



National Center on Disability and Journalism

Webinar Oct. 6, 2021 - Takeaways: NPPA and NCDJ panel “Disability and the Newsroom”

For journalists with disabilities:

- Find an ally/advocate with whom you can honestly share your experiences.
- Advocate for yourself in the workplace. Propose solutions that will make the most of your abilities.
- Disclose your disability to your employer if you’re comfortable doing so.
- Your experiences as an individual with a disability can often be an advantage. They may, for example, help you relate to or be trusted by individuals in difficult circumstances or those who have been overlooked.
- Speak up if you feel like you’re being pigeonholed.
- Don’t be afraid to go out of your comfort zone and try new things.

For all reporters and photographers:

- Include the voices and perspectives of people with disabilities in your reporting, even when the story is not specifically about disability.
- Show people with disabilities as full human beings; refrain from characterizing them only by their disabilities. This advice applies to both words and visuals.
- Refer to a person’s disability only when it’s relevant to the story.
- Ask sources if they self-identify as having a disability and ask how they would like their disability to be described.
- Use neutral, accurate language. For help, refer to the [NCDJ style guide](#).

For media employers:

- Include disability in your discussions about diversity in news coverage.
- Hire people with disabilities, recognizing that you can’t adequately cover this large and important community without representation in your newsroom.
- Track your coverage of disability and sourcing in the same way that you track coverage of other underrepresented groups.
- Offer training to your employees on covering disability.
- Encourage use of the NCDJ style guide in your newsroom.
- Consider a disability beat but make everyone in the newsroom responsible for including disability in their journalism.
- Review your job postings to ensure that you aren’t precluding someone with a disability who is capable of doing the job from being considered.
- Don’t assume that accommodations for a disabled employee will negatively affect the workplace or the work product. In fact, they can do the opposite.

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