



# Hidden Disabilities

- Jordan Foltz
- Preston Parke
- Kendall Leininger
- Dylan Mandel
- Nayef Alshammari

## Letter of Transmittal

April 16, 2022

Nayef Alshammari  
Group Associate  
987 Tree Ln, Tampa, FL 33613

Patricia Owen  
Student Accessibility  
Services USF  
4202 E. Fowler Avenue,  
SVC 1133,  
Tampa, FL 33620, USA  
813-974-4309

**Dear Mrs. Patricia Owen,**

Within this report, you will find information regarding the problem of hidden disabilities that Students at The University of South Florida face in their everyday life on campus. After thorough research, Our team came up with a feasible solution that will help these students.

Our research discusses in detail the problem hidden disabilities students face, and provides a solution with the means of implementation and budget. The team have looked up and got together sets of data that discusses in detail the issue. After further research, our team has concluded that providing lanyards to students will help solve the issues that come with hidden disabilities.

Thank you for your time. With your help, we will be able to implement this solution to create a better environment for students at USF.

If you have any additional questions regarding our team's report, please contact me at [Nayef2@usf.edu](mailto:Nayef2@usf.edu). I look forward to hearing back from you and for a further discussion on our report.

**Regards,**



**Nayef Alshammari**  
Group Associate

## Table of Contents

1. Letter of Transmittal
2. Informative Abstract
3. Introduction
4. Dynamic Slideshow
5. Problem
6. Solution
7. Implementation
8. Budget
9. Conclusion
10. References

## Informational Abstract

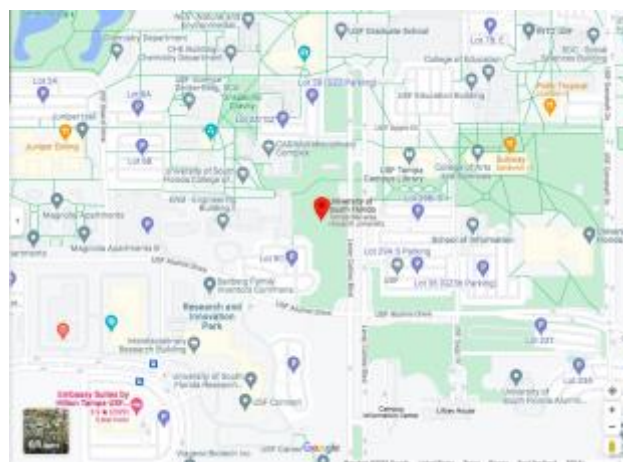


Invisible disabilities, or hidden disabilities, is a term used that categorizes disabilities and challenges that are primarily neurological or not immediately apparent. These disabilities could be autism, depression, chronic pain, deafness, anxiety, learning disabilities, and many more. Ableism is when someone is discriminatory or mean to someone with a disability. While most people tend to be respectful to someone that has a visual disability, but someone with a hidden disabilities may not get that same treatment. Someone who may be seen as 'normal,' but has a hidden disability and does not meet social standards, will struggle with fitting in with social norms. One way that this issue has been resolved is with the sunflower lanyard. Starting at Gatwick Airport, they were designed to identify passengers with a hidden disability who may need additional help while travelling. Now they are used internationally to help people with invisible disabilities.

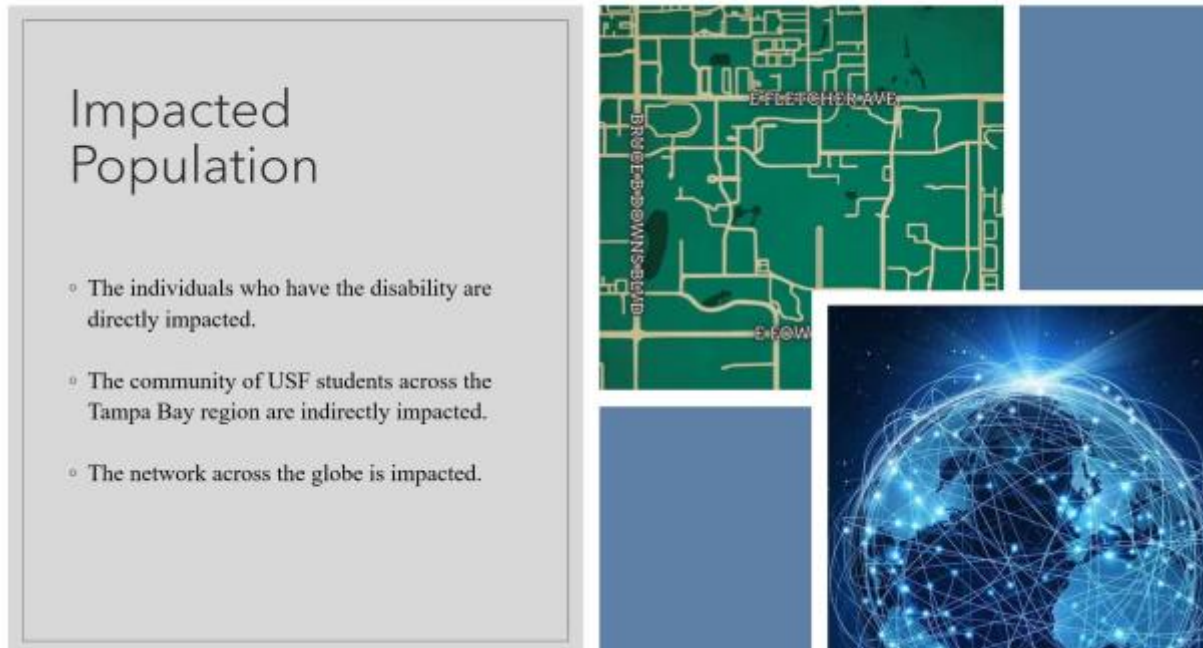
# Introduction

Invisible disabilities are anything that can't be seen, that can for students be anxiety, depression, OCD, or even a learning disability. Perhaps there are methods of drawing awareness and limiting ableism in college towards individuals with non-visual disabilities. Ableism is when a community or singular person views visually impaired or non-visually impaired people in a mean or derogative way. But one issue is the people who struggle with the non-visual one may have it worse because of the way it is handled. Someone who is perceived as 'normal' but it inherently is not by social standards, struggles with meeting social norms. We need to draw awareness and gain more social accommodations for students who feel outcasted or lonely. Most accommodations are taken at seen value, but some students struggle with fitting in or gaining friends while starting university in general. When you add the issues of hidden disabilities it becomes so much harder to feel included.

There is a wide variety of students that University of South Florida welcomes, some of which have physical or mental situations that may compromise either their social or educational environment. Although such a school strives to help and accommodate for situations such as these, we must also work towards helping others learn what these situations are and how to assist those around them. There is also some strife around the idea of not receiving awareness or accommodations that a student might need when approaching a new milestone like college. There could also be some disconnection between college and students in respect to what university can provide for students with such situations. Here is an important quote relating to identifying hidden disabilities, according to Robyn Scott from Edutopia: "Invisible disabilities (IDs) are some of the most difficult ones for educators to identify because they are just that -- invisible. Students can "hide in plain sight" either intentionally or because they aren't aware that they have a disability. Some students are fearful, along with their parents, that they won't be accepted to college or that they will carry a label through the end of 12th grade. The silent aspect of IDs also makes it difficult for teachers to learn about the ir students' needs unless they are told outright." Because of the disconnect between educational and social reasonability some people face its importance when approaching something like college to draw a connection between the two and try to accommodate those who struggle along the way in either.



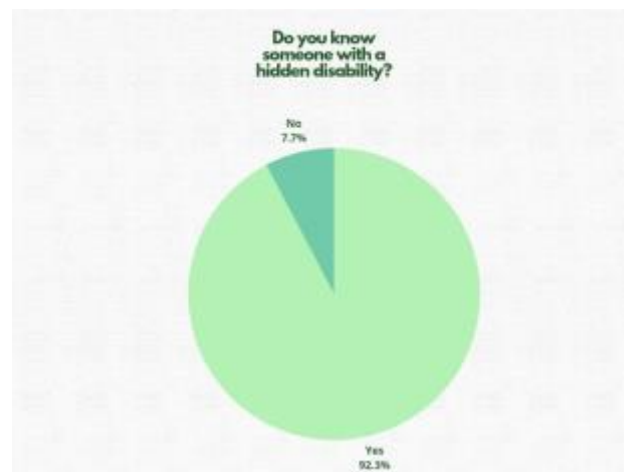
1 - Figure 1: Aerial map of the area of use



<https://sway.office.com/ONsVMc3UVZDku1Ji#content=jJE9usZmo7yoOR>

2 - Figure 2: Dynamic slideshow

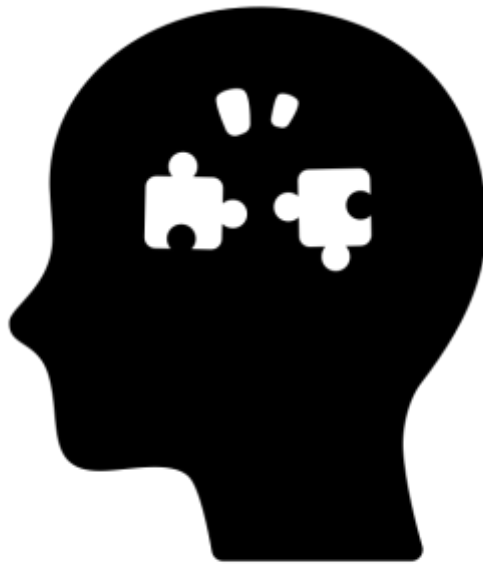
## Problem



3 - Figure 3: Survey

The main problem is that people cannot identify those with mental disabilities, as they are invisible. To bring this issue to light, we have to discuss with people how much they know about invisible illness, and we show them how many people could be suffering around them. We conducted a survey with 22 individuals that showed that hidden disabilities are extremely common within our populace, with 93 percent of people discussing that they personally know someone with a hidden disability.

## Solution

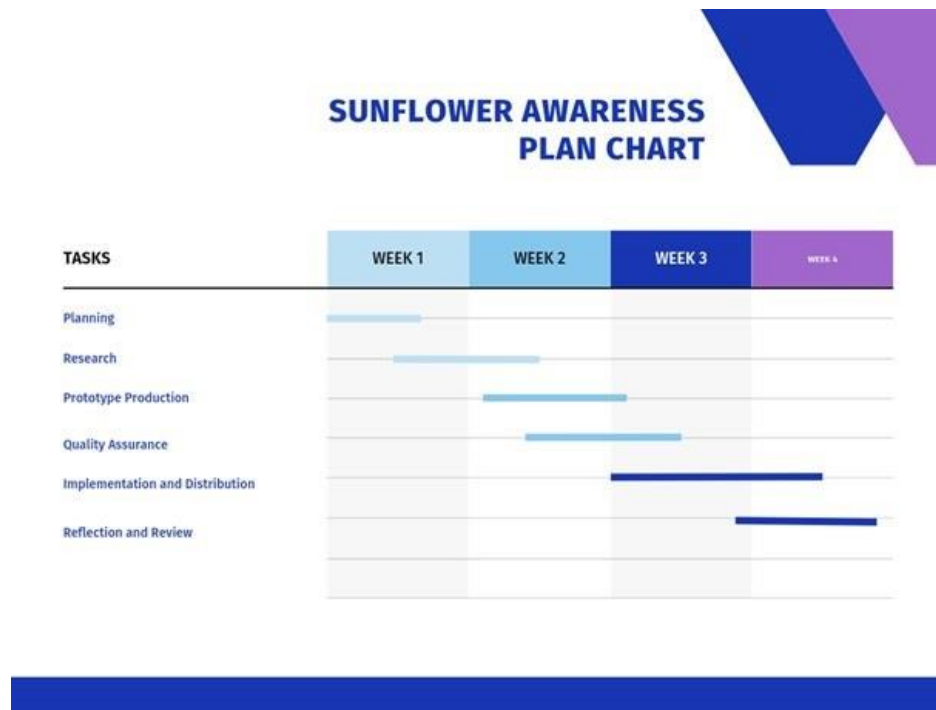


*4 - Figure 4: Wikimedia image*

We can draw attention to the problem, and this can either help or hurt, but by not drawing attention we may end up disregarding the struggle. If we can assist these students and help the peers be aware and knowledgeable, then we might have more inclusion in the classroom. Some implementations could be class discussions or even just meeting with the professor for student outreach just to let the student educate and know that somebody is aware and cares. We also discussed the option of implementing something called sunflower lanyards. These lanyards allow you to draw awareness to those who struggle a bit more than most do.



## Implementation

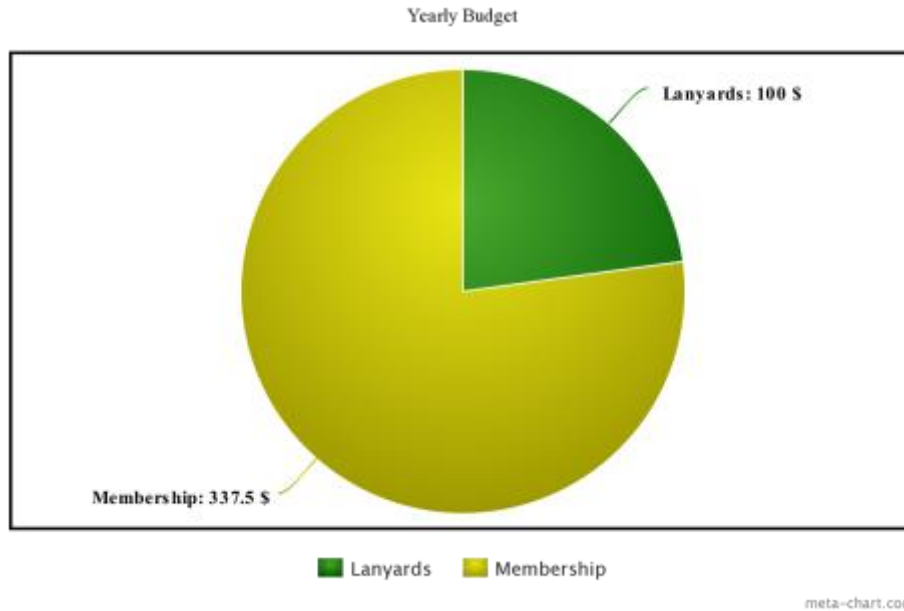


5 - Figure 5: Gantt chart

This Gant Schedule shows our one-month implementation plan of the sunflower Lanyards. The main focus will be on production and distribution. We have to allocate time into researching the right supplier as faulty and low-quality equipment can make any association look foolish. We then allow the supplier to show us their product so that as a group we can greenlight production if produced to the quality of our standards. Then the longest section will be the implementation and distribution of the lanyards to the proper USF authority so that those with documented disabilities can be supplied their lanyards. After the bulk of the lanyards have been distributed, we will review to see how the operation went and if successful we can discuss ways to implement further throughout the school.

## Budget

For our solution, our budget is quite low. A starter box of sunflower lanyards cost \$100 and includes many other sunflower products, such as bracelets, pins, and name tags. In order to purchase the kit, you must have a sunflower membership. The standard membership costs \$337.50 a year. We estimate that we may purchase one box of lanyards per year. So in total, our budget would be under \$500 a year. Since our solution is manly to spread awareness of hidden disabilities and implement in class discussion, our budget is quite low and easy to obtain.



6 - Figure 6: Pie Chart displaying the budget for each year

## Conclusion

To sum up, we need to perceive and give accommodations for people struggling in these situations of hidden disabilities. But we also need to look at more than just academic solutions but social and community ones as well. Implementing lanyards can help people easily distinguish people with hidden disabilities and help them with open arms and an open mind. We can eliminate some contractions in the classroom and in the life of these students, and thus lead them towards a successful and better future.

## References

Ed573615. (n.d.). ERIC - Education Resources Information Center. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED573615>

Google Maps, Google,  
<https://www.google.com/maps/place/University+of+South+Florida/@28.0587031,-82.4160426,17z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x88c2c7bec3c6ffd3:0xb1f4741e5c51906a!8m2!3d28.0587031!4d-82.4138539>.

Harrison, A. G. (2019, May 13). *U.S. college admissions scandal means more skepticism of genuine invisible disabilities*. The Conversation. <https://theconversation.com/u-s-college-admissions-scandal-means-more-skepticism-of-genuine-invisible-disabilities-115502>

*Invisible disabilities and postsecondary education*. (n.d.). UW.

<https://www.washington.edu/doit/invisible-disabilities-and-postsecondary-education>

*Invisible disability*. (n.d.). Google Docs. <https://forms.gle/NEcVLYUaH9ErhMvG8>



*Invisible no more.* (n.d.). Inside Higher Ed | Higher Education News, Career Advice, Jobs.

*Search media.* Wikimedia Commons. (n.d.). Retrieved April 24, 2022, from <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=disabilities&title=Special%3AMediaSearch&go=Go&type=image>

*Understanding invisible disabilities.* (2015, March 18). Edutopia.

<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/understanding-invisible-disabilities-robyn-scott>