

What countries can do to make health systems better for people with disabilities

A guide for action from the World Health Organization (WHO)



This is an EasyRead version of our toolkit on health equity for persons with disabilities. It is called the Disability Inclusion Guide for Action.



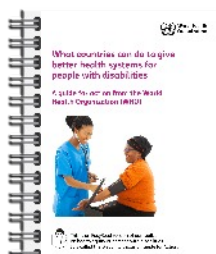
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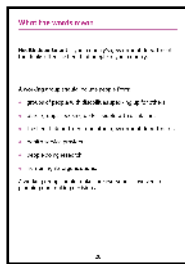
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What we are trying to do



World Health Organization

We are the **World Health Organization** or **WHO** for short.



We try to help people and countries:

- be healthier



- be safer



- look after the rights of vulnerable people.



About 1 in 6 people have a disability.



This number is going up because:

- more people have diseases like heart problems, cancers, breathing problems or diabetes



- people are living longer and need more help.

What we know



In 2022 we wrote a report about why people with disabilities have worse health or die earlier than other people.



You can read an easy read copy of this report here:
www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240063600



The report found that some people with disabilities:

- die earlier



- can have more illnesses



- have more limitations in the day-to-day activities



- are being treated unfairly and are not getting the healthcare they need.



This toolkit helps governments to make health systems fairer for people with disabilities.

The Guide for Action



There are a lot of ways to include people with disabilities in health systems.



We put these into 10 areas which should be looked at:

1. What governments can do to include people with disabilities in decision-making.



2. Finding money to make health services work.



3. Working with others.



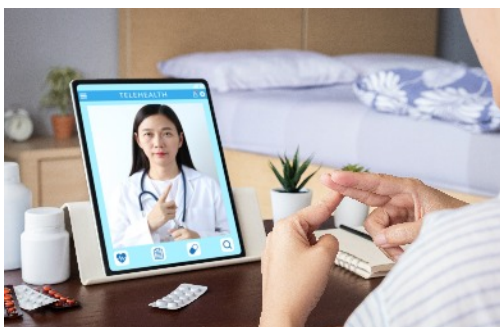
4. Different sorts of services.



5. Health and care staff.



6. Better access to health care buildings and the way health information is communicated.



7. Better use of technology where you meet over the internet with your doctor or nurse.



8. Having better care.



9. Ways to check it is all working well.



10. Doing research on disability and health.

Who this guide is for



We wrote this Guide for Action for:

- The health departments of governments and the people who work with them.
- People with disabilities and advocacy organizations must also be involved in every step.
- We expect that other partners will also be involved. These include government departments of finance, social welfare and education and organizations that provide public health and disability services.





The guide can be used across countries, across regions or in local areas.



The guide will help work out ways to make health systems more accessible for people with disabilities.

It will help people understand the difficulties people with disabilities face like:

- the way society treats people with disabilities



- physical barriers



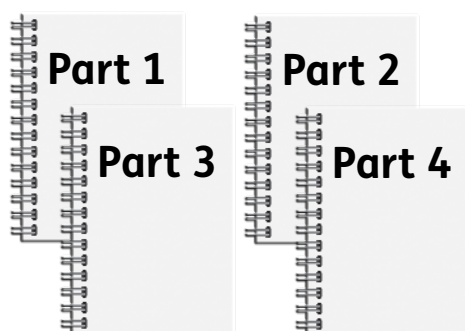


- not explaining properly or making yourself understood



- not being included in decision making.

How to use the guide



The guide is in 4 parts. Each part then has some steps to take.



Part 1. Finding people and setting up a working group



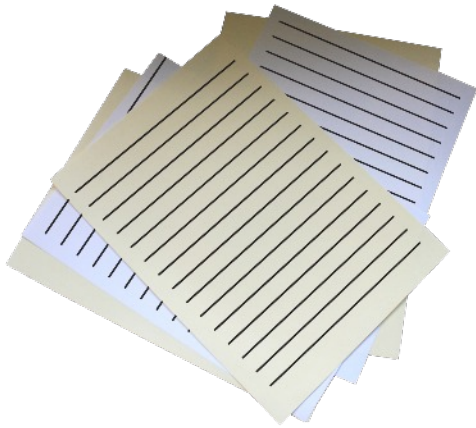
Part 2. Checking where you are



Part 3. Planning



Part 4. Doing and checking.

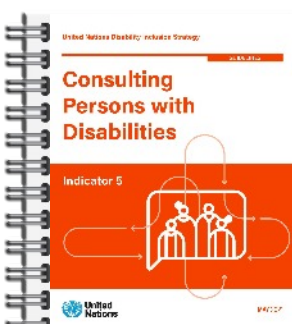
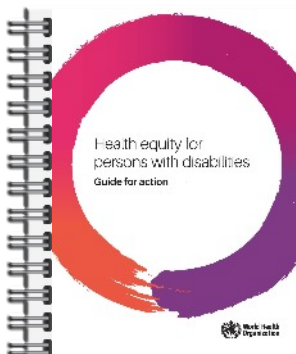


More information

There is a lot more information to help health departments do this work.

Look at:

- the WHO main report called **Health equity for persons with disabilities – A Guide for Action**
- the WHO 2022 **Global Report on Equal Health for People with Disabilities**
- the **WHO website**, the has lots of helpful ways to do things called tools. They are listed in the steps below when they might help
- the **United Nations Guidelines on consulting with persons with disabilities**.



Part 1. Finding people and setting up a working group

(this should take between 3 and 6 months)



Step 1: Getting ready

Decide who to include. Work out what they will be doing.

Have a main and named person in your Health Department.



Have some money to pay for:

- the costs of consultants
- the changes people need to be able to take part. Things like:
 - accessible transport and meeting rooms
 - making documents and materials in different languages and formats like EasyRead or large print
 - having sign language interpreters, personal assistants or support people.





Step 2: Meeting and talking to people about being involved

Talk to the main people involved about the WHO Report on Equal Health and this Guide for Action.



Ask people about what is important to them in the report and anything else they might need.



Use different types of meetings to include as many people as possible.

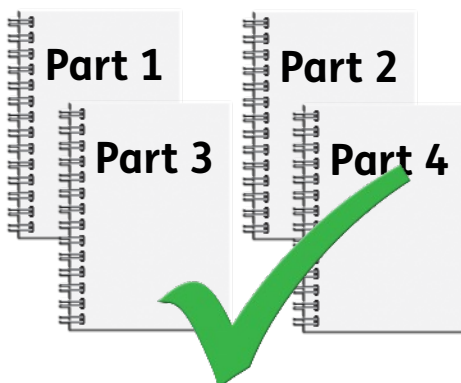


Step 3: Setting up the working group

A working group should make sure everyone is involved in planning and making decisions.

The working group should include people from:

- groups of people with disabilities speaking up for others
- other groups speaking up for people with disabilities
- the health department and other government departments
- health service providers
- people doing research
- human rights organizations.



The working group must be involved with all 4 parts.

Part 2. Checking where you are

(this should take between 3 and 6 months)



It is important to understand what is happening at the moment across health systems.



The group should look at what is already happening and how people with disabilities are included at the moment.

This includes the list of areas to look at on page 5.



Step 1: collecting the information

Collect as much information from research and data being kept at the moment.



Interview people involved including people with disabilities and their families.



Go and see for yourselves what is happening. Visit health services people think are doing good or not so good jobs.

Step 2: look at the information that has been collected and talk about how well including people with disabilities is working



Set up a workshop with the working group to talk about the information that has been collected.

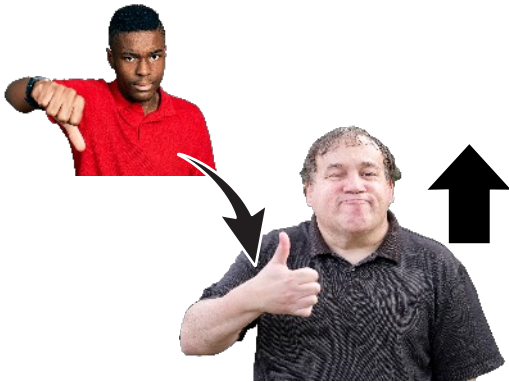


People in the workshop can use **WHO tools** to write down how well people are being included.



The group should score the information from 1 to 4 to show how well a service is doing:

1. People are not included in this service.



2. This health service needs a lot of help to get better.



3. This health service needs some help to get better.



4. This health service does include people with disabilities.



Step 3: Writing a report on what you have found out

The health department should write up your report on what has been found out.

This needs to be checked out and shared with:

- the working group
- the organizations that were involved.



Part 3. Planning

(this should take between 3 and 6 months)



The group should use what they found out in part 2 to decide what needs to happen next and what is needed to make changes happen.

Step 1: Deciding what is most important to do first, when to do it and how much it will cost

Make lists of:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

- things that need to be done in order of how important they are



- when to do them



- how much they will cost.



The working group will also need to look at:

- how the health department does its planning each year



- what are the important new things for health services to include



- what money and other things that will help are there at the moment



- if there are any helpful ways of working with other people or services which could be useful.

Step 2: Find ways to check changes are happening

Your group can identify a way to check:



- people with disabilities are being included in the healthcare



- how well the health system is working for people with disabilities. Is it better or worse than for other people?



WHO tools will help you:

- check to see if there are any gaps in healthcare



- work out where to start and what you want to do



- check how well things are going.



The health department should keep checking it is including people with disabilities.



It should be done at the same time as they check how health systems are working for everyone.



Step 3: Check the action plan and ask others to check it too

Now you have made your action plan and your plans for checking services these should be shared with everyone involved to find out what they think.



After any changes have been made you can finish off your plan and get the government to agree to it.



This includes:

- people in the health department who are the senior managers and are in charge of big decisions
- people in charge of money for health
- people who will be responsible for taking actions.



Part 4. Doing and checking



The group should help to share the plan with others and check how well it is going.



Step 1: Tell everyone about the action plan

Your plan should be shared with everyone who is possibly involved.



Start with the government and health department staff. Show them what things they need to be doing.



Make sure disability-inclusion is included in other work plans they have.

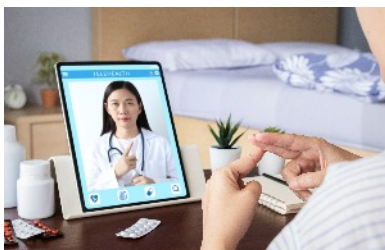


In most countries, the working group will keep working with the health department to give advice and check on how well things are going.

Step 2: Help other services and organizations understand and use the action plan



We expect that other partners will be involved in taking actions in the plan. These include departments of finance, social services and education and organizations that provide public health and disability services.



Some countries are still learning about how to include people with disabilities in their health systems.



They may need more help to understand what works and why it works.



Step 3: Check and report on the results

It is helpful to check on how well disability inclusion is doing in the health services.



This information should be written down often. It will help planning in the future.

What the words mean

Health department is your country's government department that looks after the health of people in your country.

A working group should include people from:

- groups of people with disabilities speaking up for others
- other groups speaking up for people with disabilities
- the health department and other government departments
- health service providers
- people doing research
- human rights organizations.

A working group should make sure everyone is involved in planning and making decisions.

Credits



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