

Welcome to **YELLOWRHINO**



Let's see how you really think about your invisible condition or disability. Take your time and be honest.

Remember this is NOT a medical - that stuff is strictly for the professionals! This is about your ATTITUDE and how you THINK about your condition to see how you think more positively about it.

What condition/s do you have?

Have you been diagnosed?

YES



When?

NO



Why not?

How old were you?

Note: self diagnosis can be dangerous. Please check with your GP

Ok. Great! We've got a starting point.



Let's see how you think about your diagnosis.

Describe your condition/s and way of life because of it (for example, if someone asked you why you aren't feeling well due to your condition), what would you respond? Think carefully and write it all down. Brain dump all your experiences and thoughts.

Handwriting practice lines (dashed lines) for writing a response.



Answer these questions:

1. How often do you tell people about your condition/s?

Quite often

Now and then

Only if they ask

I don't

2. How do you usually describe it?

I have ...

I suffer with

I've been diagnosed with ...

I'm not sure what I say

3. How would you word it by type?

condition

illness

disease

other
.....

4. How do you react when someone downplays it (eg: "you seem fine to me"; "it's not that bad" etc)

I get angry and react

I get angry but don't react

I get upset (sometimes after they've gone)

other
.....

5. What detail do you go into to describe symptoms?

quite a bit as I like people to understand

I'll tell them if they ask

unless it's relevant I don't share much

6. What are your thoughts on people who tell you off for parking in a disabled bay/using a disabled loo?

they are idiots who have no idea and it makes me angry, often reacting

there's always one so I explain politely if possible so they get it (they often get embarrassed when I do and apologise, so job done)

I ignore them and carry on, but it does annoy me

I ignore them and carry on as they are obviously uneducated or ignorant - their problem, not mine

7. Do you connect with people who have similar issues or conditions (eg, forums, social groups or friends with similar)?

Yes I try to

I know some but I don't go out my way to

No, I'm not interested

Well done! And breathe!

How was that? Hard? Easy?

Let's take a closer look at your answers. *Note* - there are no right or wrong answers here, just thoughts.

1. How often do you tell people about your condition/s?

Are you talking about it a lot? If so, it could be staying at the forefront of your mind when you could be focusing on something else. By focusing on what we cannot change, it can make it difficult to move on with what we WANT to do. Even if part of our day to day routine (whether taking meds or needing support) it is possible to treat these necessities as a routine, like brushing our teeth. Then we can focus on the actual stuff we enjoy. Obviously some people need to spend more time on care, but if your condition does not require constant attention then don't give it that attention. **Park** your thoughts and carry on with your life. **Notice** it then move on. If it's overly bothering you then decide to come back at another time and think about it then. **Be in control - you control you.**

2. How do you usually describe it?

Are you allowing this condition to make you suffer even more than necessary?

Saying "**I have..**" is owning it. Don't own it! It may stay with you a while (or long term) but it isn't yours. Don't claim it.

Saying "**I suffer with ...**" Makes your mind think you are suffering constantly. Are you really? Or do you sometimes laugh, have fun, enjoy life?

Unless someone is curious it may be worth thinking if you need to explain at all sometimes. After all your body - your business.

3. How would you word it by type?

How important is it that you get it right and ensure you are referring to the correct term? If it isn't a disease then **don't promote** it. Keep things simple. Address it with as low a risk as you can. Lessen the feeling of it's potency and hold over you.



4. How do you react when someone downplays it (eg: "you seem fine to me"; "it's not that bad" etc) ?

Let's add here:

6. What are your thoughts on people who tell you off for parking in a disabled bay/using a disabled loo?

It does feel so annoying when someone doesn't get the gravity of your condition. Of course you want to react - and that's natural. Sometimes we feel we need to, particularly if a person is pushing for answers. Sometimes we just feel we want to tell them off back.

Responding by getting angry or upset isn't going to make you feel better and the person who insulted you has already moved on. It is possible to change how you react but it takes practise and patience on your part.

Here are two ways to react (only suggestions, you have to do what you feel comfortable with):

- A. Deep breath then give a VERY short answer (you absolutely do NOT have to say what your condition is). So you could practise saying something like:
- I have a condition that means I need to *park here/use this toilet etc (and leave it at that - by all means say what your condition is if you want but don't feel obliged at all)
 - Thanks for your concern but I am entitled to.

B. Deep breath and ... IGNORE THEM.

Now this one takes practise and discipline. But t often means that person will stop and move on as they won't get a rise out of you.



5. What detail do you go into to describe symptoms?

If someone is interested then they can google it! Seriously, you don't have to explain every detail of your condition. Unless, of course, you want to. But why would you give it more air time that it deserves?

If you're having a conversation about it, it can sometimes help to make things clearer to you by going over your symptoms and so on. In the right context and company.

But a simple "Well I sometimes get xxxx and xxxx but I deal with it" can be much better to keep you sane and your audience too! It won't do you any good to keep repeating the symptoms or treatment etc on a regular basis as, once again, it takes over.



7. Do you connect with people who have similar issues or conditions (eg, forums, social groups or friends with similar)?

This is very personal and depends greatly on your condition. From speaking with many people with different diagnoses, there is huge range of support that people might require.

For example, people living with cancer may need to connect with others in exactly the same situation to access support. Someone with migraines may compare with a friend here and there but may not want to join any support groups as it will reinforce the whole situation and require thinking about migraines when they might only occur occasionally. Everyone is different and there is no right or wrong way to approach support networks. Do what feels best for **YOU**.





Fab! Now back to that original statement.

Grab a highlighter (or different colour pen) and reread what you wrote. Highlight the words or phrases that are unhelpful.

How can you make that description as positive as possible? Rewrite it here.

Handwriting practice lines (dashed lines) for rewriting the statement.



You did it!

Well done you!

Stay positive!

