

How To Do Your Part For Disability Pride Month

Disability,

Accessibility,

and Masking.

What's Disability Pride Month?

On July 26th, 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law. The act would go on to be known as one of the greatest pieces of civil rights legislation to this day.

The ADA was monumental in the world of Disability Rights. It ensured Disabled people had a right to nondiscrimination, and paved the way for accessibility in many aspects of daily life. But in order for change to continue in the right direction, we need to go further than the ADA.

While this law may be specific to the United States, accessibility matters, no matter where you are. Everyone needs to engage in collective-scale, individual-level action because, together, we change the world for the better!

The Americans with Disabilities Act was put in place because Disabled people and their allies fought for it. And because of the ADA, July is now considered to be Disability Pride Month! So this month and onward, help us continue to fight for accessibility, the ability to thrive, and joy!

How's masking related?

Long COVID, a condition where many people simply “don’t get better” after being sick with COVID or have recurring symptoms, is estimated to occur for at least one in ten COVID infections. For people with preexisting disabilities, this rate can be higher and the impacts more dangerous.

Since disability is a common result of COVID, the Disabled population continues to grow, meaning we all need to do our part to stop the transmission of COVID.

One of the most important actions we can take is masking with respirators (N95 or better), which protects the wearer and those around them. This creates more accessible environments where people have to worry less about getting sick—a burden that many Disabled people carry. Some Disabled people are also unable to mask because of their disability and therefore need others to be masking.

Disabled lives are both worth living and worth protecting. So support your community, your health, and the accessibility of the world for yourself and the Disabled people around you.

So what can I do?

Consider masking in public spaces to show solidarity and care. When one person takes a stand, it inspires others to do the same. This is especially important in healthcare environments where the risk of infection is higher and many Disabled people spend long periods of time.

Invest in accessibility in public events. When hosting events, consider:

- Making masking mandatory
- Hosting events outside or using HEPA filters
- Providing respirator masks and COVID tests
- Offering food to-go

No events should be about us without all of us! These steps for accessibility are prerequisites for inclusivity and upholding the values of Disability Pride Month. Starting this July and all year round, remember the steps you can take to keep your community safe!

Your voice matters! Encourage those around you to take action, too. We can come together to create spaces where everyone's lives are valued, safe, and full of joy.

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