

# HUMAN RIGHTS DAY 2024

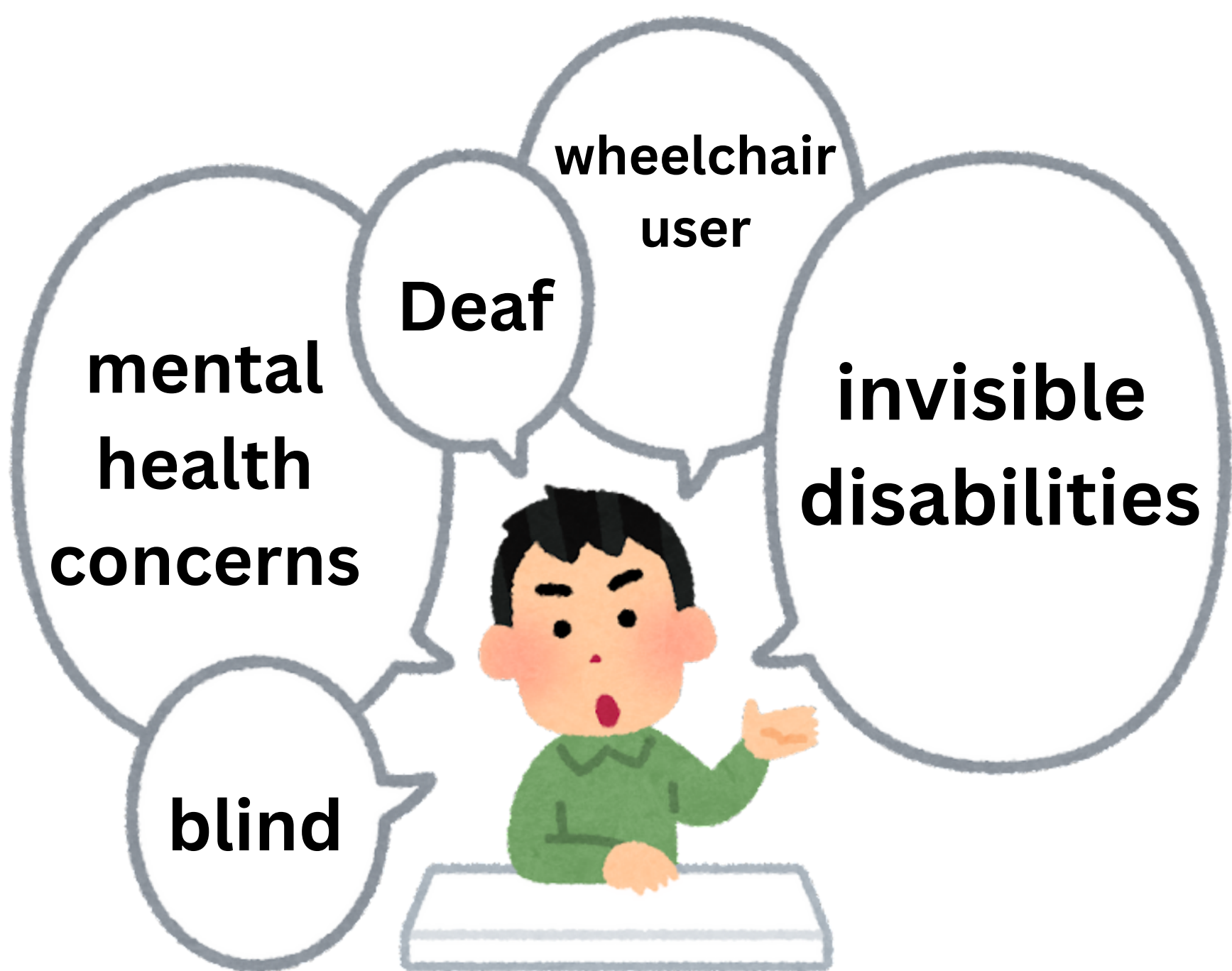
LET'S COMMEMORATE THE RIGHTS OF  
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



# Welcome to "Voices of Resilience: Stories from UCT Students with Disabilities."

In commemoration of the rights of persons with disabilities, this electronic booklet brings together a collection of powerful narratives.

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Most people think of disabilities as physical ones, but no one thinks about the invisible ones. The ones where you can walk, you can see, you can hear, but inside you are struggling every day as those senses are hurting you. As someone who has lived with undiagnosed autism for 21 years, I always felt like something was "wrong" with me. I hate certain food textures so my diet is very limited, bright lights hurt me so I have to wear sunglasses all the time, loud sounds make me want to cry and curl up into a ball, and no matter what, I am always exhausted each and every day.

To me, Human Rights Day should mean more than the right to freedom and the right to live, but the right to be happy and receive help when you need it, especially if you are living with a disability. A disability is a lifelong condition. I can try to hide my autism with many masks and I fool most people, but I can't fool myself. It's important to recognize when you need help and to advocate for yourself because you have the human right to not suffer. So reach out to those that love you and care for you and keep fighting for your right to happiness 😊

- Robyn Brown



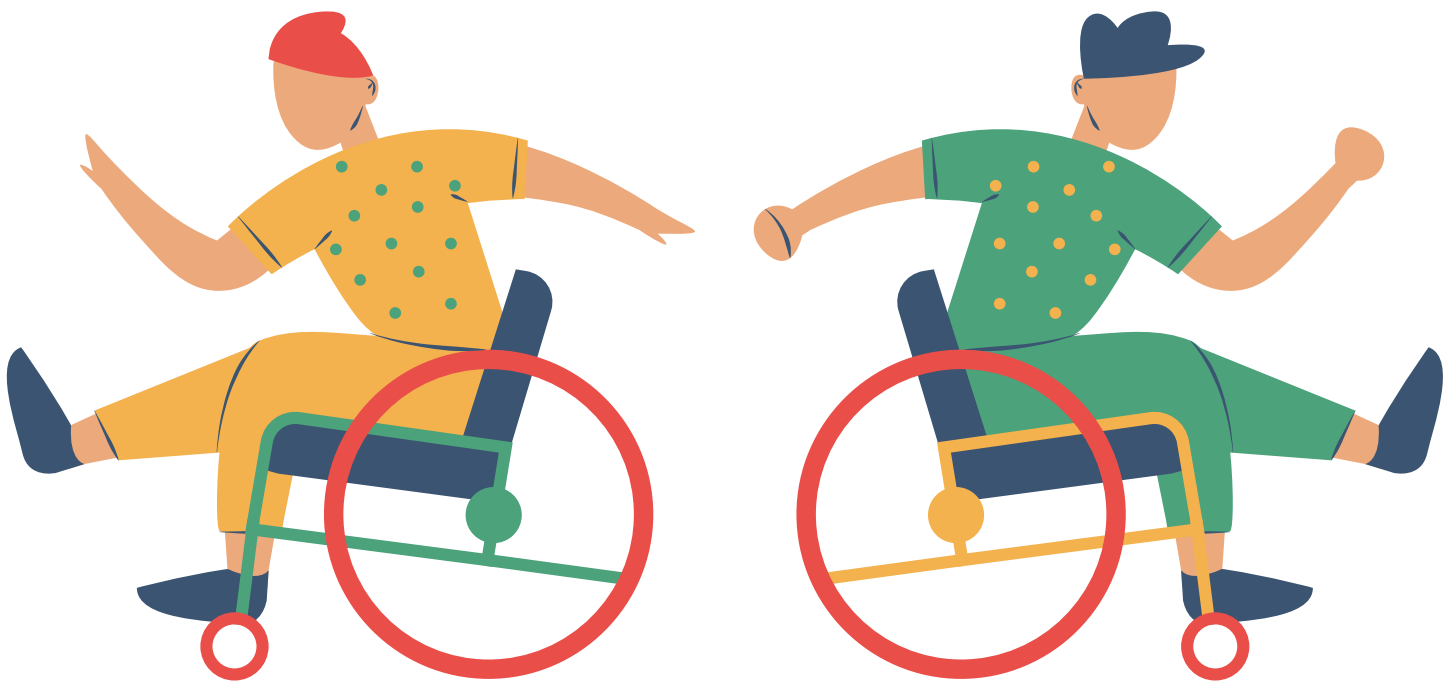
As someone living with a disability, Human Rights Day in South Africa has deep personal meaning for me. It represents an ongoing struggle for equality, dignity, and inclusion for individuals like myself. On this day, we recognize the efforts made to ensure that people from all backgrounds are not only included but also respected and valued members of society.

Human Rights Day isn't just about advocating for inclusion; it's about taking action to remove barriers to accessibility and create environments where everyone can fully participate. Whether it's in education, transportation, or public spaces, the goal is to promote inclusivity and ensure that no one is left behind.

For those of us with disabilities, Human Rights Day prompts reflection on the challenges we face daily. From societal attitudes to physical obstacles and limited opportunities, we confront barriers that others may not always see. But this day also presents an opportunity to raise awareness and advocate for change, ensuring that everyone's voice is heard, and their rights are protected.

Above all, Human Rights Day is a day of appreciation. It's a moment to acknowledge and celebrate the efforts society has made to create a more inclusive world for people with disabilities and people from all backgrounds. It's a reminder that progress is possible and that together, we can build a more equitable and accessible future for all.

– Xhanti Solani



What does Human Rights Day mean to me?

This is a universal right that everyone should be entitled to. That means everyone should be treated with respect regardless of race, gender, religion or where they come from. As a person born with a disability, I ask myself am I free? All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

As South Africans, on this day we are reminded of the sacrifices that came with achieving democracy.

“Concentrate on the abilities your disability doesn't hinder and don't dwell on the things it interferes with. Be disabled physically, not in spirit”  
Stephen Hawking

- Alex Pasqualli



Human Rights Day for people living with disabilities  
I commemorate Human Rights Day of people living with disabilities by acknowledging the strife, struggles and achievements we face as an often-marginalized community.

We are still not a priority in our society, our needs are almost never met when we don't have money to access facilities, programs and treatments that are essential to us. Are our rights too meaningless to be considered as human rights? Are we less human that our rights are least regarded? Human rights is a bitter sweet concept, it doesn't always speak to me. I still have to educate individuals, even medical professionals, of my needs.

Living with a Rare Congenital Disorder doesn't make life easier, and I am often misunderstood. Until there's quality healthcare, global awareness integrated in society and social acceptance for people living with disabilities, human rights will always be just a slogan for companies to look good to the public, leaving the rest of us continuously fighting for a simple task to be seen as human enough for those rights.

- Miracle May



Human rights, as someone that is physically challenged, means that I have equal rights just as any other person. It also means that I am accepted in my community and treated with the respect that I deserve because all differently abled people deserve to be respected and treated like any other human being.

“Focus not on the differences of people with disabilities, but the talent of the individual” Neil Milliken

- Talitha Counter

