

Am Shalom Board Member Pledge

I vow to review and familiarize myself with the Policies and Procedures of Am Shalom Congregation.

I vow to attend a majority of board meetings and to advise the other members when I cannot. I also vow to come to said meetings prepared to discuss the agenda in a fair and open minded way.

I pledge to speak my mind in a considerate and thoughtful manner even when I disagree with someone else's point of view.

I promise to keep my volunteer hours in check, to keep my spirit and my family first and, **to make sure I ask for help when I start to feel overwhelmed**. I promise to let my fellow board members know when I cannot fulfill a task so that another member can attempt to get it done.

I pledge to accept less than perfect, to always remember I am a volunteer and, to celebrate the joy in making a difference.

I vow not to discuss confidential matters with those outside the board.

I pledge to think before I act at all times and to recognize that the Board and membership of Am Shalom Congregation represents a diverse group of people with various religious beliefs, attitudes, and sexual orientations and to understand that the best way to handle a difficult situation or a crisis is to step back and review the situation before responding.

I vow to compare myself to no one - my time and contributions are my own special gift and, to feel proud that I can do what I do.

I vow to compare no one to myself, to recognize everyone gives their best of their time and abilities, to always remember it is the pieces that make the whole.

Signed by:

Printed Name

_____ Date: _____

Signature

Defining Disability

The term "disability" means: a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities, for example, walking, thinking, seeing, speaking or hearing.

Whether a disability comes about from birth or by accident not all disabilities can be seen with the naked eye.

Some people may feel uneasy being around a person with a disability, however people with disabilities are simply people and need to be treated as such.

Visible vs. Invisible Disabilities

Visible	Invisible
People who are paralyzed and need some type of aid to move around	People with hearing disorders
Severe developmental disability	Speech impediments may not be immediately apparent.
A physical difference	People who are blind can appear to be sighted, if you do not notice the aid they require to move around
Missing limbs	
Motor impairments	A learning disability may be misinterpreted as lack of intelligence or carelessness

Learning Disabilities

A learning disability has to do with the way the brain is wired. People who are LD have normal or above normal intelligence, cannot be cured, but use different ways to learn and function.

Dyslexia – trouble understanding written words.

Dyscalculia – difficulty solving math problems and grasping concepts.

Dysgraphia – difficulty forming letters or writing within a defined space.

Auditory and Visual Processing Disorder – difficulty understanding language despite normal hearing and vision, short term memory problems.

Non-Verbal Learning Disabilities – a neurological disorder causing problems with visual-spatial, intuitive, organizational, evaluative and holistic processing functions.

ADHD – Difficulty concentrating, cannot tolerate noise or commotion.

All People Are Different

What is important to remember is that we are all different and need to be recognized for that which we are capable of doing, not for what we may require aid to accomplish.

“The best way to help everyone, is for people to learn, understand and respect all people, whether they are the same or different.”

Unfortunately, and inaccurately, people with disabilities are often viewed as:

Victims, or objects of pity

Burdens, either on society or on their families and careers

A threat to the comfort and safety of others

Unable, or assumed to be unable, to do things

Having multiple disabilities (such as assuming that a person who uses a wheelchair also has an intellectual disability)

Childlike

"Special"

Such misconceptions are based on insufficient or inaccurate information about people with disabilities and can perpetuate inappropriate interactions.

We may fear what we do not know

Employers and fellow employees may be afraid of the unfamiliar. People who have never had contact with a person with a disability may have numerous questions.

Curiosity is natural, however, you may be afraid to ask those questions for fear of violating the provisions of the ADA, or being rude.

Overcoming those fears

Remember that people with disabilities are people first, who happen to have a disability.

We are all just temporarily abled. You could think, 'I might face a disability someday, and here's a person who could help me live with it!'

People Who Use Aids To Move

Always ask the person who uses a wheelchair if he or she would like assistance before you jump in to help. Your help may not be needed or wanted.

Don't hang or lean on a person's wheelchair.

Take steps to insure that all office materials that may be needed are within the reach of someone that utilizes a wheelchair.

If your conversation lasts more than a few minutes, consider sitting down, to get yourself on the same eyelevel.

Persons Who Are Hearing Impaired

Always make eye contact with the person you are speaking to.

A gentle tap on the shoulder will help you announce your presence.

Face the person you are speaking to and speak slowly and clearly, do not raise your voice.

If there is a break down in communication put pencil to paper and write down what you are attempting to convey.

Speak to the person not their interpreter if there is one present.

People With Cognitive Disabilities

If the person who you are working with is having trouble understanding you, repeat yourself, using different words, without getting frustrated. Patience is a virtue.

Break up your ideas into small manageable bits that can be easily remembered. "Keep it simple."

Be considerate without be patronizing. Keep all conversations at an adult to adult level.

People With Vision Impairments

Always make your presents known. Greet the person who may not know you are there.

Don't pet guide dogs or other service animals while they are working. Ask before interacting with the dog.

Talk directly to a person who is blind, not through their companion. Use the person's name to whom you are speaking so they are aware you are speaking to them.

Pulling or steering a person is awkward and confusing. Avoid grabbing their arm or their dog's harness unless asked for assistance.

People With Speech Impediments

Do not finish their sentences for them. Allow them the time to say everything they wish to say. Once again, patience is a virtue.

Do not mimic them or mock them for their speech.

Never pretend to know what a person is saying. Ask the person to repeat or rephrase, or offer him or her a pen and paper.

People with Learning Disabilities

Put instructions and important information in writing if the person has auditory and/or short term memory difficulties

Use hands on training

Break down complicated tasks into line items with check boxes

Supply notebooks, file cabinet and other organizing and note taking aids

Provide a quiet work environment

Text to speech software if needed

Remember that this person has normal or above normal intelligence

General Tips

Keep all walkways clear of debris.

Make sure everything that is needed for work related task can be found easily.

Work *with* people with disabilities to discover what needs to be done in your workplace.

Create effective advocacy tools for accessibility in your workplace.

Do not refer to a person's disability unless it is relevant.

Avoid asking personal questions about someone's disability. Let them mention their disability first. If you must ask, be sensitive and show respect.

Avoid negative or sensational descriptions of a person's disability with anyone.

Use "people first" language when addressing a person with a disability. i.e. It is better to say "person with a disability" rather than "a disabled person."

Language

<u>Do's</u>	<u>Don'ts</u>
Person with a disability - has a disability	The disabled, the handicapped, invalids, patients, crippled, deformed, defective
People with disabilities - have disabilities or disabled person	Normal, healthy, able-bodied
People without disabilities typical person	Wheelchair-bound - confined to a wheelchair
Wheelchair user - uses a wheelchair	