

**Disability and
COVID-19:
How To Help, Through the
Meaning Behind the
Disability Pride Flag Colors**



Red: Physical Disabilities

Who This Represents:

People with mobility impairments, limb differences, chronic pain, and other conditions affecting the body's structure or function. The color stands for strength, resilience, and ongoing advocacy.

The Impacts of COVID-19:

COVID-19 can lead to heart and lung damage as well as arthritis and fatigue. People with physical disabilities deserve safe medical environments where they don't have to worry about COVID infection.

What You Can Do:

Invest in clean indoor air and wear respirators to stop the spread of COVID-19. This is especially important in enclosed spaces like doctors' offices and public transit. Consider the mobility aids and rest areas you can incorporate for people with physical disabilities.



Yellow: Cognitive & Intellectual Disabilities

Who This Represents:

Individuals with cognitive and intellectual disabilities, including autism, Down syndrome, ADHD, learning disabilities, and other developmental conditions. The color reflects creativity and innovation.

The Impacts of COVID-19:

COVID-19 can cause cognitive disability by triggering reductions in memory and executive functioning (brain fog). People with cognitive disabilities deserve to receive education and therapy without being infected with COVID-19.

What You Can Do:

Listen when anyone, including people with intellectual disabilities, advocates for their health. Ventilate and filter the air in schools and congregate settings, encourage or require masking with respirators, and prioritize communicating with clear, plain language.



White: Invisible Disabilities

Who This Represents:

People with invisible disabilities, including autoimmune conditions, chronic illness, and fatigue-related conditions. The color represents invisibility and the broad spectrum of Disabled experiences.

The Impacts of COVID-19:

Long COVID, a chronic illness often involving fatigue and dysautonomia, is an often invisible disability. 10 to 30% of people who have had COVID-19 may have developed Long COVID. Other invisible disabilities such as autoimmunity and immunocompromise increase the risk of bad outcomes from COVID-19.

What You Can Do:

Never judge the severity of someone's disability based on their physical appearance. Learn about and support the needs of people around you experiencing chronic fatigue. Prevent Long COVID with clean air and respirator masks (N95s or better).



Blue: Psychiatric Disabilities

Who This Represents:

Individuals with psychiatric disabilities, including depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and PTSD. The color represents the importance of visibility and compassion.

The Impacts of COVID-19:

COVID-19 infection directly increases the risk of depression and anxiety. People in residential care for mental health conditions deserve safety from COVID-19.

What You Can Do:

Provide clean air and mask with a respirator by default. Recognize that preventing COVID-19 is not a sign of disordered anxiety while considering ways to lower the real stress involved in patient self-advocacy. Consider compiling a list of resources and peer support to have readily available.



Green: Sensory Disabilities

Who This Represents:

Green represents people with sensory disabilities, such as those who are Deaf, blind, low vision, hard of hearing, Deafblind, and/or affected by sensory processing disorders. The color symbolizes growth and connection.

The Impacts of COVID-19:

COVID-19 infection leads to the loss of smell and taste and can affect hearing. Some preventive measures require adjustments to protect sensory accessibility.

What You Can Do:

Prioritize clean air, and use quieter, high-airflow air filters when possible. Use high-quality respirator masks with clear panels for lipreading. Consider adding sensory-friendly shopping or entertainment hours and provide accessible forms of communication such as braille.



Charcoal Gray Background

Who This Represents:

The charcoal gray background of the flag represents mourning, rage, and the urgency of justice. It honors Disabled people who have died due to systemic ableism, including lack of access, violence, institutional neglect, suicide, and marginalization.

The Impacts of COVID-19:

People with disabilities have been disproportionately harmed by COVID-19, making up 26% of U.S. excess deaths during the first 22 months of the pandemic.

What You Can Do:

Consider ways you can hold space for the grief experienced by people with disabilities. Support the fight for disability justice in your local community to create change that honors those lost. Participate in our Health Department Outreach Campaign, model masking with a respirator mask, and remember the importance of accessibility this July and onward.

View Our References:

