



THE NJ DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERAN AFFAIRS



OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING



17 JULY 2024 NEWSLETTER:

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DISABILITY PRIDE MONTH

In July of 1990 the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law. This piece of civil rights legislature stood on the foundation set by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to grant protections against discrimination suffered by those with disabilities. This act was instrumental providing individuals with disabilities rights and protections ensuring public facilities and municipalities were equitable and accessible for everyone. The Act was sweeping and extended into private business as well where accessibility standards would now be federally enforced. The first Disability Pride Day would be celebrated in Boston that same year. What is Disability Pride? Often we may see disabilities as something inflicted on someone else or even define people by their disabilities. Disability Pride is about embracing those things that make us different. It is about how those with disabilities embrace their conditions as a part of their identity, informing who they are, and celebrating their unique perspectives and experiences. Disability Pride Month is also a time to educate those who feel they are outside of the scope of disability labels. It is a time to raise awareness about the diverse conditions and experiences of people with disabilities, aiming to reduce misinformation and assumptions while fostering empathy for all.

Are you 'Temporarily Abled'?

Being able and functional in today's society can often be taken for granted, but the truth is that being able itself is a temporary condition. We've all been ill before, and in the wake of the COVID-19 epidemic many people have had to contend with long term after effects that significantly change their daily quality of life. If illness or mishap do not occur, then we are often disabled by the advance of age as we gradually lose more of our abilities we rely on in the now. Being disabled in some way is inevitable, whether its needing glasses or needing a cane.

Situational Disability

An important method in regards to understanding disability is to be able to recognize when we are under the influence of Situational Disability. Situational Disability refers to circumstances in a setting or time that make one less able to adapt or cope with what's going on. Think about trying to hear your friends in a very crowded and loud room, or having to carry in groceries while holding a child in the other hand. This applies to temporary medical conditions such as infections or injuries. Consider how your actions and goals are hampered during these times and then consider what if this was the reality for your entire life and how that might change or force you to adapt to the challenges of everyday life.

What does 'Ableism' mean?

Self-identified Disabled individuals are the largest minority group in the world with 53 million disabled individuals in the United States and over one billion worldwide. Despite the large population of individuals with disabilities, ableism—discriminatory and prejudiced attitudes toward those with different abilities—remains exceedingly common. Ableism can be overt and obvious through the use of slurs or mocking of a disabled person, but far more prevalent is passive ableism where one lets their own internal biases influence their behavior or words. This can be things such as being overly sympathetic to a disabled person or overly helpful, asking inappropriate and personal questions about their disability, or expressing that there are ways the individual can be 'fixed'.



Invisible Disability

The word 'disability' is exceptionally broad and so many different conditions fall under it. These can manifest as developmental, cognitive, physical, mental, and sensory impairments. Sometimes two or more of these conditions can occur simultaneously in an individual or be linked together. It's important to recognize that invisible disabilities can be just as impactful on a person's daily functioning as visible aids like canes or wheelchairs. These Invisible Disabilities can be things like ADHD or Obsessive Compulsive Disorder or Dyslexia. Many people who manage these conditions don't self identify as disabled due to societal stigma that only sees physical disability. Individuals may fear being perceived as "not really disabled" or "faking it" in our work-driven culture. All disabilities matter, and building a more equitable society requires recognizing that disabilities come in many forms. In an effort to ensure equitable access for all, we must strive to create as many accessible avenues as possible for everyone.

Resources



[VETERANS AFFAIRS DISABILITY RESOURCE GUIDE](#)



[INVISIBLE DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION](#)



[988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE](#)

-THE ACCIDENT-

Much of Frida's work is inspired by cultural and personal experiences within her lifetime. On September 17th, 1925, Frida and many others were involved in a bus crash in which she suffered severe injuries. Being bed-ridden for months after the accident, many of her paintings and drawings were inspired by the accident. Pain and trauma became popular themes, being expressed through a sense of surrealism.



-PLASTER CORSETS-

After the accident, Frida wore plaster corsets for most of her life to support her spine. She often painted them and used different fabrics to decorate. Animals and plant life were always inspiration for Kahlo. Buses were also a popular doodle on her casts since she was often reminded of the accident because of her physical state.



The corsets remain to this day in her famous blue house in Mexico.

-A Star is Born-

Frida Kahlo was born on July 7th 117 years ago, but she is still celebrated by artists and feminists across the world today. Kahlo is an inspiration to many because she was viewed as limitless. Regardless of the trials life had put her through, she never allowed anyone or anything to define her but herself. The bizarre and unordinary portrayals of herself were unlike anything seen before her by any other woman artist, inspiring many to follow in her footsteps.



Click each letter to learn more about the paintings inside.

-HER OWN MUSE-

From a young age, Frida was unapologetically authentic. Instead of depicting women in traditional settings and focusing on their beauty, Kahlo chose to use her talent to mirror her empowering persona. As mentioned, her influences were often her diverse cultural background as well as religious. Once being known as 'just the wife to Diego Rivera', a famous muralist, Frida created a name for herself. Her features were confidently unconventional. Her image remains a symbol of empowerment for all women who look to defy the societal constraints of femininity.



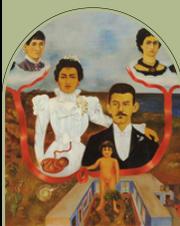
-EARLY SICKNESS-

When Frida was only 6 years old, she contracted Polio. Poliomyelitis was a common disease during the late 1940s and went into the mid 1950s. The illness caused by a virus that mainly affects nerves in the spinal cord or brain stem, can lead to paralysis, and sometimes death. Polio had affected Frida's leg growth and gave her a limp. Throughout her early school years, it was said she was bullied for her leg. This led Frida to isolate and grow closer to her father. She grew in curiosity of her father's craft and learned how to draw. Love was found in art & never left.



-THE KAHLO FAMILY-

Frida was the 4th daughter to Guillermo Kahlo and Matilde Calderon. The couple had seven children: Maria Luisa, Margarita, Matilde, Adriana, Wilhelm, Frida, and Cristina. Maria Luisa and Margarita were Guillermo's daughters from a separate marriage. Sadly, their mother had died during the birth of Margarita. A few days later, Guillermo met Matilde and asked her father if they could marry.



MULTICULTURAL - INFLUENCE -

Although she was born and raised in Coyoacan, Mexico, her mother was of indigenous and Spanish descent while her father was German and Hungarian. Frida often used her mix of cultural influences within her paintings through clothing and symbolism. The painting *The Two Fridas* reflects Kahlo's struggle with her identity, torn between her European heritage and her Mexican roots.



-CASA AZUL-

Built by her father Guillermo Garcia, La Casa Azul or 'the blue house' was the home to the Kahlo family. According to resources, Frida was born within the home and created her earliest works within its walls. Due to her early childhood illnesses, she spent much of her childhood isolated from the outside. After her accident, a custom painting easel and ceiling mirror were installed for Frida to begin painting her first few famous self-portraits. At the age of 47, Frida passed away in this very house.



-FRIDA FACTS-

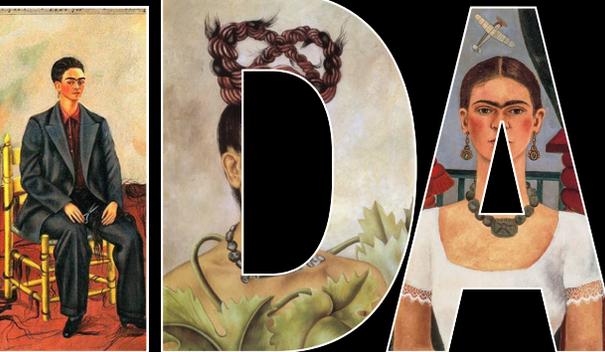
In 1937, fashion collided with art as Frida Kahlo graced the pages of Vogue magazine.

Kahlo often lied that she was born July 7th, 1910, rather than July 6th, 1907, due to supporting the Mexican Revolution.

Frida began teaching art to children in 1928 at 'La Esmeralda School' in Mexico

Frida is known to be an icon for the LGBTQ + community since she was open about her bisexuality.

Frida owned many pets, one of her favorites being her spider monkeys. She became fond of animals after discovering she could not bear children.



Kahlo savored breaking the rules and fighting back, both through her art and in real life. She proves in her work that there is no uniformity within art and that it is okay to embrace our individuality. Click on a topic below to get a deeper look into Frida's writings and more:

'Mamacita Linda'

'Letters from Frida'

'Sessions with Diego & Frida'

'Kahlo: art & Garden Life'