



Designing for Vulnerability

*A Journey Into Transforming Products
and Services for Everyone*



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Strategic & Inclusive Designer

***I invest myself in design
with the goal of
transforming organizations
and having a positive
impact on people's daily
lives.***



From lived experience to inclusive design:

- Grew up in a context where afro hair was seen as unprofessional and wrong.
- Migrated and faced bias due to my accent and origins.
- Often felt out of sync in rigid or normative systems
- ADHD and anxiety impact how I focus, process, and connect
- I use design to create spaces for all minds, all stories, all people



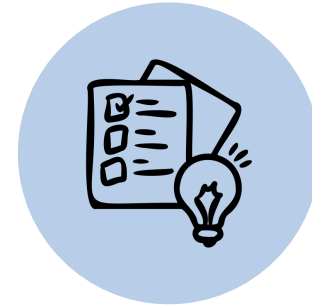
What you'll walk away with ?



**Key principles of
inclusive design**



**Real-world
examples and tools**



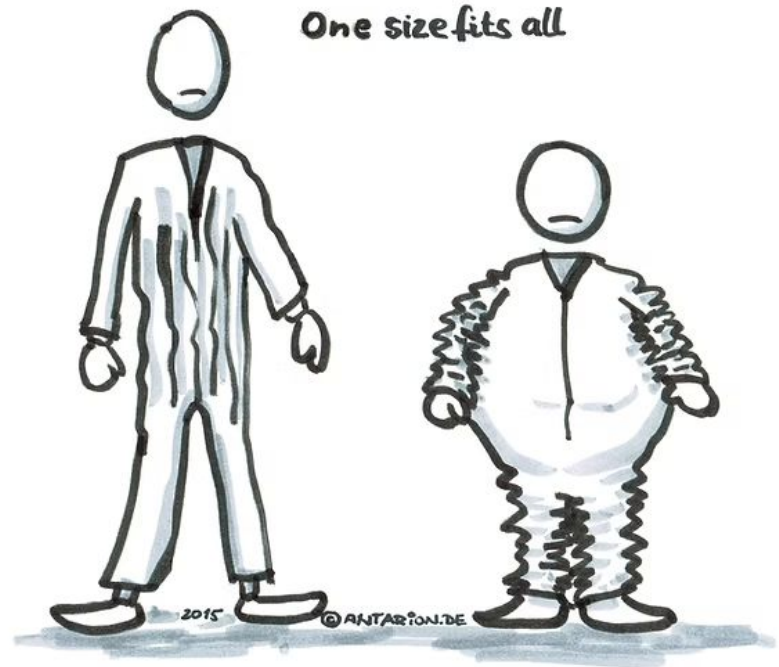
**Practical steps to
start making change**



Understanding exclusion

The illusion of “neutral” design

“Designing for the average excludes the edges.”





Key concepts to build inclusive design



Diversity

**Who is in the room
and their differences**



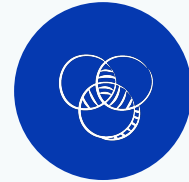
Inclusion

**Who feels safe,
heard, and valued
in that room.**



Equity

**Fair access and
support for all**

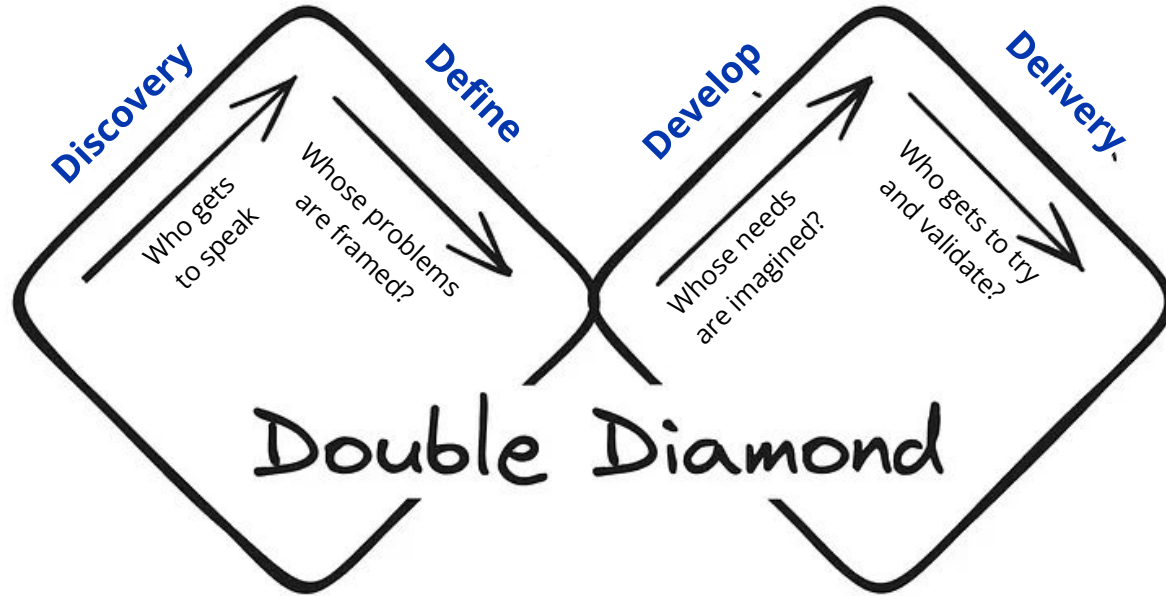


Intersectionality

**How identities
combine and shape
unique experiences**



Exclusion in the design process

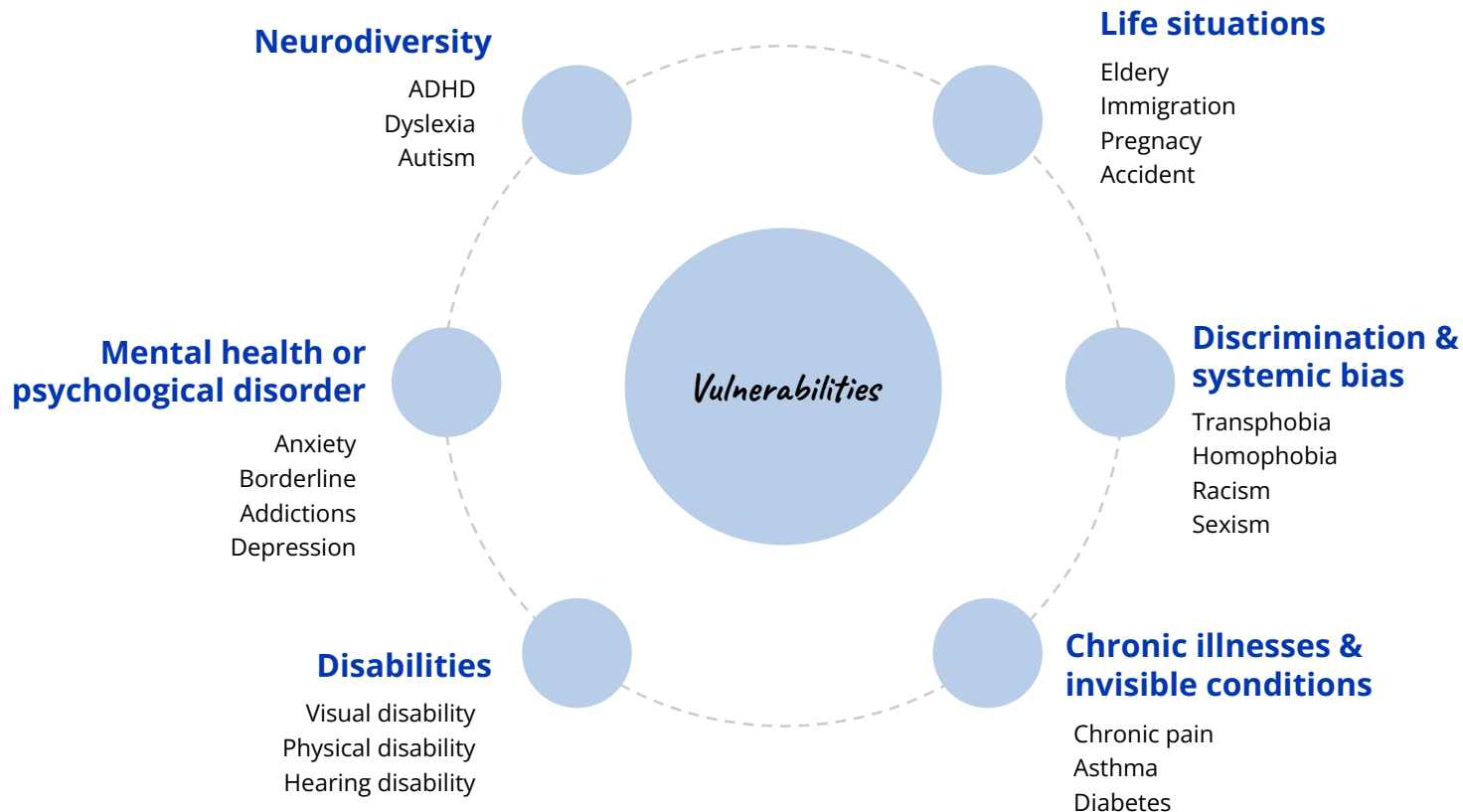




The first question to ask as a designer

***Who's not in the room and
what are we missing?***

Common blind spots





***Inclusion isn't a "nice to have"
it's essential. Exclusion cost :***

- Loss of users
- Loss of trust
- Legal or reputational risk
- Poor usability = lower conversion
- Public backlash



L'Oréal and the cosmetics gap

- ♦ **A market ignored for years**

L'Oréal was late to invest in products for darker skin tones, leaving a gap in the market.

- ♦ **A visionary competitor**

In 2017, Rihanna's Fenty Beauty launched with 40 inclusive shades—forcing L'Oréal to catch up after losing market share.

“When you don't include from the start, you leave space for your competitors.”





***Inclusion isn't just about fixing gaps,
it's about creating bold, meaningful
solutions from the start.***



Inclusive innovation in banking

Talking bank card

An accessible payment card for blind and visually impaired users

A major European bank partnered with a fintech and a secure tech provider to develop an experimental talking payment card.

✓ **How it works:** The card connects via Bluetooth to a mobile app, which reads aloud payment terminal information in real time.

✓ **Why it matters:** It allows blind or visually impaired users to hear the payment amount before entering their PIN, offering greater autonomy, safety, and trust during transactions.





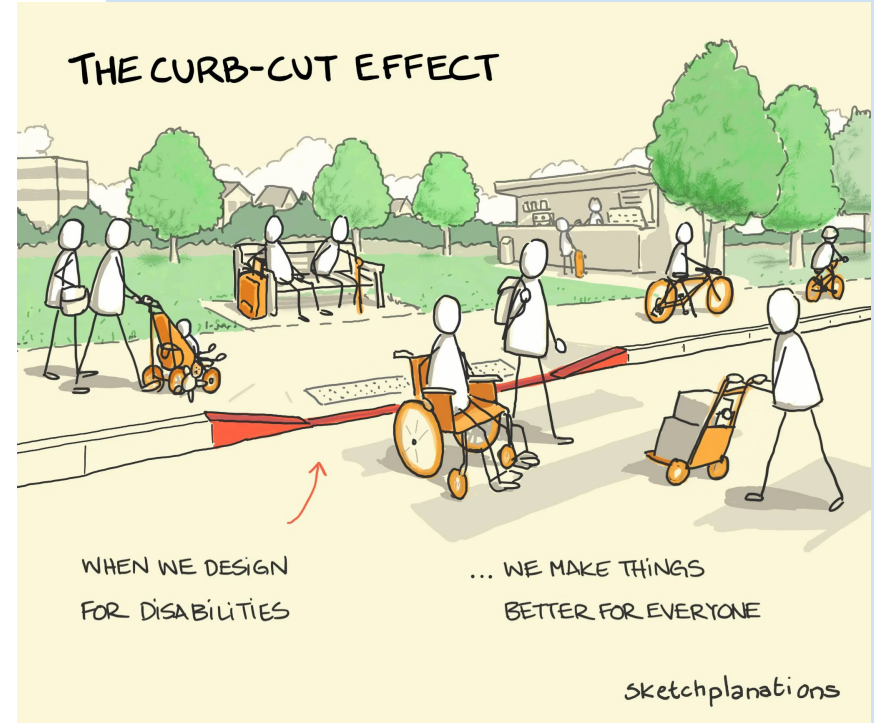
Design for one → Benefit for all

Originally created for wheelchair users

Now helps:

- ◆ Parents with strollers
- ◆ People with suitcases
- ◆ Delivery workers
- ◆ Travelers with trolleys

***Inclusion drives innovation.
Solving for the few improves life
for many***





Inclusive design is smart business

Benefits of inclusive design :

- ♦ **Larger market reach**
- ♦ **Stronger brand reputation**
- ♦ **Better usability for everyone**
- ♦ **Legal and regulatory compliance**
- ♦ **A driver of innovation**

“Inclusive design boosts innovation, expands your market, strengthens your brand, and makes your products usable by more people. It’s not a cost, it’s an investment.”



Go deeper into user needs

Beyond classic empathy maps, include:

- ♦ **Access** → What does the person have or lack to act or decide?
- ♦ **Emotion** → What fears, motivations, or feelings shape their behavior?
- ♦ **Stigma** → What shame, judgment, or social pressure do they face?
- ♦ **Systemic Barriers** → What external structures block or limit them?
- ♦ **Life Context** → What does their daily reality look like? (e.g., work, family responsibilities, housing situation...)
- ♦ **Mental Health & Emotional Load** → Are they going through a difficult time? Feeling tired, overwhelmed, or emotionally drained?

Empathy Map – Inclusion version





***Let's go beyond the surface.
Classic empathy maps ask what users
say, think, do, and feel.
But to design inclusively, we need to
go further, into what limits them.***



Inclusive Research & Co-Design

3 tips for inclusive research :

- ♦ **Involve users early** not just at the end
- ♦ **Use storytelling**, not just data
- ♦ **Co-design with people** who have lived experience

“Designing with people instead of for them changes everything.”



Diverse Usability Testing

Include profiles such as:

- ♦ **Neurodivergent users**
- ♦ **Older adults**
- ♦ **People with low vision**
- ♦ **Migrants and non-native speakers**
- ♦ **People with different financial realities**

“You don’t need a huge budget—just different profiles.”



A simple roadmap for inclusive design



Awareness

**Audit your
assumptions &
blind spots**



Representation

**Include diverse
voices in the
process**



Iteration

Test, learn, adapt



Sustainability

**Make inclusion part
of your everyday
design culture**

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What will you change tomorrow?

- ◆ **Exclusion is often unintentional but real**
- ◆ **Inclusion starts with listening and small changes**
- ◆ **Designing for the margins improves the experience for all**



Thanks !