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## BRIEF REFERENCE GUIDE TO DISABILITIES

### Sources:

Shelley Christianson, Jewish Community Guide to People with Disabilities,  
[www.inclusioninnovations.com](http://www.inclusioninnovations.com)

Clergy Packet: Factsheets on Mental Health Disorders, [www.jewishhealingcenter.org](http://www.jewishhealingcenter.org)

**Alzheimer's Disease:** most common cause of dementia. Forgetfulness, confusion, problems speaking, understanding, reading, writing, behavioral and personality changes, aggressive, anxious or aimless behavior.

**Anxiety Disorders:** Generalized Anxiety Disorder-chronic, exaggerated worry about everyday life events and activities, accompanied by physical symptoms. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder-repeated, intrusive and unwanted thoughts or rituals that seem impossible to control. Post-traumatic Stress Disorder-persistent symptoms that occur after experiencing a traumatic event, sometimes with nightmares, numbing of emotions, depression, anger. Panic Disorder-characterized by panic attacks, sudden feelings of terror that strike repeatedly and without warning. Phobia-extreme, disabling and irrational fear of something that poses no danger.

**Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder:** neurological disorder characterized by difficulty with attention, impulsivity and sometimes hyperactivity.

**Autism Spectrum Disorders:** Autism-impairment in social interaction, communication and interactive play. Pervasive Developmental Disorder(NOS): severe and pervasive impairment in certain behaviors, but does not meet criteria for a specific diagnosis. Asperger Syndrome-no significant delay in cognitive ability, but impairment in social interaction and presence of restricted interests and activities.

**Bipolar Disorder:** episodes of serious mania and depression, with mood swings from excessively "high" and/or irritable to sad and hopeless, with periods of a normal mood in between. Mania-excessive energy, racing thoughts, euphoria, easily irritated or distracted, poor judgment. Depression-persistent sad, anxious or empty mood, fatigue or loss of energy, feeling guilty, hopeless or worthless, thoughts of suicide or death.

**Cerebral Palsy:** physical impairment that affects movement, caused by injury to parts of brain that control ability to use muscles and the body.

**Clinical Depression:** persistent sad, anxious or empty mood, persistent physical symptoms, fatigue or loss of energy, feeling guilty, hopeless or worthless, thoughts of suicide or death.

**Cognitive Disorders/Developmental Disabilities:** Intellectual functioning, daily living skills, communication skills and social skills are impaired.

**Hearing Impairments: Deaf:** hearing impairment that is so severe that a person is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification. **Hard of Hearing:** hearing impairment which adversely affects performance but is not included in definition of deaf. **Deaf-Blind-** simultaneous hearing and visual difficulties that cause extreme difficulty in daily living activities.

**Learning Disabilities:** neurological disorder that affects brain's ability to receive, process, store and respond to information. Can affect ability to listen, speak, read, write, perform math tasks.

**Schizophrenia:** disorder which affects how a person thinks, feels and acts. May have difficulty distinguishing what is real and imaginary, may be unresponsive or withdrawn, may have difficulty expressing normal emotions in social situations.

**Traumatic Brain Injury:** sudden physical damage to brain, with differing short and long term effects depending on what part of brain is injured. Can affect language, memory, speech, motor skills, vision, hearing, cognitive abilities, social skills, behaviors.

**Vision Impairment:** visual acuity of 20/200- person is legally blind. Low vision- limited or diminished vision that cannot be corrected with standard lenses. Partial sight-field of vision is impaired because of illness, degenerative syndrome, or trauma.