

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Someone with a special sensory, physical or mental need is sometimes said to have a "disability." The truth is, most people have special needs now and then. People with disabilities may have special needs because:

- They see or hear little or not at all
- They have limited or no use of their arms or legs
- Their ability to learn or socialize is affected by illness or developmental disability



Dealing with a disability can be a challenge. It can involve social, emotional, sexual, and economic difficulties. One of the hardest things about having a disability is being excluded from the mainstream of life by people who are so-called "normal."

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A DISABILITY . . .

. . . you probably know someone who does. If you feel uncomfortable in the company of someone who is different, that's OK. Just remember to talk about your feelings openly. Your acquaintance may be able to explain how to deal with the situation. You could become friends – not out of pity, but for the same reasons you would befriend anyone else – because of common interests or compatible personalities.

IF YOU HAVE A DISABILITY . . .

. . . remember that you have the power to feel good about yourself – no one else can make you feel bad without your permission. Keep reminding yourself that no matter what your outside looks like, you are a whole person inside. Feeling good comes from each person's mind and heart, not from their physical appearance.

WHATEVER YOUR ABILITY . . .

. . . it doesn't have to affect your personality on the inside. The inside part is up to you, regardless of your outward appearance. The way you choose to "appear" to others will say a lot about your ability as a human being.

2-1-1 has information about how people with special needs can access local services. To find out if a program is physically accessible, has a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf, or provides information in Braille or Large Print, call 2-1-1 or 848-2255 (voice,) or 848-9422 (TTY.)

Each school has its own way of serving students with special needs. Talk with your school counselor about programs that could help.

Some special services for people with disabilities in our community are:

Midstate Independent Living Consultants 675-7600
Helps Central Wisconsin residents with disabilities live independently.

Opportunity, Inc. 842-8700
Long-distance callers may call toll-free. . . (800) 472-4408

Provides assistance for children and adults with disabilities and their families.

Metro Ride Paratransit Service . . . (800) 236-8438 (to schedule a ride)
(formerly WATS + Paratransit Service)

If you have a disability that prevents you from using a standard City bus, you may arrange for a specialized van to pick you up anywhere within the Metro Ride service area.



For information about recreational and educational opportunities for youth with disabilities, call:

United Way's 2-1-1 dial 2-1-1 or 848-2255 any time day or night

Offers information & referral to community services that can help.

Or, access our website at: www.unitedwaymc.org/211.htm.

Click at SEARCH ONLINE, then click on the first letter of the word you want to search, for example "R" for RECREATION. Then find the RECREATION heading you're interested in.