

Hello my name is Gary Malkowski. I would like to discuss the concept of attitudinal barrier prevention in the work place.

Audism is a form of discrimination based on a person's ability to hear whether they identify as Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or Deafened. There's often a conveyance of beliefs within a hearing system that places preference on individuals who can hear and speak and with whom they can identify; people who behave in a manner more similar to hearing individuals rather than those who are Deaf and have a preference for the use of sign language, who may struggle with speech and lip reading and use a communication mode dissimilar to those used by hearing people. These attitudes are highly impactful and problematic.

There are many forms of discrimination. Audism is grounded in misconception and misunderstanding, often disguised in sentiments and concern for safety, or unawareness of accommodations, or perceived undue financial hardship, or providing inequitable access. Attitudinal barriers include negative attitudes, behaviors, and expectations regarding the abilities of Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals.

Ableism is defined as a belief system akin to racism, sexism, or ageism that sees persons with disabilities as being less worthy of respect and consideration, less able to contribute or participate, or of less inherent value than others. Ableism may be conscious or unconscious, and may be embedded in institutions, systems or the broader culture of society. Ableist attitudes are often based on the view that disability is an anomaly to normalcy, rather than an inherent and expected variation in the human condition. Ableism may also be expressed in ongoing paternalistic and patronizing behavior toward people with disabilities. See additional details in the Ontario Human Rights Commission's policy on Ableism and Discrimination based on Disability.

With positive attitudes, it's essential that you be on guard against inappropriate audist or ableist beliefs, or attitudes, comments, or actions. They may be direct or indirect. It's important to avoid practices of tokenism or engaging in any differential treatment or advantage for some people and disadvantage for others. It is important to treat everyone respectfully and equally including individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, and persons with disabilities.