

# Disability Identity Development Scale (DIDS)

**Instructions: Choose the answer that best reflects your answer to the following statements and mark the box that corresponds to your answer.**

**Do you have a disability?**

- Yes, I have a hidden/less apparent disability *(If yes, complete items 1-31, skip 32 and 33)*
- Yes, I have a visible/apparent disability *(If yes, complete items 1-29 AND 32 and 33)*
- Yes, I have both hidden/less apparent **and** visible/apparent disabilities *(If yes, complete all items)*
- No, I do not have a disability. *(If no, stop here.)*

	Not Like Me At All	A Little Bit Like Me	Somewhat Like Me	A Lot Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1. My family treats me differently because of my disability.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I am proud to identify as a person with a disability.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I like (or would like) attending disability-related advocacy events (i.e., rallies, protests, policy town halls).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I organize events for the disability community (i.e., support group meetings, sporting events, advocacy events, lectures).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I have a strong sense of belonging to people with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I learn about disability culture by reading books/articles/blogs/websites.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I believe there is a disability community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I am a mentor to other people with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I identify with disability culture.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I give advice to other people with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. I am a mentor to other people with MY disability.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. I advocate for accessibility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. I identify as a person with a disability.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. I advocate for inclusion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. I wish that I was not disabled.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. I like (or would like) attending disability community events.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Not Like Me At All	A Little Bit Like Me	Somewhat Like Me	A Lot Like Me	Very Much Like Me
17. I embrace the core values of disability culture as my own.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. I view myself as a disability expert.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. There are some days that I wish I did not have a disability.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. I believe disability rights are civil rights.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. I connect people with disabilities to the disability community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. My close friends treat me like any other non-disabled friend.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. I seek out friends who have disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. I identify with a disability community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. I speak publicly about disability (in person or online).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. My family treats me like any other non-disabled family member.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. Being a person with a disability is an important reflection of me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28. When I think about my disability, I get upset.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29. I am able to contribute to the disability community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RESPOND TO ITEMS 30-31 ONLY IF YOU HAVE A HIDDEN/LESS APPARENT DISABILITY:					
30. If I meet someone who discloses they have MY hidden disability, I feel a connection to them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31. If I meet someone who discloses they have MY hidden disability, I engage with them (i.e., smile, wave, say hello).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RESPOND TO ITEMS 32-33 ONLY IF YOU HAVE A VISIBLE/APPARENT DISABILITY:					
32. If I see a stranger with MY disability, I feel a connection to them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33. If I see a stranger with MY disability, I engage with them (i.e., smile, wave, say hello).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Scoring Directions:**

Not Like Me At All = 1  
A Little Bit Like Me = 2  
Somewhat Like Me = 3  
A Lot Like Me = 4  
Very Much Like Me = 5

**\*Item #: 19 should be reverse scored (R) prior to computing the subscale score:** Not Like Me At All = 5, A Little Bit Like Me = 4, Somewhat Like Me = 3, A Lot Like Me = 2, Very Much Like Me = 1 for only this item.

**Factor: Acceptance Internal Processing—Frustration**

Sum responses to items: 15, 19\*, 28

Item 15 \_\_\_\_ + Item 19 (R) \_\_\_\_ + Item 28 \_\_\_\_ = **Total Subscale Score** = \_\_\_\_ (possible range of 3-15)

**Factor: Acceptance - External Actions**

Sum responses to items: 1, 22, 26

Item 1 \_\_\_\_ + Item 22 \_\_\_\_ + Item 26 \_\_\_\_ = **Total Subscale Score** = \_\_\_\_ (possible range of 3-15)

**Factor: Relationship - Connection/Bond**

Sum responses to items: 6, 7, 12, 14, 20

Item 6 \_\_\_\_ + Item 7 \_\_\_\_ + Item 12 \_\_\_\_ + Item 14 \_\_\_\_ + Item 20 \_\_\_\_ = **Total Subscale Score** = \_\_\_\_ (possible range of 5-25)

**Factor: Relationship - Shared Disability—Hidden** (Note: This factor is not applicable for individuals with visible only disabilities.)

Sum responses to items: 30, 31

Item 30 \_\_\_\_ + Item 31 \_\_\_\_ = **Total Subscale Score** = \_\_\_\_ (possible range of 2-10)

**Factor: Relationship - Shared Disability—Visible** Note: This factor is not applicable for individuals with hidden only disabilities.)

Sum responses to items: 32, 33

Item 32 \_\_\_\_ + Item 33 \_\_\_\_ = **Total Subscale Score** = \_\_\_\_ (possible range of 2-10)

**Factor: Adoption - External Environment**

Sum responses to items: 2, 3, 5, 9, 13, 16, 17, 23, 24, 27

Item 2 \_\_\_\_ + Item 3 \_\_\_\_ + Item 5 \_\_\_\_ + Item 9 \_\_\_\_ + Item 13 \_\_\_\_ + Item 16 \_\_\_\_ + Item 17 \_\_\_\_ +  
Item 23 \_\_\_\_ + Item 24 \_\_\_\_ + Item 27 \_\_\_\_ = **Total Subscale Score** = \_\_\_\_ (possible range of 10-50)

**Factor: Engagement – Service**

Sum responses to items: 4, 8, 10, 11, 18, 21, 25, 29

Item 4 \_\_\_\_ + Item 8 \_\_\_\_ + Item 10 \_\_\_\_ + Item 11 \_\_\_\_ + Item 18 \_\_\_\_ + Item 21 \_\_\_\_ + Item 25 \_\_\_\_  
+ Item 29 \_\_\_\_ = **Total Subscale Score** = \_\_\_\_ (possible range of 8-40)

## Score Interpretation:

*This measure identifies both internal and external dimensions of disability identity. Subscales that describe internal processing involve an individual's private reflection or emotions about their disability. Subscales that describe external actions represent visible or identifiable "moves" towards participation in disability community. Both internal and external dimensions are important and together represent disability identity. Higher scores for each subscale indicate greater agreement with the corresponding disability identity status. Lower scores for each subscale indicate less agreement with the corresponding disability identity status.*

### **FACTOR 1: Acceptance Internal Processing – Frustration**

Description: This factor is about one's internal frustration about one's disability. Frustration is not considered to be a static state: rather, internal frustration over one's disability is fluid and can change. Not all individuals with disabilities exhibit positive acceptance of or embodiment of one's disability identity at all times. A high subscale score for this factor indicates more frustration about one's disability; a low subscale indicates less frustration about one's disability.

### **FACTOR 2: Acceptance - External Actions**

Description: This factor is about the actions and reactions of others in the person with a disability's life. It describes family and close friends' ways of interacting with or treating the person with a disability. This could mean treatment that is similar to non-disabled people or different because of the disability itself. This factor is related to acceptance because it defines the way the person with a disability is accepted by and with others, and the ways in which this acceptance is understood and interpreted by the person with a disability themselves. In this way, other people's (external) actions shape a person's disability identity in important and significant ways. A high subscale score for this factor indicates more level of acceptance of others about one's disability; a low subscale indicates less level of acceptance of others about one's disability.

### **FACTOR 3: Relationship - Connection/Bond (internal)**

Description: This factor is about the perception the person with a disability feels of their relationship to other persons with disabilities across all disability types. It describes the internal experience of connection for the person with a disability, which may include a sense of being drawn towards others who share similar experiences of disability and/or impairment. This internal measure also involves a potential preference for people to distance themselves from a disability identity, and not feel connection to others who they might see or learn have a disability. A high subscale score for this factor indicates more feelings of connection or relationship to other persons with disabilities; a low subscale indicates less feelings of connection or relationship to other persons with disabilities.

### **FACTOR 4: Relationship - Shared Disability – Hidden/Less Apparent**

Description: This factor is about a person with a disability acknowledging or potentially feeling a shared connection and relationship with others who have the same hidden or less apparent disability. This shared connection could result in engagement with the other person or simply feelings of a connection. A high subscale score for this factor indicates more feelings of connection or relationship to other persons with the same hidden or less apparent disability as them; a low subscale indicates less feelings of connection or relationship to other persons with the same hidden or less apparent disability as them. This factor is not applicable to individuals with only a visible or apparent disability, but would be applicable if they identify as having both a hidden or less apparent disability and a visible or apparent disability.

### **FACTOR 5: Relationship - Shared Disability – Visible/Apparent**

Description: This factor is about a person with a disability acknowledging or potentially feeling a shared connection and relationship with others who have the same visible or apparent disability. This shared connection could result in engagement with the other person or simply feelings of a connection. A high subscale score for this factor indicates more feelings of connection or relationship to other persons with the same visible or apparent disability as them; a low subscale indicates less feelings of connection or relationship to other persons with the same visible or apparent disability as them. This factor is not applicable to individuals with only a hidden or less apparent disability, but would be applicable if they identify as having both a visible or apparent disability and a hidden or less apparent disability.

### **FACTOR 6: Adoption - External Environment**

Description: This factor is about a person with a disability feeling a strong connection to the broad disability community, such that if they see barriers to persons with any disability they will act to remove that (social or physical) barrier. A high subscale score for this factor indicates more feelings of connection to the broader disabled community; a low subscale indicates less feelings of connection to the broader disabled community.

### **FACTOR 7: Engagement – Service**

Description: This factor is about a person choosing to participate in activities that support the disability community such as fundraising, or serving on panels and interacting with the broader community. A high subscale score for this factor indicates more feelings of connection to the broader disabled community; a low subscale indicates less feelings of connection to the broader disabled community. A high subscale score for this factor indicates more engagement or service with the disabled community; a low subscale indicates less engagement or service with the disabled community.