

Young people report experiencing a variety of disabilities, such as 'physical, sensory, intellectual and psychiatric impairments', which restrict their access to social activities and employment opportunities, and prevent them achieving their educational potential.¹⁷



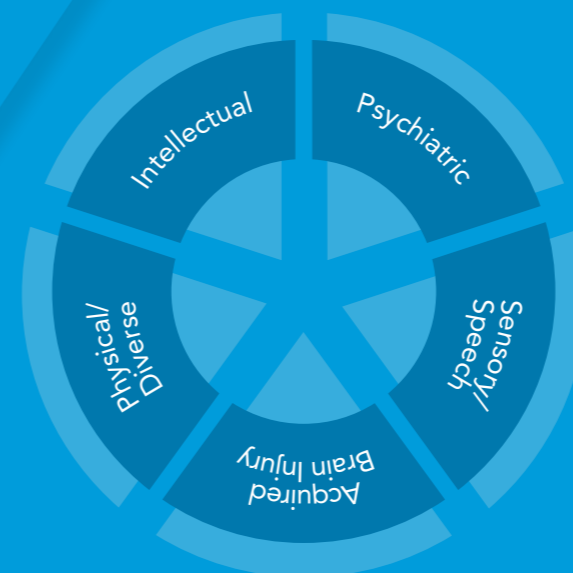
Youth Disability

IN AUSTRALIA



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* The five broad areas of disability

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Youth Disability

IN AUSTRALIA

Overview

'Youth and disability' is rarely considered a topic of interest in its own right. In the Australian political, social and legal context, this situation is attributed to young people with disability being considered primarily in reference to their disability, rather than as developing young adults.¹ As a result, policy and services have historically focused on the provision of medication, treatment and behavioural management strategies to young people with disability.²



Not so lucky country

Australians living with a disability have the lowest quality of life anywhere in the developed world.³

+ Representation

Without consultation with young people, policies may be developed and implemented that are not appropriate or adequate to address the needs of young Australians with disability.

- ▶ There is limited national data collection specific to young people and disability.⁴
- ▶ There is no established national organisation that enables young people to represent their own concerns and ideas to decision-makers.⁵
- ▶ Carers and parents are often asked to speak on behalf of young people with disability.⁶

+ Housing and care

There are 621 people under 50 currently living in residential aged care in Australia with an additional 200 expected to be admitted each year.⁷

The associated expenses with caring for a young person with disability, such as altering living arrangements, purchasing medication, as well as income sacrifice to become a carer, may be leading some Australian families into poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage.⁸

+ Forced sterilisation

There is anecdotal evidence, as well as health insurance statistics, which suggest that the forced sterilisation of young people with disabilities still occurs in Australia in alarming numbers, despite policy and judicial efforts.⁹



x **365** days

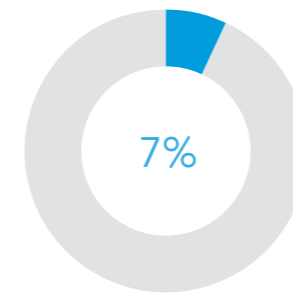
* Social Isolation

Young people living in nursing homes lead isolated lives, with 53% receiving less than one visit from a friend or family member, and 82% rarely or never visiting their friends.¹⁰

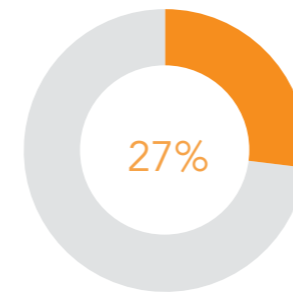
+ Facts and figures

In 2009, it was estimated that 204,000 young people (7%) reported some form of disability.¹¹

- ▶ Of these young people, 56,000 (or 27%) reported experiencing severe disability. This number also represents 1.8% of all young people.¹²
- ▶ There was little difference in the level of profound or severe disability between young males (1.9%) and young females (1.7%).¹³
- ▶ Indigenous young people reported being more likely than their non-Indigenous counterparts, 2.2% and 1.3% respectively, to require aid with core activities of self care, mobility and communication.¹⁴



Youth with a disability
An estimated 7% of young people reported some form of disability in 2009.



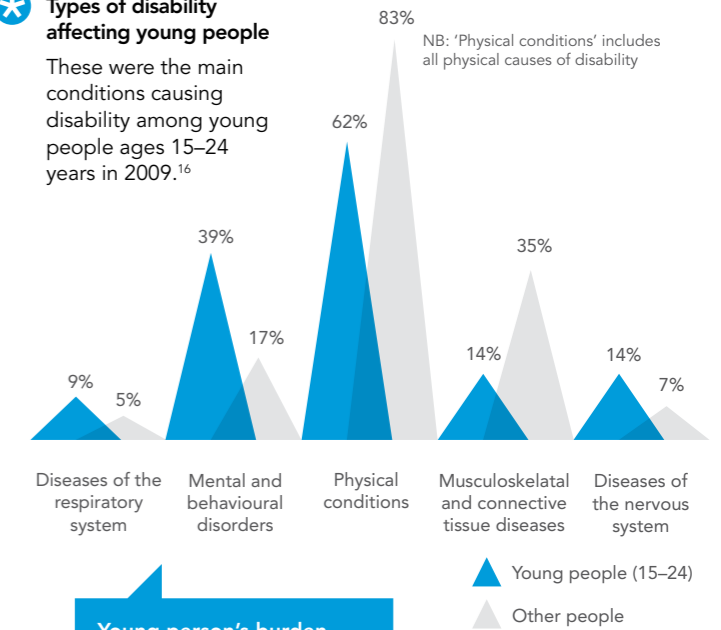
Severe disability
Of those young people with disability, 27% report experiencing a severe disability.

Defining severe disability

According to the ABS 2009 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, a person with a severe disability may need help with core activities, has difficulty communicating with family or friends and can communicate more easily using sign language or other non-spoken forms of communication.¹⁵

* Types of disability affecting young people

These were the main conditions causing disability among young people ages 15–24 years in 2009.¹⁶



Young person's burden

Young people with disability are twice as likely to have a mental/behavioural disability as older people with disability.



References:

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For full references, please visit: www.acys.info/facts