

INVISIBLE DISABILITIES IN THE CLASSROOM: RECOGNISING, UNDERSTANDING, AND ADAPTING

Training for secondary school teachers and educational staff

See beyond the visible to support every student's real needs

Duration : 5 hours	Modules : 4 modules
Lessons : 16 lessons	Audience : Secondary school teachers and educational staff
Format : 100% online, asynchronous	Provider : N° 11757351875
Certification : Qualiopi	Price : On request

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Course description

This 5-hour training helps secondary school teachers and educational staff identify the diversity of so-called 'invisible' disabilities — mental health conditions, chronic illnesses, subtle neurodevelopmental disorders — that students may show no outward signs of, yet whose needs are real and often overlooked. The training equips professionals to recognise these situations, adapt their practices, and mobilise appropriate institutional resources, without waiting for formal diagnosis or stigmatising the student. Participants will learn to observe with compassion, communicate effectively with families, and implement practical classroom adjustments. At the end of the training, each participant will be able to shift their perspective on 'difficult' or 'disengaged' students to see them as individuals experiencing invisible challenges.

Module summary

MODULE 1	What is an invisible disability? Definitions and school reality	4 lessons
MODULE 2	Spotting without diagnosing — compassionate observation	4 lessons
MODULE 3	Adapting practices — concrete and universal adjustments	4 lessons
MODULE 4	Devices, teamwork, and long-term monitoring	4 lessons

Learning objectives

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- Define invisible disabilities and identify their main categories in secondary education
- Recognise behavioural signs that may indicate an invisible disability without overstepping professional boundaries
- Implement universal and targeted adjustments to support diverse learning needs
- Navigate institutional support frameworks and coordinate effectively with colleagues and families
- Develop a compassionate, non-stigmatising approach to supporting students with invisible disabilities

General information

Duration	5 hours
Target audience	Secondary school teachers, pastoral staff, teaching assistants, and educational professionals
Prerequisites	None - training accessible to all adult professionals
Pricing	On request - VAT not applicable (Article 261-4-4° of the French Tax Code)
Certification	Qualiopi - Certificate of completion provided
Training provider	DYNSEO - Training activity registration number: 11757351875

Lesson 1 - The concept of invisible disability — definition and diversity

- Invisible disability: any condition not perceptible at first glance
- Main categories: neurodevelopmental conditions, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions
- Key figures: how many pupils are affected without recognition
- Why 'invisible' does not mean 'non-existent': the paradox of lack of recognition

Lesson 2 - Subtle neurodevelopmental conditions (ADHD, DYS, high-functioning autism)

- ADHD without visible hyperactivity: inattention, forgetfulness, chronic disorganisation
- Mild or undiagnosed specific learning difficulties: inconsistent performance, coping strategies
- High-functioning autism (formerly Asperger's): social difficulties alongside average or strong academic performance
- High intellectual potential (gifted pupils) with dual exceptionality

Lesson 3 - Chronic illnesses and their impact on schooling

- Common invisible conditions in adolescents: epilepsy, diabetes, inflammatory diseases
- Endometriosis, chronic migraines, chronic fatigue: often underestimated conditions
- Impact on attendance, concentration, and academic performance
- Individual healthcare plans: what they are, what they include, and how to implement them

Lesson 4 - Mental health conditions — anxiety, depression, school refusal

- Generalised anxiety and anxiety disorders in adolescents: classroom manifestations
- Adolescent depression: how it presents differently from adult depression
- School refusal (emotionally based school avoidance): a serious and often misunderstood issue
- Eating disorders and their impact on education

Lesson 1 - Behaviours often misinterpreted by school staff

- The 'lazy' pupil who is actually exhausted by chronic illness or treatment
- The 'restless' or 'disruptive' pupil whose ADHD has not been identified
- The 'withdrawn' or 'eccentric' pupil whose autistic profile has gone unnoticed
- The 'absent-minded' pupil whose anxiety prevents sustained attention

Lesson 2 - Observe, compare, share — a collective identification process

- What teachers can note without overstepping: behaviours, pace, work output
- The importance of informal discussions between colleagues to identify consistent patterns
- How to share observations with pastoral leads, Educational Psychologist, or school nurse
- The concept of a 'cluster of indicators': not a diagnosis, but a justified concern

Lesson 3 - Talking with the pupil — a supportive conversation

- Creating a safe space for discussion without pressure or stigma
- Open-ended questions that allow the pupil to express themselves at their own pace
- Distinguishing professional listening from a therapeutic role: knowing one's limits
- What to do if a serious concern is disclosed: safeguarding procedures

Lesson 4 - Involving families — dialogue and co-construction

- How to raise concerns about possible invisible disability without causing defensiveness
- The role of the family in diagnosis and ongoing support
- Managing situations where parents deny or minimise the pupil's difficulties
- Building long-term trust: frequency, tone, and content of communication

Lesson 1 - Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

- The principle of UDL: designing lessons that are accessible to all from the outset
- Diversifying materials: text, oral input, video, diagrams — to reach different learners
- Diversifying forms of output: written work, oral responses, mind maps, visual productions

- Removing unnecessary barriers without lowering academic expectations

Lesson 2 - Adjustments for attention and organisational difficulties

- Breaking down instructions and tasks: one step at a time
- Organisational tools: visual planners, checklists, visible timers, structured work plans
- Seating arrangements and managing environmental distractions
- Adapted assessment: extra time, reworded questions, authorised supports

Lesson 3 - Adjustments for chronic fatigue and invisible illnesses

- Allowing comfort adjustments: access to water, medication, discreet exits
- Managing repeated absences: maintaining contact, sharing materials, gradual catch-up
- Adapting workload during flare-ups or intensive treatment periods
- Formal support tools: complementary plans to structure adjustments

Lesson 4 - Adjustments for anxiety and mental health conditions

- Reducing socially stressful situations: unexpected presentations, forced reading aloud
- Anticipating assessments: clear advance notice, predictable structure, avoiding surprises
- Managing absence linked to anxiety or depression with structure and understanding
- Internal support resources: school nurse, Educational Psychologist, social worker

MODULE 4

Devices, teamwork, and long-term monitoring

4 lessons

Lesson 1 - Institutional support frameworks for invisible disabilities

- Personalised support plans: accessible support without formal recognition processes
- Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP): for officially recognised needs
- Individual healthcare plans: for chronic illnesses and medical treatment
- Choosing the most appropriate support pathway depending on the pupil's needs

Lesson 2 - Team coordination and long-term follow-up

- The central role of the form tutor: coordinating information and ensuring consistency
- Simple shared monitoring tools: collaborative documents, short monthly meetings
- Managing transitions: lower to upper secondary, class changes, school transfers
- Preventing staff burnout in complex and long-term situations

Lesson 3 - Digital tools to support these pupils

- CLINT: cognitive training for attention, memory, and executive functions
- Practical resources on stress, anxiety, and emotional regulation in the classroom
- MON DICO: supporting pupils with communication difficulties
- Presenting these tools to families as complementary support resources

Lesson 4 - Review and personal action plan

- Knowledge check: identifying appropriate support frameworks and adjustments
- Reflective practice: which pupil in my class might have an invisible disability?
- Three practical actions to implement from next week
- Resources: local authorities, organisations, national education guidance, further training

Teaching methods

- Online training accessible 24/7 via e-learning platform
- Self-paced learning with video lessons, interactive activities, and downloadable resources
- Practical case studies and reflection exercises for immediate classroom application
- Knowledge assessments at the end of each module
- Certificate of completion upon successful validation of all modules
- Access to a resource library and ongoing updates