



BEYOND BARRIERS

REDEFINING DISABILITY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

COMMUNICATION WITH COLLEAGUES

When communicating with colleagues, use respectful language, just as you would like other people to speak with you. If you are still determining the appropriate terms to use, it is acceptable and advisable to ask.

UNDERSTANDING DISABILITY

The 2025 Employment Equity Amendment Act (EEA) aligns South Africa's definition of disability with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

This recognises disability as the result of interaction between an individual's impairment and various barriers – social, environmental or attitudinal – that may hinder full participation in work and society.

DEFINITION OF THE ACT IN 2025

Individuals **with long-term or recurring physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments** which in interaction with various barriers, may substantially limit their prospects of entry into, or advancement in, employment.

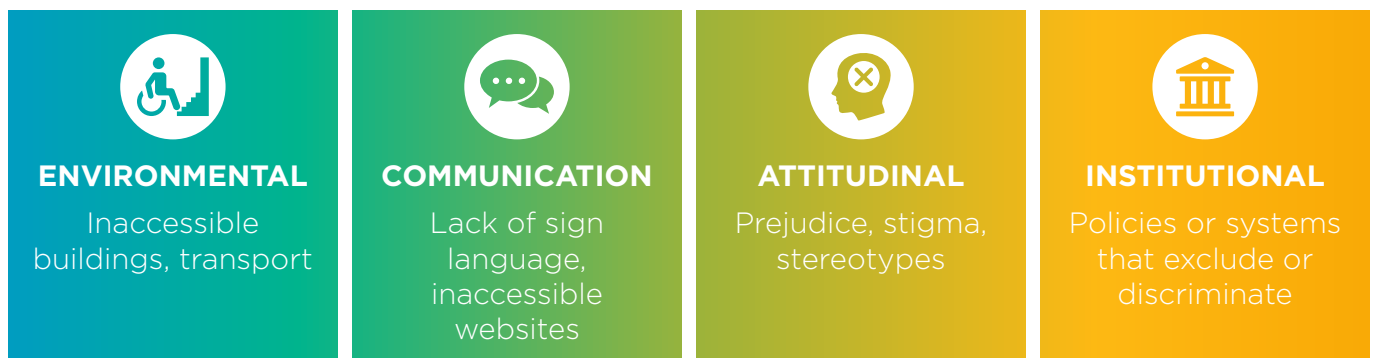
In simple terms, this means:

- The condition lasts a year or longer or recurs regularly.
- It may be physical, mental, intellectual or sensory in nature.
- The limitation arises because of barriers, not only the impairment itself.
- The focus is on inclusion and accessibility – ensuring people can participate fully at work and in society.

WHAT ARE BARRIERS?

Disability is not just about the impairment. It is about how society responds.

TYPES OF BARRIERS



QUICK COMPARISON



UPDATED DEFINITION

Includes all impairments, emphasises barrier-free participation and is rights-driven



PREVIOUS DEFINITION

Focused mainly on impairments and workplace limitations

NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST OF CATEGORIES OF IMPAIRMENTS THAT MAY BE DISABILITIES

Please ensure that a specific condition meets the criteria outlined in the Employment Equity Act, as not all chronic illnesses or ailments are disabilities and the context needs to be considered. Talk to your HR representative or Incon, if unsure.



VISION LOSS AND BLINDNESS

Blind: Total loss of vision
Visual impairment: Partial sight or blurred vision



HEARING LOSS AND DEAFNESS

Deaf: Total loss of hearing
Hard of hearing: Partial hearing loss, which can range from slight to severe
Use of a hearing aid: Indicates whether a person uses a hearing aid



CHRONIC ILLNESS

Examples include cerebral palsy, asthma, multiple sclerosis (MS), epilepsy, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, chronic fatigue syndrome, muscular dystrophy and Lou Gehrig's disease (ALS).
Epilepsy: This term covers various disorders characterised by electrical disturbances in the central nervous system, typically resulting in seizures or involuntary muscle contractions.
Motor disability: Conditions like MS, muscular dystrophy, ALS and cerebral palsy fall into this category, resulting from damage to the central nervous system.



MENTAL ILLNESS OR INTELLECTUAL IMPAIRMENT

Mental illness: This is a psychiatric condition caused by a biological, physiological or psychological disorder or chemical imbalance in the brain.
Intellectual impairment: This refers to conditions that result in significantly below-average intellectual functioning.



CONGENITAL IMPAIRMENT

This refers to physical impairments present from birth, such as a limb missing at birth.



PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT

This includes conditions that affect using legs, arms or the body trunk due to paralysis, stiffness, pain or other impairments.



SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DISORDERS

These include difficulties with speech patterns that affect the clarity of spoken words.



PARALYSIS OR SPINAL CORD INJURY

Hemiplegia: This condition involves full or partial paralysis of one side of the body, typically due to brain damage from disease, trauma or stroke.
Paraplegia: This is a paralysis of the lower half of the body, which involves partial or total loss of function in both legs.



IMPAIRED ATTENTION

Attention deficit hyperattention disorder can be severe enough to be considered disabling.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Reasonable accommodation includes any modification or adjustment to a job or work environment that enables a person with a disability to have equal access to participate in or advance in employment.

HOW TO REQUEST REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

1

Complete and submit your **EEA1 form** on your own to HR or speak to your medical practitioner about your disability and for assistance in completing the EEA1 form. Alternatively, arrange an appointment with an Incon nurse to obtain more information.

2

Technical experts may be consulted to establish and implement suitable measures to accommodate you in the workplace.

3

You might need to provide input or undergo a functional evaluation to determine the best accommodation for your needs.

EXAMPLES OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION



Adapting existing facilities or equipment to improve accessibility



Acquiring new equipment



Providing necessary computer hardware and software



Restructuring roles

EACH REQUEST IS ASSESSED ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS.

CREATING AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

Mediclinic is committed to creating a barrier-free environment where everyone can contribute meaningfully.

Inclusion is a shared responsibility.

Each of us plays a part by promoting understanding, respect and access for colleagues with disabilities.

To complete your EEA1 form to help drive meaningful change, [click here](#). Once completed, email the form to HR at askhr@mediclinic.co.za

Together we can continue to build a workplace where every individual is supported to thrive.

EXPERTISE YOU CAN TRUST.

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