

RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

It is important when you work with people with disabilities that you ensure their rights are respected, and they are treated as equals. Ask them (and in some cases those that know them best) about their likes and dislikes and ensure you approach their support from a person-centered perspective.

It is also important that you are aware of what language you use with the person you support. The Self Advocate Leadership Network has created a document about the best and worst uses of language, from their perspectives as people with disabilities. You can find that document here: <https://salnbc.com/thinking-about-language-words-matter-words-have-power/>

For more resources created by people with disabilities you can also visit the webpage of People First Canada: <https://www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca/>

Guiding Documents

There are two major guiding documents that can also support you to be aware of the rights of people with disabilities:

- 1) [The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)
- 2) [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

These documents protect and promote the rights of people with disabilities in our society. They also protect their rights to education, to employment, to live where they choose, to have enough supports to live independently, to have enough income to live with dignity, and to be involved in their communities.

What is the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (CCRF)?

The [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#) is a part of the Canadian Constitution, which is a set of laws containing the basic rules about how our country operates. Section 15 of the Charter makes it clear that every individual in Canada – regardless of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, colour, sex, age or physical or mental disability – is to be considered equal. This means that governments must not discriminate on any of these grounds in its laws or programs.

At the same time as it protects equality, the Charter also allows for certain laws or programs aimed at improving the situation of disadvantaged individuals or groups. For example,

programs to improve employment opportunities for people with mental or physical disabilities may be protected under subsection 15(2).

For more information on the Charter, see [Your Guide to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#). The guide is an educational publication that explains the purpose and meaning of each of the Charter's sections.

What is the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)?

The Convention is an agreement between countries to obey the same law about specific issues. When a country signs and ratifies (approves) a convention, it becomes a legal promise and guides the actions of the government. It often leads the government to adapt and change its own laws to support the goals of the convention.

- The Convention was adopted on December 13, 2006
- Canada ratified the Convention on March 11, 2010

By ratifying the Convention, the Canadian government has agreed to follow the articles of the UNCRPD.

The UNCRPD is a unique convention in the following ways:

- It is one of the first conventions to involve the people affected by it (people with disabilities)
- The level of awareness of the challenges faced by people with disabilities and their families
- The way it understands human rights from the social model and not the medical model. It views disability in terms of barriers in the environment, not in the individual.

You can download a PDF of the easy read version of the UNCRPD here: [EasyReadUNConvention](#)