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Especially Good Guide

Tukena
UUDISTUVA VAMMAISTYÖ

Especially Good Guide

The Especially Good guide highlights the perspective of people in need of support on how the need for support and disability should be discussed. The need for support is always individual. It may relate, for example, to learning and understanding, sensory experiences, or physical functioning.

The purpose of the guide is to increase awareness and encourage open discussion about the need for support, equality, and prejudices.

We recommend that every adult become familiar with this guide. It can be useful, for example, for teachers as well as professionals in the social and health care sectors. The guide is also beneficial in workplaces where people in need of support are employed. Its content can also be used as a resource in conversations with children.

The content of the guide has been created together with people in need of support. It reflects the views of those who participated in its development on the themes addressed in the guide.

The Tukena Foundation sr
Renewed and diverse work with disabled people in Uusimaa, 2025

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Vili Ohra-aho, 2025

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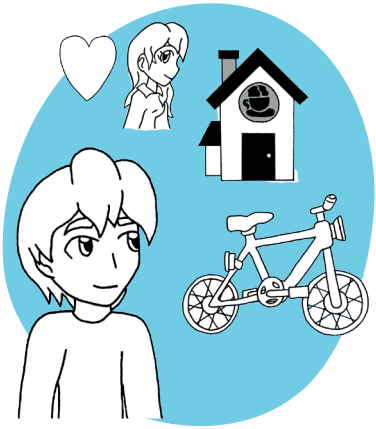
This guide talks about people who have support needs. The term person in need of support can refer, for example, to people with an intellectual disability, neuropsychiatric traits, or other challenges related to learning and understanding.

The guide does not focus on individual diagnoses or provide a comprehensive description of all types of disabilities.

I'm more than a person with a disability — needing support **is only one part of me**



"You can't tell much about a person just by looking. ***Get to know them!****"*

All people are different — everyone is an individual.
Every person has many roles, qualities, and interests. A person in need of support also has a life filled with many things — such as work, hobbies, and relationships.

People with the same diagnosis can have very different support needs. Based on a diagnosis or a person's appearance alone, we actually know very little about them.

Above all: see the person.
Needing support in some areas doesn't mean needing support in everything — or that everything in life revolves around the need for support. People who need support in their daily lives also have a great deal of skills and strengths.

Examples of support

- **Instructions**: clear guidance, one instruction at a time, visual instructions, easy-to-read fonts
- **Time management**: sufficient time to complete tasks, reminders (e.g., for leaving for work or taking breaks), consideration of clock comprehension (analogue vs. digital)
- **Well-being at work**: ensuring adequate breaks, clearly defined work tasks
- **Sensory considerations**: using headphones to support concentration, appropriate lighting

There are many terms, but these are preferred

*"**First and foremost an employee** — secondarily a person in need of support."*

Generally, it is polite to refer to people by their names.
The term **person in need of support** is neutral and descriptive. It highlights that the person has certain areas in which they need support.

The term **person with special needs** can be seen as emphasizing each person's uniqueness and individuality. On the other hand, the need for support shouldn't be viewed as something extraordinary. Each of us needs support in certain situations in life and everyday living. Everyone has the right to receive support that meets their individual needs.

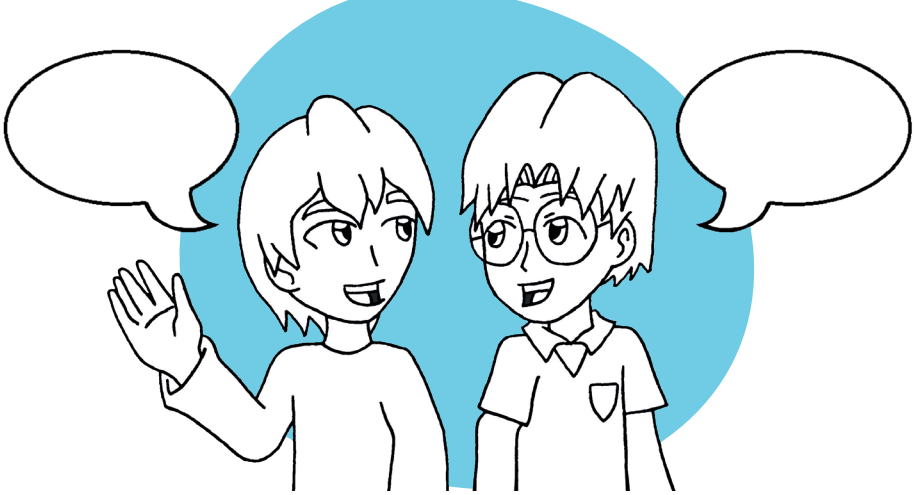
The word disabled can be hurtful
The terms disabled or intellectually disabled can be stigmatizing. These words have been misused in our society and even used as insults, which is why they may be perceived as inappropriate or offensive.

If you're unsure which term to use, you can always ask the person themselves. The word disabled may be perceived as offensive, but in some situations its use may be necessary — for example, when referring to services defined by the Disability Services Act.

"It annoys me that the word disabled is used as an insult, and people don't understand what it actually means. If it were used correctly, it would be okay — but in our society, it's used in the wrong way."

Only rarely are there situations where it's necessary to use terms like disabled person, intellectually disabled person, person in need of support, or person with special needs.

Almost always, it's possible to refer to a person by their name or use terms that don't define them by their disability or need for support. Such terms include, for example, participant, young person, student, or employee.



Discussing the need of support

"**I'm afraid of facing prejudice and being bullied** *if I share that I need support.*"

The topic might be unfamiliar to you, and you may not know how to talk about the need for support.
You're certainly not alone. If talking about the need for support or encountering people in need of support is new and unfamiliar, it's natural to feel uncertain about asking and discussing the need for support.

However, talking about your own need for support can also be nerve-wracking, so you can bring it up and ask. It's important to be open and speak respectfully. Don't belittle, discriminate, or make assumptions. Approach the situation neutrally and try to be understanding. Make sure you understood correctly.

"We all go to sleep at night."
Every person is different, and differences should be approached with respect. Each of us, through our actions and attitudes, can help normalize diversity.

Approach the need for support neutrally, it doesn't need to be ignored.

Most of the time, the need for support is simply a normal part of everyday life for the person.

Asking about the need for support

"You can ask about the need for support, as it's not always easy to bring it up and talk about it yourself. ***Ask directly, but politely."***

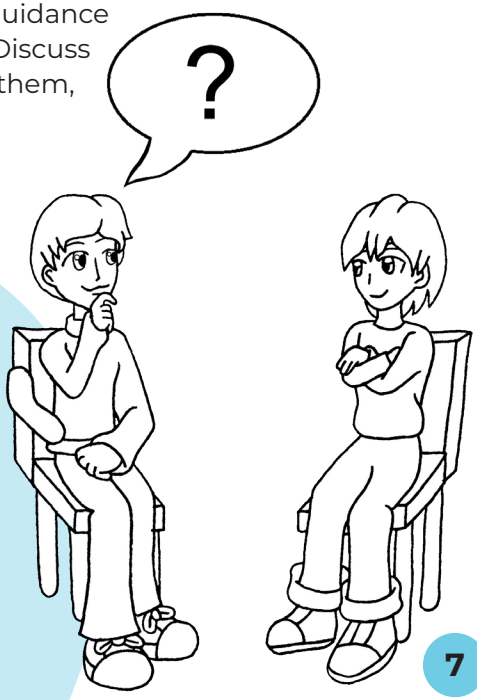
Ask if you don't know. Listen.
Talking about the need for support can feel personal and challenging. Ask about it with respect and appreciation.

Preferably, ask about it one-on-one and in a calm situation. The person defines for themselves how much they want to share.

Ask about skills and strengths instead of asking about things the person may not know or be able to do.

Ask about where support is needed, rather than about diagnoses

Ask them to share what kind of guidance and support they hope to receive. Discuss together ways that could support them, for example, at work.



Tips
- **Ask and listen** to the person's own wishes.
- **Speak directly to the person**, not, for example, to a caregiver.
- **If you don't understand,** you can ask them to repeat.
- **You can ask**, "Can I help?"
- **However, consider**: are you asking because you need information or just because you're curious?

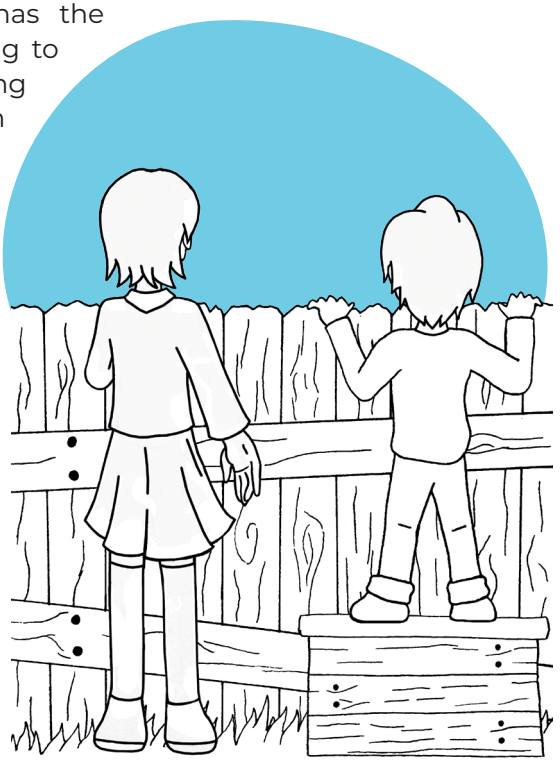
Equality is an obligation

All people are equal.
*The Equality Act and the Constitution require the promotion of equality and prohibit discrimination in all areas of life, such as in the workplace, education, services, and other societal functions. The laws emphasize that no one should be discriminated against on the basis of disability, age, ethnic background, gender, or any other personal characteristic. **

Promoting equality is therefore an obligation defined by law. Equality does not mean giving everyone the same amount of everything, but rather providing each person with what they need, in an individual and personalized way.

Promoting equality and addressing individual needs does not come at the expense of others. As stated earlier in the guide, every person needs support, and everyone has the right to receive support according to their needs. Whether it's receiving an assistive device or support with digital skills.

When truly realized, equality means addressing individual needs. As shown in the image, individual support — like the box under the feet — enables an equal view over the fence.



** Non-discrimination Act 1325/2014 & The Constitution of Finland 731/1999*

Prejudices may exist, even unknowingly, in each of us.

You don't need to fear your own prejudices; you can always change your attitude.

Free or full of prejudice

*"People fear things **they don't understand.**"*

Prejudice is a preconceived notion about a group of people or an individual. Prejudices can be based on generalizations and stereotypes (simplified views of a group of people).

It is very human to have prejudices, and there's no need to strive for being completely free of them. Prejudices often form when we have no experience with something or don't know enough about it.

Prejudices can influence people's behaviour and lead to discrimination or unfair treatment. For this reason, it is important to recognize and be aware of our own prejudices.

Tips

- Approach things with an open mind.
- Pay attention to your thoughts and recognize any potential prejudices.
- Be interested and engage in conversation. Ask questions and seek information on the topic.

Conclusion

This guide was created in collaboration with people in need of support. The content of the guide was developed in co-creation workshops. The final texts for the guide were crafted by the employees of the Renewed and diverse work with disabled people in Uusimaa project, based on the information gathered from the co-creation workshops and the stories shared by people in need of support.

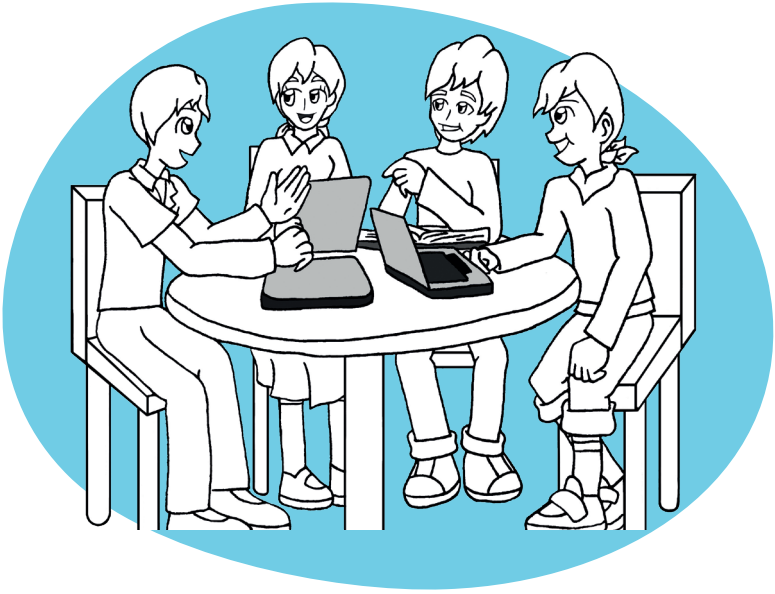
The content of this guide reflects the views of the people who participated in the development process, and may not necessarily represent the views of all people in need of support. The guide has been named and illustrated by people in need of support. People in need of support have also participated in the finalization of the guide, ensuring that the content aligns with their perspectives.

"Nothing about us without us."

Thank you to everyone who participated in the development of the guide!

For more information on the topic:

uvva.diak.fi
tukena.fi



The goal of the Renewing and Diverse Disability Work in Uusimaa project (2023-2026) is to increase the sector's appeal, job satisfaction, and the cultural and linguistic awareness of work communities through various means.

The project aims to reduce potential prejudices towards disability and disability work. Through the project's activities, awareness will be raised about job opportunities in disability work, particularly among young people and individuals with an immigrant background.

The lead organization of the project is Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, and the partners are Tukena Foundation, Diaconal Institute, STEP Training, and the Finnish Institute of Diakonia.

The project, co-funded by the European Union, is running from 1 November 2023 to 31 October 2026.

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