

Vocabulary

1. Soundproofed

2. Straightforward

3. Take Part In

4. Liaise

5. Overwhelmed

6. Swing Into Action

a. To join other people in doing an activity.

b. To speak to people in an organization to make a plan or share information.

c. Built or adapted so that no sound can come in or go out of a space.

d. Easy to understand and use.

e. A strong negative feeling that you cannot manage a situation.

f. To suddenly start working.

a. The meeting room is _____, so we can speak freely without worrying about noise outside.

b. When the project started, the team _____ to ensure that all departments were informed.

c. I sometimes feel _____ when I have too many tasks and not enough time to finish them.

d. If there's an emergency, we need to _____ immediately and follow our response plan.

e. The instructions were _____ enough for everyone to follow without any issues.

f. John loves to _____ in community events because he enjoys helping others.

Student A

The Sunflower lanyard initiative for travelers with invisible or hidden disabilities has spread to airports all around the world. But how well does it work in real life? An account from a Sunflower lanyard user with a mental health condition contains mixed reviews.

This user was traveling alone and visiting a destination airport for the first time. Despite having prepared for the trip in advance by checking the airport website and making a list of what to expect at every stage of the journey, they felt quite **overwhelmed** upon arrival at the new airport and experienced a difficult time, even while wearing their Sunflower lanyard. It's not clear exactly what happened here, but understandably, on their return trip, they felt rather anxious as they prepared for their flight.

However, as soon as airport staff spotted their lanyard (and before even hearing a request for assistance), they **swung into action** and took the traveler to a quiet spot to find out more about their exact needs. The staff member even **liaised** with the security staff to fast-track them through this stage and stayed around to see them through to the next part of the journey.

In fact, this pattern was repeated throughout the traveler's return trip, with offers of help at nearly every point. It seems that on the whole, Sunflower lanyards can make a huge difference to the wearer's travel experiences.

Student B

The Sunflower lanyard initiative for travelers originated with an airport in the UK. How have airports in general developed the support they offer to travelers with invisible or hidden disabilities?

First of all, it's possible to actually pick up a free Sunflower lanyard from some airports, making it even more **straightforward to take part in** the project - look for the Assisted Travel Desk on arrival at the airport. Travelers can also book additional assistance for some stages of their journey in advance, including access to family or priority lanes at security. However, support varies a great deal between individual airports.

Some airports offer special tours of their facilities and procedures in advance of flying. Others have downloadable resources which include photos, information on what to expect at all stages of the journey and a space to write any personal information you wish to disclose.

Sunflower Rooms provide quiet waiting areas both before and after the security stage. These rooms are **soundproofed** so that airport noise doesn't lead to sensory overload, although there are departure screens so that anxious travelers can keep up to date with their flight status. Some of these safe spaces are designed to look as much as possible like a home, with soft seating and dim lights.

It seems like airports are really trying to be more inclusive, although of course, users will have the final word on how helpful these arrangements are.

Read your part of the article

- Share with your classmate the main idea of your article
- What words from the vocabulary were included in your piece of it and how is it connected to the idea.



Discuss the ideas with your classmate

1. Airports have set a good example in addressing the needs of users with invisible or hidden disabilities. How can airlines, other transport providers and sporting events improve support for these people even further?
2. In your opinion, what are the limits to assisting travelers with any sort of disability?
3. Training staff to offer assistance to lanyard wearers may also benefit both the staff members and their employers. List some of these advantages.
4. People with disabilities face many problems. The social model of disability says that their biggest challenges are social attitudes and the way the physical environment is built. Therefore, addressing these problems will make the greatest difference to their lives. To what extent do you agree with this view?
5. Is there anything else you'd like to know about traveling with an invisible or hidden disability? Where could you find out more?