



PARTNERING TOWARDS INCLUSION

Accessibility, Inclusion and Employment Plan
June 2019 – June 2022



WE
LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS
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VALUES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

OUR PURPOSE

To partner with people to change lives for the better.



WE BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

We are people people. Relationships come first. Listening helps us understand.

WE BELIEVE

A society where everyone can participate is a stronger, more resilient, more connected society.



WE ARE IMAGINATIVE

We are imaginative in our thinking and open to new ideas and ways of doing things.

OUR VALUES

All that we do, the decisions we make, and the approach we take is determined by our five core values:



WE ARE RESPECTFUL

We are respectful and caring in our dealings. We see the big picture but never lose sight of detail. We welcome diversity.



WE ARE RESPONSIVE

We are responsive to needs, determined to get things done and do them well.



WE ARE COURAGEOUS

We are courageous in our convictions. We stand up for what we believe in.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS AND CUSTODIANS

In the spirit of reconciliation, Life Without Barriers acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this country, and their connection to land, water and community. We pay our respect to them, their cultures and customs, and to Elders past, present and emerging.

This document may contain images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples now deceased.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE WORKPLACES

Life Without Barriers believes that, as a society, it is our utmost duty to work alongside people with disability to experience a life they deserve. The landmark National Disability Insurance Scheme is undoubtedly the most significant step forward Australia has made, giving people with disability greater choice and control in their life. However we have more to do as a nation to provide opportunities for meaningful work, limiting the personal, social and financial benefits it provides.

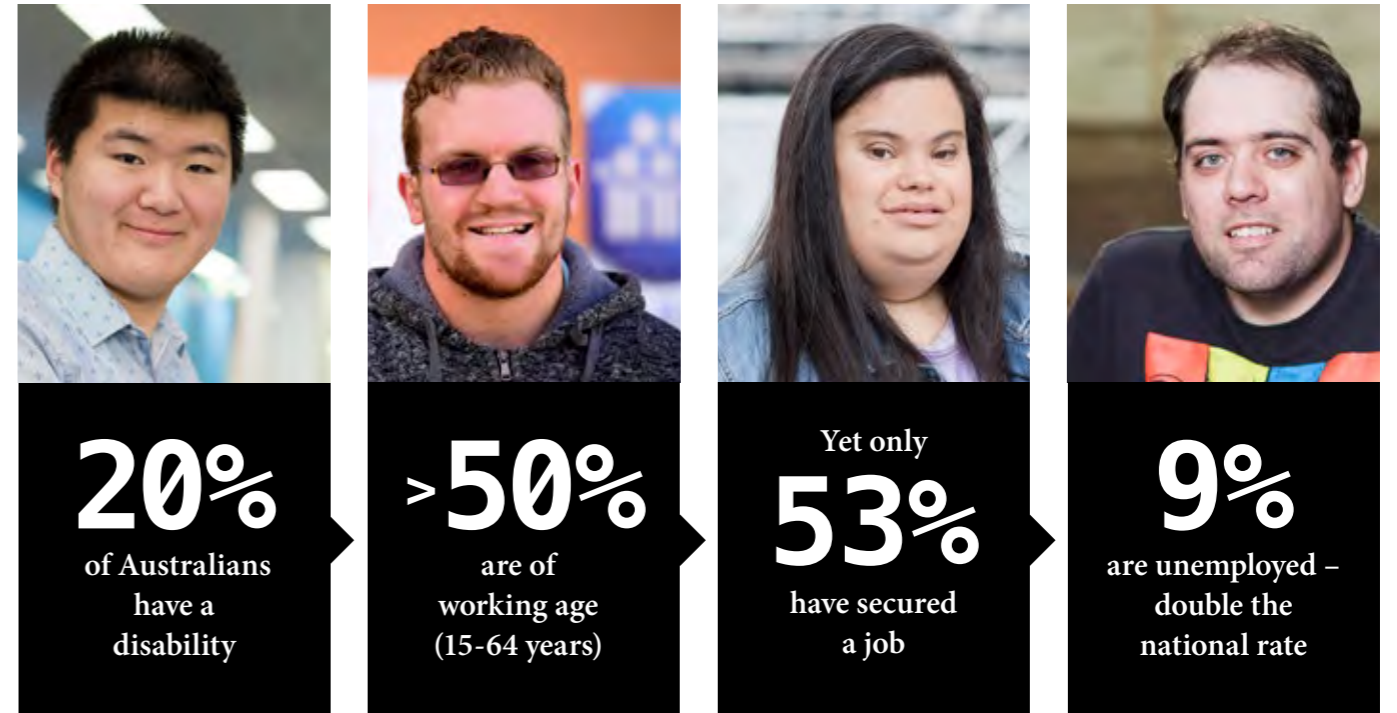
Over 4 million people in Australia, or 20% of our population, have a disability, and more than half of this population are of working age (15-64 years). Yet only 53% of these people have secured a job and the unemployment rate is double that of people without a disability, at 9%. Of those who are employed, it is often in lower paid jobs where there is no scope for career advancement.

People with disability are an integral part of the fabric of society and as the population grows, we can expect the number of people with disability will increase proportionately. These are people who deserve, as does every Australian, to be given the opportunity to be part of the workforce – not barriers placed in their way to do so.

The Human Rights Commission refers to 9 key attributes creating barriers for people with disability in employment. Issues such as a lack of job training, access to employment where office modifications will be actively made, fear of discrimination are just a few of these.

Life Without Barriers is committed to being an employer that challenges these barriers by creating workplaces that are welcoming, safe and vibrant with diversity. We want to be leaders in changing the mindset of employers and getting the best workforce that includes the 20% of Australians with a disability and show them the many benefits that come with it including a fuller talent pool with people who are adept at solving problems and who bring different perspectives.

We hope sharing our Accessibility, Inclusion and Employment plan encourages other organisations and agencies to develop their own frameworks for fostering inclusive workplaces as well as holding ourselves accountable for the commitments we are making to people with disability.



Barriers for people with disability in employment

- Lack of job training
- Discrimination
- Lack of work rights awareness
- Lack of assistance finding and maintaining employment
- Loss or reduction of Disability Support Pension
- Health issues
- Housing
- Transport

CHAIR'S MESSAGE



All employers across Australia have an opportunity and a responsibility to disrupt the challenges people with disability face.

As a leading social purpose organisation, founded on our commitment to pro-actively advance the human rights of people with disability, Life Without Barriers is in a unique position to drive this change.

Our priority is to share the wealth of information and learnings acquired over more than 20 years, through collaborations with government, our partners and the sector. By working collectively, we will benefit all Australians.

We know accessibility and empowerment in the workplace is so important for people with disability, and that is why we committed to ambitious targets in our Accessibility, Inclusion and Employment Plan two years ago to grow our organisation and demonstrate our leadership in the sector.

We are proud of our achievements in providing meaningful employment opportunities and fostering a culture of respect and belonging for people with disability, and we want to further stretch ourselves in this next Accessibility, Inclusion and Employment Plan, to take us further than ever before.

While continuing to work internally on our employment policies and processes, I am most excited by our emphasis on innovation, influencing public policy to embed accessibility as a priority for all employers. By strengthening our ties with our partners and working with other organisations that share the same goals as us, I am confident we will drive a culture of change.

I fully support the accessibility and inclusion journey that Life Without Barriers is on, and commend it for developing this new plan to step up to the next level.

Terry Lawler OA
Chair, Life Without Barriers

BOARD DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



I know accessibility is important because it ensures opportunities for people with disability, such as the right to secure sustainable, enjoyable and appropriate employment. This is something that I am passionate about and that I have driven since becoming a Life Without Barriers Board Director.

Sadly, people with disability continue to face more barriers to employment and social inclusion than the general community, and consequently face greater workplace discrimination and poorer social outcomes as a result. Life Without Barriers wants to be the leader in changing that situation and we have already come a long way through our previous Accessibility, Inclusion and Employment Plan (2017-2018).

I am heartened that we achieved our target of 4% new appointments identifying as having disability in 2017, and in 2018, our anonymous Employee Engagement Survey revealed that 9% of total respondents identified as having disability.

In 2017, Australia celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 – undoubtedly the most significant step forward for acknowledging the rights of people with disability.

Our new Accessibility, Inclusion and Employment Plan draws on this Act and all the work that has followed in its implementation.

We will bring the same passion and focus as before, mirroring our values 'We are Responsive' and 'We are Courageous', and continue to strive to make our culture as welcoming and inclusive as possible with a workforce that includes the 20% of Australians with disability.

I commend the new Plan to everyone within our organisation and beyond.

Graeme Innes AM
Board Director, Life Without Barriers

CHIEF EXECUTIVE INTRODUCTION



As Chief Executive I am confident of the commitment of every member of staff at Life Without Barriers to promote the inclusion of people with disability. What I hope is that our commitment, inspires this in others to recognise their power to influence positive change.

At Life Without Barriers, we welcome diversity. We actively foster inclusion through the diversity of our people. We live a culture underpinned by respect, belonging and connection. We actively employ, support and provide opportunities to our current and prospective employees inclusive of disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, intersex status, relationship status, age, culture, ethnicity, and faith. As a leading provider of disability support services with over 6,000 staff, we are setting an example to employers nationwide with our commitment to inclusion.

Guided by our last Accessibility, Inclusion and Employment Plan, we are embedding accessibility in the day-to-day operation of our business and creating employment opportunities across Life Without Barriers.

This new Accessibility, Inclusion and Employment Plan continues to challenge all of us with a broader focus than before. I'm confident that by building on our past success, we can develop and implement new and innovative ways to promote inclusion, both inside and outside our organisation.

Our values and culture underpin all of our activities. We not only want to ensure these values are implemented in Life Without Barriers, we want to share them in the wider community by telling our story and partnering with other organisations.

I encourage everyone to embed the principles, culture and actions needed to create an inclusive workplace that is welcoming to people with disability and others.

I also encourage and challenge everyone to keep our Accessibility, Inclusion and Employment Plan alive by engaging with it regularly.

I would like to particularly acknowledge and thank our Disability Services Advisory Council (DSAC) and the Australian Network on Disability (AND) for their invaluable input to this plan and ongoing support for our journey towards a fully inclusive organisation.

Claire Robbs

Claire Robbs

Chief Executive, Life Without Barriers

DISABILITY EMPLOYEE NETWORK



The Life Without Barriers Disability Ability Wellness Network (DAWN) is a platform for all employees to come together and share ideas about how we can support people with disability, chronic health conditions and mental health conditions. It's a way to encourage staff to recognise opportunities and bring forward solutions that can contribute to improving opportunities for people with disability.

“

“I'm excited to be the Sponsor of the Disability Ability Wellness Network (DAWN). My role is to guarantee that inclusion of people with disability remains firmly on the Life Without Barriers agenda and assist in communicating the strategy and plans of the network across the organisation.

My role is to also make sure I can support the network with any issues they need support to escalate and resolve. I am very excited about the work of our contributors to the DAWN. I look forward to supporting our DAWN champions and creating greater accessibility for all.”

Chris Chippendale

Executive Lead Disability Engagement.

2017–2018 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

10%

EXTERNAL ACCESSIBILITY RECOGNITION / VALIDATION

Improvement in accessibility and inclusion policies, processes and practices.

153

INCREASED EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

Achieved target of 4% of new staff in 2017 and continued to employ more staff in 2018 in roles across the breadth of LWB.

#7

ACCESS AND INCLUSION INDEX

Achieved 7th place in the Australian Network on Disability's inaugural Access and Inclusion Index in 2017. In 2018, we improved our score by 10% and again ranked 7th.

9%

BASELINE FOR STAFF WITH DISABILITY

Established baseline to measure progress towards achieving new employment targets. (from anonymous 2018 Employee Engagement Survey)

11 PIPELINE OF TALENT

Successful placement of 11 interns through the Stepping Into Internships program during 2017-2018 AIEP with two offered ongoing employment.

WORKPLACE ADJUSTMENT POLICY GUIDELINE AND PROCEDURE

Demonstrates commitment to supporting accessible and inclusive workplaces.

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT LEADER ROUNDTABLES

Facilitated Ideas without Barriers roundtables for senior leaders, from government, academia, business and the broad community sector, to challenge and inspire thinking about disability employment in our business.



2019 – 2022 ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSION & EMPLOYMENT PLAN (AIEP)

This 3 year plan continues our journey to improving accessibility and inclusion for employees, people we support and the communities in which they live. Leveraging the strong foundations built through delivery of our 2017-2018 plan, this plan will focus a range of key areas:



FOUNDATIONS

There are ongoing advancements in accessibility across the globe. We are committed to continue to embed improvements in accessibility in our business processes by leveraging positive new developments including through digital platforms and how information is communicated and available for a diverse range of people.



PEOPLE

We are unwavering in our commitment that all staff within Life Without Barriers are disability aware and encourage the employment of people with disability. We will strengthen the capability and skill of our staff about how they contribute to an inclusive workplace.



COMMUNITY AND THE PEOPLE WE SUPPORT

We commit to proactively influencing social public policy by partnering to share expertise and drive positive change in the societal attitudes of people with disability.

We will share research and insights from our experience and expertise to help inform better outcomes for people with disability and we will work with Governments across Australia to build their knowledge about improvements we need to make as a nation.

AUSTRALIAN NETWORK ON DISABILITY'S ACCESS AND INCLUSION INDEX

Life Without Barriers is an active participant in the Access and Inclusion Index given it is a highly effective way to monitor progress towards access and inclusion goals and focus effort on improvements.

It is for this reason we have underpinned this plan with the Index's ten point framework:

1. **COMMITMENT**
2. **PREMISES**
3. **COMMUNICATIONS**
4. **INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**
5. **WORKPLACE ADJUSTMENTS**
6. **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**
7. **CAREER DEVELOPMENT**
8. **SERVICES**
9. **SUPPLIERS AND PARTNERS**
10. **INNOVATION**

STRATEGY TOWARDS 2022



FOUNDATIONS



“ We endeavour to supply fit-for-purpose premises, documentation and vehicles that are accessible to people with disability, and we seek advice from people with disability to inform our business decisions for suitability of premises where needed. ”

John O'Connor,
Executive Director, Corporate Services and Finance



“ We are completely invested in being an organisation that challenges itself in developing the highest consistent standard of communications that provide no barriers to our staff or the people we support getting the information they need. We are excited by the developments in accessible content and technology and from now through to 2022 we will be courageous in our exploration of ways we can continue to be imaginative and fit for purpose in accessible communication and marketing. ”

Brad Swan,
Executive Director, Strategy and Engagement

COMMITMENT

- 1.1 Establish an effective Disability Employee Network by June 2019
- 1.2 Support employee mental health by implementing a Wellbeing Program by September 2019
- 1.3 Improve experience for staff with disability by measuring their engagement and utilising insights about accessibility and culture from the 2020 Employee Survey

PREMISES

- 2.1 Consult with employees with disability on design and fitout of new premises from June 2019
- 2.2 Develop Property Workplace Standards which go beyond compliance to relevant standards and include dignified access by September 2019

COMMUNICATIONS

- 3.1 Fully accessible integrated communications driven by a focussed Communications Strategy by July 2019
- 3.2 Utilising insights and guidance from disability advocacy groups on how LWB portrays people with disability in creative & in language from September 2019
- 3.3 In house capability to develop accessible content by December 2019
- 3.4 Improved accessible intranet content for staff from May 2020
- 3.5 Ongoing promotion of National Relay Service

INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

- 4.1 All digital platforms are Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA compliant and regularly tested from July 2019
- 4.2 Develop accessible intranet platforms for all staff by May 2020
- 4.3 Introduce Accessibility Matrix for purchasing
- 4.4 Utilise internal ICT Support Call Centre to record employee accessibility requests to further inform initiatives to improve staff experience of accessibility

STRATEGY TOWARDS 2022



PEOPLE



“

We commit to educating our employees and especially our managers to be disability inclusive, and that our recruitment processes and workplaces encourage and advance the employment of people with disability.”

Scott Orpin,
Executive Director, People, Safety and Culture

WORKPLACE

- 5.1 Update policies in relation to Workplace Adjustment to be inclusive of flexible practices and career development from June 2019
- 5.2 Implement Workplace Adjustment Passport by September 2019

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- 6.1 Implement employment programs by continuing to offer internships through the Stepping Into Program and interview all applicants with disability who meet minimum job requirements from June 2019
- 6.2 Employment targets set to attract people with disability as new hires
 - At May 2020 (end year 1) – 8% of new staff identify as having disability
 - At May 2021 (end year 2) – 10% of new staff identify as having disability
 - At May 2022 (end year 3) – 12% of new staff identify as having disability
- 6.3 Retention targets established to retain people with disability
 - At May 2020 (end year 1) – 4.5% of staff identify as having disability in myHR
 - At May 2021 (end year 2) – 7.5% of staff identify as having disability in myHR
 - At May 2022 (end year 3) – 9% of staff identify as having disability in myHR

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1 Create a ‘Working Without Barriers’ eLearning module to grow understanding on providing support for employees with disability from June 2019
- 7.2 As part of the Life Without Barriers induction program, design a Disability Induction module for all staff entering any role in Disability
- 7.3 Implement a Mentoring Program which is inclusive of all employees and complements Career Development plans aiming for 5% of employees with disability to participate by December 2020

STRATEGY TOWARDS 2022



COMMUNITY & THE PEOPLE WE SUPPORT



“
There are few things as fundamental to good practice as the relationship between the people we support and practitioners, and central to any relationship is inclusion and reciprocity. Our relationships can only be successful if we listen to what the people we are working with want and need and include them, their families and communities in decision-making and service design and build on their own strengths and capacity to help overcome barriers to participation.”

Mary McKinnon,
Executive Director Practice & Quality



“
We want to provide the best possible services to the people we support – we value their insights and expertise about their experience with Life Without

Barriers, and how we can do better. We are committed to improving accessibility and inclusion for all through a combination of person centred engagement, leadership, local and corporate partnerships, public policy development and a co-design approach.”

Angela Connors,
Executive Director Client Services

SERVICES

- 8.1 Easy English service agreements in place for all parts of disability service delivery from December 2019
- 8.2 Implement a Client Voice strategy so that access and inclusion is at the forefront of our service development and delivery by February 2020
- 8.3 All client direct information is developed with accessibility features (being easy read or translated content) that is considerate and linked to the Accessible Communication Strategy by April 2020

SUPPLIERS AND PARTNERS

- 9.1 Increase commitment to accessibility of new suppliers with tender accessibility and inclusion responses to annually inform any further tender opportunities from June 2019
- 9.2 Increase commitment to accessibility of existing suppliers by sharing our commitment to accessibility and inclusion at review meetings encouraging them to commit to the same from June 2019

INNOVATION

- 10.1 Actively influence public policy contribution in relation to the experiences of people with disability in relation to economic participation from July 2019
- 10.2 Engage senior industry stakeholder discussion and thought leadership through 'Ideas Without Barriers Roundtables Biannually
- 10.3 Through our partnerships, influence the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and governments for meaningful employment opportunities for people with disability
- 10.4 Support partnerships including JobLife joint venture with Angus Knight that provides Disability Employment Services and report on the efficacy of service provision annually.

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART – STORIES OF INCLUSION



CATHERINE

Service Delivery Officer, DUO Services, ACT

I am a Pinterrairer woman from Tasmania and I live and work in Canberra. I am part of the support worker phone line team and often assist with the client phone line. I have left side hemiplegic cerebral palsy. My experiences as a person who has a disability working at Life Without Barriers have been positive in terms of the assistance given to help me at work.

Although my disability is seemingly mild, my balance is not good and I have trouble using stairs especially when there is no handrail. Most of the stairs in my office have handrails but the one out back did not. This leads to the enclosed car park and an area where we have smoking ceremonies/ some meetings and events. A rail was installed for these stairs which now allows me to have unassisted access to the back area. I also have an iPad which I use to make text larger so I can read documents easily and it allows me to take notes too.



MARTIN

Administration Officer, QLD

My name is Martin Day and I work out of the Brisbane office (Shailer Park), and have worked with Life Without Barriers since 2007. Life Without Barriers has been very accommodating during my employment as an Administration Officer and has made necessary modifications to my work station for me to be able to perform the duties within my role.

During my employment with Life Without Barriers, I was tasked with the role of employing many Disability Support Workers and as part of an employment panel, was able to give a valuable insight into a lived experience of having a disability as well as accessibility issues within various locations around South East Queensland. I have also been involved with the client's social club, which was tasked with client engagement and running fun activities for people that we support.

Since I've been with Life Without Barriers, I have met many clients, staff, workers, and families, and hopefully changed preconceived ideas about disability.



JASON

Administration Officer, QLD

My name is Jason and I have worked for Life Without Barriers since 2009. I started as a part time employee, working four hours a day in a reception and general administration role. I learned 'on the job' with limited guidance and became full time later that year to support the ongoing needs of my office.

I am really committed to my job and providing the highest level of service to all of my colleagues and clients. I enjoy making sure that my colleagues fully supported to do their job which allows Life Without Barriers to provide a great service to our clients, who are at the centre of everything we do.

In 2011, my new Operations Manager Caroline Pedersen started working with me in Toowoomba. She identified that I was very committed to doing a good job, but that I struggled to know my role and how to best apply my skills. She worked very closely with me to identify my strengths and how I could achieve the most out of my role. We evaluated my key areas of responsibility and broke them down to align my skills to my duties. This was also complemented by having a supportive team around me, who have always put the person before the disability. One of the most important elements of my role is the interactions I have with clients and colleagues. My team has always ensured I understand the bigger picture and how my role contributes to the support Life Without Barriers provides to vulnerable people in our community. I love doing my job and I guess I'm doing okay because this year my manager nominated me for the Life Without Barriers Employee Recognition Awards People's Choice Award and I won.

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART – STORIES OF INCLUSION



GEORGIA

Communications Administrator, NSW

I first began my journey at Life Without Barriers through the Australian Network on Disability (AND) with their stepping into program as an intern. The purpose of the internship is to give students with disability a chance to experience a range of tasks and project challenges, commensurate with their study and interests.

I have Nocturnal Epilepsy and it does not affect my work. I started in the Strategy & Engagement Team where I worked on Social Media campaigns as well as creating marketing material and other ad hoc tasks. I then moved onto the Learning and Development Team and then finally in the People, Safety & Culture Team. I was given the chance to work on many different projects while I was interning and never did I feel that I was treated differently. When my internship ended I was given the opportunity to apply for a position working on the Victoria Transfer which I got.

Life Without Barriers has always been welcoming and inclusive since I started. Some people are amazed when they hear that I have come through the AND program which really makes me feel like I'm changing opinions about what someone can achieve.



EMILY

Project Officer, NSW

My name is Emily and I have been assisted by Life Without Barriers in a way I have never been supported by any other workplace. LWB does this by creating a working space where my colleagues are all supportive of differences, and my manager is always understanding and accommodating when I need flexible working arrangements. This ensures I can continue to perform at my best while also making sure my health is not affected.

Like many people with an invisible illness, I find it hard to always explain my disability in a way that people can understand. The title most commonly used to explain my disability, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, is also quite misleading and misrepresentative of what my life is like. This can make the workplace a very hard world to navigate as no two days are the same.

Working at Life Without Barriers for the past two years, has not only helped me regain lost confidence, but it has also shown me that embracing my disability, and being open about my challenges, doesn't hinder me but makes me unique and valued.

ANONYMOUS, NSW

I have worked with Life Without Barriers for 15 months. I have a neurological disability (acquired about 10 years ago). I am also neurodiverse. I make my own workplace adjustments regarding light and sound. I work part time and have about 7 years

(collective in my working life) in the disability area, mostly as a Disability Support Worker. Very few people know about my disability and neurodiversity as it is difficult to admit to colleagues, live with and in some ways, I don't want to be treated differently, just let my work quality speak for itself. When I see others with more high needs disability, I often think I don't have a disability. This is incorrect I know, but an invisible disability makes it easier to fit in.

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