

Resources¹

Disabilities and Disorders: Lessons for Lawyers

Disabilities within the adult population

Centers for Disease Control (CDC), April 14, 2025, www.cdc.gov

70 million+ people; more than 25% of the population

13.9% Cognition -difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions

12.2% Mobility – difficulty walking or climbing stairs

7.7% - Independent living disability – difficulty doing errands alone

6.2% Hearing – deaf or serious difficulty hearing

5.5% Vision – blindness or serious difficulty seeing

3.6% Self-care – difficulty dressing or bathing

Disability under the Missouri Human Rights Act (MHRA)

“physical or mental impairment” that substantially limits one or more ... major life activities.”

or

Person is “regarded as having such an impairment.”

“Regarded as having such an impairment”

Person either:

“[h]as a physical or mental impairment that does not substantially limit major life activities but is treated by an employer or by others as constituting such a limitation”

or

“[h]as none of the impairments defined in [8 CSR 60-3.060(1)(A)] ... but is treated by an employer or by others as having an impairment which substantially limits a major life activity[.]”

8 CSR 60-3.060(1)(E); *Heuton v. Ford Motor Co*, 930 F.3d 1015, 1019 (8th Cir. 2019).

¹ June 2026. This is not a comprehensive list of resources but instead is designed to aid in better understanding the subject. Provided by Laurel Stevenson, MAP Director, United States District Court, Western District of Missouri. As a CLE presenter, Laurel’s views and opinions are her own.

ABA Model Rule 1.4: Communications

- (a) A lawyer shall:
 - (a) promptly inform the client... regarding matters that require a client's informed consent;
 - (b) reasonably consult with the client...;
 - (c) keep the client reasonably informed...;
 - (d) promptly comply with reasonable requests for information....

Interplay between Rules of Professional Conduct, Principles of Civility, and Bias

Implicit Bias Guide, *Implicit Biases & People with Disabilities*, ABA Commission on Disability Rights

Affinity/in-group favoritism/in-group bias: “[W]e tend to favor, prefer and associate positive characteristics with members of the group to which we belong—people who are most like us and share similar interests, experiences, and backgrounds.”

Office of Legal Ethics Counsel & Advisory Committee for Supreme Court of Missouri,
www.mo-legal-ethics-org

Mental Health and Conflicts: A Handbook for Empowerment, published by the American Bar Association. Available at <https://www.americanbar.org/products/inv/book/420367133/>

Lee Rawles, *How neurodiverse lawyers can thrive in the profession—and change it for the better*, August 11, 2021 (<https://www.abajournal.com/books/article/podcast-episode-152>)

National Association of Mental Illness (NAMI), <https://www.nami.org>