



Cornell University  
ILR School  
DBTAC-Northeast ADA Center

PROGRAM

5

## ADA Trainer Network | Program 5

# About Hidden Disabilities: The Legal, Practical and Human Side of Non-Obvious Disabilities

## Introduction

People with hidden disabilities, such as psychiatric or learning disabilities, occupy a unique position in society. Although they have disabilities that qualify for protection under the ADA, they often encounter disbelief about their disability status. People with hidden disabilities face many challenges when working with a disability. They must decide whether to disclose their disability in the workplace, they must often deal with misconceptions about their disabilities, and they must also address issues of “fairness” when accommodated in the workplace. This five module session will explore society’s view of people with hidden disabilities. It will also explore issues around defining disability, disclosure, and confidentiality in the workplace. Case studies will allow participants to test their knowledge about working with people with hidden disabilities. This training presentation is based on one of a series of nine essential trainings developed and offered by the Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC-Northeast) at Cornell University in cooperation with the Northwest ADA Center at the University of Washington.

## Goals & Objectives

### Module 1: Our Legacy: Views of Disability in America

- Gain knowledge of the impact of society’s view of disability and how that has affected the decision to disclose a hidden disability



## Contact Us

John Dineen  
Northwest ADA Center  
University of Washington  
6912 220th St. SW  
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043

Toll-free: 800-949-4232  
Voice: 425-771-7427  
Fax: 425-774-9303  
TTY: 425-771-7438

Email:  
[dineej@u.washington.edu](mailto:dineej@u.washington.edu)

Call us toll-free:

800-949-4232

NW ADA Center  
University of Washington  
6912 220th St. SW  
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043

Toll-free: 800-949-4232  
Voice: 425-771-7427  
Fax: 425-774-9303  
TTY: 425-771-7438

dineej@uw.edu

[www.nwadacenter.org](http://www.nwadacenter.org)

- Believe that disability does not automatically equal deficit
- Make informed decisions about disclosing a hidden disability or interacting with someone who is disclosing a hidden disability

### **Module 2: The ADA: Hidden Disabilities and Disclosure**

- Gain knowledge about the ADA provisions pertaining to disclosing a hidden disability
- Understand that the ADA gives certain legal protections to people who disclose a hidden disability and to issues of confidentiality
- Apply the law to disclosure decisions

### **Module 3: Disclosing a Hidden Disability: Best Practices**

- Increase knowledge of best practices on how to disclose a disability or participate in a disclosure discussion
- Increase willingness to begin or participate in effective and respectful disclosure conversation or communication in a variety of settings (i.e., employment or education)

### **Module 4: About Hidden Disabilities**

- Increase knowledge of major types of hidden disabilities
- Increase willingness to questions myths and false perceptions around hidden disabilities
- Build ability to communicate about hidden disabilities

### **Module 5: Case Studies of People with Hidden Disabilities**

- Gain awareness of the range of issues, concerns, and challenges posed by having a hidden disability
- Increase willingness to engage and explore in a variety of options to address the needs of someone who is disclosing a hidden disability
- Increase ability to generate a range of options as a person with a hidden disability or for others with a hidden disability and to apply these in employment or educational settings

## **All Available Trainings**

Program 1: Disability Awareness: Understanding the ADA

Program 2: Getting Hired and Moving Ahead in a Job When Working with a Disability

Program 3: Tapping into Talent

Program 4: Serving Customers with Disabilities

Program 5: About Hidden Disabilities

Program 6: Reaching Individuals with Disabilities: Accessibility in Federal, State, and Municipal Entities

Program 7: Reaching Individuals with Disabilities: Accessibility in Private or Commercial Business

Program 8: Accessible Technology in the Workplace

Program 9: Accessible Web Sites: Everyone Benefits