

RESOLUTIONS, AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS  
E. ITEM 2.



AGENDA REPORT  
October 9, 2018

Resolution recognizing October 14th-20th as Invisible Disabilities Week;  
District 5

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**SUBJECT:**

Resolution recognizing October 14th-20th as Invisible Disabilities Week

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

None

**DEPT/OFFICE:**

District 5

**REQUESTED ACTION:**

Requesting that the BOCC approves the resolution recognizing October 14th-20th as Invisible Disabilities Week

**SUMMARY EXPLANATION and BACKGROUND:**

None

**CLERK TO THE BOARD INSTRUCTIONS:**

Please provide one framed copy

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**Description**

- Resolution Recognizing October 14th -20th as Invisible Disabilities Week



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October 10, 2018

MEMORANDUM

TO: Commissioner Kristine Isnardi, District 5     Attn: Danielle Stern

RE: Item E.2., Resolution Recognizing October 14 – 20, 2018, as Invisible Disabilities Week

The Board of County Commissioners, in regular session on October 9, 2018, adopted Resolution No. 18-153, recognizing October 14 – 20, 2018, as Invisible Disabilities Week. Enclosed is a copy of the Resolution.

Your continued cooperation is always appreciated.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
SCOTT ELLIS, CLERK

Tammy Rowe, Deputy Clerk

/dt

Encl. (1)

Brevard



County

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

*Resolution*

**WHEREAS**, an invisible disability is defined as a physical, mental or neurological condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities that is invisible to the onlooker; and

**WHEREAS**, symptoms of invisible disabilities can include debilitating pain, fatigue, dizziness, cognitive dysfunctions, brain injuries, learning differences and mental health disorders, as well as hearing and vision impairments; and

**WHEREAS**, these symptoms are not always obvious to the onlooker, but can limit a person's ability to do daily activities and lead to misunderstandings, false perceptions, and judgments; and

**WHEREAS**, the Invisible Disabilities Association (IDA) was founded in 1996 by Wayne Connell as a way to educate friends and family about his wife's invisible disabilities and help raise awareness that invisible illness, pain, and disabilities are very real; and

**WHEREAS**, **INVISIBLE DISABILITIES WEEK** is an opportunity to encourage, educate, and connect people and organizations touched by illness, pain, and disability around the globe.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA**, does hereby recognize October 14 through October 20, 2018, as

**INVISIBLE DISABILITIES WEEK**

to bring awareness, education, and support to those suffering from invisible disabilities in Brevard County and throughout the world.

**DONE, ORDERED, AND ADOPTED** in regular session, this 9th day of October, 2018.

ATTEST:

SCOTT ELLIS, CLERK

RITA PRITCHETT, CHAIR  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA



## RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS**, an invisible disability is defined as a physical, mental or neurological condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities that is invisible to the onlooker; and

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**WHEREAS**, the Invisible Disabilities Association (IDA) was founded in 1996 by Wayne Connell as a way to educate friends and family about his wife's invisible disabilities and help raise awareness that invisible illness, pain and disabilities are very real; and

**WHEREAS**, Invisible Disabilities Week is an opportunity to encourage, educate and connect people and organizations touched by illness, pain and disability around the globe.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA** does hereby recognize October 14<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018 as

### INVISIBLE DISABILITIES WEEK

To bring awareness, education and support to those suffering from invisible disabilities in Brevard County and throughout the world.

**DONE, ORDERED AND ADOPTED**, in regular session, this 9<sup>th</sup> day of October, A.D., 2018.

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RITA PRITCHETT, CHAIR  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

ATTEST:

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SCOTT ELLIS, CLERK

# How Do You Define Invisible Disability?

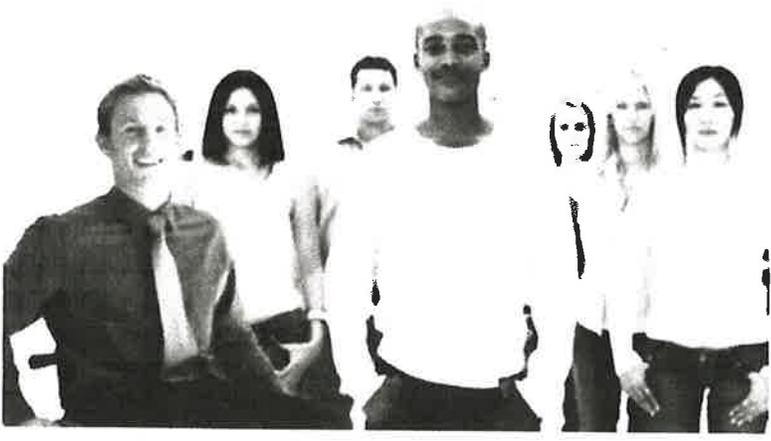
## in·vis·i·ble dis·a·bil·i·ty

/in'vizəb(ə)l/ /disə'bilədē/

noun

People often ask us to define invisible disability. To define invisible disability in simple terms is a physical, mental or neurological condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities that is invisible to the onlooker. Unfortunately, the very fact that these symptoms are invisible can lead to misunderstandings, false perceptions, and judgments.

*"They are parking in an accessible parking space with a placard, but they look fine. I wonder if that driver has an invisible disability."*



## Why define invisible disability?

In general, the term *disability* is often used to describe an ongoing physical challenge. This challenge could be a well-managed bump in life or a mountain that creates severe changes and loss. Either way, this term should not be used to describe a person as weaker or lesser than anyone else! Every person has a purpose, uniqueness, and value, no matter what hurdles they may face. When we define invisible disability, it helps us understand the subtle differences and challenges each person experiences in their daily lives.

Also, just because a person has a *disability*, does not mean they are *disabled*. Many living with these challenges are still fully active in their work, families, sports or hobbies. Some with disabilities can work

full or part-time, but struggle to get through their day, with little or no energy for other things. Others are unable to maintain gainful or substantial employment due to their disability, have trouble with daily living activities and need assistance with their care.

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) an individual with a disability is a person who: Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment (*Disability Discrimination*).

Furthermore, "A person is considered to have a disability if he or she has difficulty performing certain functions (seeing, hearing, talking, walking, climbing stairs and lifting and carrying), or has difficulty performing activities of daily living, or has difficulty with certain social roles (doing school work for children, working at a job and around the house for adults)" (*Disabilities Affect One-Fifth of All Americans*). Given this basic knowledge, it is easy to see how work to define invisible disability is both critical to helping so many who are overlooked but also daunting in scope.

## **Define invisible disability and open doors of communication and understanding.**

Often people think the term, disability, only refers to people using a wheelchair or walker. On the contrary, the 1994-1995 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) found that 26 million Americans (almost 1 in 10) have a severe disability, while only 1.8 million used a wheelchair and 5.2 million used a cane, crutches or walker (*Americans with Disabilities 94-95*). In other words, 74% of Americans who live with a severe disability do not use such devices. Therefore, a disability cannot be determined solely by whether or not a person uses assistive equipment.

The term *we define invisible disability* refers to symptoms such as debilitating pain, fatigue, dizziness, cognitive dysfunctions, brain injuries, learning differences and mental health disorders, as well as hearing and vision impairments. These are not always obvious to the onlooker, but can sometimes or always limit daily activities, range from mild challenges to severe limitations, and vary from person to person.

Also, someone who has a *visible* impairment or uses an assistive device such as a wheelchair, walker or cane can have an *invisible* disability or *invisible disabilities*. For example, whether or not a person utilizes an assistive device, if they are debilitated by such symptoms as described above, they live with *invisible disabilities*.

## Opportunities for dialog begin when we define invisible disability.

Unfortunately, people often judge others by what they see and conclude a person can or cannot do something by the way they *look*. This attitude can be equally frustrating for those who may appear *unable* but are perfectly capable, as well as those who seem *able*, but are not.

International Disability expert, Joni Eareckson Tada, explained it well when she told someone living with debilitating fatigue, "People have such high expectations of folks like you [with invisible disabilities], like, 'come on, get your act together.' But they have such low expectations of folks like me in wheel-chairs, as though the thought is that we can't do much" (Joni).

The bottom line is that everyone with a disability is different, with varying challenges and needs, as well as abilities and attributes. Thus, we all should learn to listen with our ears instead of judging with our eyes. That is the reason we define invisible disability.

### 2017 Awards Gala Info

Need help getting your friends and family to understand the invisible nature of your illness?

Check out the book, But You LOOK Good.

Need a community where others understand you and your illness?

Join the Invisible Disabilities Community.

Have you ever thought about sharing your personal journey with illness and pain?

Be a part of the Invisible No More Campaign.

### **LIST OF ILLNESSES THAT ARE CONSIDERED INVISIBLE DISABILITIES:**

We do not maintain a list of specific illnesses and diagnoses that are considered invisible disabilities. Invisible disabilities are such symptoms as debilitating fatigue, pain, cognitive dysfunctions and mental disorders, as well as hearing and eyesight impairments and more.

There are thousands of illnesses, disorders, diseases, dysfunctions, congenital disabilities, impairments, and injuries that can be debilitating. Therefore, all conditions that are debilitating are taken into consideration when we talk about invisible disabilities throughout the website. However, our focus is not to attempt to provide a vast amount of information about thousands of specific conditions (there are plenty of sites that do that).

We are here to provide awareness, education, connection and support for everyone who lives with a debilitating condition. We do this by offering articles, pamphlets, booklets, resources, radio, video, semi-

nars and more to give hope and compassion to all living with invisible disabilities as well as information for loved ones to better understand.

If you would like to suggest a link to an organization or foundation that provides information about your specific condition, please send it to us through the contact page. We would love to hear about it!

**ARTICLE RESOURCES:**

Disabilities Affect One-Fifth of All Americans, 1997 [census.gov/prod/3/97pubs/cenbr975.pdf](http://census.gov/prod/3/97pubs/cenbr975.pdf)

Disability Discrimination [eeoc.gov/eeoc/foia/letters/2011/ada\\_definition\\_disability.html](http://eeoc.gov/eeoc/foia/letters/2011/ada_definition_disability.html)

Americans with Disabilities [census.gov/aprd/www/statbrief/sb94\\_1.pdf](http://census.gov/aprd/www/statbrief/sb94_1.pdf)

Joni Eareckson Tada. Joni and Friends International Disability Center. [www.joni-andfriends.org/radio/2006/7/5/invisible-disabilites/](http://www.joni-andfriends.org/radio/2006/7/5/invisible-disabilites/)