



## Understanding barriers to employment

Many things can get in the way of people with disability securing employment and having successful careers. These barriers can often make the impact of disability worse. Some barriers may be related to disability or health conditions, low literacy and numeracy skills, or a lack of family or community support, while others are created by society and are more structural in nature.

Often, multiple barriers or factors combine to prevent people with disability from gaining or maintaining work. For example, a person may live in an area with poor public transport, making it difficult to get to work, or they may have caring responsibilities which limit how many hours they can work. Take the time to get to know the person and understand the barriers that they might experience, remembering that these will be different for each individual.

### Structural or systemic barriers

Society has systems and rules which can make things harder for people with disability. Structural barriers include things like inflexible recruitment processes, difficulty accessing flexible working arrangements and potential loss of financial support due to increased employment.

### Environmental barriers

Some barriers are environmental, including things like inaccessible buildings, workstations or amenities, lack of accessible transport to and from work or inaccessible workplace technology.

### Attitudinal barriers

People with disability commonly experience attitudinal barriers. These include things like stigma, bias and negative assumptions about capability, employer discrimination during recruitment and in the workplace, low expectations, and micro-aggressions and hostility.

### Communication barriers

Communication accessibility is critical to employment success. Communication barriers include things like job ads and workplace materials not available in accessible formats, lack of clarity from employers about roles and relationships, low levels of awareness about rights at work and difficulty with social or workplace communication norms.

### Vocational barriers

Barriers can arise with a person's work and skills history. This can include things like low levels of education and training, limited work experience or extended periods out of work, making re-entry harder.

### Non-vocational personal barriers

Sometimes, things in a person's life can make it harder to find and keep a job. These might be things like the impact of physical and mental health issues, financial instability and stress, homelessness and personal safety concerns, caring responsibilities and relationship challenges

