

Where to get help?

Knowing what services are available to assist you can help you to better plan around any challenges. Physical disabilities can impact on your day to day life but there are lots of services designed to assist you.

- **Work:** programs can provide assistance if you are unable to work due to disability. They can also provide help to continue working. Some employment agencies help disabled people with finding suitable work.
- **Study:** Most universities have disability support offices that are designed to help students with disabilities. Services can include special consideration on exams/essays, organizing for someone to take notes for you and organizing on-campus parking.
- **Support groups :** some disabilities are represented by non-government organizations. Support groups can be a great way to get support and advice from people who are going through and have gone through what you are going through. They provide support, advice and information.



- **Travel :** Getting around can be a difficult when you have a physical disability. Disability access on public transport varies widely, depending on where you live (though is generally much better in cities). . Your local community service should be able to provide more information about the sorts of services they offer. If you are planning to go overseas or interstate there are travel agents who specialize in travel for disabled people (check the yellow pages).



Having a Physical Disability



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Having a Disability....

Approximately 1 in 8 Canadians live with disabilities. People with disabilities want to share healthy lifestyles to enjoy good health and well being.

Physical disabilities can be either short term (eg. a broken wrist) or long term (eg. paraplegia). Some disabilities can improve over time while others may not. Depending on you disability, it might be controlled with medication and physical therapy (eg. physiotherapy). Some people are born with physical disabilities, while other physical disabilities are caused by illness, injury or accident.

Having a disability can be a huge challenge and might mean having to make changes to many aspects of your life. It might mean having to find alternative ways to achieve your goals (or make new ones).

Having a disability can be hard to deal with, you might experience a wide range of feelings or reactions. These are things you might feel when you first find out you have a disability.

However, you might experience them at other times too. Some feelings or reactions you might experience include:

- Anger
- Sadness or depression
- Feeling scared
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Stress or anxiety
- Shock
- Frustration
- Denial
- Confusion

What can you do?

It can be overwhelming trying to understand why you have to deal with something that can be so difficult and seem so unfair. Some suggestions that might help:

- **Support** - don't be afraid to ask for support, be it from a counselor, family member or friend. Asking for support doesn't mean you're weak or a failure; it's a sign of strength. It might help to ask whether the doctors have had training for both the physical and psychological aspects of disabilities. Remember, it's okay to get a second opinion or try a new doctor or counselor if you're not happy.

- **Try and be patient** - finding yourself disabled can be really frustrating and mean that you are more dependant on other people, at least for a while.
- **Get informed** - As with chronic illnesses, having a good understanding of your disability can help you learn to accept it. Knowing what to expect with your condition can take some of the anxiety away and help you manage it best.
- **Take care of yourself** - make sure that you eat well and exercise if you can. And making sure you do something special for yourself each day, even if it's just watching your favorite TV show. Having a disability doesn't mean you can't have fun!

