

The emotional impact of hidden disabilities

Around 1 in 5 people in the UK have a disability, with 80% of these being hidden disabilities. COVID-19 has brought into greater focus the prevalence of hidden disabilities, with many needing to shield or being unable to receive vaccines. This article looks at Hidden Disabilities to raise awareness of their prevalence, both in the workplace and wider society.

A person can be considered to have a disability if they have difficulty performing certain functions (seeing, hearing, talking, walking, climbing stairs and lifting or carrying), or difficulty performing activities of daily living. Additionally some disabilities can cause difficulty with certain social roles (doing school work for children, working at a job and around the house for adults).

Invisible disabilities, also known as Hidden Disabilities or Non-visible Disabilities, are disabilities that are not immediately apparent. Typically, they can include chronic illnesses and conditions that significantly impair normal activities of daily living.

Living with these conditions may make daily life more demanding for those affected, though this varies greatly between different people. Without visible evidence of the hidden disability, it is frequently difficult for others to acknowledge the challenges faced and as a consequence, sympathy and understanding can often be in short supply.

Examples of Hidden Disabilities

Some examples of hidden disabilities include:

- Autism
- Brain injuries
- Crohn's Disease
- Chronic pain
- Cystic Fibrosis
- Depression, ADHD, Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, and other mental health conditions
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- SpLDs – Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, ADHD, ADD etc
- Rheumatoid Arthritis, Lupus, Multiple Sclerosis
- Visual and auditory disabilities. These could be considered non-visible if the person with the disability didn't wear support aids such as glasses or hearing aids

Please do also bear in mind that not all people living with the above conditions will consider themselves to have a disability.

If you feel you may need some support, you can also contact Care first. Care first is a leading provider of confidential, professional counselling, information and advice services. All employees are eligible to use Care first, our services include; telephone counselling, information services and online support. Call Care first on the Freephone number provided by your organisation and you can speak to a professional in confidence.

If you would like to view the Webinar on **'The emotional Impact of Hidden disabilities'** this is being delivered live on **Wednesday 11th August at 12pm**, please use the below link to register for this session –

<https://attendeegotowebinar.com/register/1736149068103970318>

If you are unable to join the webinar live, a recording of the session can be accessed using the same link above after the webinar has taken place.