

# List of Disabilities

## Do You Qualify As Having a Disability?

The ADA defines "disability" very broadly and does not limit the type of disability for which a service animal can be used. In addition, there is great flexibility with respect to the nature and severity of a person's physical, mental, or emotional issue (disability). The essence of the law states that if you have any condition that makes it difficult to perform or limits an important life activity (that other people can perform easily), you are qualified. You are not required to have a doctor's excuse or formal diagnosis. The life activity might only be a problem during certain times, like dizziness (leading to balance problems), low blood sugar, a seizure, panic attacks, stress, or depression, to name a few examples.

Although we do not encourage exaggerating problems to qualify as disabled, it is clear that you don't have to be blind or deaf to have a disability. Are you diabetic? Then you probably qualify if your blood sugar level sometimes incapacitates you or makes normal functions difficult. Do you have dizziness or balance problems on occasion? How about difficulty hearing?

## Partial List of Qualified Disabilities:

### Physical Problem

Asthma (or other breathing problems)  
Blindness (& partial blindness)  
Deafness (& partial deafness)  
Diabetes  
Dizziness/Balance problems  
Epilepsy  
General Hearing Difficulty  
Mobility Problems  
Neurological Problems  
Paralysis  
Physical Weakness  
Speech Problems  
Seizures

### Emotional/Mental Problem

Age-Related Cognitive Decline  
Any Psychiatric Condition (see exclusions below)  
Autism  
Depression  
Dyslexia  
Bipolar Disorder  
Emotionally Overwhelmed  
Panic Attacks  
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)  
Separation Anxiety  
Social Phobia  
Stress Problems

## ADA Definitions of Qualified Disability

Under the ADA, an individual with a disability is a person who:

1. Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;
2. Has a record of such an impairment; or
3. Is regarded as having such an impairment.

A **physical impairment** is defined by the ADA as:

Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory (including speech organs), cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genitourinary, hemic and lymphatic, skin, and endocrine.

A **mental impairment** is defined by the ADA as:

Any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.

**NOTE:** The ADA does not list all conditions or diseases that make up physical, mental, and emotional impairments, because it would be impossible to provide a comprehensive list given the variety of possible impairments.

## Exclusions to the Qualified Disability Definition

Neither deviant behavior (e.g., political, religious, or sexual) nor conflicts that are primarily between the individual and society are mental disorders unless the deviance or conflict is a symptom of a dysfunction in the individual. According to Title II of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990, current or future interpretation of psychological disabilities excludes common personality traits such as poor judgment or a quick temper.