



From ADA Compliant to ADA Compassionate
Eliminating Stigma and Increasing Belonging in
the Workplace

By Courtney Valladares, SHRM-CP

Courtney J. Valladares, SHRM-CP

- Master's Degree in Communication Studies
- Collegiate Communications Instructor since 2007
- Human Resources Professional for over 8 years
- Charlottesville SHRM Board Member
- HR Manager for the University of Virginia Foundation.
- Mom to Liam (5th grader at The Covenant School)
- Jesus Lover, Traveler, Foodie, Live Music Junkie, and Dolly Parton Enthusiast.





**In Honor of My Grandmother
Virginia "Ginny" Hittle**

Introduction



The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ensures equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Our Focus

1

Understanding the
Shift from ADA
Compliance to ADA
Compassion

2

Eliminating Stigma
and Promoting
Inclusion in the
Workplace

3

Increasing
Belonging and
Support for
Employees with
Disabilities

Understanding the Shift from ADA Compliance to ADA Compassion

While ADA compliance is a legal necessity, embracing ADA compassion is about creating a culture of empathy, understanding, and support that goes beyond meeting minimum standards. It involves proactive efforts to foster inclusion, eliminate stigma, and increase belonging for individuals with disabilities in the workplace.



Understanding the Shift from ADA Compliance to ADA Compassion:

Key differences between ADA Compliance and ADA Compassion

Mindset and Approach

1. ADA Compliance: The focus is on meeting legal requirements and avoiding violations.
2. ADA Compassion: The focus is on understanding and addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. It involves a proactive and empathetic approach to inclusion.



Understanding the Shift from ADA Compliance to ADA Compassion:

Key differences between ADA Compliance and ADA Compassion

Level of Engagement

1. ADA Compliance: Compliance may be viewed as a checklist or a set of rules to follow.
2. ADA Compassion: Compassion involves active engagement with employees with disabilities, seeking to understand their experiences, needs, and perspectives.



Understanding the Shift from ADA Compliance to ADA Compassion:

Key differences between ADA Compliance and ADA Compassion

Inclusivity and Support

1. ADA Compliance: Compliance ensures that basic accommodations are provided but may not go beyond minimum standards.
2. ADA Compassion: Compassion promotes inclusivity by going above and beyond legal requirements. It includes creating a supportive environment, offering additional resources and support, and fostering a culture of belonging.

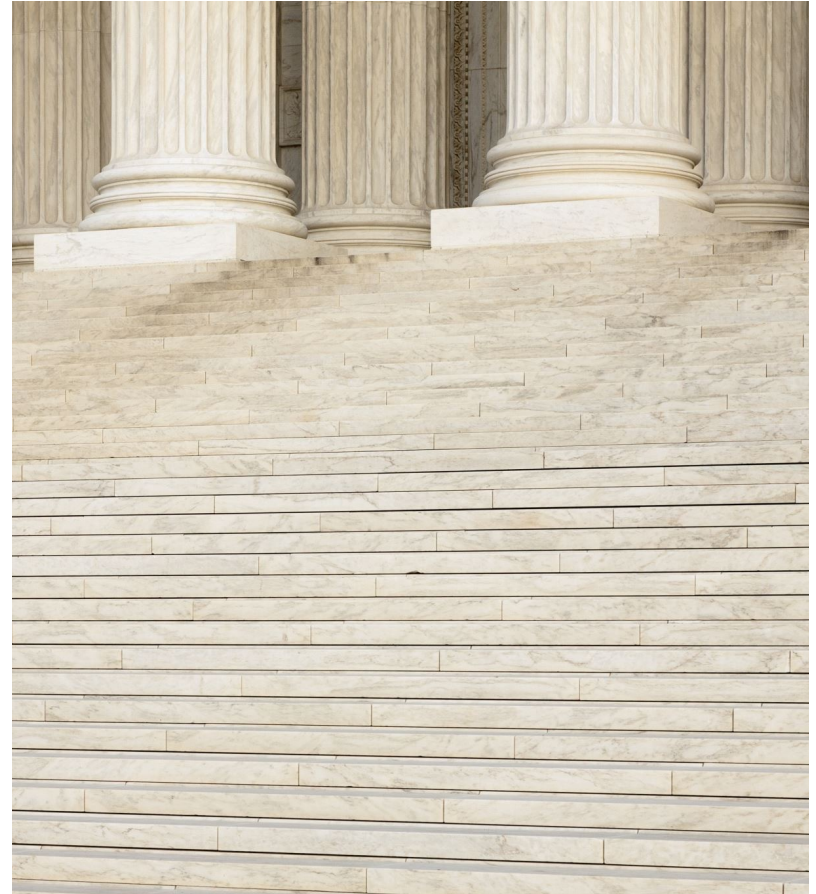


Understanding the Shift from ADA Compliance to ADA Compassion:

Key differences between ADA Compliance and ADA Compassion

Impact on Workplace Culture

1. ADA Compliance: Compliance helps avoid legal risks but may not necessarily contribute to a positive workplace culture for individuals with disabilities.
2. ADA Compassion: Compassion contributes to a more inclusive, supportive, and empathetic workplace culture. It promotes respect, understanding, and a sense of belonging for all employees.



Understanding the Shift from ADA Compliance to ADA Compassion

ADA compassion goes beyond meeting basic standards; it involves creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and able to contribute their best.



HR must facilitate the development of a culture surpassing mere legal obligations, striving to cultivate a workplace environment that nurtures empathy, comprehension, and assistance for individuals with disabilities.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a dark blazer over a light-colored top, is smiling and looking towards the camera. She is standing in a city street with blurred buildings and trees in the background. The text is overlaid on the image.

Eliminating Stigma and Promoting Inclusion in the Workplace

Common misconceptions and stigma associated with disabilities in the workplace can significantly impact how individuals with disabilities are perceived, treated, and supported.

Addressing these misconceptions and reducing stigma is crucial for creating a more inclusive and supportive work environment.



Common misconceptions and stigma associated with disabilities in the workplace:

Misconception: Disabilities Always Have Visible Signs

Stigma: There is a widespread belief that disabilities are always visible, such as using a wheelchair or having a noticeable physical impairment.

Reality: Many disabilities are invisible, including chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, and learning disabilities. This misconception can lead to skepticism or disbelief when individuals with invisible disabilities request accommodations or support.



Common misconceptions and stigma associated with disabilities in the workplace:

Misconception: Disabilities Limit Productivity and Contributions

Stigma: There is a stereotype that individuals with disabilities are less capable, productive, or competent in the workplace.

Reality: Disabilities do not define a person's abilities or potential. Many individuals with disabilities excel in their roles and make valuable contributions to their organizations with the right support and accommodations.

Common misconceptions and stigma associated with disabilities in the workplace:

Misconception: Accommodations Are Costly and Burdensome

Stigma: Some employers may view accommodations as expensive, complicated, or disruptive to the work environment.

Reality: Most accommodations for employees with disabilities are reasonable, cost-effective, and beneficial for both the individual and the organization. Accommodations can range from flexible work arrangements to assistive technologies and ergonomic adjustments.



Common misconceptions and stigma associated with disabilities in the workplace:

Misconception: Employees with Disabilities Need Special Treatment

Stigma: There may be a misconception that employees with disabilities require constant supervision, lowered expectations, or preferential treatment.

Reality: Employees with disabilities are seeking equal opportunities, fair treatment, and accommodations that enable them to perform their job duties effectively. They do not necessarily want special treatment but rather equitable support to succeed in their roles.

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How to Eliminate Stigma and Promote Inclusion in the Workplace



**Education and
Awareness**



**Language and
Communication**



**Inclusive Policies
and Practices**



**Collaboration and
Partnerships**



**Leadership and Role
Modeling**



Education and Awareness

- Conduct training sessions and workshops to educate employees about different types of disabilities, common misconceptions, and the impact of stigma.
- Provide resources, such as informational materials, videos, and guest speakers, to increase awareness and promote understanding.
- Foster open dialogue and discussions about disability inclusion, encouraging employees to ask questions, share experiences, and challenge stereotypes.

Language and Communication

- Promote the use of disability-positive language that focuses on abilities rather than limitations.
- Encourage respectful and inclusive communication practices, such as asking individuals about their preferred accommodations or support needs.
- Ensure that all communications, including written materials, presentations, and digital content, are accessible to employees with disabilities.





Inclusive Policies and Practices

- Review and update policies and procedures to ensure they are inclusive of employees with disabilities, including recruitment, hiring, promotion, and performance management practices.
- Offer flexible work arrangements, reasonable accommodations, and support services to enable employees with disabilities to fully participate and succeed in their roles.
- Promote diversity and inclusion in all aspects of organizational culture, from team meetings and social events to recognition programs and career development opportunities.



Leadership and Role Modeling

- Lead by example and demonstrate inclusive behaviors, attitudes, and decision-making at all levels of the organization.
- Empower leaders and managers to champion disability inclusion initiatives, set expectations for inclusive behavior, and hold individuals accountable for discriminatory actions or language.
- Recognize and celebrate diversity and inclusion efforts, highlighting success stories and positive outcomes of promoting inclusion in the workplace.

Collaboration and Partnerships

- Collaborate with disability advocacy organizations, community groups, and external stakeholders to share best practices, resources, and expertise.
- Seek feedback from employees with disabilities through surveys, focus groups, and advisory committees to inform decision-making and continuous improvement efforts.
- Engage in partnerships with suppliers, vendors, and contractors who prioritize disability inclusion in their products, services, and practices.

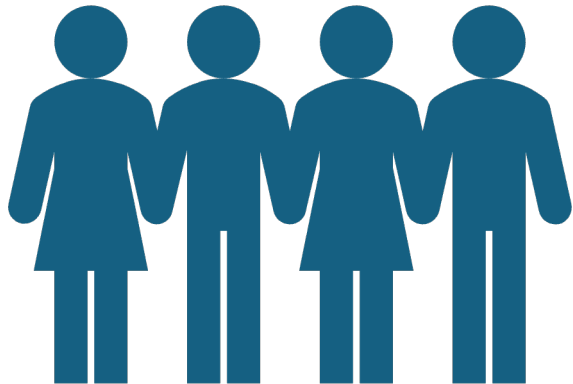




Increasing Belonging and Support for Employees with Disabilities

Creating a more inclusive and supportive workplace for employees with disabilities involves implementing best practices that address accessibility, accommodation, communication, and cultural change.

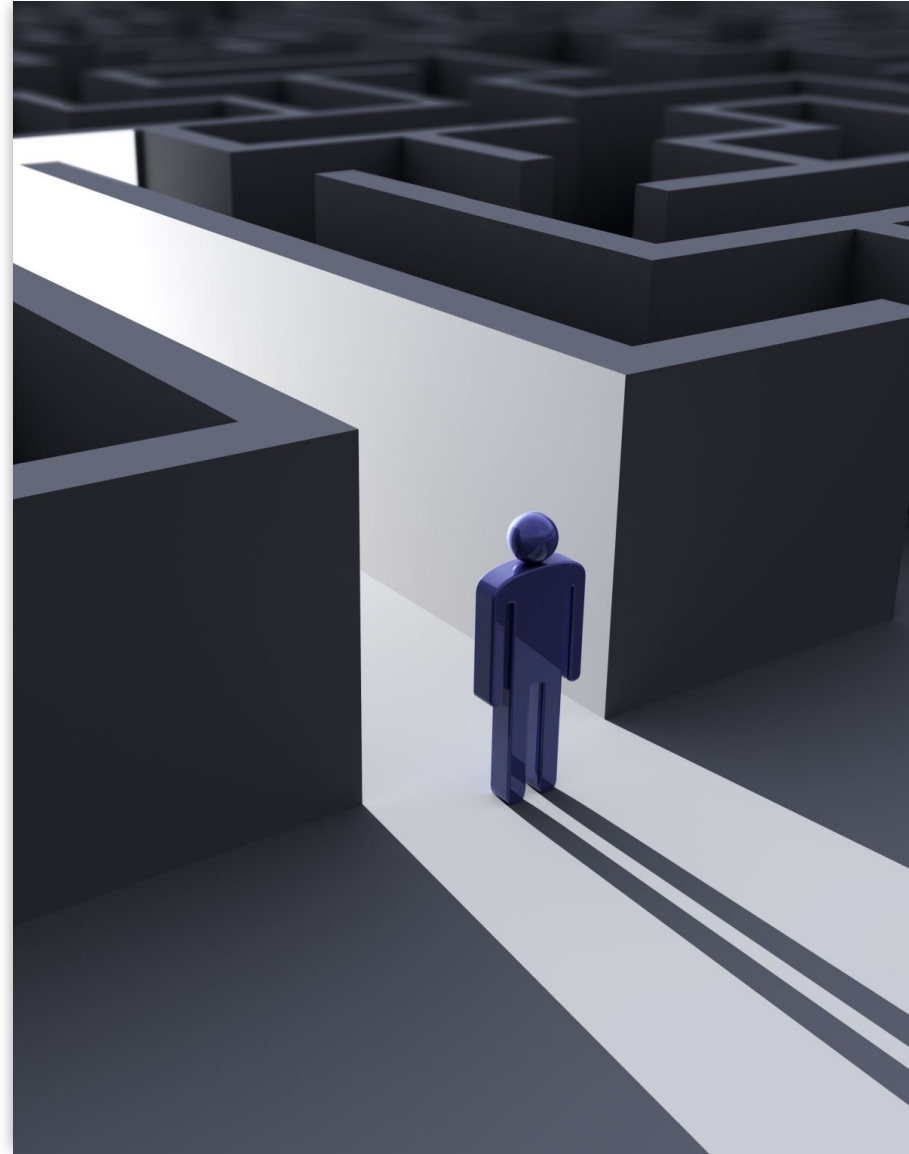
Best Practices for Increasing Belonging and Support for Employees with Disabilities



- Accessible Workplace Design
- Accommodations and Support Services
- Inclusive Policies and Practices
- Employee Resource Groups and Support Networks

Accessible Workplace Design

- Ensure that the physical environment is accessible, including ramps, elevators, accessible restrooms, parking spaces, and doorways.
- Provide adjustable workstations, ergonomic furniture, and assistive technologies (such as screen readers, magnifiers, and speech recognition software) to accommodate diverse needs.
- Conduct accessibility assessments and audits regularly to identify and address barriers to accessibility.



Accommodations and Support Services

- Establish a clear process for requesting and providing reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities.
- Consult with employees to understand their specific accommodation needs and preferences.
- Provide training and resources for managers and HR personnel on how to effectively implement accommodations and support employees with disabilities.



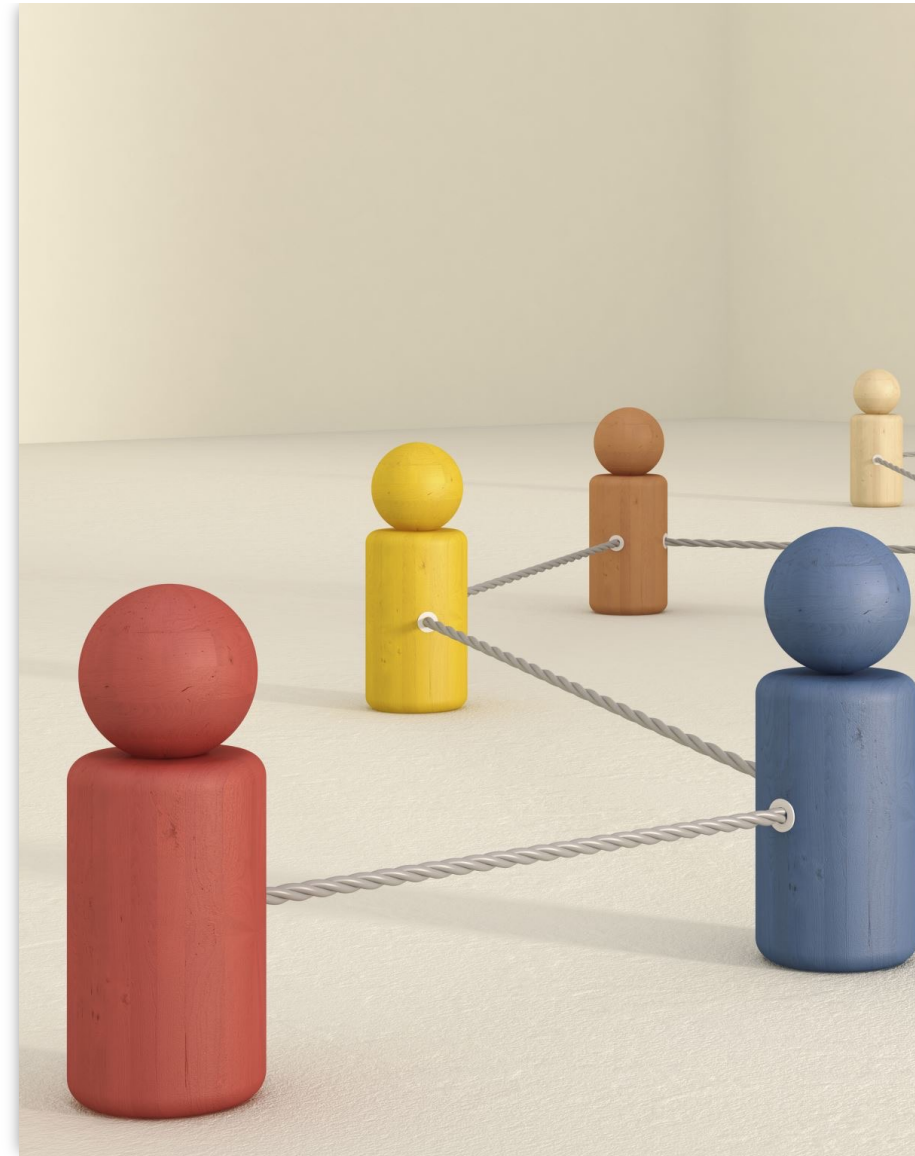
Inclusive Policies and Practices

- Review and update policies, procedures, and practices to ensure they are inclusive of employees with disabilities.
- Include disability as a dimension of diversity in recruitment, hiring, promotion, and retention efforts.
- Offer flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting, flexible hours, and job sharing, to accommodate diverse needs and promote work-life balance.



Employee Resource Groups and Support Networks

- Establish employee resource groups or affinity networks for employees with disabilities to connect, share experiences, and access support.
- Encourage networking, peer mentoring, and collaboration among employees with disabilities and their allies.
- Provide opportunities for employees to participate in diversity and inclusion initiatives, task forces, and committees.



Review

1


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There is no greater disability
in society, than the inability
to see a person as more.

Robert M. Hensel

“ quote fancy

Questions?

The image features a dark blue gradient background. On the right side, there is a dense cluster of 3D question marks in a slightly lighter shade of blue, creating a textured effect. The word "Questions?" is centered in the middle of the image in a white, sans-serif font.

LET'S CONNECT

