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## Diagnosis vs. Disability vs. Society

- **Diagnosis** refers to the medical condition or labels assigned by healthcare professionals. It helps identify specific impairments but doesn't always address the broader context of living with a disability.
- **Disability** refers to the interaction between the person's condition and their environment. A disability is not just the medical diagnosis but also how society structures itself in ways that can limit access and opportunity for disabled individuals.
- **Society** plays a significant role in determining whether something is considered a disability. For example, a person with a mobility impairment may not have difficulty navigating an environment with proper accommodations, but without those accommodations, they face barriers.

### YETI Insights:

#### Learning Disability Perspective

Living with a learning disability means constantly being measured against standards that don't reflect my strengths. Society expects quick thinking, fast reading, and perfect memory—but my brain works differently. People assume I'm not trying hard enough or that I'm not capable, but that's not accurate. I process information in my own way and on my own time. What I need isn't judgment, but patience, flexibility, and the chance to show what I can do in a way that works for me.

#### The Autistic Perspective

As an Autistic person, I often struggle to meet society's expectations of how I should communicate, socialize, or react to the world around me. People assume that because I don't always express emotions the way they expect or need more structure, I'm difficult or uninterested—but that's not true. I just navigate life differently. What I need isn't to be 'fixed' or forced to fit in, but to be accepted, understood, and given space to thrive in my own way.

#### The Sensory Disability Perspective

Having a sensory disability means living in an environment that often overwhelms or ignores my needs. Bright lights, loud noises, or certain textures can be unbearable, yet society expects me to adapt rather than making spaces more inclusive. People assume I'm being picky or overreacting, but my sensory experiences are real and deeply affect how I function. What I need isn't judgment, but understanding, accommodations, and the freedom to navigate the world my way.

## **The Physical Disability Perspective**

Having a physical disability means constantly navigating a world that isn't made for me. Stairs without ramps, doors without automatic openers, and inaccessible transportation make simple tasks unnecessarily difficult. Society expects me to 'push through' barriers that shouldn't exist in the first place. People assume my disability defines what I can or can't do, but that's not real. I'm capable, I adapt—but I shouldn't have to fight for basic access.

## **The Perspective of a Person with Complex Healthcare Needs**

Living with complex healthcare needs means my life is dictated not by my abilities, but by a world that isn't built for me. Whether it's relying on a ventilator, needing personal care assistance, or using technology to communicate, society often sees my needs as 'too much' rather than simply part of who I am. People assume my quality of life is poor or that I'm fragile, but I'm not—I have goals, relationships, and a full life. What I need isn't pity, but access, understanding, and a world that values my existence as much as anyone else's."