

NARRATOR:

The Disability & Philanthropy Forum presents Kevin Irvine, Senior Talent Acquisition Consultant, Individuals with Disabilities at RUSH University Medical Center.

KEVIN IRVINE:

Not everyone's ready to self-disclose, and not everyone sees the value in it, but I do think that there is a lot of value.

And I also think that when, for those of us with non-apparent disabilities, there is this issue of imposter syndrome, and "Can I own this term, 'disability?'" And I think that it is really important that there's a lot of people out there with noticeable disabilities who don't have the choice about whether or not to disclose, or whether or not to have that be part of their open identity. And so I think when you own the word "disability" publicly and in a very open way, you are making that connection between your experience and someone else's experience.

Maybe you've had very, very different experiences, but you're not keeping disability at arm's length, you're bringing disability in, and other people with disabilities in, and all the things that I see people do with, they say, "Oh, I don't want to use the word 'disability,'" or "It doesn't affect me that much," or all these qualifiers, is a way of keeping disability at arm's length. And I think that's a mistake. Because again, I think we're stronger when we're together. And I've also seen what happens when you do share your story is people connect to that and you find these connections that you didn't know existed.

NARRATOR:

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