

Attitude Foundation Content Guidelines

A guide for accessible and inclusive content.

PLAIN ENGLISH

* Other accessible formats available on request.

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ATTITUDE FOUNDATION SUMMARY

What we want to achieve (our mission)

Many people agree that "attitudes" affect how people think about disability. Thinking about disability in negative ways builds barriers that shut out people with disability from every area of life.

The Foundation started in July 2014 because of the need to change attitudes to disability in our culture.

When we use the word "**culture**" we mean the attitudes, ideas, values and beliefs that the people in a society usually share.

Changing attitudes to disability will help make a fairer society for Australians with disability. Unfair treatment of people with disability affects their human rights and stops them from joining in along with everyone else.

The mission of the Foundation is to change attitudes to disability. The Foundation will use media to encourage other people not to discriminate against people with disability and to accept and include them for who they are.

The word "**media**" includes television, film and radio, printed news and stories and other ways that people use to share information, stories and ideas with large numbers of people. The word "media" can also mean journalists, TV producers, writers and other people working in the media industry.

The Foundation agrees with the PWC report - Disability expectations, which was about making the National Disability Insurance Scheme work to give people with disability and their families the chance for a better life. This report said, "Change must occur at the broadest level for improvement to be seen at the level of the individual". This means that there needs to be a general change in attitude, for individual people to think differently about disability.

That is why the Foundation will do things to change the way people think about disability and to help people with disability be a part of political, social, economic and cultural life.

The Foundation knows there is no quick fix to stop unfair treatment of people with disability but believes that using the media can help. This is because the way that the media shows disability affects how everyone thinks about it.

The media has the power to change attitudes to disability and this will change things for people with disability. That is why the Foundation wants to use media.

The Foundation will make sure that all the media that it creates or supports helps people to understand that it is important to respect the rights, capabilities and contributions of people with disability. The Foundation will also use media to challenge negative stereotypes and prejudices about people with disability.

When we use the word "**stereotype**" we mean an idea that people with disability always behave the same way because they have disability or because they have a type of disability. The idea that all people who use wheelchairs are "supercrips" or that people with intellectual disability are like children are disability stereotypes.

The word "**prejudice**" means when a person has an unfair opinion about someone else without knowing enough about them. This may be because that person is of a particular race, religion or other group. It may be because a person has a disability. "**Discrimination**" is similar to prejudice. It means treating someone else unfairly or badly because that person is one of a particular group. Discrimination can happen to people with disability in many ways. Discrimination happens when a person is not given a job, they get less pay, or they are told they cannot go to school with everyone else just because they have a disability.

The Foundation will make sure that when it makes media, it also gives people with disability the chance to say what they think and get involved. Where it can, the Foundation will give people with disability the chance to learn about media so that they can try to work in the media industry.

The Foundation will try to do these things by talking to other people or groups. This may mean disability and other organisations, people who work in media, government and other people who share this goal to change attitudes.

Who we are

The Attitude Foundation started in 2014. The people who started it are passionate about people with disability being part of society and about telling stories. The people on our Board know a lot about human rights, not-for-profit organisations and the media.

We want to make it so that people with disability can live their lives without having to deal with other people's negative attitudes and discrimination.

What we do will help other people understand better the different ways in which people with disability contribute to the Australian community. This change will make the lives of people with disabilities better and help them to be a part of society along with everyone else.

To learn more about us, please visit http://www.attitude.org.au/our_people

GUIDELINES

1. What these guidelines are for (Purpose)

These guidelines explain what the Foundation will do about media that is made by or for the Foundation, or with the Foundation's help or that has something to do with the Foundation (we call this "**Attitude media content**").

These guidelines are just for information and are not a contract. They do not say everything about Attitude media content, and other documents may have other important information, like information about protecting children involved in Attitude media content.

2. What these guidelines are about (Scope)

These guidelines are about Attitude media content.

3. How we will make Attitude media content (Sourcing and production of content)

Because the Foundation wants to give a voice to people with disability and help them to learn media skills, whenever it makes Attitude media content, it will make sure that the way it goes about doing it will be open, transparent, inclusive and accessible. The Foundation will talk with the Australian disability sector and directly with people with disability.

The word "**inclusive**" can mean something that it is open to everyone. When we use the word "inclusive", we mean something that does not leave people out because of their disability.

When we use the word "**accessible**", we mean that people with disability are able to use something easily. It could mean how information is given to a person with intellectual disability so they can understand it. It could be something written in a way that blind people can read. Or it could be a building that people who use wheelchairs are able to enter. Whether something is accessible depends on a person's disability.

4. Accessibility of content

The Foundation wants to make and share Attitude media content that is accessible and inclusive of people with disability and people of all identities.

We will try to make sure that what we make can be seen or understood in different formats depending on a person's disability and the technology and other supports they use. We will make sure that we have content in large print, braille, audio

description, audio transcript, captioned video, sign language, Plain English and Easy Read.

We will try to make our print or hard copy documents accessible and easy to understand. We will take into account font, colour, colour contrast, document structure/reading order and spacing for our documents.

Everything that we put online or that is in electronic format (like a PDF or Word file) will follow the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 by the World Wide Web Consortium. We will also make sure that Attitude media content can be seen in different types of devices, systems or technologies.

Sometimes we may have Attitude media content translated from English into different languages.

We will follow the rules in these guidelines when choosing the words that we use to talk about disability. We will also make sure that everyone working on Attitude media content understands and follows these guidelines and the rules we have in section 5.2. We will be especially careful not to use words that offend people of different race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexuality, gender, age, socio-economic status or class, or legal status.

5. Nature of content

5.1 What we are trying to do (Objectives)

The Foundation aims to use media to:

- (a) give people with disability the opportunity to say what they think; and
- (b) change the attitudes of the community to disability.

To do this, it is not enough for Attitude media content to show what most non-disabled people already think. Attitude media content needs to help to change their thinking by challenging their negative attitudes. Attitude media content can help the community to know more about the real lives of people with disability and to help people understand disability in a different way.

We will always ask these questions about Attitude media content:

- (a) Are people with disability the ones telling their story?
- (b) Does the story:
 - (i) show the real lives of people with disability?;
 - (ii) use stereotypes about disability?;

(iii) talk down to people with disability? (for examples by calling them "inspirational" just because of their disability); and

(iv) show the physical or attitude barriers for people with disability in the community or just show them as "broken" and needing "treatments" and "cures"? For a person who uses a wheelchair, only having stairs is a physical barrier. Attitude barriers are when the way other people think stops people with disability from doing things or joining in.

5.1.1 The person at the centre of the story (Narrative control)

The Foundation wants people with disability to have the opportunity to decide how they live their lives and to have their say. Attitude media content will be made to respect the right of people with disability to say what they think and to tell their own stories.

That is the reason the Foundation wants people with disability to use their own words or the way of communication they prefer. Sometimes this is not possible or the person whose story it is may prefer that someone else tell the story for them. When this happens, it is just as important to make sure that the story that is being told is that person's real story and that it is told in the way that the person sees it.

Sometimes it is fair to show also what other people think, like parents, family members, friends or carers. But because it not their story, it should not just be about the way they see it. People with disability have not been able to tell their stories for a long time and telling your own story is important.

5.1.2 How disability is shown (Portrayal of disability)

The way that people usually understand disability is part of our culture.

The main ideas and beliefs about disability in our culture are mostly the ideas of non-disabled people about what it is like to live with a disability and what they think about it. The words and images that the media uses to show disability makes those ideas and beliefs even stronger.

The kinds of words, images and messages that the media uses to talk about disability helps decide how other people think about people with disability and how they behave towards them. Those choices also send a message about what is and is not important to people and to society.

Attitude media content will show the real lives of people with disability. Attitude media content will also show disability in a way that helps other people understand the things that stop people with disability from enjoying their rights and from being a part of the world around them. Some of these things are the way that people with disability were treated in the past, the way that things are organised and how most people think about disability.

Attitude media content will show that disability is a natural and real part of life and that people with disability are just people. Attitude media content will not show disability in any way that makes stereotypes about people with disability stronger or that talks down to people with disability.

The Foundation will also look at the Convention on the Right of Persons With Disabilities in deciding how to make Attitude media content . The Convention is an important document about the rights of people with disability. Article 8 of the Convention says that the media should show people with disability in a way that is fair, inclusive and respects their rights. It also says that governments should do something to end stereotypes and discrimination about disability and to help people understand disability in a positive way.

Article 8 says:

"1. States Parties undertake to adopt immediate, effective and appropriate measures:

a) To raise awareness throughout society, including at the family level, regarding persons with disabilities, and to foster respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities;

b) To combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices relating to persons with disabilities, including those based on sex and age, in all areas of life;

c) To promote awareness of the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities.

2. Measures to this end include:

a) Initiating and maintaining effective public awareness campaigns designed:

To nurture receptiveness to the rights of persons with disabilities;

To promote positive perceptions and greater social awareness towards persons with disabilities;

To promote recognition of the skills, merits and abilities of persons with disabilities, and of their contributions to the workplace and the labour market;

b) Fostering at all levels of the education system, including in all children from an early age, an attitude of respect for the rights of persons with disabilities;

c) Encouraging all organs of the media to portray persons with disabilities in a manner consistent with the purpose of the present Convention;

d) Promoting awareness-training programmes regarding persons with disabilities and the rights of persons with disabilities."

5.2 Diversity

"**Diversity**" means understanding and accepting that everybody is different and that some kinds of differences are especially important.

People with disability have different lives and sometimes have different ideas about what it is like to have a disability.

Attitude media content will show the diversity of people with disability and tell the stories of people with different types of disabilities. Some people have physical disabilities, other people have sensory, cognitive or intellectual disabilities. There are people who look different, people who were born with a disability and others who became disabled later. You cannot always see someone's disability.

Attitude media content will also tell the stories of people who are not treated fairly because of their disability and because they belong to another group as well. Women and girls who have a disability or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians with a disability are often treated more unfairly.

5.3 Use of language

The words used to talk about people with disability are important. They help decide how other people think about people with disability. They also make a difference to how people with disability feel about themselves.

Attitude media content will use the words that each person with disability likes other people to use to talk about them or their disability.

The first thing is to find out what words a person with disability likes other people to use. Not everyone who has a disability likes the same words.

Some people want to be called "**disabled people**" because they want other people to understand that being disabled is the first thing they should know about them ("identity-first" language). Sometimes this is because they feel that is the most important thing about them. Other people say that they are "disabled" because of the way that things are organised in the world around them "disables" them.

Other people want to be called "**people with disability**" ("person-first" language) because for a long time people did not see anything else about them, they just saw their disability and did not see them as people.

In these guidelines we use "person-first" language because it is the language used in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. However, there is no right or wrong way as long as the words that are used are the

words that the person with disability decides to use or that other people should use to talk about them.

Some groups of people with disability choose to use "identity-first language". Other groups choose to use "person-first language". Some people call themselves "Autistic" and other people call themselves "person with Autism". Some groups agree on the words they prefer. "Person with Down syndrome" is what people with Down syndrome and their families prefer. But people who are Deaf or blind usually prefer "identify-first language", for example "Deaf person" or "blind person".

Sometimes people with disability will use words to talk about themselves that they do not like other people outside their group to use. Some of these words are "crip" and "gimp" but there are others. This is called "reclaiming" a word that has been used in a negative way, by giving it a positive meaning in the group. This can be a way of showing pride as a person with a disability and as a member of a group of people with disability.

The most important thing is to use the words that each person with disability chooses.

There are words that were used for a long time but that most people now agree are insulting. You should never use words like "retarded", "mongoloid" and "spastic". Many people also agree that you should not use words like "handicapped", "wheelchair bound" or "confined to a wheelchair" and "deformed".

There are other words that are not as offensive but are not a good choice because of how they make people with disability feel and how they make other people think about disability. Some of these words are "suffer", "stricken", "afflicted", "inspirational", "brave", "tragic", "overcoming", "dependent", "sick", "victim", "patient", etc.

The Foundation will think carefully about words and language when it is telling stories about people with disability or about what it is like to have a disability. It will try to use modern language to talk about disability that helps people to understand better that people with disability have rights and should decide how they live their lives.