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# Advising Students with Disabilities in Education Abroad

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# Who was Judy Heumann?

American disability rights activist whose contributions since the 1970s lead to development of human rights legislation and policies benefiting children and adults with disabilities.

Founded Disabled in Action- secured protection of people with disabilities under civil rights laws

Directly helped to develop legislature that eventually became the Individuals with Disabilities Act and so much more.

Please watch Crip Camp- follows a group of civil rights activists in their fight for accessibility legislature- understand where we came from to get to where we are now and where to go from here. Available on Netflix

# Use of Inclusive Language when advising a student with a disability

- Ask to find out if an individual is willing to disclose their disability, even if it is obvious!
- Emphasize abilities, not limitations like:
  - Person who uses a wheelchair
  - Person who uses a communication device
- In general refer to person first, and the disability, second, like:
  - Person with a learning disability
  - Student receiving special education services
- Use neutral language, like:
  - Person with epilepsy
  - Person with a brain injury



# Advising Students with Disabilities in Education Abroad

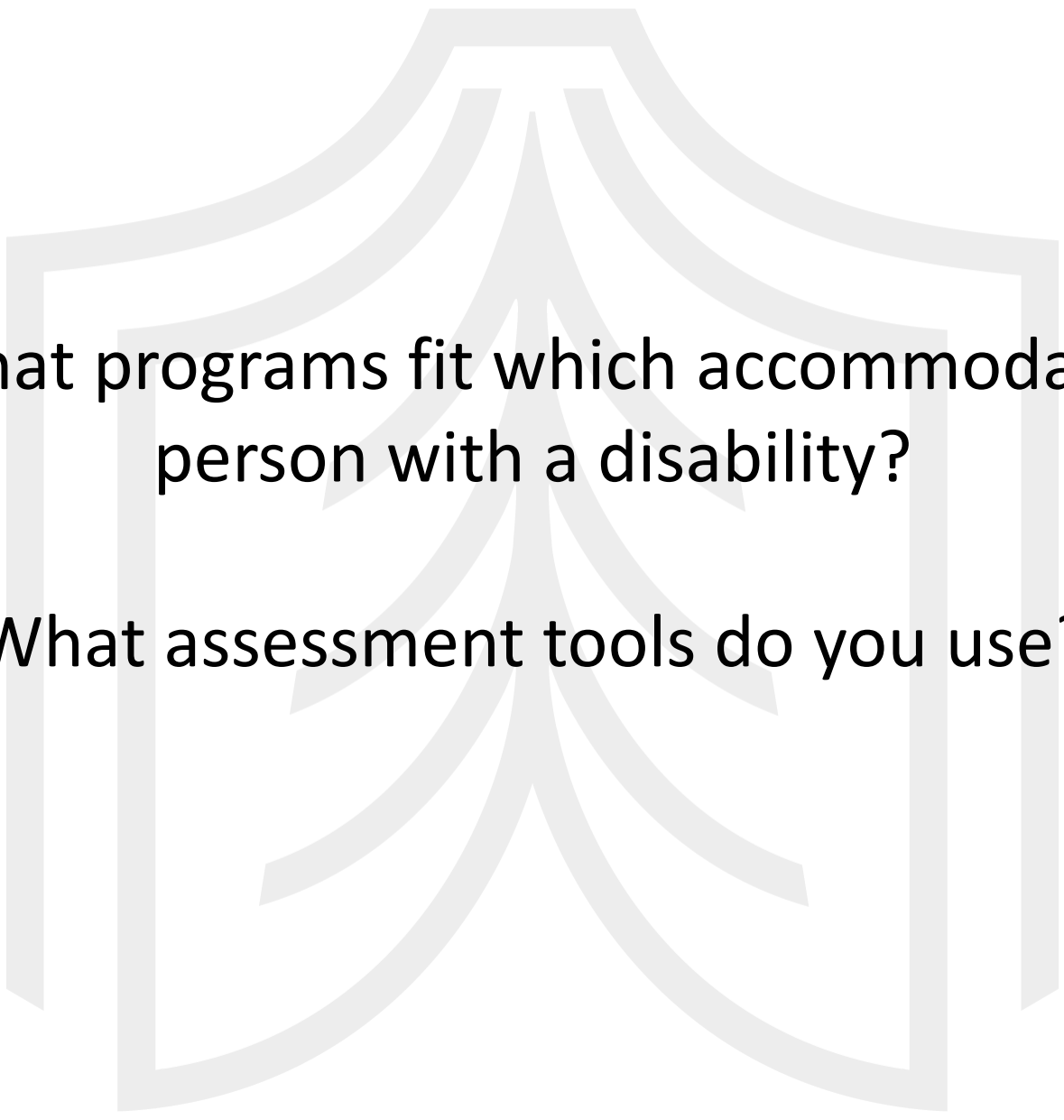
(what this session is)

From the perspective of someone with a disability advising individuals in study abroad!

Topics of discussion:

- Documentation process for institutionally based programs, consortia based programs and third-party providers- meaning when someone applies to an education abroad program, who handles the documentation process for accommodations for students?
- Providers who offer programs in all parts of the world should think about briefly including language on essential requirements like 'The type of program can vary- some include physically demanding components. All participants will be fully active in culture.'
- Will it help me if I disclose to find out about in-country resources and support? Is this information easily accessible for me to assess on my own what may best fit my needs?
- What messages are participants looking for when reading the medical forms:
  - If I disclose a disability, could I still be cleared to go? No blanket bias?
  - Assessment of individual's ability to meet essential requirements of program include:
    - Individual preferences
    - Will I have input on if I can meet the essential requirements of the program? Was it a yes or no question? Does the person advising me understand what I am talking about?
    - Any space to provide requests for accommodations?





Who decides what programs fit which accommodation needs for a person with a disability?

What assessment tools do you use?



# Tips for Supporting People with Disabilities in Programs

1. Start with the person- International exchange programs are not interchangeable for everyone. Make sure you start with the individual's goals and work with them to match with the appropriate program.
2. Be clear on requirements- people with disabilities know their limits better than anyone, and when they are acquainted with the requirements of the program, they will make their choice. At the same time, program providers should not assume that discomfort or risk disqualify someone from participating



3. Don't assume it will cost extra- sometimes dialogue stops before it starts when it is assumed a disabled person requesting reasonable accommodations is automatically asking for money. Many reasonable accommodations don't cost anything. If funding is needed, there are ways to obtain it so that it won't 'break the bank', but you cannot start unless dialogue is started.

4. Seek training- exchange providers should seek out training on disability for their staff on a regular basis. Such workshops might cover topics like advising, setting up a procedure for people to request reasonable accommodations, or strategics for providing specific types of reasonable accommodations. NCDE has many of these trainings, get in touch with them!



5. Publicize a procedure for requesting reasonable accommodations. Every program offers guidance for participants on visa applications, safety, cultural customs, and more. Why not provide information on a procedure for requesting a reasonable accommodation? In guidance about health abroad, participants should also receive information about traveling with medications, service animals, and adaptive equipment.

Start with 'Yes', approach the situation with an open mind and refrain from applying higher safety standards based on disability.





When you do a site visit with a provider or for your institution, what questions have you developed for the purposes of assessing accessibility at that location?

Questions like:

- What are the laws regarding accessibility in the host country?
- Does the student have appropriate documentation for accommodations?
- What is the local learning environment like?
- What are the housing and transportation options available?
- Who are the faculty and staff students will need to work with on site to make arrangements for accommodations?
- Is it possible for the program to accommodate disability in the same way it would be accommodated on campus? If not, will the student be willing to make adjustments in order to participate in that particular program?



# Resources in Supporting Students with Disabilities in Education Abroad

- Your university's disability services office
- [Mobility International USA](#) WONDERFUL resources at your disposal to help you learn about perspectives of people with different types of disabilities- sign up for their newsletters.
- [U.S. Department of State Students Abroad Site for Travelers with Disabilities](#)-highlights local/country laws and safety information
- [RIT Blog](#)- Blog posts of people with disabilities studying abroad.
- [Ripple Effect: Travelers with Disabilities Abroad](#)- podcast with the National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange
- Your colleagues- if you have colleagues that you know that have shared they have a disability with you, it may be worthwhile having a conversation with them about types of accommodations they have to think about, explain their day to day life processes, what they find challenging to navigate in an world that was not built to accommodate them. Start with asking, 'I have some questions I was hoping for your perspective on, would you be open to speaking with me on this specific topic?'
- [Web Accessibility Tools](#)- Strategies, standards, resources to make the Web accessible to people with disabilities
- [Accessibility for meetings/conferences:](#)
- [Accessible Social media content tips](#)





National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange  
Web Resource Library

<https://www.miusa.org/resource/>



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Any questions or comments?



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# Institute of International Education Webinar

March 22, 2023, 1:00 pm Eastern Standard Time

Join IIE for a webinar releasing the new *Open Doors Special Report on International Students with Disabilities*

The presentation will provide insights on the number of international students with disabilities attending U.S. colleges and universities, how institutions can include international students with disabilities in their metrics, and how U.S. higher education institutions support international students with disabilities.

[https://iie-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_JsVogGPRkuXYeWJfhSAyQ](https://iie-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_JsVogGPRkuXYeWJfhSAyQ)



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