Disability Employer Resource
Factsheet: Myths and Facts

| **Myth** | **Fact** |
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| People with disability can only do unskilled and low-level jobs. | People with disability can work at any level or position in an Agency. 34% are managers (see [Australian Network on Disability: Disability Statistics](https://www.and.org.au/pages/disability-statistics.html))The Australian Bureau of Statistics reported in 2012 of working-age people with disability who were employed:* 19.9% as professionals
* 14.1% in administration
* 15.2% as technicians and\or in a trade
* 11.6% ran their own business
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| People with disability apply for jobs they just can’t do. | People with disability have a range of skills, talents, abilities and qualifications (including trade or tertiary). People with disability usually have a clear understanding of their abilities and are unlikely to apply for jobs they cannot do. |
| People with disability can’t do the whole job.  | * Not every person with a disability requires job role modification. Like everyone, people with disability will submit a resume and will include their skills when applying for a job.
* Some people may need changes to the way work is done or to their work environment.
* For example, Parliament house put ramps in place so a Senator who uses a wheelchair could have access.
* Workplace adjustments such as flexible work hours, a specific key board or certain type of chair are options that apply to lots of employees, some have a disability.
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| People with a mental illness never get better.  | With appropriate treatment and supports, many people can and do recover from mental illness. |
| Only certain ‘types’ of people experience mental illness. | * Mental illness is common.
* One in five Australians may experience a mental illness at some stage in their life.
* Everyone is vulnerable to mental health problems, regardless of age, gender, education, income or culture.
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| People with disability have higher absenteeism. | Disability is not a sickness and there is no evidence to support the claim that people with disability take more sick days.  |
| People with disability are less productive. | People with disability are as productive as other employees. Disability does not impact on productivity. |
| There are higher recruitment, employment and training costs for people with disability. | * There are usually no extra costs. Some employees may require inexpensive devices to assist them in their work.
* Job Access is a free service that can provide advice and often financial support for workplace adjustments.
* Disability Employment Services can also assist you with recruitment and the Job Access process.
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| Workers compensation and safety costs are high when you employ people with disability. | * Workplace insurance premiums are not based on the characteristics of particular groups of employees (for example number of people with disability employed) but on accidents at work.
* There is no evidence that employees with disability are more susceptible to workplace accidents than other employees.
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| People with disability require a large amount of support in the workplace. | Most people with disability need little or no support. If an employee does require a support worker, they will organise this. |
| People with disability don’t apply for jobs. | People with disability have twice the unemployment rate of people in the general community. If they aren’t applying for jobs with your organisation, look into your recruitment practices. |
| It’s too hard to interview a person with disability, I have to watch everything I say. | * It is advised that interview panel members have disability awareness training.
* Talking to people with disability can be easy if you follow some simple guidelines:
* Focus on the person not the disability.
* Don’t make assumptions about what they can or can’t do.
* Do ask a person if they have any access needs.
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| Mental health issues will permanently reduce someone’s capacity to function in a work environment. | During periods of mental ill health, productivity may be affected, but recovery (and sometimes with supports) generally brings a return to previous functioning levels.[Black Dog Institute: Workplace Mental Health Toolkit](https://blackdoginstitute.org.au/docs/default-source/education-resources/black-dog-institute-mental-health-toolkit-2017.pdf) |