Human rights and disabilities
Student resources: Information Sheet 1

About disability
So, what are we talking about when we talk of disability? The Disability Information
and Resource Centre believes a disability is a positive attribute of the human
condition, and to be celebrated as it contributes to the diversity and uniqueness of
humanity. People with a disability have a right to be, and our society has a
responsibility to ensure that this right is not violated. A normal human life cannot be
defined nor can the normal way of achieving success and happiness. The only normal
quality that exists among human beings is life itself.

Definitions
Disability
Disability is very hard to define as it involves many aspects of human behaviour
(including cultural, social and medical).

What is a Disability Culture?
“People with disabilities have forged a group identity. We share a common history of
oppression and a common bond of resilience. We generate art, music, literature, and
other expressions of our lives and our culture, infused from our experience of
disability. Most importantly, we are proud of ourselves as people with disabilities. We
claim our disabilities with pride as part of our identity. We are who we are: we are
people with disabilities.” (Steven E. Brown, PhD)

Disability
“Disability is not a ‘brave struggle’ or ‘courage in the face of adversity’. Disability is
an art. It's an ingenious way to live.” (Neil Marcus, 1993)

Disability
Disability is any restriction or lack of ability (resulting from an impairment) to
perform an activity in a manner considered to be normal for the population.