

Information about the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne

This information is for patients, carers, families and community members of St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne.

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What is the Hidden Disability Sunflower?

The Sunflower is a symbol that people can wear to show they have hidden disability. By wearing something with the Sunflower, like a lanyard, they let others know they might need extra help, understanding, or more time. The Sunflower is used around the world in places like public transport, universities, shops, banks, and health centres.



What is hidden disability?

Some disability or health conditions are not easy to see. It can make it hard to understand why someone might need help. Disability can be forever, for a short time, or related to a situation. It can affect the way a person thinks, their body, vision, or hearing. It may make it hard to be in public spaces. Hidden disability is different for everyone and can include learning problems, dementia, anxiety, low vision, chronic pain, or breathing problems.

Do I have to wear a Sunflower?

Wearing a sunflower symbol is up to you. It is a quick, easy way to show that you might need extra help. If you don't want to wear the sunflower symbol, you can still tell hospital staff if you need extra support. One way you can do this is to ask them to fill out an "About Me" form with you. Only use the sunflower symbol if it feels helpful and right for you.

Do I wear my Sunflower symbol all the time?

You decide when and where you wear the Sunflower symbol. For example, you may choose to wear it in a busy waiting room. You may want to wear it when you are in an unfamiliar part of the hospital. The choice is yours. In some cases, carers or family members may choose to wear the Sunflower symbol instead of the person with hidden disability.

Do I have to tell others about my disability?

Hospital staff should not ask you about your disability. They can only ask if it has to do with your care. In many situations such as an appointment, being cared for on the ward or having an operation, staff may need to know about your disability so they can give you the right care.

Does my care at hospital change if I wear the Sunflower?

Wearing the Sunflower symbol lets staff know that you may need extra help or understanding. Trained staff can give you this support. If you need adjustments to your care, staff may ask you, or you can tell them what you need. If you need help with this, ask for the Disability Support team.

What does the public know about the Sunflower Hidden Disabilities?

Most members of the public don't know about the Sunflower symbol at present.

Where can I find Sunflower merchandise to indicate I have hidden disability?

You can get free Sunflower items such as lanyards, pins, stickers and wrist bands at City of Melbourne [Libraries](#) or [Visitor Centres](#). Alternatively, you can buy Sunflower items through the [Hidden Disabilities Sunflower website](#). Most items cost about \$6.

Where can I find more information?

You can visit the St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne Internet page:

<https://www.svhm.org.au/patients-visitors/patient-information-and-services/disability-liaison-officer>

or the [Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Website](https://hdsunflower.com/au): <https://hdsunflower.com/au>

