

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard

What are hidden disabilities?

Hidden disabilities are not always visible but can affect the daily life of a person living with them. Types of hidden disabilities include (but are not limited to):

- Low Vision or hearing loss
- Autism
- Anxiety disorders
- Dementia
- Crohn's disease
- Epilepsy
- Fibromyalgia
- Lupus
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Asperger Syndrome
- Post Traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Learning disabilities
- Mobility issues

History

The Sunflower Lanyard Program was originally created to act as discreet identification that the wearer, or their companion, has a hidden disability and might require additional assistance. Gatwick was the first airport to introduce the program in May 2016, and multiple other airports across the UK have adopted the sunflower lanyard. Based on the success of the lanyards in airports, additional organizations have adopted them including supermarkets, cinemas, shopping centers, railway stations, museums, and sport venues.

How does it work?

Wearing a sunflower lanyard enables passengers to self-identify as having a hidden disability. By wearing a lanyard, staff will be aware that a passenger has a hidden disability. It is a voluntary program and passengers are not required to participate. Staff will not know a passenger's specific disability unless they self declare it on the tag. Airport staff are trained to recognize the lanyards as identifiers and ask if additional help is needed.

Considerations that passengers with hidden disabilities might appreciate:

- speaking face-to-face to allow lip reading
- using clear and easy-to-understand language
- making others aware a person may be struggling or have behavioral issues
- allowing more time to complete travel process

Wearing a lanyard DOES NOT guarantee fast tracking through security or any preferential treatment. Passengers are still required to arrange special assistance with their airlines.

Who can wear a lanyard?

Anyone who self-identifies as having a hidden disability or is supporting someone who has a hidden disability can wear a lanyard. No additional verification of a specific disability is required and they are provided at no cost.

What are the benefits of wearing a lanyard?

The benefit of wearing a sunflower lanyard is the additional awareness of others that the individual has a hidden disability. Increased awareness provides an opportunity for others to provide additional support if needed. Wearing a lanyard doesn't mean additional support will always be required, but for those who choose to list their disability on the provided tag, it allows the opportunity for targeted assistance as needed.

Where to direct travelers

Guests can request a lanyard or other wearable item from the information booths located **at Terminal 1** on the departures level, the tram level, and at the Travelers Assistance main office on Concourse D. **At Terminal 2** the items are located at the information booth in the ground transportation center.

For more information about the program, go to hiddendisabilities.com/us.

Questions about the program at MSP Airport can be directed to **Shelly Lopez** at shelly.lopez@mspmac.org or **612-726-5239**

