unique from one another.

Mallery, T. 2018. Diversity, equity and inclusion: explained [Blog, June 21].

DEI: Centering Disability

Equity

An equitable workplace is one that recognizes the various needs of employees and that all employees do not have, or have not had, the same access to resources and opportunities. Organizations striving for equity focus on bridging the gap between minorities and majority groups.

Mallery, T. 2018. Diversity, equity and inclusion: explained [Blog, June 21].

# DEI: Centering Disability

Inclusion

An inclusive workplace is an environment where all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to support, opportunities, and resources, and are invited to fully participate in the organization's activities.

Mallery, T. 2018. Diversity, equity and inclusion: explained [Blog, June 21].

Disability Inclusion

ACCORDING TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, PEOPLE

"with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory [such as hearing or vision] impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."
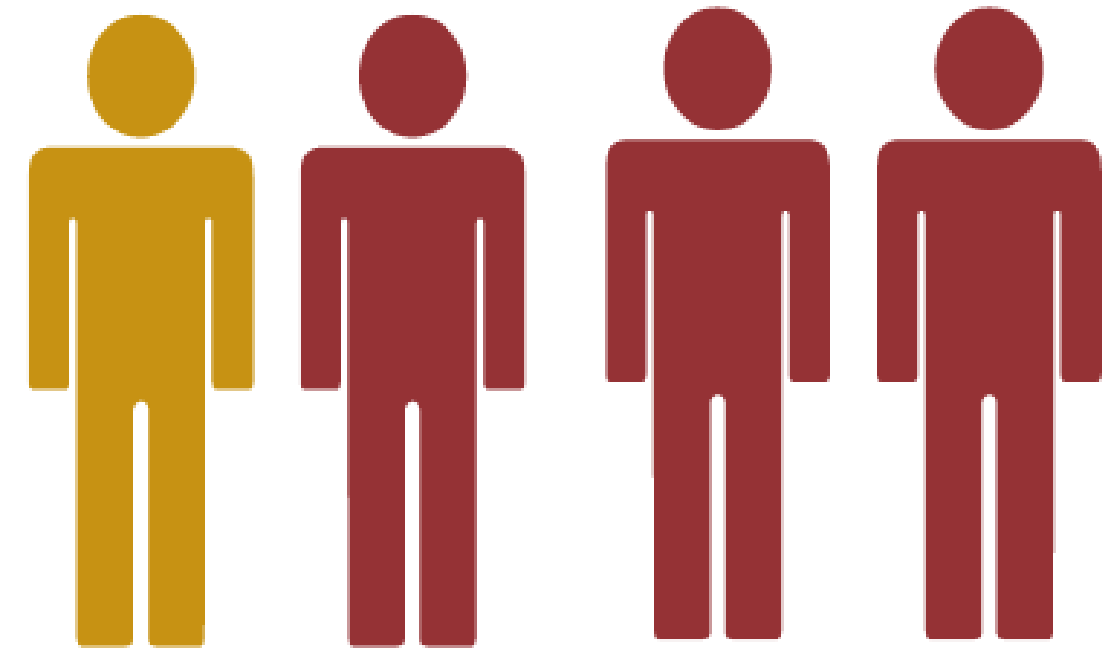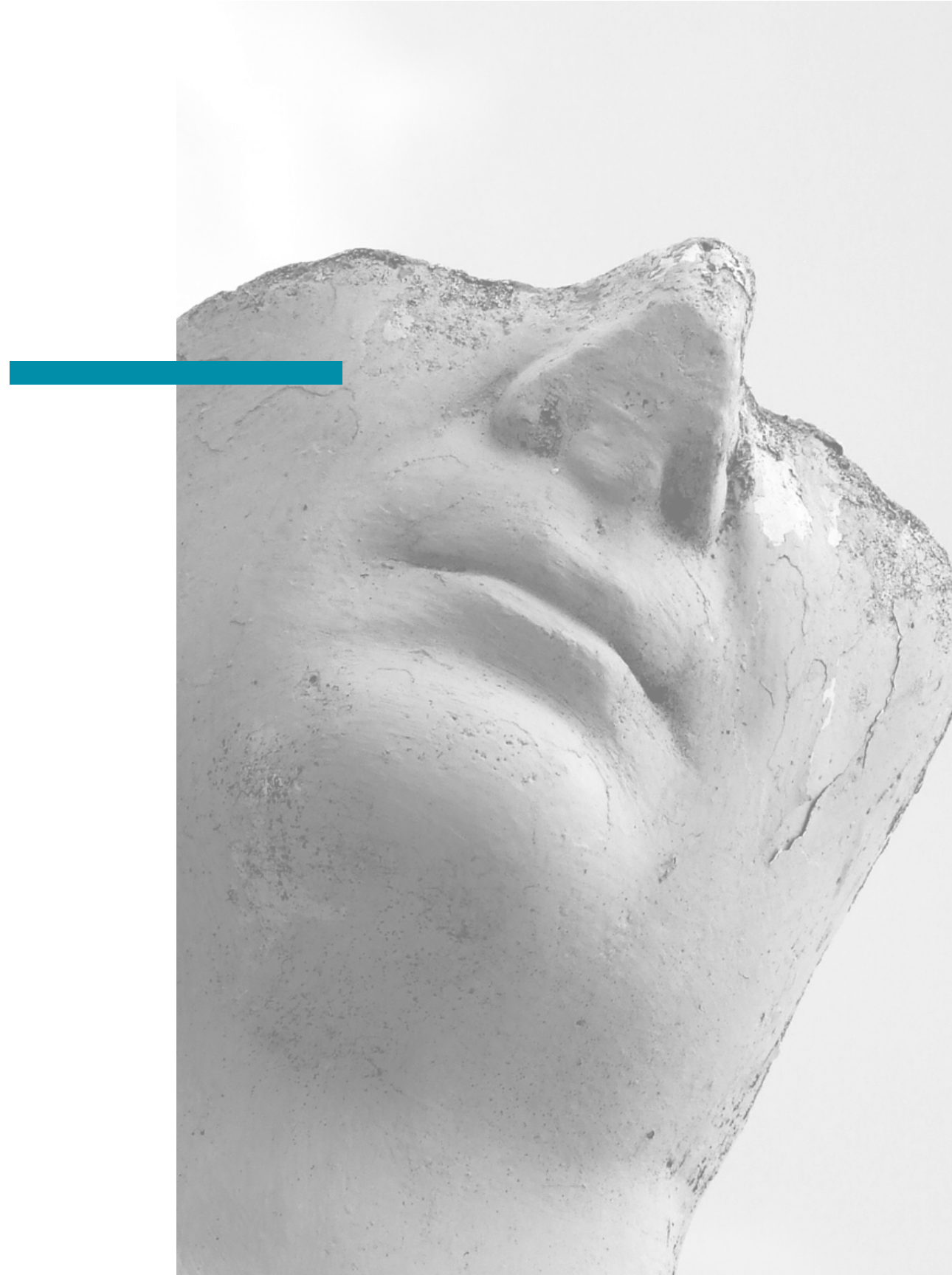
One in four American adults has a disability.*

*2016 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

In our imaginations, what often comes to mind when we hear the term "Disability?"

Redefining Disability
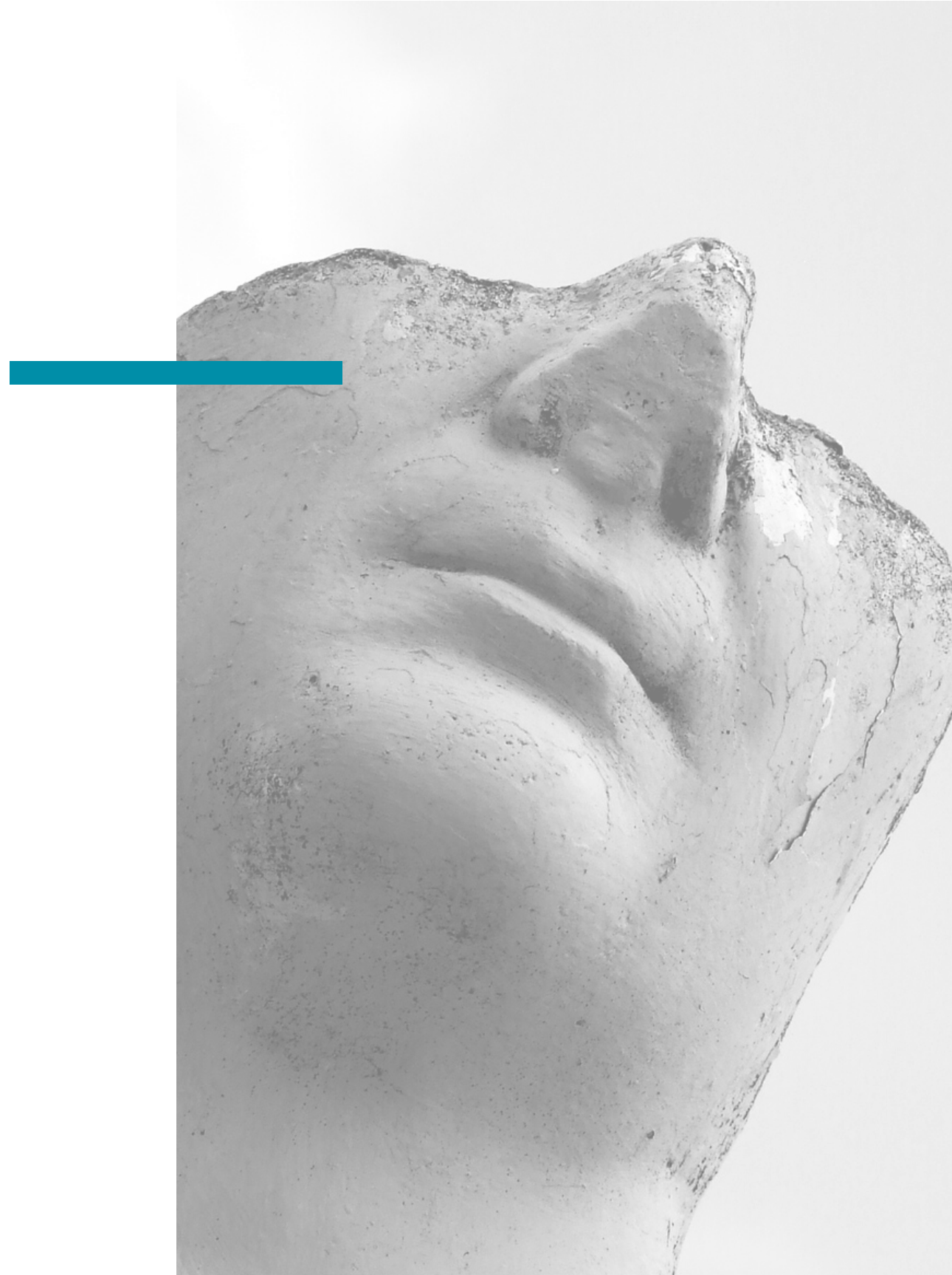
MYTH 1
Disability equates to illness

MYTH 2
Disability persists no matter the context

MYTH 3
Persons with disabilities cannot advocate for themselves

Lollar, D. J. (2014). Public health perspectives on disability. Springer.

Redefining Disability
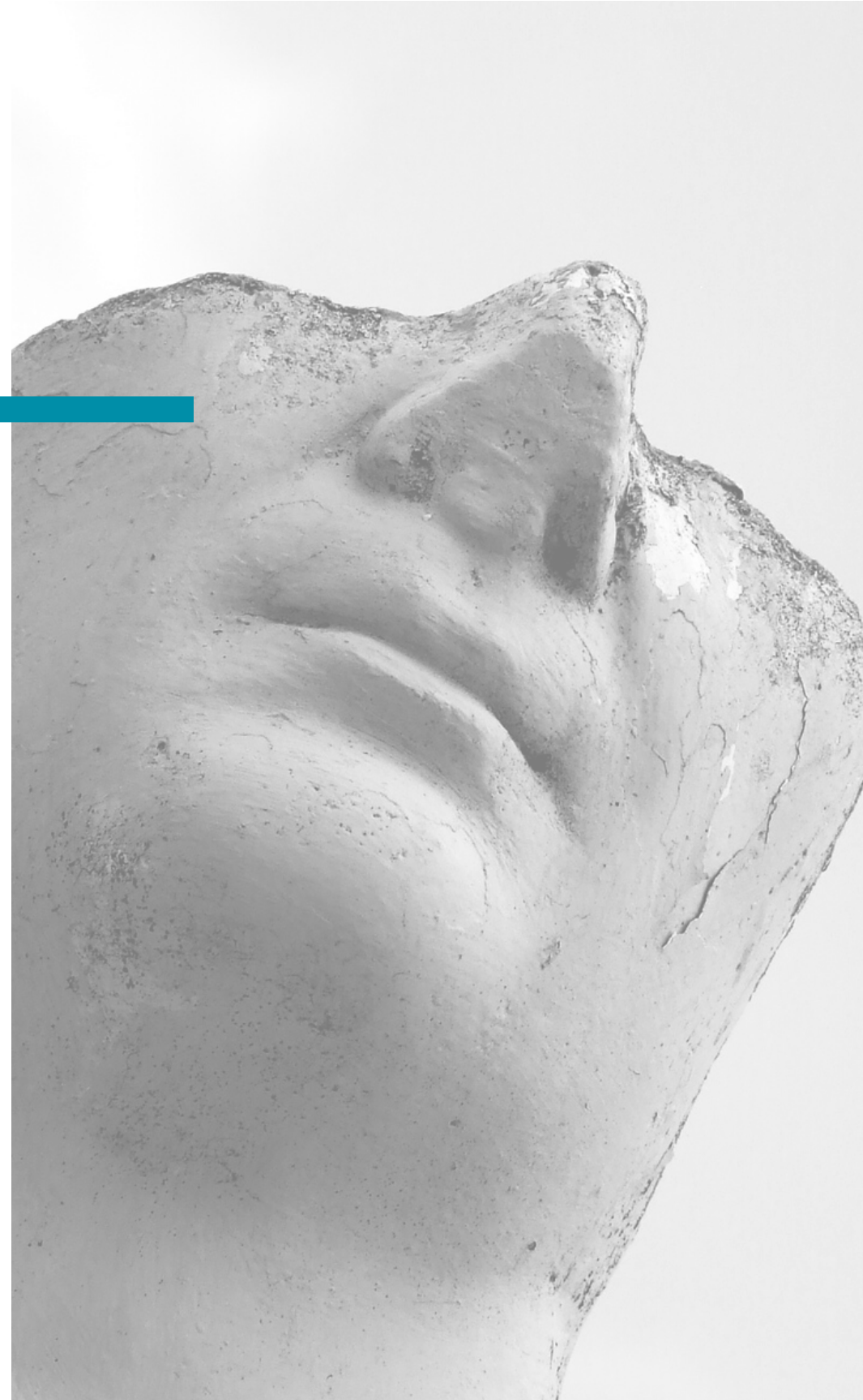
REALITY 1
Disability does not always equate to illness

REALITY 2
Disability persists because of the context

REALITY 3
Persons with disabilities can advocate for themselves...and prefer to!

Lollar, D. J. (2014). Public health perspectives on disability. Springer.

Redefining Disability

Impairment
any condition of the body or mind (impairment)

+

Activity Limitation
makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities

+

Participation Restrictions
makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to interact with the world around them

Lollar, D. J. (2014). Public health perspectives on disability. Springer
ADA.gov.

Major Life Activities

- **breathing**
- **walking**
- **talking**
- **hearing**
- **seeing**
- **sleeping**
- **caring for one's self**
- **performing manual tasks**
- **working**

- **immune system functions**
- **digestive**
- **bowel**
- **bladder**
- **neurological**
- **brain**
- **respiratory**
- **circulatory**
- **reproductive functions**

Redefining Disability

Impairment	
any condition of the body or mind (impairment)	

$+$

Barriers
a set of norms, attitudes, policies, and structure

Lollar, D. J. (2014). Public health perspectives on disability. Springer.

Redefining Disability

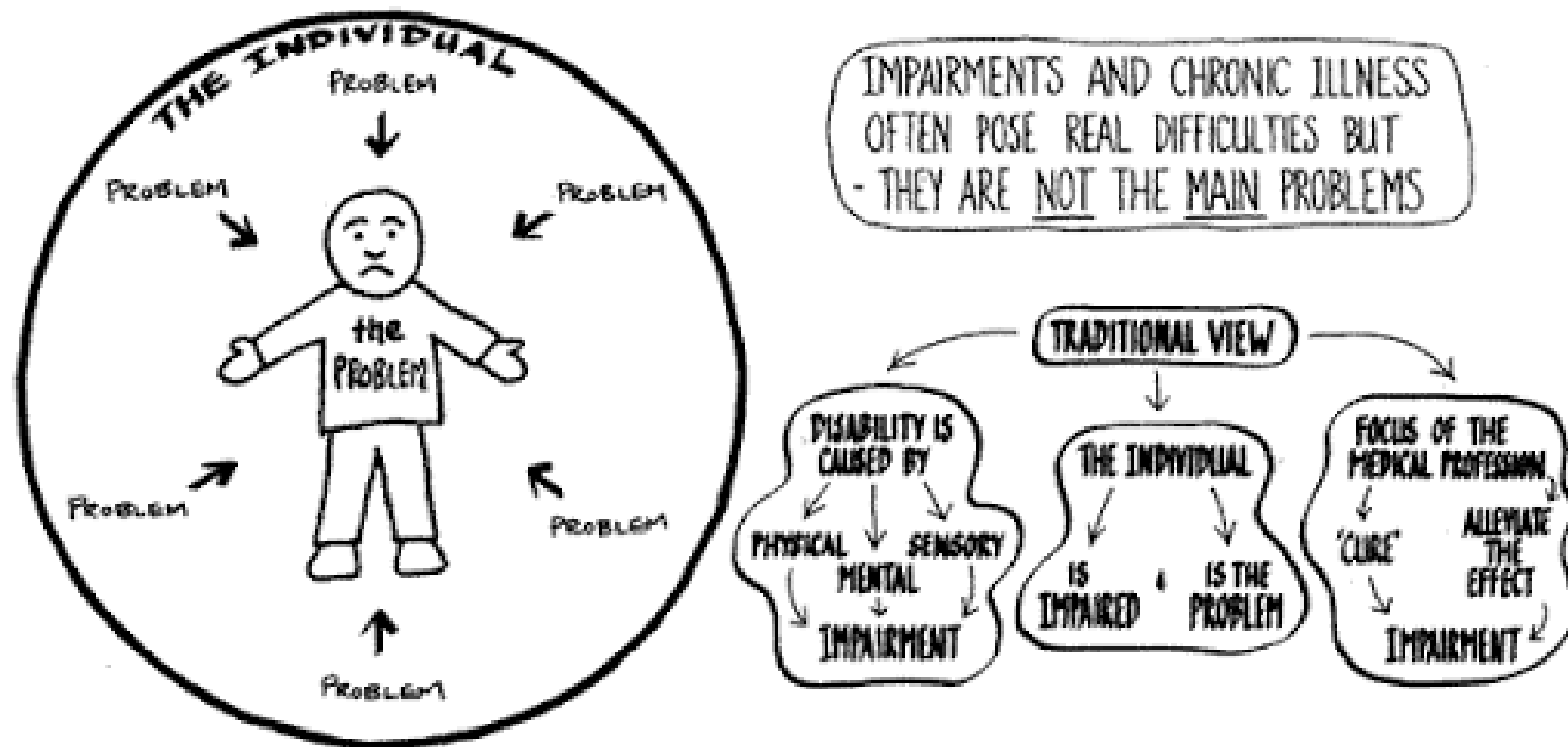| Impairment any condition of the body or mind (impairment)	+	Barriers a set of norms, attitudes, policies, and structure

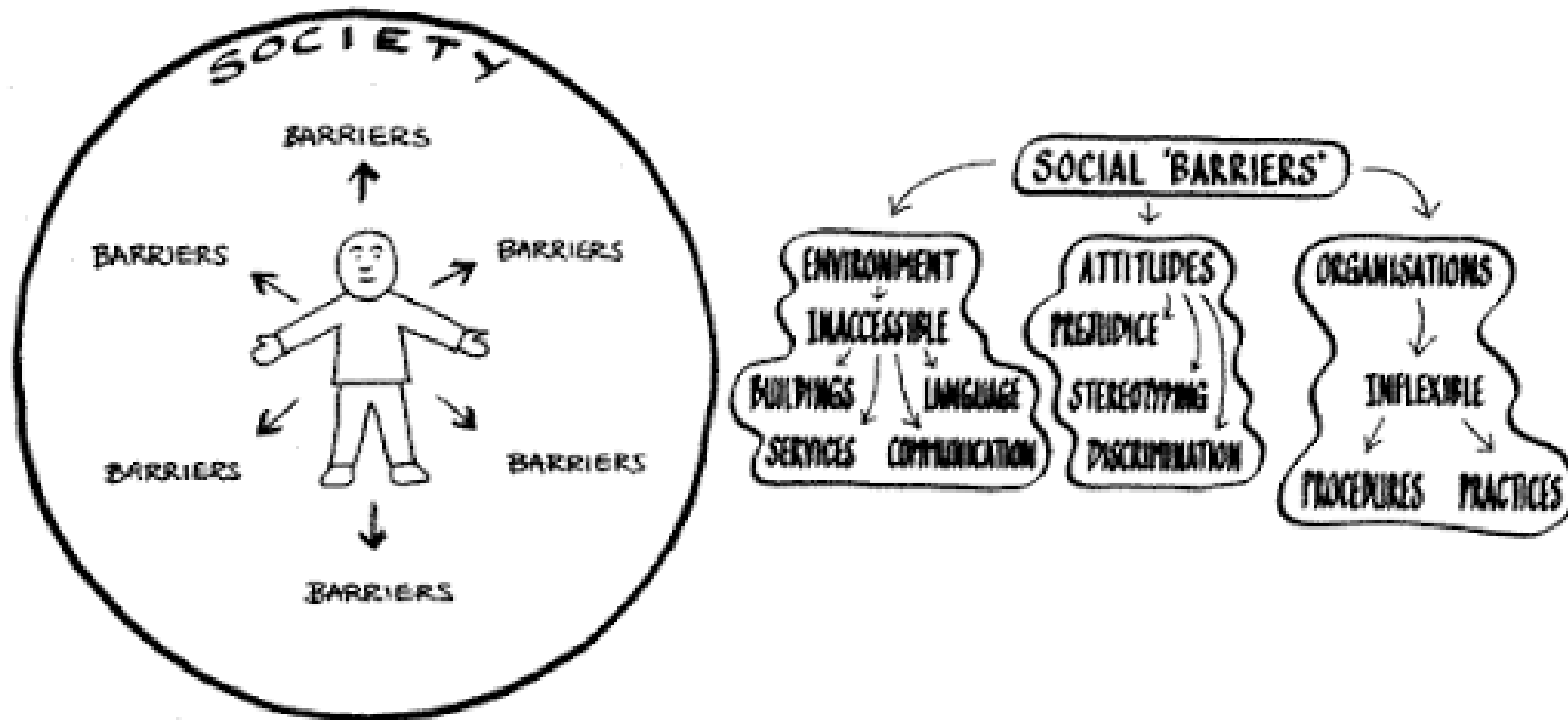| Impairment any condition of the body or mind (impairment)	+	**Changing of Barriers** a set of norms, attitudes, policies, and structure

INCLUSION

Lollar, D. J. (2014). Public health perspectives on disability. Springer.
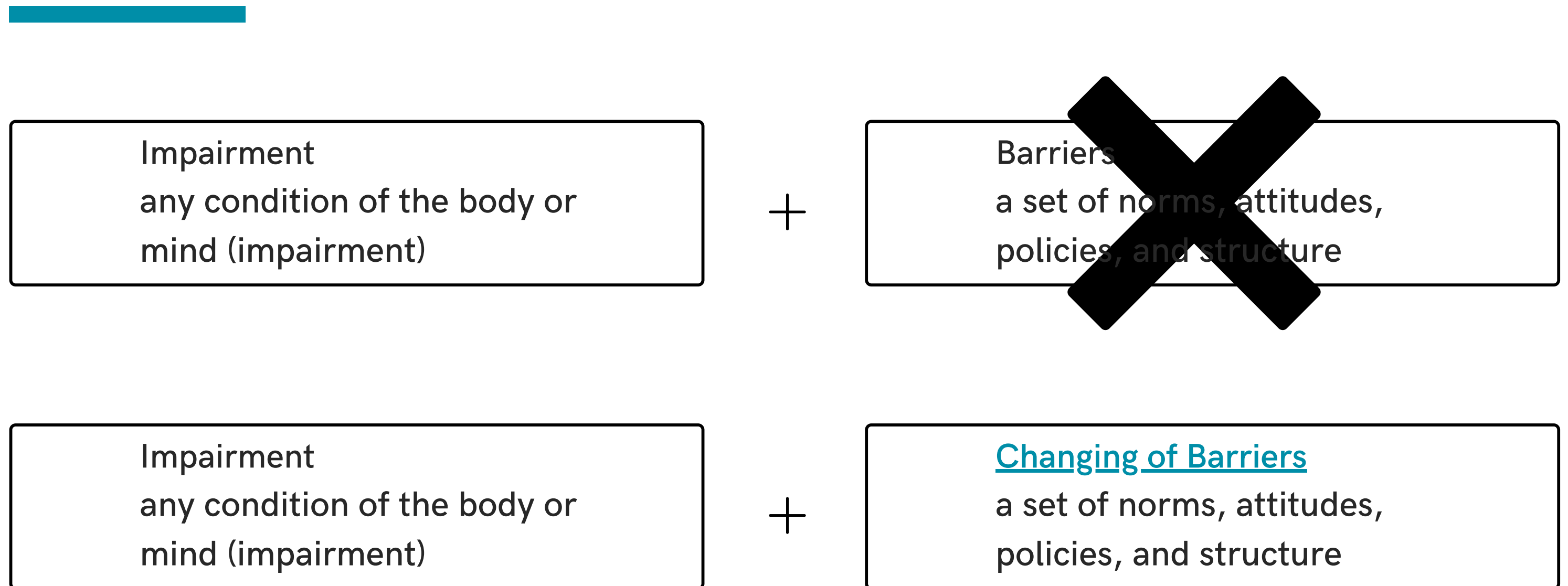
Medical Model of Disability

THE MEDICAL MODEL OF DISABILITY

THE INDIVIDUAL

PROBLEM

PROBLEM

PROBLEM

PROBLEM

PROBLEM

PROBLEM

the PROBLEM

IMPAIRMENTS AND CHRONIC ILLNESS OFTEN POSE REAL DIFFICULTIES BUT - THEY ARE NOT THE MAIN PROBLEMS

TRADITIONAL VIEW

DISABILITY IS CAUSED BY

PHYSICAL   SENSORY
     MENTAL

IMPAIRMENT

THE INDIVIDUAL

IS IMPAIRED   IS THE PROBLEM

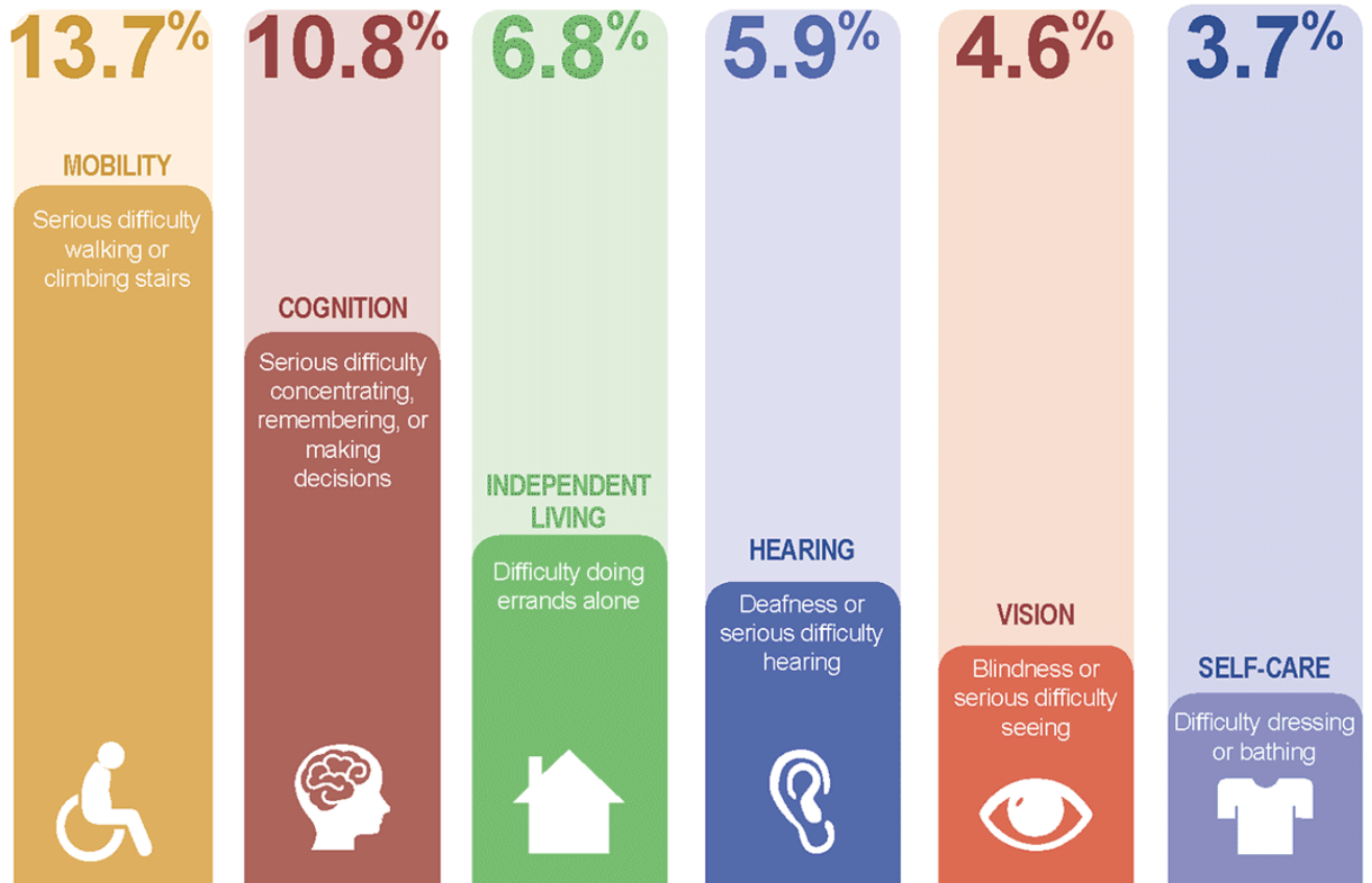FOCUS OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION

'CURE'   ALLEVIATE THE EFFECT

IMPAIRMENT

Social Model of Disability

THE SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY

Percentage of adults with functional disability types

13.7%

MOBILITY

Serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs

10.8%

COGNITION

Serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions

6.8%

INDEPENDENT LIVING

Difficulty doing errands alone

5.9%

HEARING

Deafness or serious difficulty hearing

4.6%

VISION

Blindness or serious difficulty seeing

3.7%

SELF-CARE

Difficulty dressing or bathing

www.cdc.gov/disabilities

Visible Disabilities

Paraplegia

Quadriplegia

Cerebral palsy

Speech impairment

Absent limb/reduced limb function
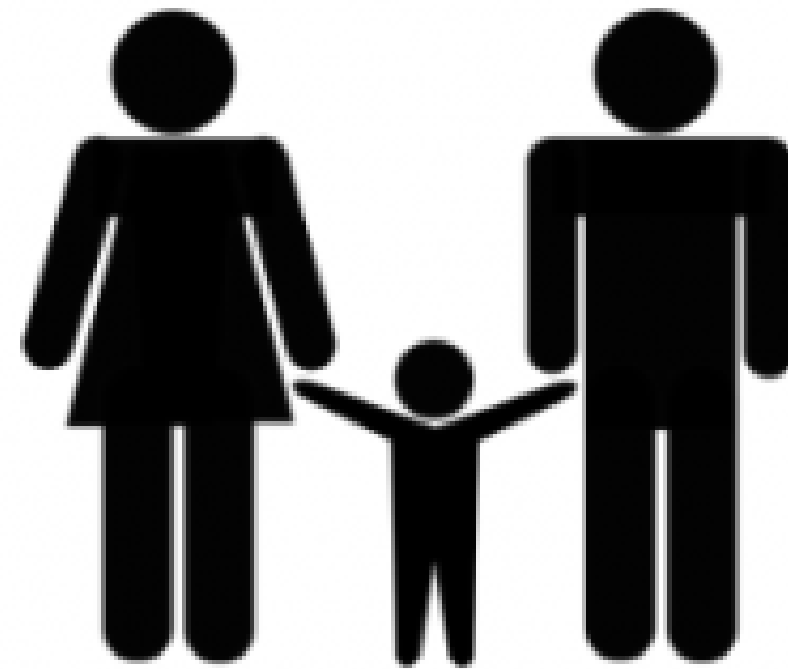
Blindness

Not all disabilities ← look like this

Some → look like this

Percentage of adults with functional disability types

13.7% MOBILITY — Serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs

10.8% COGNITION — Serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions

6.8% INDEPENDENT LIVING — Difficulty doing errands alone

5.9% HEARING — Deafness or serious difficulty hearing

4.6% VISION — Blindness or serious difficulty seeing

3.7% SELF-CARE — Difficulty dressing or bathing

www.cdc.gov/disabilities

Invisible Disabilities

AIDS/HIV

ADHD

Bipolar disorder

Cancer

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Diabetes

Epilepsy

GI disorders

Hearing Loss

Heart Conditions

Learning Disabilities

Lupus

Lyme Disease

Migraine Headaches

Multiple Sclerosis

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity

PTSD

Respiratory Disorders

Sleep Disorders

Arthritis

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is a major cause of death and disability in the United States.

Those who survive a TBI can face effects that last a few days, or the rest of their lives.

Effects of TBI can include impairments related to thinking or memory, movement, sensation (e.g., vision or hearing), or emotional functioning (e.g., personality changes, depression).

These issues not only affect individuals but also can have lasting effects on families and communities.

1. **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019). Surveillance Report of Traumatic Brain Injury-related Emergency Department Visits, Hospitalizations, and Deaths—United States, 2014. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.**
2. **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Report to Congress on mild traumatic brain injury in the United States: steps to prevent a serious public health problem. Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2003.**

Traumatic Brain Injury

Aparajita Jeedigunta , PhD

Invisible Disabilities and Inclusion

by Aparajita Jeedigunta | Apr 9, 2019 | Diversity and Inclusion, Invisible Illness and Injury, Mental Health | 0 comments

Not all disabilities look like this

Some disabilities look like this

grumpylittles

Here are a few of the things I have personally heard in my life about my invisible Traumatic Brain Injuries

- "… You shouldn't tell others about your condition. It makes people uncomfortable. You'll never get work/make friends/find a spouse/be taken seriously."

- "… It's all just in your head. You should get over it!"

- "… If you really have a brain injury, show me your medical reports. Otherwise I know you're lying."

- "… You don't act … slow or damaged… at all!"

- "… But you don't look like I imagine a brain injured person would!"

- "… Stop focusing on your disability."

Depression is more than just sadness.

People with depression may experience a lack of interest and pleasure in daily activities, significant weight loss or gain, insomnia or excessive sleeping, lack of energy, inability to concentrate, feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt and recurrent thoughts of death or suicide.

Depression is the most common mental disorder. Fortunately, depression is treatable. A combination of therapy and antidepressant medication can help ensure recovery.

Depression —

People with anxiety disorders usually have recurring intrusive thoughts or concerns.

Anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure.

They may avoid certain situations out of worry. They may also have physical symptoms such as sweating, trembling, dizziness or a rapid heartbeat.

Anxiety

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common mental disorders affecting children.

ADHD also affects many adults.

Symptoms of ADHD include inattention (not being able to keep focus), hyperactivity (excess movement that is not fitting to the setting) and impulsivity (hasty acts that occur in the moment without thought).

ADHD is often first identified in school-aged children when it leads to disruption in the classroom or problems with schoolwork. It can also affect adults. It is more common among boys than girls.

ADHD

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) inattentive type

- Doesn't pay close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in school or job tasks.
- Has problems staying focused on tasks or activities, such as during lectures, conversations or long reading.
- Does not seem to listen when spoken to (i.e., seems to be elsewhere).

ADHD —

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) hyperactive type

- Talks too much.
- Blurts out an answer before a question has been finished (for instance may finish people's sentences, can't wait to speak in conversations).
- Has difficulty waiting his or her turn, such as while waiting in line.

ADHD

Chronic pain is usually defined as any persistent or intermittent pain that lasts more than 3 months

Chronic pain is a major public health problem, with epidemiological studies reporting that in the USA and Europe, approximately one fifth of the general population are affected.

Clinical studies have revealed that chronic pain, as a stress state, often induced depression and that up to 85% of patients with chronic pain are affected by severe depression

Chronic Pain

05

Mental Health and Chronic Illness

Chronic illnesses such as cancer, heart disease, or diabetes may make you more likely to have or develop a mental health condition.

It is common to feel sad or discouraged after having a heart attack, receiving a cancer diagnosis, or when trying to manage a chronic condition such as pain

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NIMH: Chronic Illness and Mental Health: Recognizing and Treating Depression
https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/chronic-illness-mental-health/index.shtml

05

Mental Health and Chronic Illness

Depression is common among people who have chronic illnesses such as:

- Alzheimer's disease
- Autoimmune diseases, including systemic lupus erythematosus, rheumatoid arthritis, and psoriasis
- Cancer
- Coronary heart disease
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- HIV/AIDS
- Parkinson's disease
- Stroke

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NIMH: Chronic Illness and Mental Health: Recognizing and Treating Depression
https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/chronic-illness-mental-health/index.shtml

General Barriers to Inclusion

STIGMA

01

Persons with an invisible disability have negative views of disclosing their disability to employers for a fear of being labeled

IGNORANCE

02

People with invisible disabilities can have dramatic limitations with typical work activities, and it can be difficult for co-workers to acknowledge, recognize and understand the disability.

A lack of sensitivity to someone's disability, especially an invisible disability, can create misunderstandings, resentment and frustration, worsening the situation. Co-workers could consider someone with an invisible disability to be lazy, weak, antisocial, incompetent, aloof or distant.

Attitudinal Barriers to Inclusion

INFERIORITY

01 Because a person may be impaired in one of life's major functions, some people believe that individual is a "second-class citizen."

PITY

02 People feel sorry for the person with a disability, which tends to lead to patronizing attitudes.

HERO WORSHIP

03 People consider someone with a disability who lives independently or pursues a profession to be brave or "special" for overcoming a disability.

Attitudinal Barriers to Inclusion

04 THE SPREAD EFFECT

People assume that an individual's disability negatively affects other senses, abilities or personality traits, or that the total person is impaired.

05 STEREOTYPES

The other side of the spread effect is the positive and negative generalizations people form about disabilities..

06 DENIAL

Many disabilities are "hidden," such as learning disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, epilepsy, cancer, arthritis and heart conditions. People tend to believe these are not bona fide disabilities needing accommodation.

Attitudinal Barriers to Inclusion

07 FEAR

Many people are afraid that they will "do or say the wrong thing" around someone with a disability. They therefore avert their own discomfort by avoiding the individual with a disability.
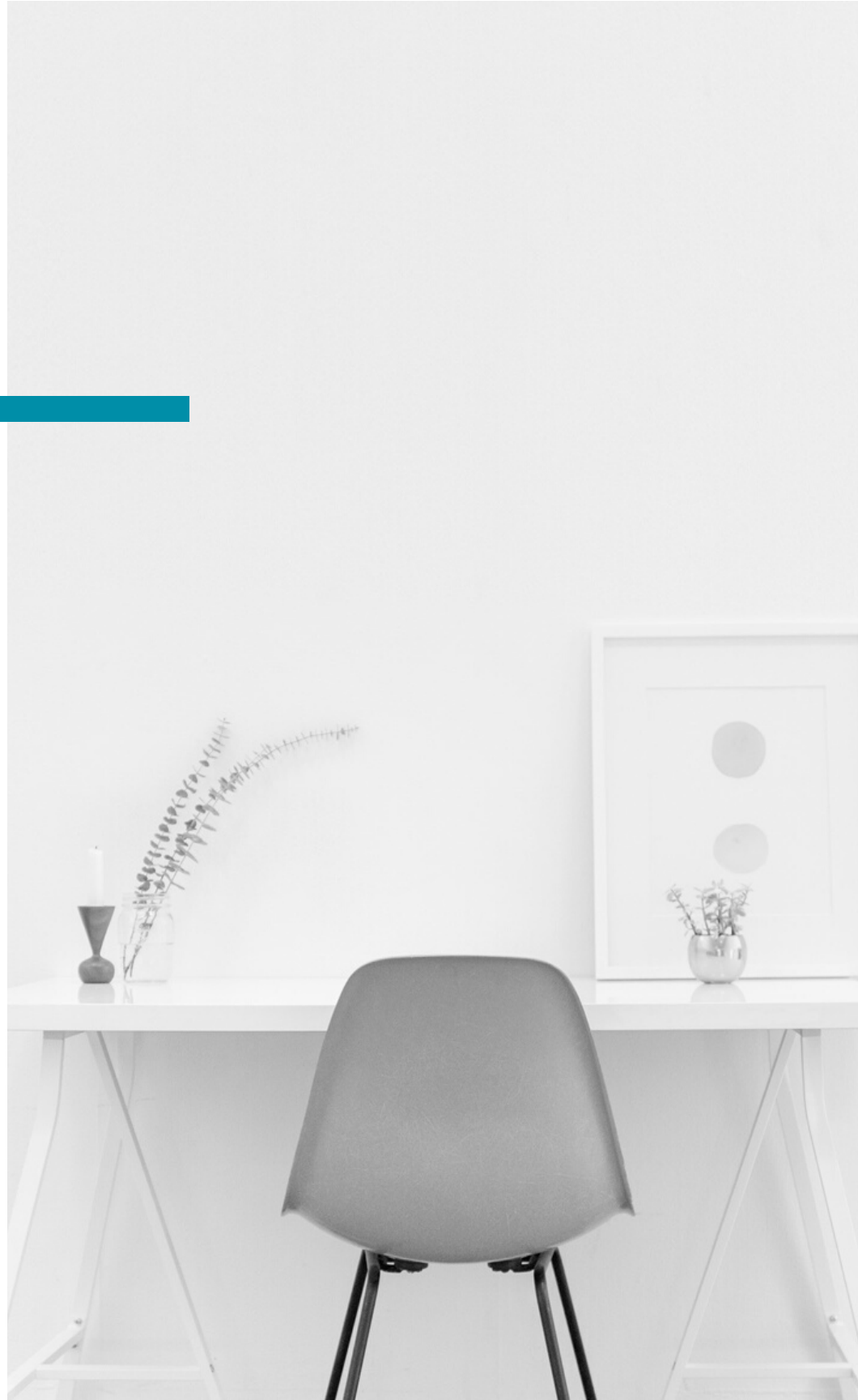
08 BACKLASH

Many people believe individuals with disabilities are given unfair advantages, such as easier work requirements.

61 million Americans experiencing functional difficulties associated with disability (CDC, 2020)

**So, how can we be more inclusive?**

Opportunities for Inclusion

ONBOARDING

- Offer all employees diversity and inclusion training inclusive of those who manage invisible disabilities

- Make the processes for obtaining reasonable accommodations transparent

- Introduce the benefits and the importance of existing within an environment that supports the needs of ALL employees as members of the team and organization

Opportunities for Inclusion
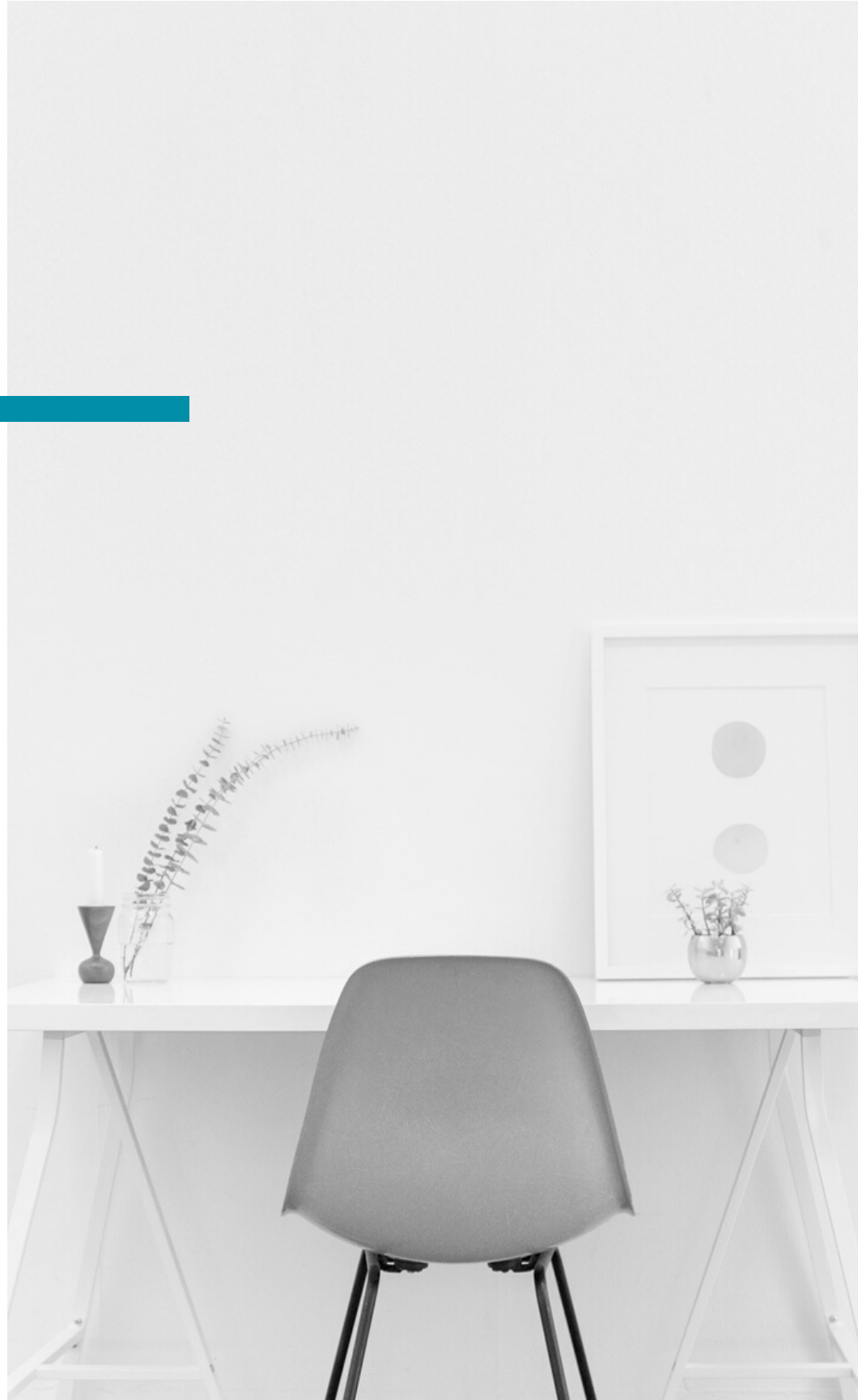
TRANSFORM ATTITUDES

- Eliminate the belief that people with disabilities are unhealthy or less capable of doing things

- Openly name stigma and stereotypes as barriers that can be overcome with effort

https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability-barriers.html#Attitudinal

Communication Tips

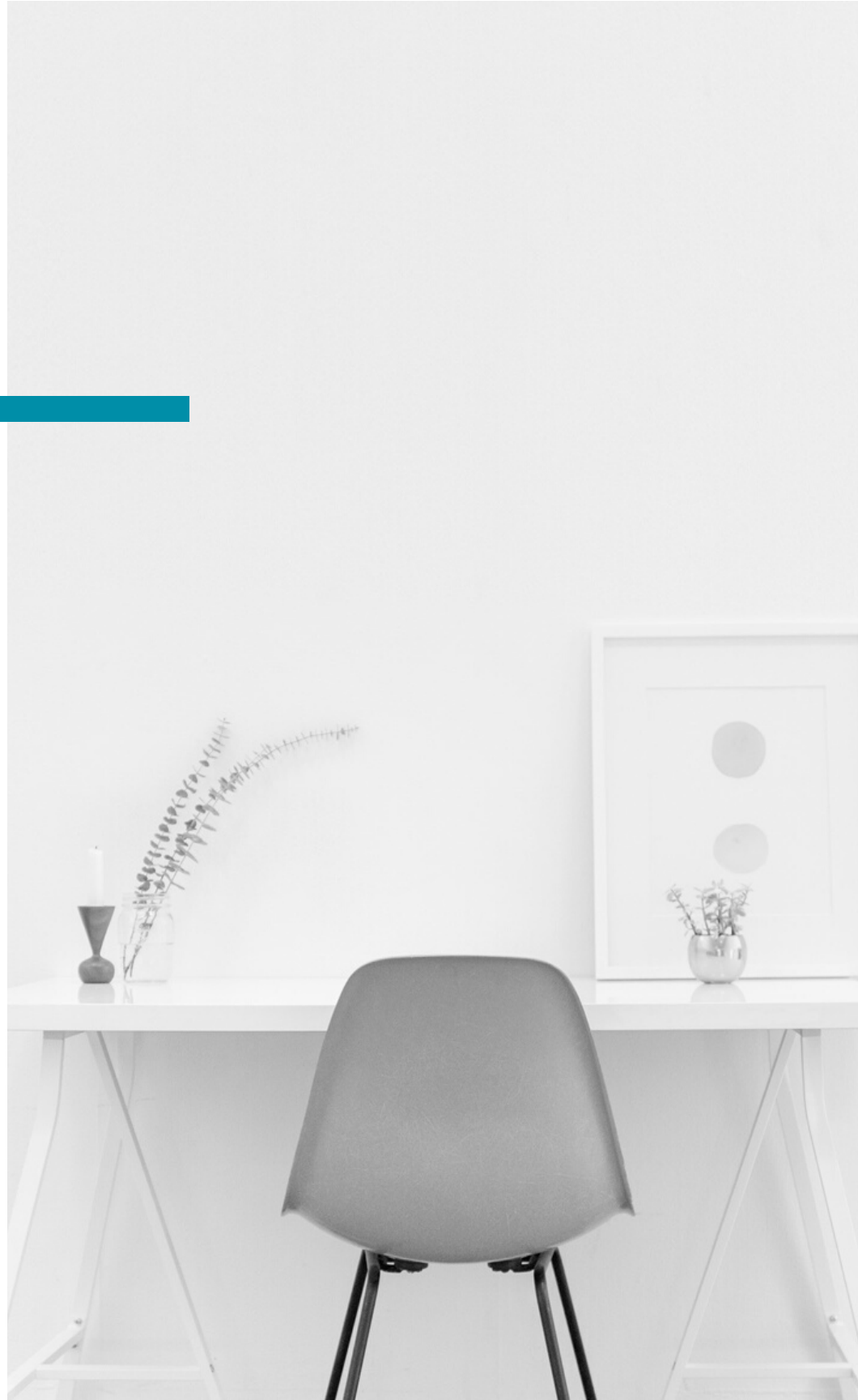| Tips	Use	Do not use
Emphasize abilities, not limitations	Person who uses a wheelchair	Confined or restricted to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound
	Person who uses a device to speak	Can't talk, mute
Do not use language that suggests the lack of something	Person with a disability	Disabled, handicapped
	Person of short stature	Midget
	Person with cerebral palsy	Cerebral palsy victim
	Person with epilepsy or seizure disorder	Epileptic
	Person with multiple sclerosis	Afflicted by multiple sclerosis
Emphasize the need for accessibility, not the disability	Accessible parking or bathroom	Handicapped parking or bathroom

https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability-strategies.html#Reasonable

Communication Tips

| Tips	Use	Do not use
Do not use offensive language	Person with a physical disability	Crippled, lame, deformed, invalid, spastic
	Person with an intellectual, cognitive, developmental disability	Slow, simple, moronic, defective, afflicted, special person
	Person with and emotional or behavioral disability, a mental health impairment, or a psychiatric disability	Insane, crazy, psycho, maniac, nuts
Avoid language that implies negative stereotypes	Person without a disability	Normal person, healthy person
Do not portray people with disabilities as inspirational only because of their disability	Person who is successful, productive	Has overcome his/her disability, is courageous

Opportunities for Inclusion

UNIVERSAL (INCLUSIVE) DESIGN

- The goal is to provide a workplace that is welcoming, enables everyone to reach the areas needed, and to fully use office equipment and resources

- Using UD means that facilities, programs, and services take into account the broad range of abilities, ages, reading levels, learning styles, languages, and cultures in their diverse workforce and customer base. .

https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/employment-supports/universal-design

Opportunities for Inclusion
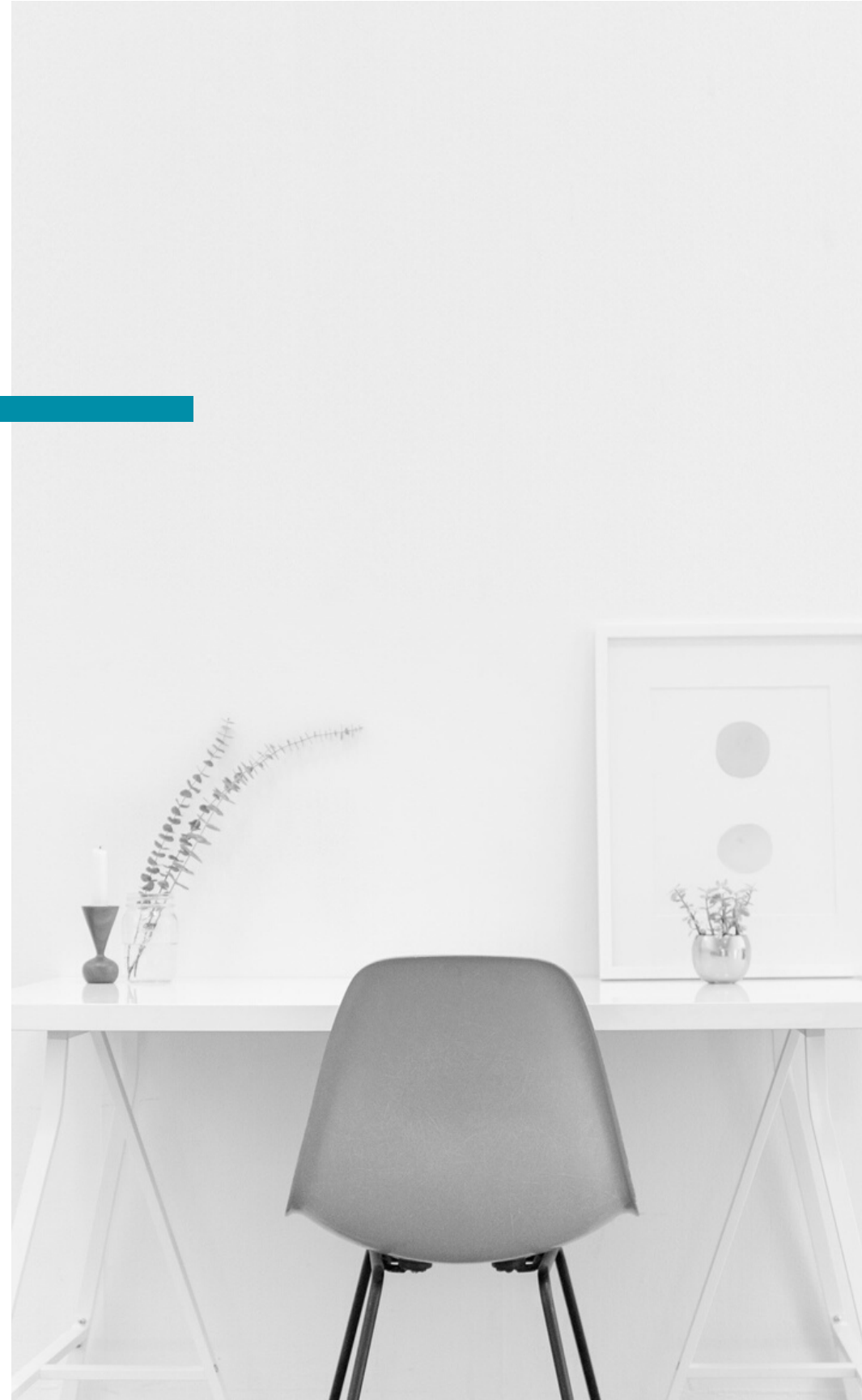
WORKPLACE EMPATHY

- Establish Trust As A Social Norm
- Have Regular Check-Ins
- Add Empathy To The Weekly Team Agenda

COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP

- Inclusivity requires courage from us all
- Inclusive leaders in the workplace speak up and challenge the status quo

THE PLATINUM RULE

- Treat others as they wish to be treated
- This requires that you ask!

Thank you!

Twitter/Clubhouse: @drjessisommmdmph