

AKTIVE

UNDERSTANDING DISABILITY TOOLKIT

INFORMATION TO HELP YOU
UNDERSTAND, ENGAGE AND
EMPOWER DISABLED PARTICIPANTS



OVERVIEW

Disability can be a complex issue with a wide range of definitions. Individuals who live with impairments may not consider themselves disabled as their impairment may have little to no impact on their daily lives.

With advances in adaptations, equipment, building law and wider policy, barriers to including disabled people in physical activity have decreased over the last twenty years - although there is still a long way to go before the barriers are eliminated.

[Find out more on disability issues >>](#)

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THE PURPOSE



Auckland is a complex multi-cultural environment with many challenges and unparalleled opportunities to increase and sustain participation in sport and recreation. This has led to the establishment of **The Auckland Approach to Community Sport >>**, a strategic response aiming to create a world-class community sport system in *Tāmaki Makaurau*, community by community. This toolkit has been developed (and will be updated) based on insights and good practice examples from across Auckland.

Organising and providing meetings, programmes and events so that disabled people can be **present**, can **participate** and are **learning** as much as possible, through accommodating different needs, requires early planning and considered thought about all the ways to be accessible and inclusive.

The purpose of this understanding disability toolkit is to provide information, insights and ideas that will assist leaders of clubs/codes to understand, engage and empower disabled participants into physical activity opportunities across Auckland.

UNDERSTANDING DISABILITY AND IMPAIRMENTS

Disability can cover different areas:

- Physical impairments affecting movement such as cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries, or limb loss
- Sensory impairments such hearing or visual losses
- Cognitive impairments such as autism or down syndrome
- Mental health conditions such as depression and schizophrenia.

In Auckland disabled people represent a fifth of all Aucklanders - a sizeable proportion of the region's population. That equates to approximately 314,000 people in Auckland living with at least one type of impairment.



Long-term health conditions



Visual



Social and behavioural



Autistic spectrum disorder



Hearing



Mental health



Mobility



Dexterity



Learning / intellectual memory



Breathing



Other



Long-term pain



Long-term health conditions cover a variety of conditions from high blood pressure through to migraines - not all these conditions are 'limiting'. There is a large overlap with other impairments and long-term health conditions which are often considered secondary impairments. Primary impairments are defined as apparent at the time of diagnosis, and secondary impairments occur over time, often as the result of primary impairments.

For example, if someone has cerebral palsy and high blood pressure, we consider their primary impairment to be the one which has the most impact on their daily life - therefore the primary impairment would be cerebral palsy. This can also be applied to long-term pain which overlaps heavily with mobility, dexterity, and long-term health conditions, and can cover impairments such as back pain and arthritis.

These primary impairments can be grouped into three subcategories – sensory, intellectual, and physical.

PRIMARY			SECONDARY
Sensory	Intellectual	Physical	
Visual e.g., macular degeneration, ocular albinism Hearing e.g., Ménière's, profound hearing loss	Learning / intellectual memory e.g., down syndrome, learning disability Social and behavioural e.g., autistic spectrum disorder, ADHD	Mobility e.g., amputee, spinal injury Dexterity e.g., dystonia, Friedreich's ataxia	Long-term pain Breathing Long-term health conditions Other

[Advice on how to capture impairment information as part of your registrations >>](#)

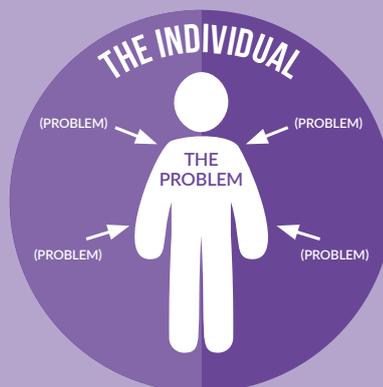
A SOCIAL STATE, NOT A MEDICAL CONDITION

Historically we have taken a 'medical model' approach to disability which views disability as a problem of the person and is permanent. This is best illustrated in the way we ask our members about any impairments by only offering a 'Yes/No' answer to the question of 'Do you have a disability?', if Yes, what is your disability type'.

In contrast, a competing view known as the 'social model of disability' focuses on the environment and how this affects the individual. An individual may be living with an impairment that requires daily living adaptations, but attitudinal and physical barriers are actually the main cause of disability for someone living with an impairment.

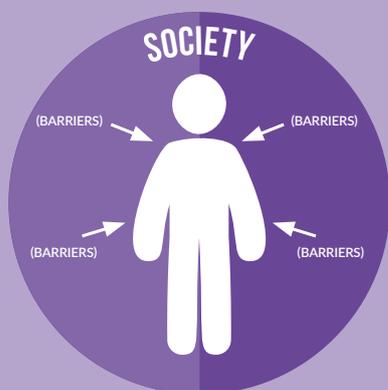
THE MEDICAL MODEL OF DISABILITY

e.g., the person cannot climb stairs, needs help, cannot walk, cannot talk, etc.



THE SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY

e.g., badly designed buildings, no parking spaces, poor attitudes, etc.



In 2021, correct language based on the social model of disability would be a wheelchair user or a person with cerebral palsy. To describe a person who is not disabled the correct term is 'non-disabled'. In this way the terminology 'disabled person' and 'non-disabled' is used to describe people living with or without an impairment.



CLASSIFICATION

In competitive sport, disabled and non-disabled people are classified or divided into groups to ensure fair competition. An example of this in non-disabled sport is that there are two football world cups - one for males and one for females. Other similar groupings could be age groups or weight ranges.

For disabled sport, this grouping of people is called **classification** (Para Sport) and **divisioning** (Special Olympics), and both are a fundamental rule of competitive disability sport.

Classification	Divisioning
<p>Classification groups athletes according to how much their impairment affects their ability to carry out the fundamental activities in a specific sport.</p> <p>Find out more >></p>	<p>Divisioning matches athletes up with others of the same gender, around the same age, and most importantly of the same competitive ability.</p> <p>Find out more >></p>

EXCLUSIVE VERSUS INCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITIES

There are plenty of opportunities to develop and offer different types of physical activities for people with multiple impairments that currently have limited options to be active – ranging from separate (exclusive) through to open (inclusive).



EXCLUSIVE ACTIVITY

Alternative activities that have been developed separately for disabled people.

DISABILITY ACTIVITY

Emphasis is on including non-disabled people into activities developed specifically for disabled people.

PARALLEL ACTIVITY

Disabled and non-disabled people engage in the same activity but are classified or divided into different ability groups.

MODIFIED ACTIVITY

Disabled and non-disabled people engage in the same activity but Space, Task, Equipment and / or People have been changed to include everyone.

INCLUSIVE ACTIVITY

Activities that everyone can participate in.

Taking an inclusive approach is essential for all activities, however there is always a time and a place for exclusive, disability, parallel and modified activities. Developing an activity, environment and rules aimed specifically at different impairment groups allows players to excel within their impairment group. **Advice on how you might categorise players for intra - and/or inter- community activities >>**

However, it is important to stress that this approach should go together with an inclusive game.

For example, a deaf netball player will be able to play, train and compete within the traditional club and competition structure, and could also play deaf netball - a game specifically designed and aimed to bring deaf players together to train and compete with adapted rules.

The way you communicate your activity and the design of your website, forms and social media are just as important as disabled and non-disabled playing and training alongside each other - so your approach should be to be inclusive across every aspect of what you do.



MODIFYING ACTIVITIES

A number of physical activities can be, or already have been, designed or adapted for disabled people. The **STEP** inclusion model outlines what changes - **S**pace, **T**ask, **E**quipment and / or **P**eople - can be made to activities to make them more inclusive.

A SCENARIO...

You turn up to the club to coach a group and there are three females and four males: two are left-handed, one uses a wheelchair, one is physically bigger than their peers and one has no interest in your activity.

To accommodate these different types of abilities you could...

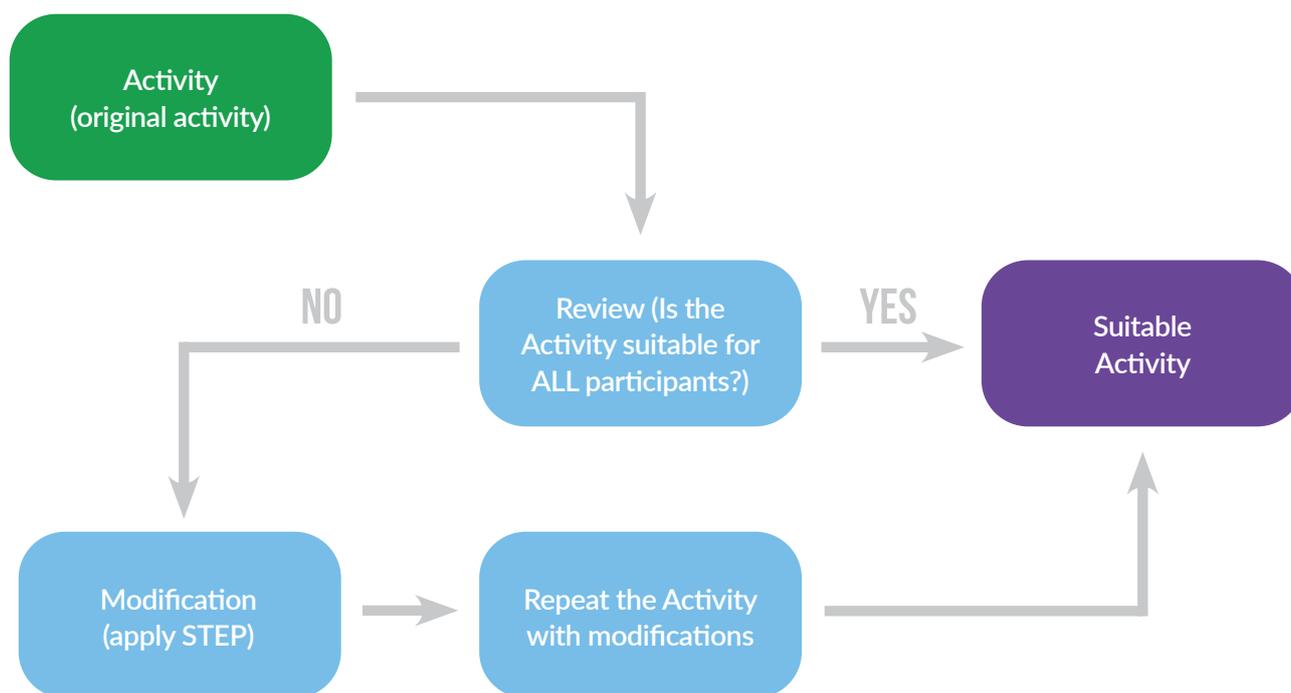
Space	Change the area available to make the game more or less difficult. Have two or three different areas with different space options to cater for differing skill levels.
Task	Change the demands of the task in response to skill levels. Modify the rules – be flexible. Different people can have different tasks within a game. Change direction, time and other components.
Equipment	Modify the size, shape, weight, colour or arrangement of equipment to meet skill levels or inclusion level of the game.
People	Change the number of players involved. Utilise different groupings based on skill levels. Not all of the group needs to have the same number of players involved.

MODIFYING ACTIVITIES CONT.



Although we can modify activities in a number of ways, we should always focus on maintaining the integrity of the game or activity being delivered, while maximising our participants' potential.

The following flowchart illustrates how inclusion is a process that constantly needs to be reviewed and helps us determine how much adaptation is needed for a particular activity to maintain a balance.



We know that disabled people gain benefits from being physically active when they are visibly and actively:

- Present (in the activity)
- Participating (in the activity)
- Learning the same outcomes (from the activity)

If the answer is no to any of the above, consider adjusting or changing the type of activity.

Some sports have been designed specifically for a particular impairment group. For example, goalball is a separate disability activity for people with a visual impairment. Other sports, like athletics, badminton

or swimming are open to many different impairment groups. In some cases, the modified version of the sport is governed by its own national governing body, for example New Zealand Wheelchair Rugby.



ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE GUIDELINES

The following provides a list of some of the things to consider before, during and after a meeting, programme or event to make your play, sport or active recreation opportunities more inclusive. For more ideas on providing an inclusive environment, please see the **[Community Engagement toolkit >>](#)**

ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

There are a lot of things to consider when planning an activity. This list of accessible and inclusive physical activity considerations has been put together to help you think of the things you may need to do to make your physical activities more accessible and inclusive so those who may be disabled can take part.

You do not need to have answered 'yes' to everything in this list to run your activity as it will depend on the individual needs of your participants. Consider if it is appropriate and do what you can – understanding takes time. A list of contacts and resources has been provided should you require more support.

Determining need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you checked what other activities are already taking place? • Have you got evidence that participants are genuinely interested in attending your proposed activity? • Have you identified the 'barriers' that may prevent interested participants from taking part? • Have you considered the best month, day, time to run your activity? • Have you contacted other organisations that may be able to support your activity?
Pre-activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have a pre-activity process to gain information from participants to help with your planning? (i.e. do they require any special assistance / dietary requirements)
Promotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are your promotions available in a range of formats? (e.g. large print, audio, website, social media) • Do your promotions have a key index showing types of accessibility provision? (e.g. wheelchair symbol) • If online, is NZ Sign Language interpretation, closed captions or sub-titles available? • If online, is there an audio-description for those with vision impairments requiring descriptive responses? • Do your promotions show your activity in action with real (disabled and non-disabled) people taking part? • Do your promotions use language that reassures the participants' needs will be considered? (i.e. do this activity at your own pace)
Contact information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do your promotions state who to contact for more information (including a contact email address, phone number and website)? • Is someone available to answer any accessibility questions beforehand? • Is there an option for participants to 'view / tour' the location beforehand? • If involving tamariki / rangatahi - have you mentioned expectations of parents / caregivers and supporters?
Geographic location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do your promotions include an address of the location? • Do your promotions show a street map and places for (accessible) parking?

ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If indoors, do your promotions mention the type of location the activity will be in? (i.e. community hall, gymnasium) • Have you examined that all public areas are accessible? (e.g. compliant ramps and handrails) • If outdoors, are ground surfaces easy for a person using a wheelchair to move over? (e.g. firm, even, free of hazards) • Is signage for location clearly visible? (e.g. banners, flags) • Are there safe and quiet spaces available at the location? (e.g. for lost participants, injured participants)
Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do your promotions state the times for arrival (set up) and departure (pack up), as well as activity start and end times? • Have you mentioned your cancellation guidelines?
Price	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do your promotions contain information on all costs? • Are different payment options and methods available? • Have you considered sharing details of funding available (if appropriate)? <p>Find out more about funding >></p>
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are participants able to get access to your location by public transport (bus, ferry, train)? <p>Find out more about the Total Mobility Scheme >></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there clearly marked mobility car parks available? <p>Find out more about the Mobility Parking scheme >></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the parking area safe, covered and away from traffic? • Is there a place to drop-off and pick-up people? • Are there designated places for taxis?
Entry / Exit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a level, lift or ramped entry? • Are there accessible emergency exits? • Is someone available to assist participants on arrival / exit? • Is there a process for allocating staff / volunteers to assist people in the event of an emergency? • Are both audio and visual emergency warnings available? • Is the evacuation meeting point safely accessible?
Setup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the activity location consider sound projection, weather, spectator seating, distance to toilets and parking? • Has furniture and fittings been moved free from hazards? • Is seating available that is easy to get up from? • Are power sockets available for adaptive equipment?
Toilets / Changing Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there accessible toilets / changing areas available? • Is there signage to the accessible toilets / changing areas?
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If required – have your staff / volunteers be provided with training on diversity and inclusion matters? • Are the activity staff / volunteers willing and able to provide support and advice? • Is there a policy allowing access for service dogs and amenities?
Post-activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are your post activity materials available in a range of formats? (e.g. large print, audio, website, social media) • Do you have a post-activity evaluation process to gain feedback from participants to help with future planning? (e.g. did they have any issues with access / what affected their participation) • Have you analysed and responded to any complaints or difficulties? • Have you identified any changes for future activities or locations? • Have you let participants know of details for the next activity?

ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Active acknowledges the following organisations for their contribution and support to the development of these guidelines:



TE HUNGA HAUĀ MAURI MŌ NGĀ TĀNGATA KATOA





PROVIDERS THAT CAN SUPPORT

Below is a list of some organisations that can offer you specialist support to include disabled people in various physical activities.

The Halberg Foundation provides education through their Inclusion Training (how to adapt sport, physical activity and recreation) which focuses on those with a physical and/or sensory impairments.

For sensory and physical impairments (sport)

- Paralympics New Zealand – can provide links to National Sport Organisation Members, including:
- Parafed Auckland – can link with activities that cater for those with:
 - Visual impairments (Blind Sport NZ)
 - Hearing impairments (Deaf Sports NZ)
 - Movement impairments (e.g., Boccia New Zealand, New Zealand Powerchair Football, New Zealand Wheelchair Rugby, New Zealand Wheelchair Tennis)

For intellectual impairments (sport)

- Special Olympics New Zealand – can link to a range of activities / groups
 - Find a club in Auckland

For sensory, intellectual and physical impairments (active recreation)

- Achilles New Zealand (running)
- Blind Low Vision (recreational activities)
- Circability (performing arts)
- Functional Adaptive Movement (strength and conditioning)
- Recreate New Zealand (various activities)
- New Zealand Riding for the Disabled (horse riding)
- Sailability Auckland (recreational sailing)
- StarJam (dance)
- Touch Compass (performing arts)

LOOKING FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

There is a range of other resources available to assist your organisation with being accessible and inclusive:

- [Be.Ready Online Self Assessment tool >>](#)
- [Accessibility Design Guide and Self-Assessment Checklist >>](#)
- [Buildings for everyone: Designing for access and usability >>](#)
- [Play for all – Universal designs for inclusive playgrounds >>](#)
- [Halberg Inclusion Training >>](#) 

HERE TO HELP

Your Regional Sports Trust/Organisations are also here to help – please don't hesitate to contact us if you would like to talk through any of this material and/or assistance.

MORE INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT THE FOLLOWING:

[aktive.org.nz >>](http://aktive.org.nz)

[harboursport.co.nz >>](http://harboursport.co.nz)

[sportwaitakere.co.nz >>](http://sportwaitakere.co.nz)

[sportauckland.co.nz >>](http://sportauckland.co.nz)

[clmnz.co.nz/counties >>](http://clmnz.co.nz/counties) 

Information in this toolkit is for guidance only and does not constitute formal professional advice. Where specific issues arise in your club/code, advice should be sought from the relevant provider(s) as necessary.

NGĀ MIHI.

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Published September, 2022.

