Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) @ Western Sydney University

What is the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Initiative?

The Sunflower is a discreet symbol that can be worn by people with hidden (non-visible) disabilities to indicate they may need additional time, support, or understanding. By wearing a Sunflower lanyard or wristband, individuals can signal they may experience barriers not immediately obvious to others.

What is a hidden disability?

Hidden disabilities are conditions that aren't immediately visible to others. They include:

- Autism, ADHD or learning differences
- Mental health conditions
- Sensory impairments (e.g. hearing loss, sensory sensitivities)
- Chronic illnesses or pain
- Neurological or cognitive conditions
- Fatigue, mobility or respiratory conditions

Around **4.4 million Australians** live with disability, and approximately **80–85%** of these are not visible. Find out more about some of the other types of hidden disabilities on the Hidden Disability Non-visible disabilities website.

Who can wear a Sunflower lanyard/wristband?

Anyone with a hidden disability is welcome to wear a Sunflower lanyard or wrist band. Participation is entirely voluntary, and lanyards and wristbands are free of charge for Western staff and students.

Where can I get a Sunflower lanyard/wristband at WSU?

- **In-Person -** Sunflower lanyards or wristbands are available for in person collection at front counters of our major campus Libraries. Just ask the friendly library staff for a Hidden Disability lanyard or wrist band. No questions asked!
- **Mailed out -** You can also request a lanyard or wristband be mailed out to you. Complete this simple form with your basic details and postal address.

Where Else Can I Get a Sunflower Lanyard?

You can also access Sunflower lanyards from other sources:

- **Transport NSW**:
  Transport users can request a free Sunflower lanyard from Transport for NSW. It is recognised across public transport services, including trains, buses, light rail and ferries. Order online or ask at selected train stations and service counters.

- **Participating Retailers and Airports**:
  Many large retailers (such as Commonwealth Bank, Optus and Qantas) and airports also participate in the Sunflower program and may offer lanyards upon request.
- **Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Website**:
  You can also purchase lanyards or wristbands and accessories directly from the official Hidden Disabilities shop.

What do I do when I see someone wearing a sunflower lanyard?

If you see someone with a lanyard or wristband who appears to need assistance, a good way to approach them and begin a conversation is:

"Hello, I see you're wearing a sunflower lanyard. Is there anything I can do to help you today?"

To ensure that your interaction is supportive and respectful, here are some top do's and don'ts:

- Don't ask the person what their disability is. Respect that their privacy is important.
- Be solution-focused and considerate when offering help.
- Listen closely and follow the person's lead - don't make assumptions about what the person can or can't do or what support they might need.
- If the person is accompanied by another person, for example a friend, a carer, or a sign language interpreter, always speak directly to the person with a disability.

What kind of help should I provide to someone wearing the lanyard/wristband?

Always ask before providing assistance and respect the person's wishes if they decline your support. Within reason, provide the assistance requested by the person wearing the lanyard/wristband. For example:

- If the person has to stand in a queue for a long period, allow them to skip the queue or offer them a seat. If no seats are available, ask someone who is seated if they can vacate their seat for the person wearing the lanyard.
- If the person is struggling in a noisy, bright, or overstimulating environment, allow them to wait or sit somewhere quiet.
- If the person needs support in locating accessible facilities (i.e. bathrooms, elevators), help them find it.
- If the person is having difficulty finding their way on campus, support them with reading maps or signs and/or escorting them to their destination if possible.
- If you are in a situation where you are providing a person wearing a lanyard/wristband detailed information, be patient as you explain the details and understand that you may need to repeat the information more than once, write it down or explain it in a different way.

- If the person expresses that they may benefit from ongoing support or if the person requires support beyond what you can provide – refer them to the appropriate service who can advise them further:
    - **Students** can reach out to Disability Services for advice on support and reasonable adjustments available at disability@westernsydney.edu.au.
    - **Staff** can reach out to the Safety team to discuss workplace adjustments that may be available via the "Ask People Services" WesternNow form.
- If you are concerned about the persons wellbeing or feel they need immediate support:
    - A staff member supporting a student should call Wellbeing Services on 1300 668 370 (option 5) during business hours.
    - For staff and students, including after-hours support, you can contact Campus Safety & Security on 1300 737 003.

You are not expected to provide any specialist advice or support. If providing support significantly impacts your work or study capacity – then politely let the individual know that you are unable to support them in that moment and if appropriate:

- Provide them information about other support services at Western Sydney University
- Ask if they are happy to wait for a few moments until you have time to assist them further.
- If you have any concerns about support requested please reach out to your supervisor.

What if I see someone wearing a lanyard/wristband but they don't seem to need help?

That's OK. Some people may not require assistance in every situation.
It's best to **offer support only when appropriate** (e.g. if they seem unsure, distressed, or need help navigating campus or services) and r**espect their decision** if they decline.

How can I support people with hidden disabilities who *don't* wear a lanyard/wristband?

Not everyone wants to disclose their disability or wear the lanyard or wristband. You can help the University be more inclusive generally by:

- Using **universal design** principles when designing physical and digital spaces, during planning discussions, in your communications, in your workplace and in your learning and teaching practice.
- Being patient, flexible and inclusive in how you teach, advise or support others
- Avoiding assumptions and creating psychologically safe environments for our students and staff

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Who can I contact for more information and advice?

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - equityanddiversity@westernsydney.edu.au