

ATTITUDES TOWARDS PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

In 2019, NCSS surveyed close to 2,000 Singapore Residents aged 18 and above about their perceptions towards persons with disabilities. We also met 38 able-bodied persons and 24 persons with various disabilities through focus groups in 2020.

Here's what we found:



Public attitudes towards persons with disabilities are generally positive

3 in 4

Singaporeans have positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities.[^]

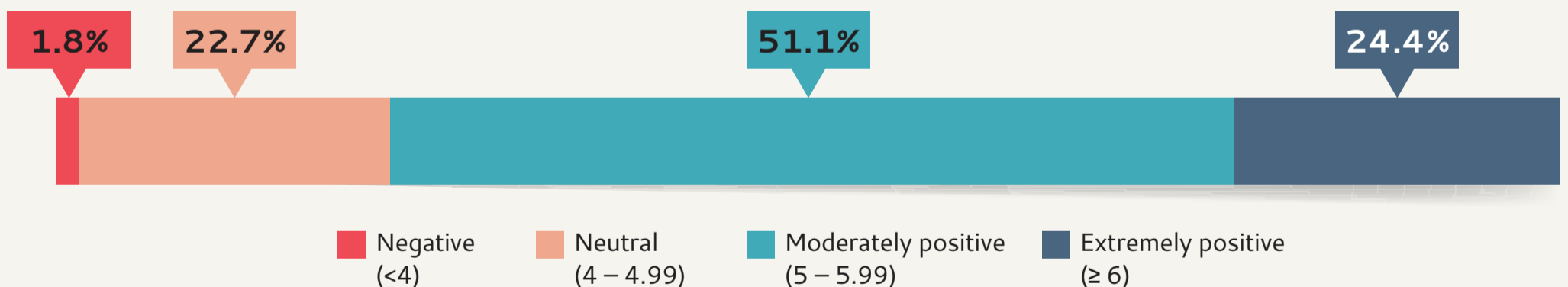
[^]Based on responses to a series of statements which measure how they inclusive participants are in their thoughts, feelings or actions towards persons with disabilities, in areas of education, employment and public access/social interaction.

Persons with disabilities shared in focus groups that there has been improvement in acceptance and attitudes over the years.

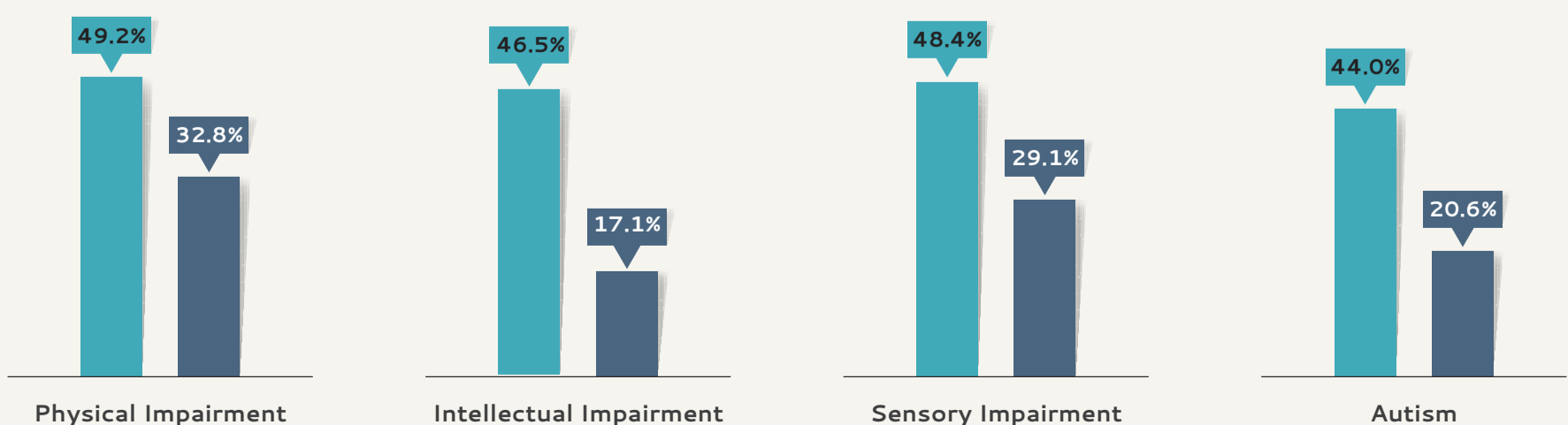
"We can definitely see more gracious attitudes and better acceptance of people with disabilities in the society. But [...] we are not there yet at the stage where we can celebrate."

– Male, 30s, with a Physical Disability

Overall Attitudes (% Respondents by Score Bandings, based on 7-point scale)



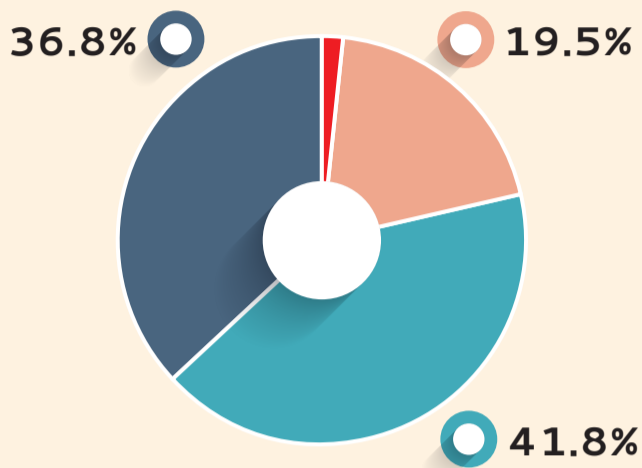
Attitudes by Disability Type (% Moderately & Extremely Positive)



Across domains, attitudes in the employment domain are a key area for improvement



Public Access & Social Interactions



The “last mile”, the final leg of a journey, is central to persons with disabilities’ experiences in public spaces and infrastructure.

“I alight the bus, if I want to get to an industrial building, how do I go? [...] I can have a map but I can’t see the map.”

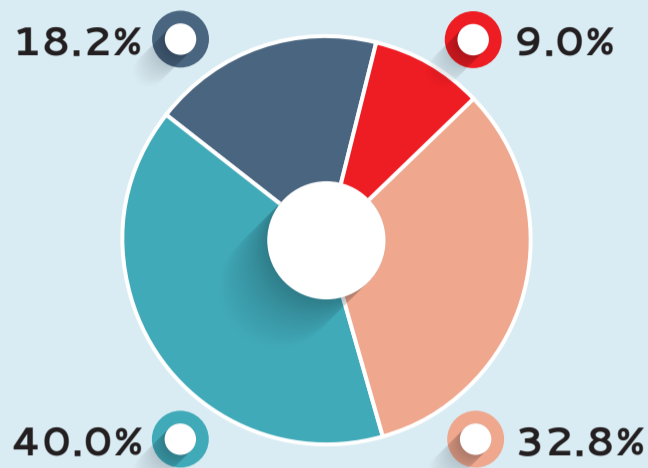
– Male, 50s, with Visual Disability

“Many abled individuals have the liberty to be late and then can just book a Grab. But that’s definitely not something that [persons with disabilities] can do. If we want to book wheelchair accessible transport, we need to like plan at least one week ahead.”

– Female, 30s, with Physical Disability



Employment



Some members of the public showed equal consideration in hiring and accommodating persons with disabilities at work.

“A handicapped person might be able to take over my role, as long as there is support in place.”

– Female, above 40, Bachelors Degree and above

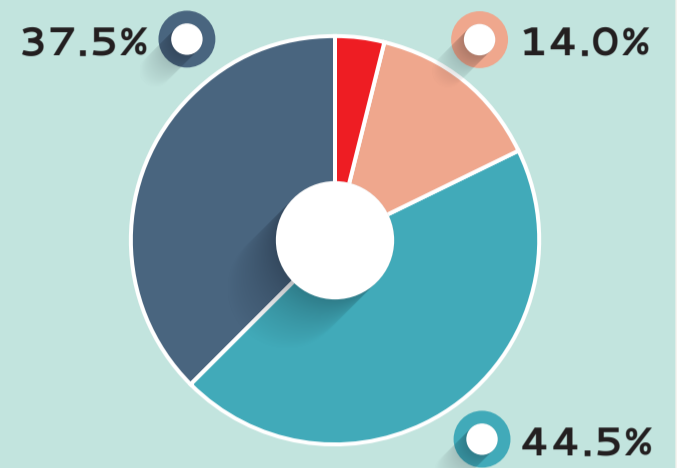
But older respondents with Diploma qualifications and below tend to confine persons with disabilities to simpler jobs.

“[Persons with disabilities] can actually take up simpler job functions and prove their ability to support themselves.”

– Female, above 40, Diploma and below



Education



Persons with disabilities we met with had generally positive experiences in school. Their friends and teachers were accommodating.

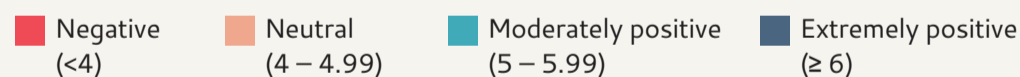
“I was lucky to have a very good form teacher... to have good friends who helped me in one way or another.”

– Male, 40s, Deaf

However, some experienced bullying.

“Because he’s in a motorised wheelchair, the students would turn off the power and then leave him alone in the classroom.”

– Female, 30s, with a Physical Disability



Most people want an inclusive society, but fewer are comfortable with direct personal interaction with persons with disabilities

9 in 10 agreed:



They would speak up for students with disabilities if they saw them getting bullied in school



Persons with disabilities should be given priority when taking public transportation

VS

Only 6 in 10 agreed:



They would be comfortable with having a person with disabilities as a supervisor



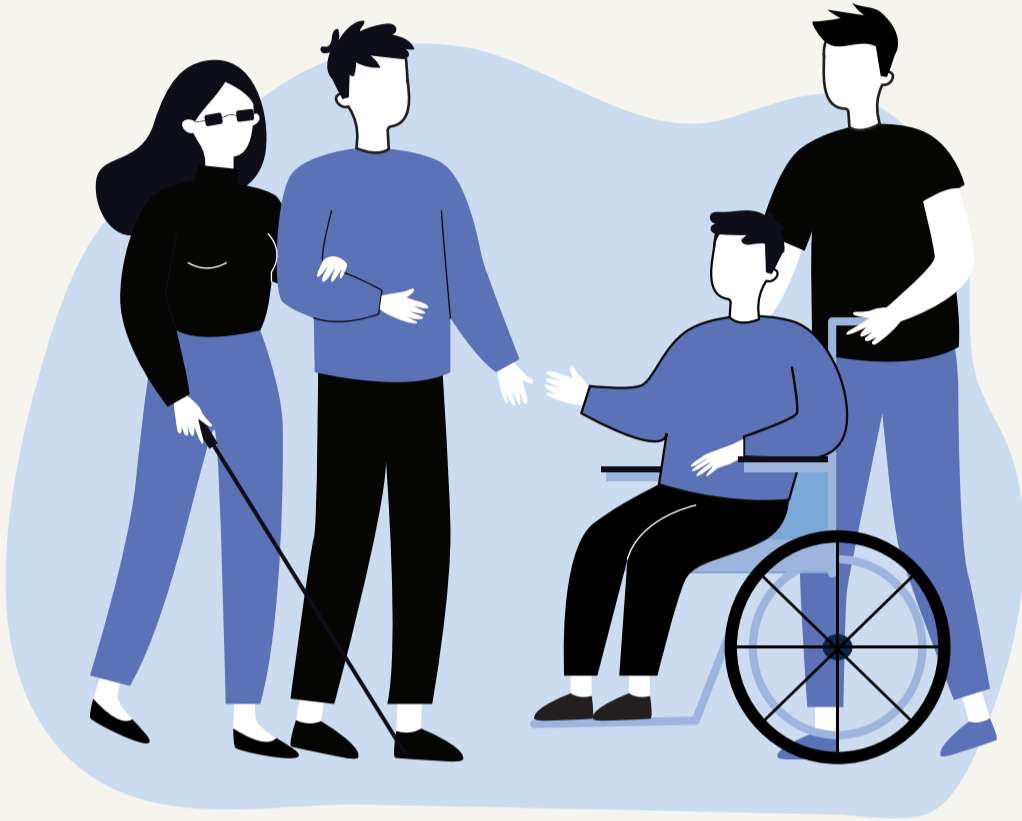
They would not end interactions with persons with disabilities as quickly as possible

People may hesitate to reach out due to a lack of knowledge

"I mean honestly...if a blind person approach me, I don't even know how to guide the person, I mean where do I go?"

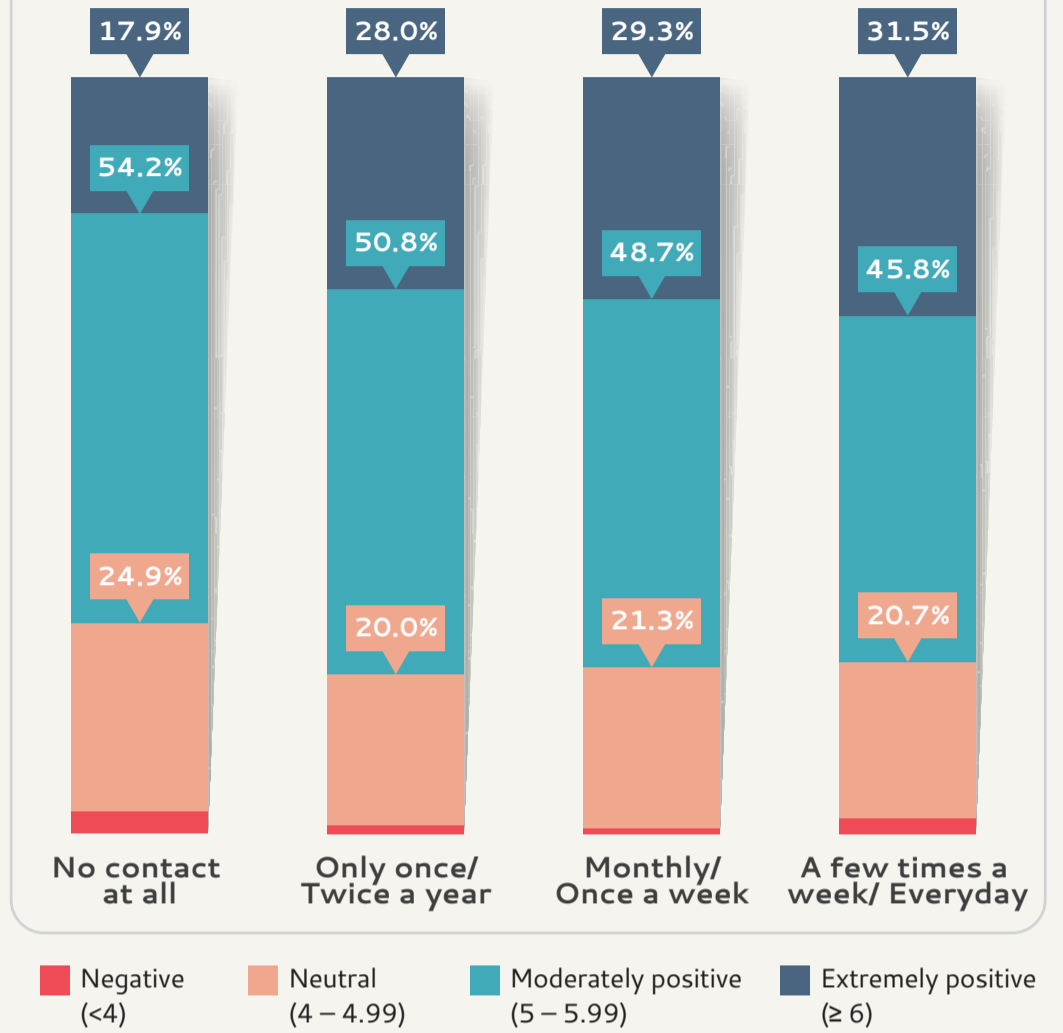
– Female above 40, Diploma and below

Some respondents also didn't want persons with disabilities to feel pitied



Those with contact with persons with disabilities had more positive attitudes

In the past year, how much contact have you had with persons with disabilities?



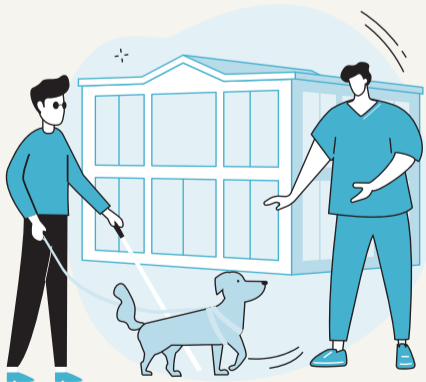
...WE CAN DO MORE...

when interacting with persons with disabilities



Ask before you help

Some appreciate help while others are able to move around on their own and do not require help. Do not be offended or embarrassed if your help is declined.



Be sensitive about physical contact

Wheelchairs, white canes and guide dogs are considered personal space. Do not touch these without first asking the person for permission.



Speak directly to him or her

Speak directly to the person, not to his companion (e.g. sign language interpreter, caregiver).

Don't make assumptions

Persons with disabilities know themselves best. Allow them to make their own decisions about participating in any activity.



Scan for more tips on understanding and removing barriers for persons with disabilities, or visit tinyurl.com/ncsspwd15.

