

A Seat at the Table: Disability, Equity, and Accountability in Social Work Licensing

Personal reflections and collective action for testing equity

My Story – Disability and Determination

- Born with Cerebral Palsy
- Spinal cord injury from surgery
- Attended desegregated public school through IDEA



From Advocacy to Leadership



The Disability Landscape

27%

27% of Canadians
with physical
disabilities (2022)

28.7%

28.7% of Americans
with physical
disabilities (2024)

Learning disabilities
most common

Meet the National Advocates



Sarah Hamilton

Educator, Learning
Disabilities Canada



Janeen Steele

Civil Rights Attorney,
Learning Disabilities
America



Ollie Cantos

Lawyer, Disability
Belongs, former US
DOE

Equality vs. Equal Treatment

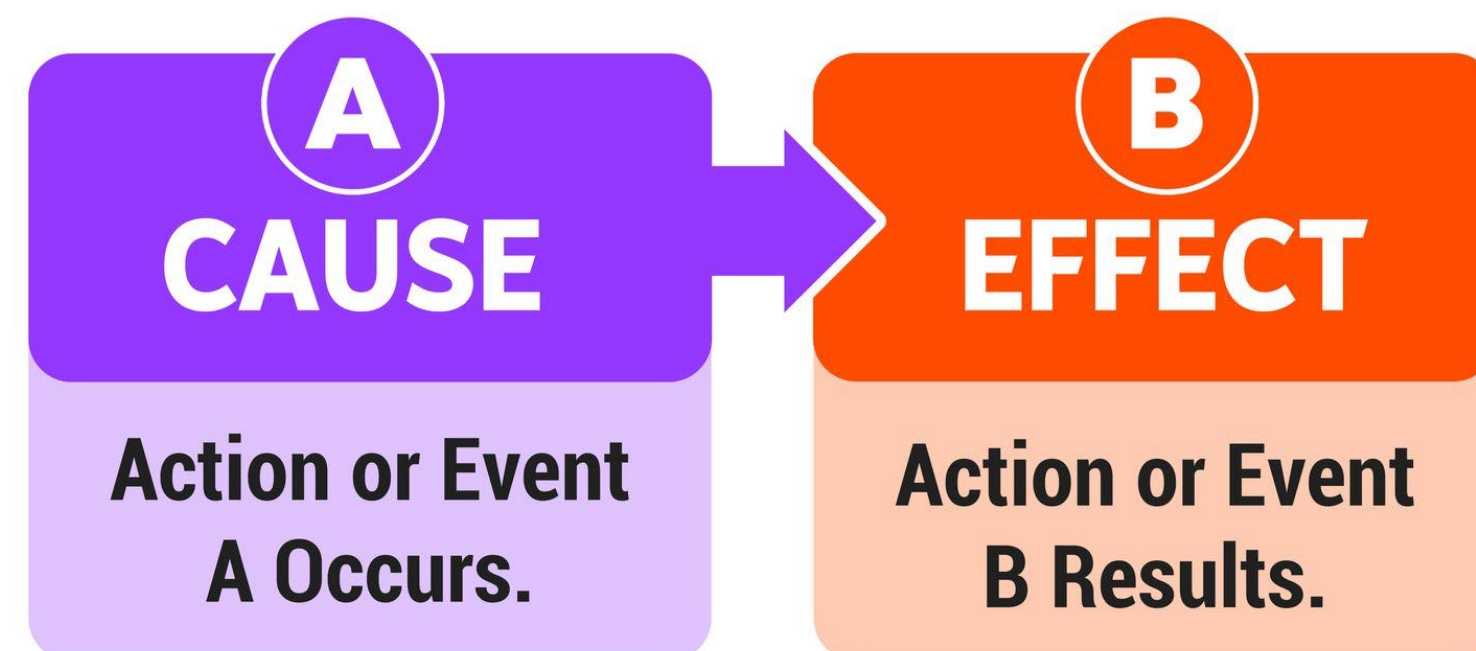
“To be treated as an equal means...”



Why Exams Matter

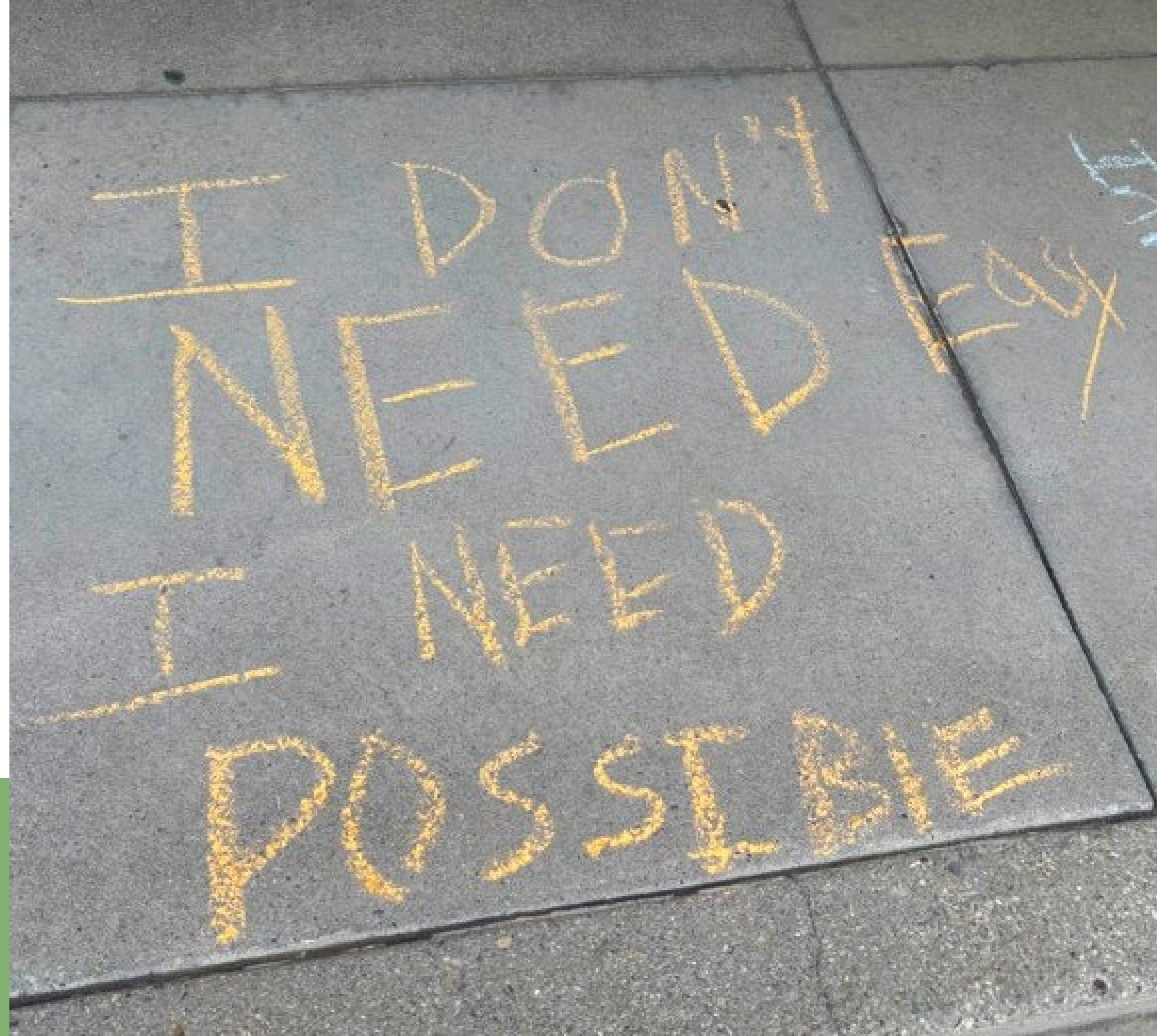
Exams ensure
Accountability

Cause and Effect Definition



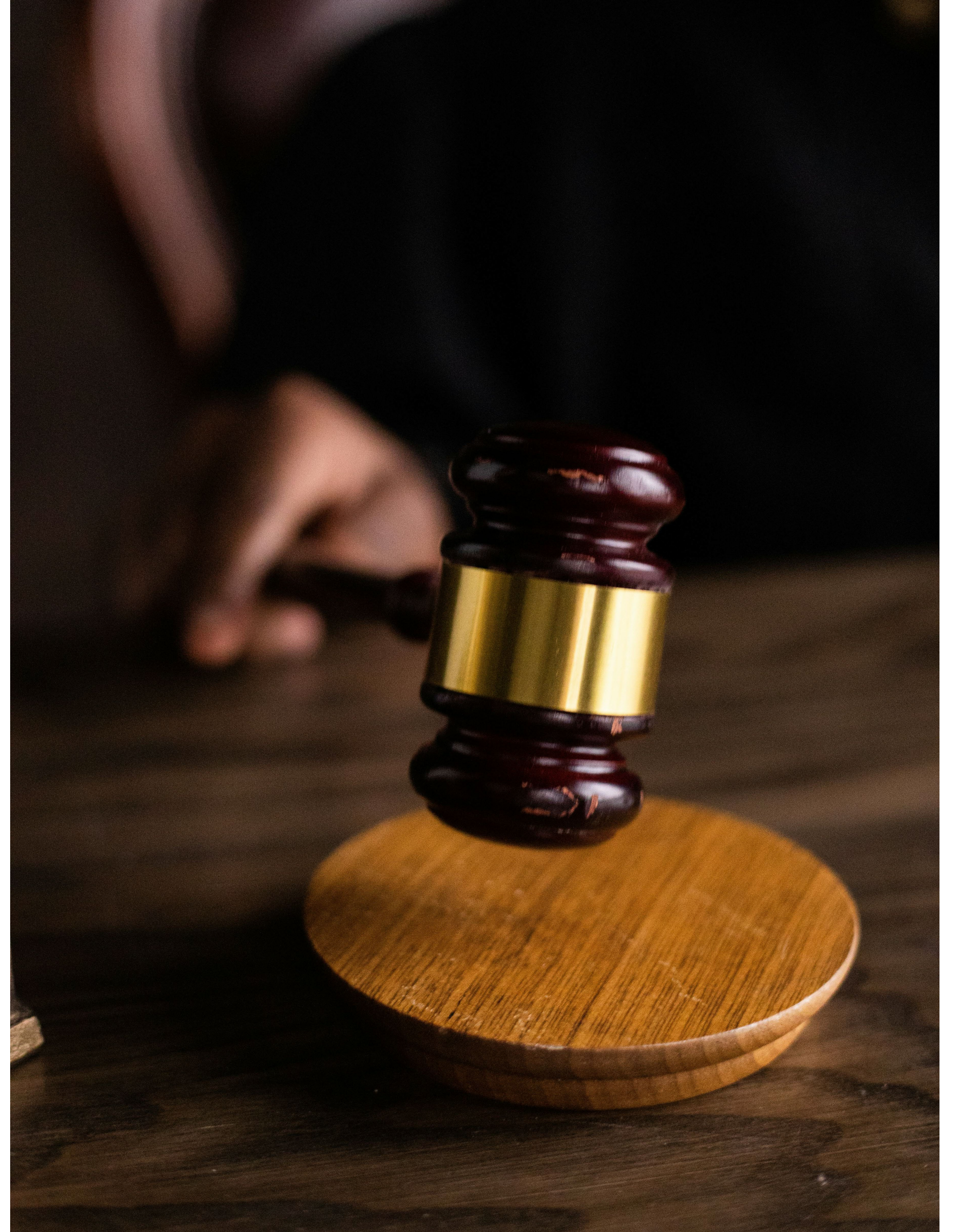
Real Support Means Real Choices

*“It’s not a choice for me...
until I had help.”*



Legal Rights and Protections

- Canadian Human Rights Act
- Provincial Human Rights Acts
- ADA (USA)
- Equality is determined by the benefits a pathway provides, not what it is called or how it is obtained.



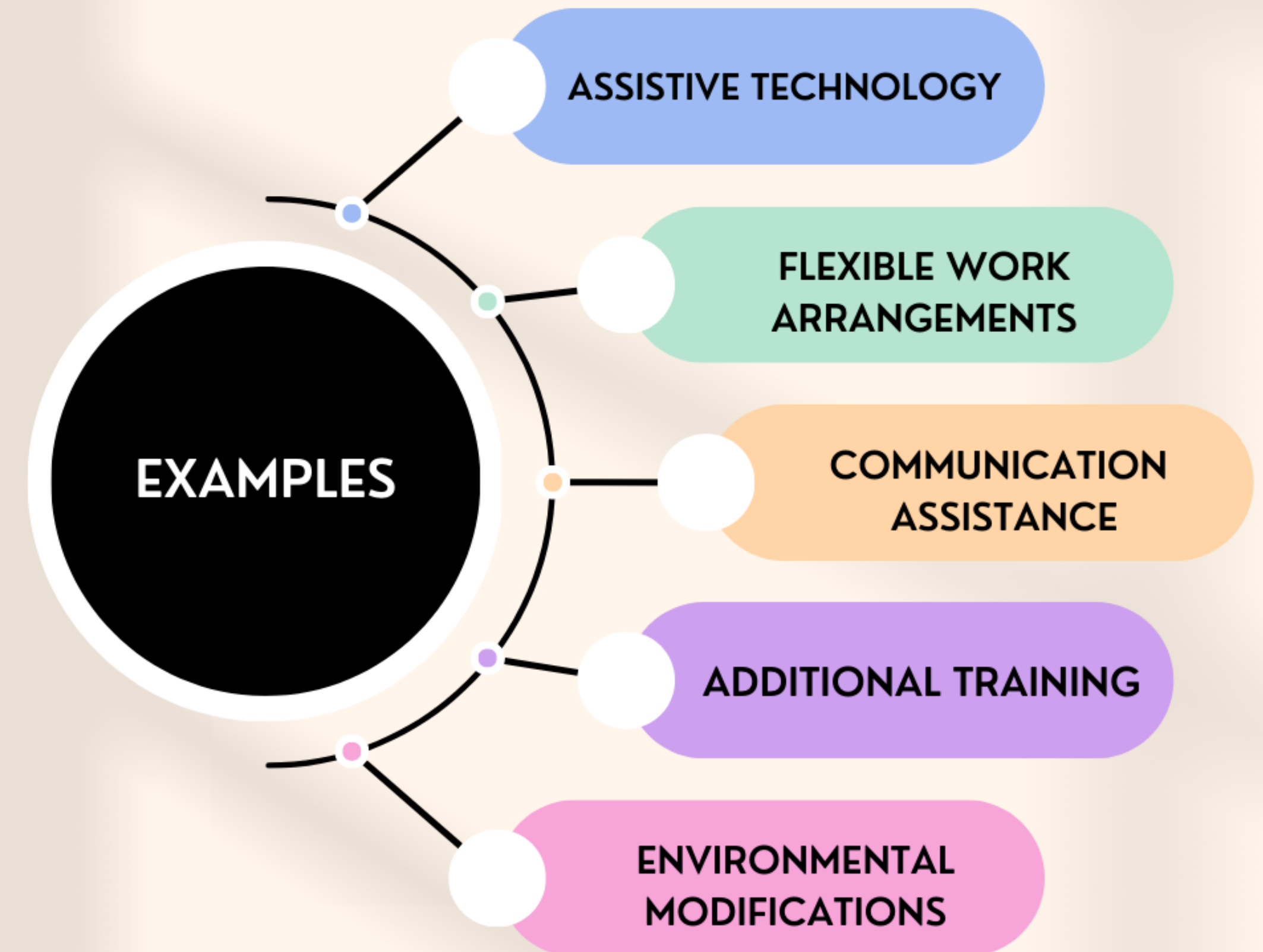
**Special pathways,
designations, and
statuses hurt us,
not help us.**

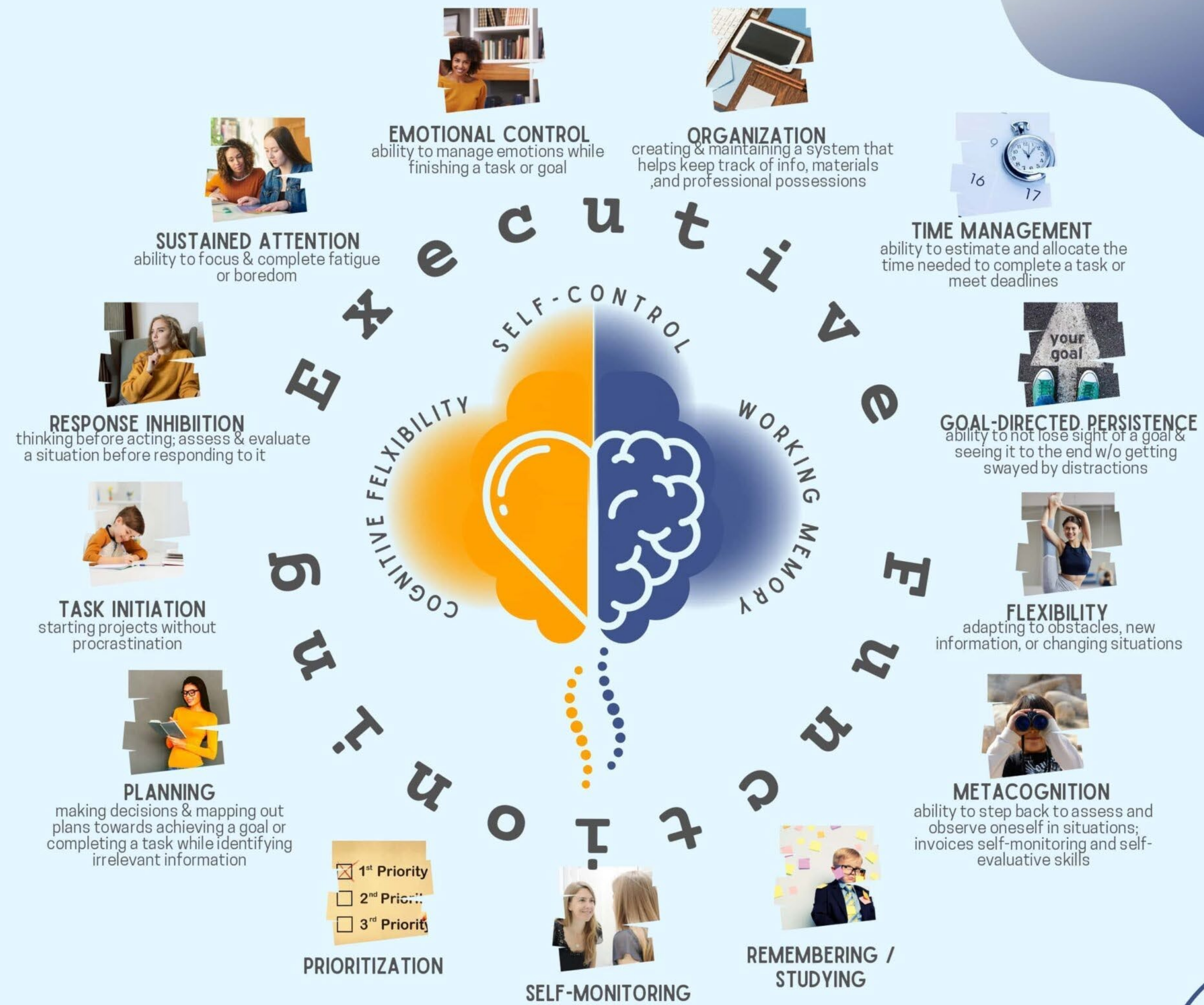
*We are constantly having to
prove we are capable and
competent.*



**Accommodations
are required, not
removing the
standard of
performance.**

10 Key Accommodation Requests







LDA
Learning Disabilities
Association of America



ldac
Learning Disabilities
Association of Canada

We believe that alternate pathways violate the civil rights of individuals with learning disabilities by creating unnecessary barriers that lead to exclusion of individuals from the profession who meet licensing standards.

We believe that eliminating protected accommodations during objectively measured licensing assessments provides an avenue for discrimination. The elimination of these rights comes with an additional cost of removing accountability of educators, testing bodies, and regulators to ensure an equitable and effective education for individuals with disabilities.

We believe that as educators, regulators, and testing bodies work together to improve the administration of and preparation for test for those with learning differences, all test takers will benefit in higher pass rates and readiness to enter their professional practice.

My Story –

I was given an exam as
a barrier to entry.

I passed it.

Exam became a
protection against
discrimination.



Mom

Me



**We want a seat at
the table.**

