

# Disabilities as Barriers

Personal barriers are different for everyone.

Special needs, even though they may have a common name or classification, affect people differently. The way your special need affects you can depend on your job selection, your background, your education, and even the encouragement you received as a child.

I want you to turn to worksheet #8, “Setting Goals for Me,” and take a look at the jobs you listed on it. Now turn to your goal sheet and look at your job goal. As I go around the room, I want you to tell me your job goal. You must be able to see yourself doing this job with your disability barrier.

List each person’s goal on the board, one at a time.

Okay, trainees, now I want you to list three local places where each person could look for a first job right out of school with no experience. It might not be the “ideal” job. In fact, it’s probably going to be an entry-level position.

Write their suggestions under each job goal.

Remember, you cannot deny your disability. You own it. It belongs to you and you alone. You must overcome it in the workplace.

It may take reasonable accommodations on the part of the employer, or it may take action on your part to overcome your barrier. Regardless, you must acknowledge it and recognize it as part of you. If you can close your eyes and see yourself doing the job with your disability, then your disability is just a barrier for you to overcome. It should not interfere with your job performance. If you can honestly see yourself doing the job, then you can do it.

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## Activity 3 (Optional)

15 MINUTES

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Discuss cases of famous and not-so-famous people who have had disabilities to overcome. For example, Franklin D. Roosevelt had polio, Helen Keller was blind and deaf, and Nelson Rockefeller was dyslexic. Ask trainees to list others they can think of. Write their list on the board. Encourage discussion of how these famous people overcame their barriers.

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