

Cor.System

A concept for what
you can't see.

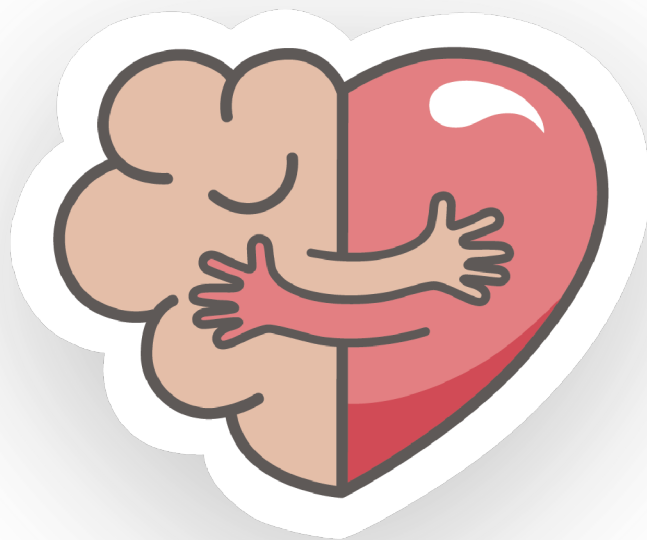
Works in many settings.

The **Cor.System** could give us a shared language that anyone can use – whatever the diagnosis, wherever it's used: at home, at work, at the local authority. As a symbol, a gesture and the code word "Cor."

Built on the principles of Universal Design, it can help ease anxiety, lower barriers and change the way people interact.

#notinvisible #SayCor

Made in Germany. Designed for the world.



ONE OPEN SIGN – FOUR WAYS: PRINT, SHOW, SAY, WRITE

markenliebe · gemeinsam zusammen e.V. · stille-stunde.com



Show

The hand sign



Print

Badge, card & sign



Say

The code word



Write

"Cor." in a message

The moment it all gets too much.

An ordinary supermarket. Harsh lighting, beeping checkouts, too many people at once. For most people, it's just another Tuesday. For some, it's the moment everything shuts down – and they can't say so.

People with invisible disabilities rarely struggle for lack of effort. They struggle with many small barriers – and with the fact that nobody can see what's going on.

What if a small sign meant you could go to the front of the queue before it all got too much?

What weighs on you stays invisible to others.

Many visible or long-recognised disabilities have widely known symbols: the wheelchair, the white cane, signing hands. For chemical, social, sensory and communication barriers – the invisible ones – there are still few dedicated signs. Visibility helps in many ways: the Sunflower is internationally established, and the Cor.System is another, open option.

The Cor.System aims to add to this.

HF

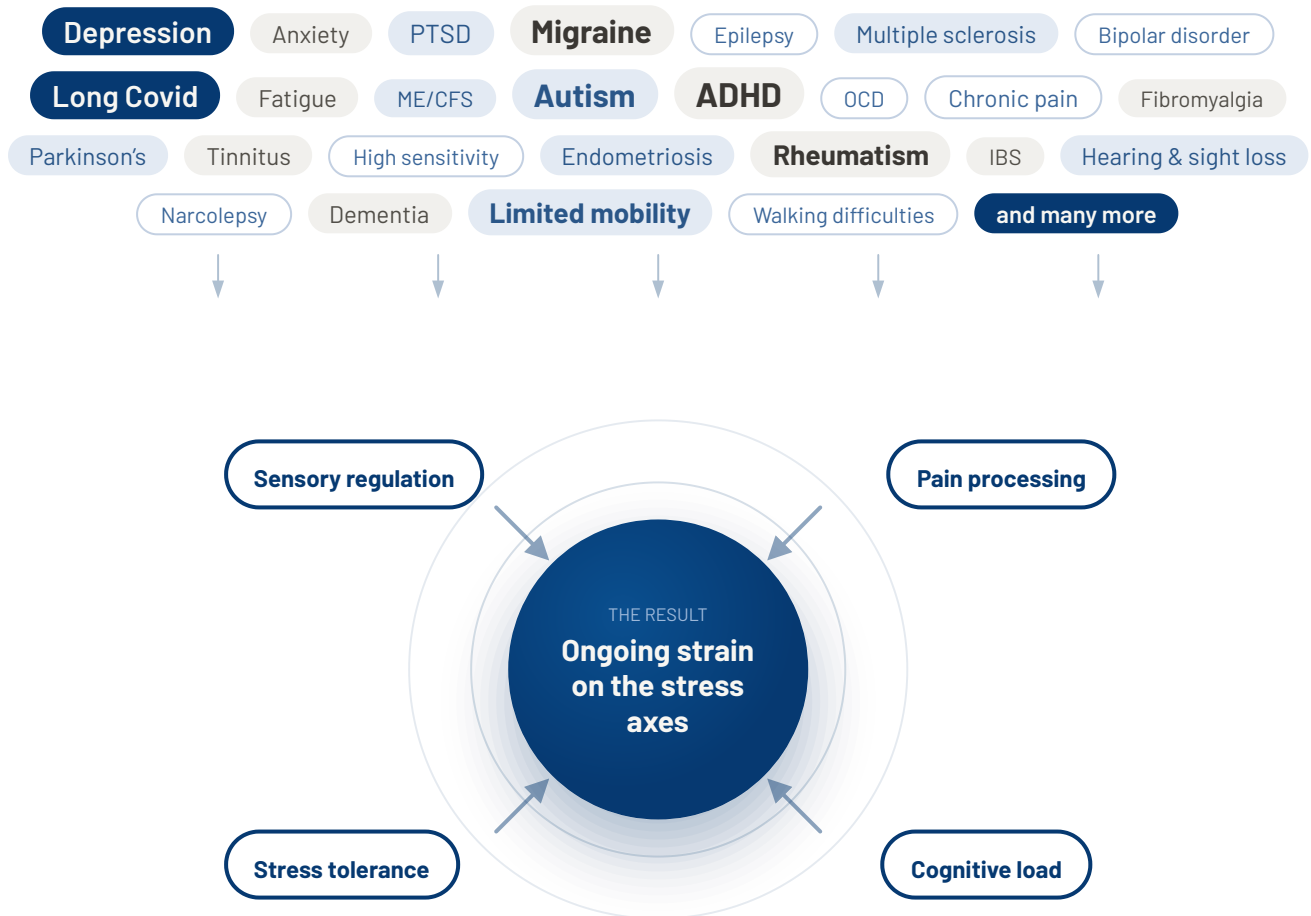
"In principle, I consider it ethically justified to remove the barriers that keep people with invisible disabilities from taking part on equal terms – just as with visible disabilities."

Prof. Helmut Frister · Chair, German Ethics Council (translated)

Who is it for – and what's new?

Government ministries told us that invisible disabilities were **impossible to categorise**. We took that as a challenge and put a great deal of heart and work into it. The result is a proposal for how the group could be structured – by **functional impact**, not by neurodivergent profiles, mental-health, neurological or chronic conditions, or sensory impairments.

What they share isn't a diagnosis but strain on the stress axes.



People with invisible disabilities often live with ongoing strain on at least one stress axis.

It matters less **which axis is affected first** – the likelihood grows that **other axes will follow**.

RL

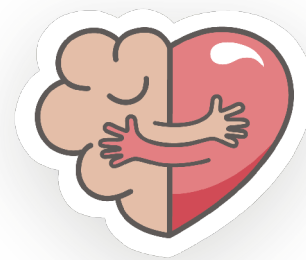
"Bringing diagnosis, invisible barriers and suicide prevention together in one model is an important step – and it has to be part of modern prevention work."

Prof. Dr. Reinhard Lindner

German National Suicide Prevention Programme (NaSPro) · translated

The Konvera cascade model – what it's really about.

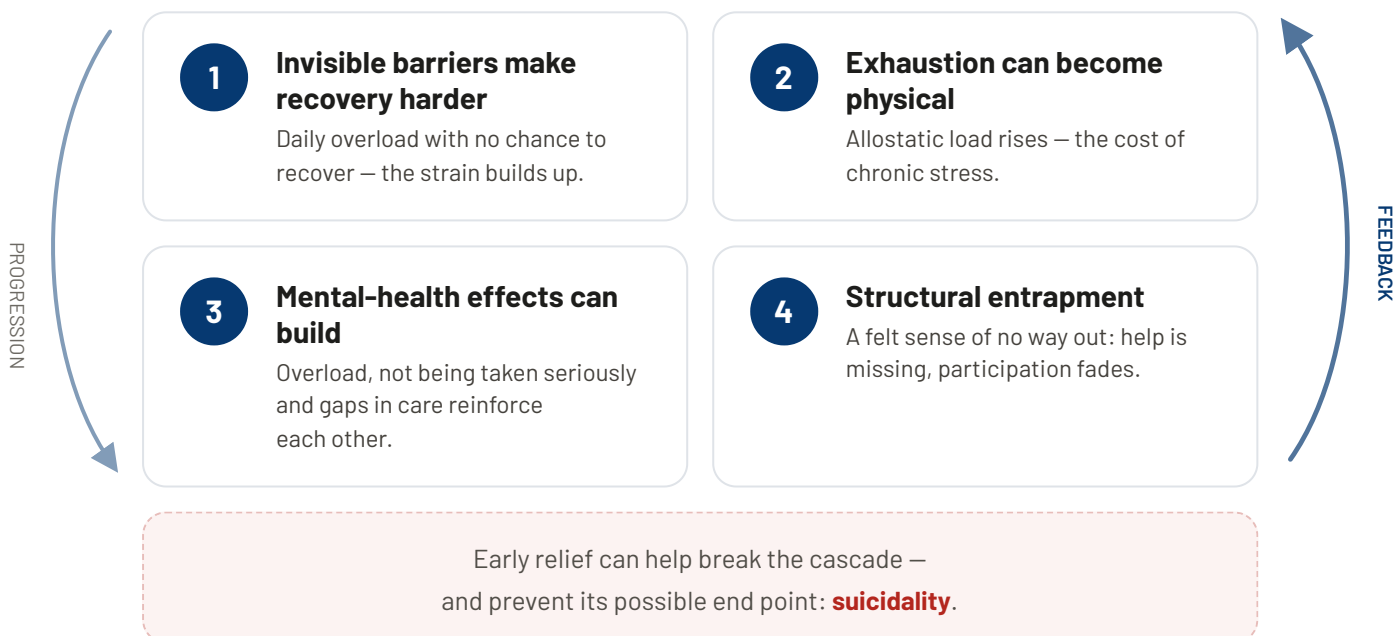
People with invisible disabilities face invisible barriers – and those barriers put strain on **the stress axes** – every day. Without time to recover, this can turn into a **self-reinforcing cascade** – and this is where the Cor.System comes in.



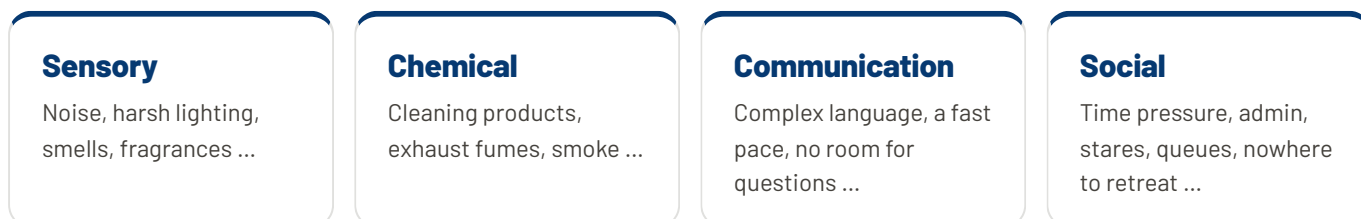
① LEVELS OF STRAIN · FOUR FUNCTIONAL AXES



② THE CASCADE · CIRCULAR AND SELF-REINFORCING



③ THE FOUR INVISIBLE BARRIERS · WHERE THE COR.SYSTEM COMES IN

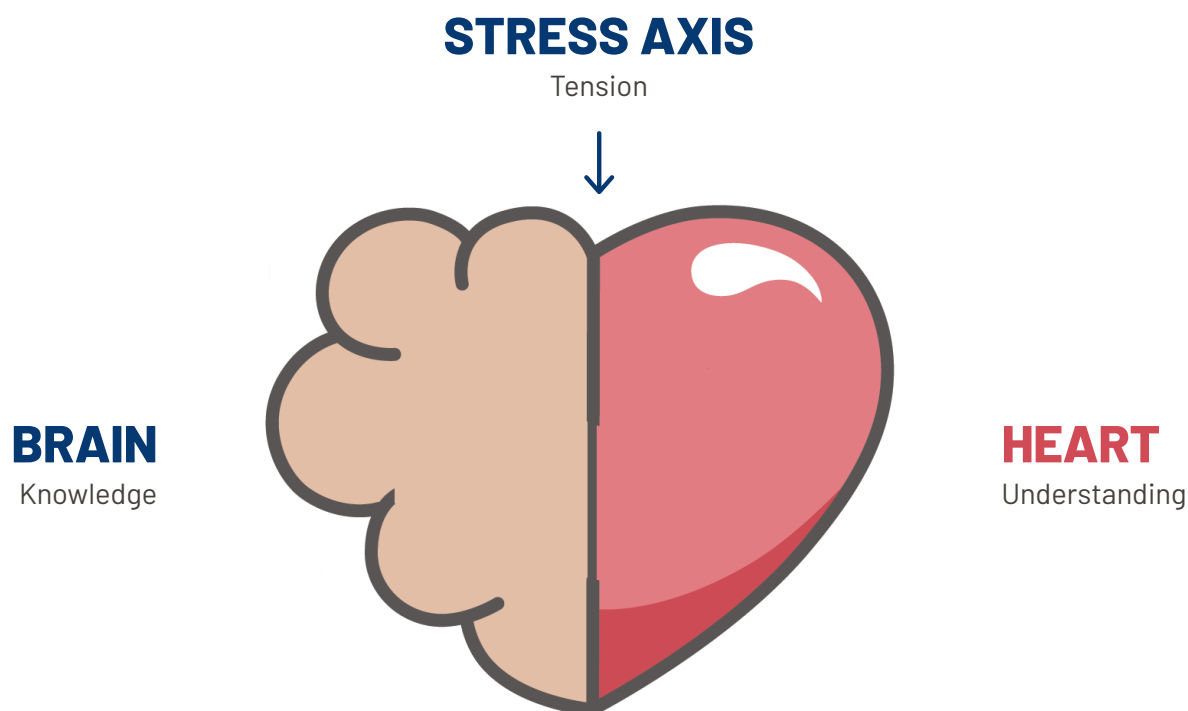


"Sensory and communication barriers need to be recognised as stressors relevant to suicide risk – an important contribution to the health-policy debate."

Prof. Dr. med. Ute Lewitzka · Suicidology & suicide prevention · Goethe University Frankfurt (translated)

Half heart, half brain.

This concept is about these barriers and the people with invisible disabilities who face them. On the left, a brain – knowledge. On the right, a heart – understanding. Rather than simply touching, they merge into one sign. Together, they can improve **inclusion**.



Not opposites, but two halves of one whole – the seam between them is the **stress axis**, right where everyday tension builds.

Not pity. Understanding.

The sign doesn't reveal a diagnosis or put a label on anyone. It doesn't say "I have endometriosis, autism or migraines." It says: **"There are barriers here you can't see – please be considerate."** The other person's heart and mind can then work like an aid, much like a wheelchair – knowledge and understanding can lower barriers and help people take part more fully in life.

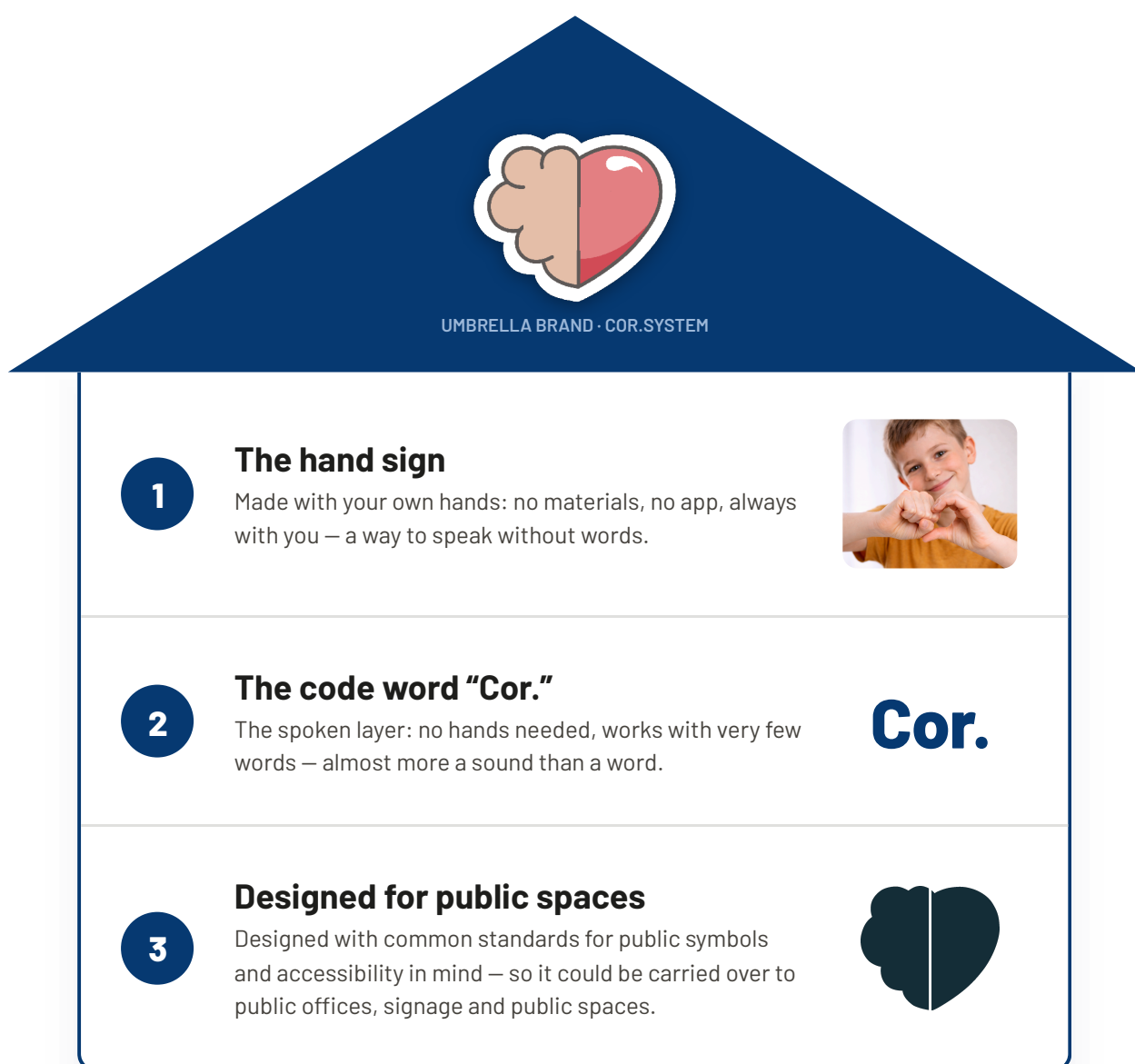
STRAIN ON THE STRESS AXIS



high → reduced

Three Nova in the Cor.System.

Stickers, lanyards and cards already exist – mostly from private providers, tied to a brand or organisation, often requiring a purchase or registration, and limited to a single format. The Cor.System takes a different approach: **free to use, tied to no organisation** and not dependent on any product. A sign that points to the support people need, much like existing official symbols – not an arbitrary placeholder. Alongside the umbrella brand, it creates three layers that, as far as we know, haven't been combined like this before – open and in one system.



Campaign and official sign in one – that combination could be what's new.

Two hands form the sign.

When speaking isn't possible — because of **deafness, mutism or overload** — you can show the heart-brain sign with your own hands. No materials, no app, always with you.

1

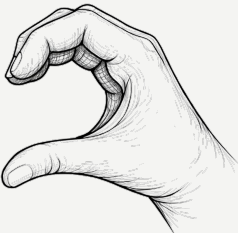


The fist = the brain

Make a fist with one hand. The rounded knuckles represent the folds of the brain.

+

2

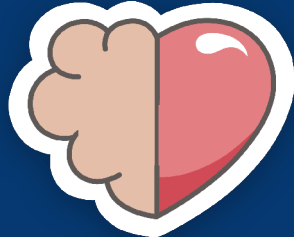


The half heart

With your other hand, form half a heart with your thumb and fingers and place it against the fist.

=





Heart & Brain

Together, both hands form the sign: a heart and a brain embracing.

WHAT THE SIGN SAYS

"Invisible barriers are overwhelming me here."

**Please ease the pressure –
I'm not doing well right now.**



PERSON AFFECTED

→

understand and
respond

**I understand – I'll
cut down the stimuli.**



OTHER PERSON

Only one hand free?

Show the parts one after another — first the fist (brain), then the half heart. The meaning stays clear with one hand.

For many areas of life

 Nursery

 School

 Work

 Leisure

Children and adults alike.

What can the other person do?

Dim lights & music

Give space

Talk less

Headphones · sunglasses

Fidget toys · cold water

Calming measures, if you know what helps the person (e.g. a practised coping skill).

2 NOVA 2 – THE CODE WORD

Cor.

#SayCor

**One word for everyone. Almost more a sound than a word –
you can say it without hands, even when words are hard.**

One tiny word that carries a lot:
heart and mind, courage, warmth, connection.

Why “Cor.”?

A code word needs to be short, easy to use and still meaningful. “Cor.” does exactly that. It isn’t a made-up word – its root is shared by many languages: the Latin *cor*, meaning heart.

Cor.
/kɔːr/

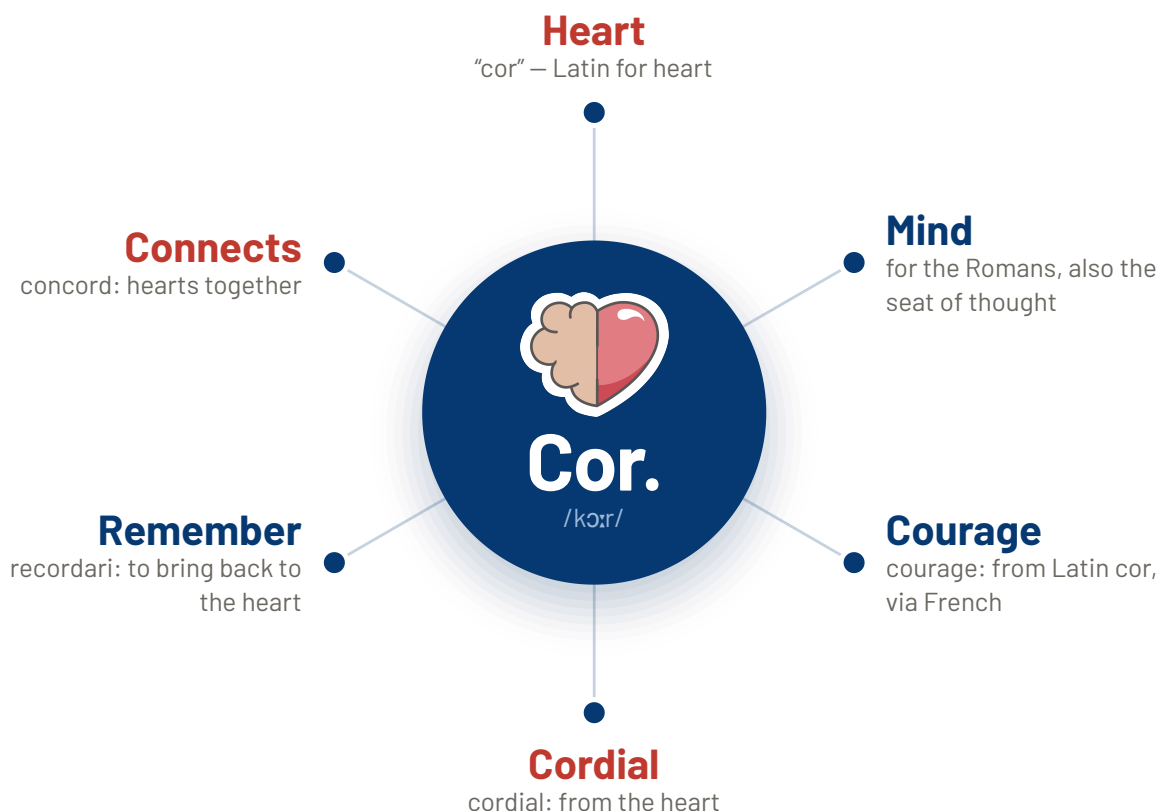
A sound first, then a word. One syllable, almost more a sound than a word – often still possible with limited speech, exhaustion or stress. You can also **type it as a text message** when speaking isn’t an option. That way, others can respond – for example with a de-escalation plan you’ve practised together.

Cor. 14:02 ✓✓

Sorry. Can you turn off the light, have a chilli sweet and do some mental maths till I get there? We’ve got this. Love you. ❤️

14:02

The Romans used the Latin word **cor** for the physical heart and, figuratively, for feeling, courage, soul, spirit and inner judgement – and, more broadly, for reason and insight.



Heard in many languages:

🇫🇷 cœur

🇪🇸 corazón

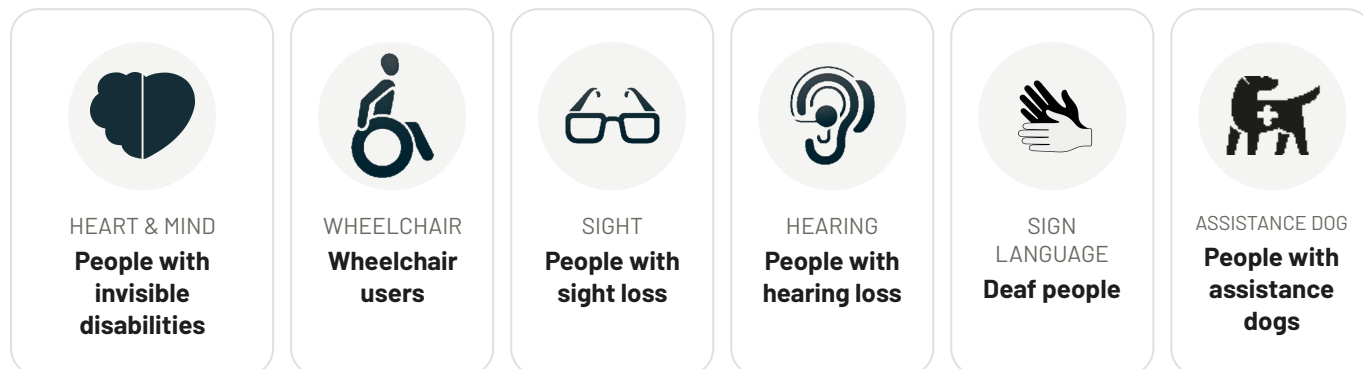
🇮🇹 cuore

🇧🇪 cor

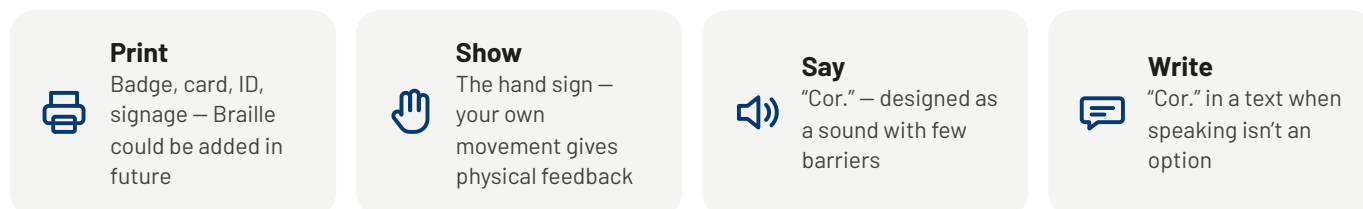
🇵🇹 coração

Logical, flexible, not perfect.

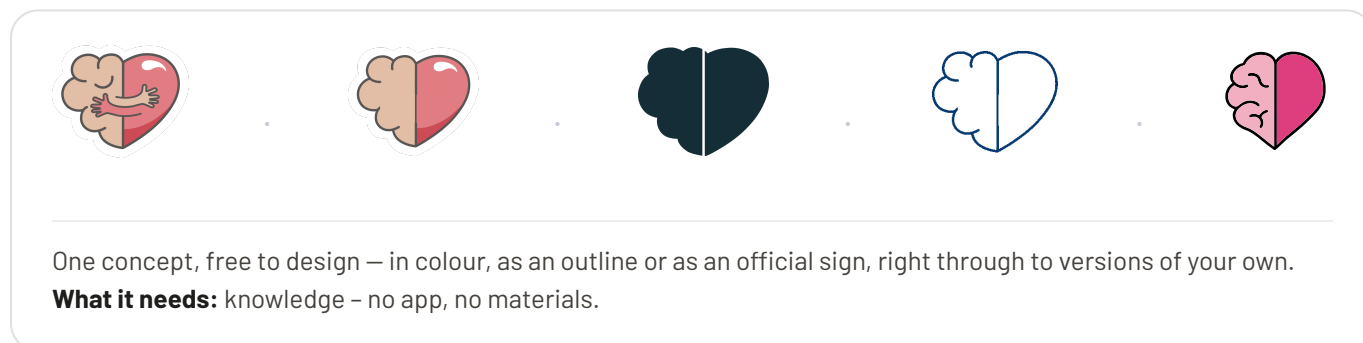
Many groups already have established symbols. The Cor.System sits alongside them in the **same style** and could fill an existing gap: a sign for people with invisible disabilities. No broken hearts, no euphemisms – simply an image of an aid.



ONE SIGN – FOUR WAYS TO USE IT



ADAPTABLE – YOUR OWN VERSIONS



Universal – and honest: what it isn’t

It isn’t proof of a diagnosis, an emergency or an entitlement. It doesn’t replace medical advice or an emergency call. No discounts, no perks – just visibility for barriers you can’t see.

In an emergency, the sign can help paramedics and police find other ways to communicate and de-escalate.

We don’t claim it’s self-explanatory without any introduction – its elements are familiar and easy to recognise after a short explanation.

Designed to be universal – the Cor.System.

The seven principles of Universal Design – and how the **Cor.System** addresses them.

1 Equitable use

The same sign works the same way for everyone – no proof required, no stigma. No one should be left out or have to justify themselves. It's free to use and easy to share or make.

2 Flexibility in use

Everyone picks what suits them at the time: two hands or one, the word "Cor.", a printed card, an ID, a badge or a digital display.

3 Simple, intuitive use

Hearts and brains are everyday symbols; the meaning is easy to explain, quick to learn and easy to pass on.

4 Perceptible information

Print (the sign, signage), show (your own gesture as feedback), say ("Cor."), write ("Cor." as a message).

5 Tolerance for error

No proof of entitlement needed. The system allows design variations as long as the core shape, meaning, contrast and context stay intact.

6 Low physical effort

The symbol takes hardly any effort · the word is very short · the gesture is small and can be simplified · there are equal alternatives for anyone who can't make it.

7 Size & space for use

Largely usable regardless of posture or mobility – scales from a badge to an entrance sign.



DESIGN PRINCIPLE

The sign must never become a condition for support – no one should have to disclose anything to be included. But it can be an important step towards ethically meaningful visibility.

The depth of the Cor.System.

A complete concept for public spaces: a proposal for making visible the barriers that have rarely been noticed. Because invisible barriers often go unrecognised, visibility can be an important part of raising awareness:

S · SENSORY



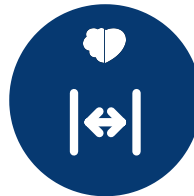
● HB-S1

Reduced noise



● HB-S2

Reduced lighting



● HB-S3

Space /
less touch



● HB-S4

Quiet hour



● HB-S5

Flicker-free lighting



● HB-S6

Low-stimulus design /
neuroarchitecture

C · CHEMICAL



● HB-C1

Smoke-free zones



● HB-C2

No air fresheners



● HB-C3

Fragrance-free cleaning



● HB-C4

Fragrance-free policy



● HB-C5

Low-emission furnishings



● HB-C6

Good ventilation

Communication and social.

Co · COMMUNICATION



● HB-Co1

Predictable
communication



● HB-Co2

Non-judgemental
communication



● HB-Co3

Written
communication



● HB-Co4

Easy Read



● HB-Co5

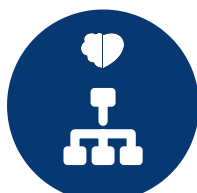
Sign language



● HB-Co6

Low-contact /
digital communication

So · SOCIAL



● HB-So1

Clear routines



● HB-So2

Flexible appointments



● HB-So3

Predictable waiting times



● HB-So4

Quiet room



● HB-So5

Companion welcome



● HB-So6

Flexible breaks



● HB-So7

Assistance dogs welcome

HB-Co4 (Easy Read) and HB-Co5 (sign language) are existing, widely used signs. HB-So7, the assistance dog sign is also an established official symbol and fits into the family. All signs are proposals.

The Cor.System in everyday life.

One idea becomes an ID, a card, a badge and a sign – on paper, on screen, in the room.



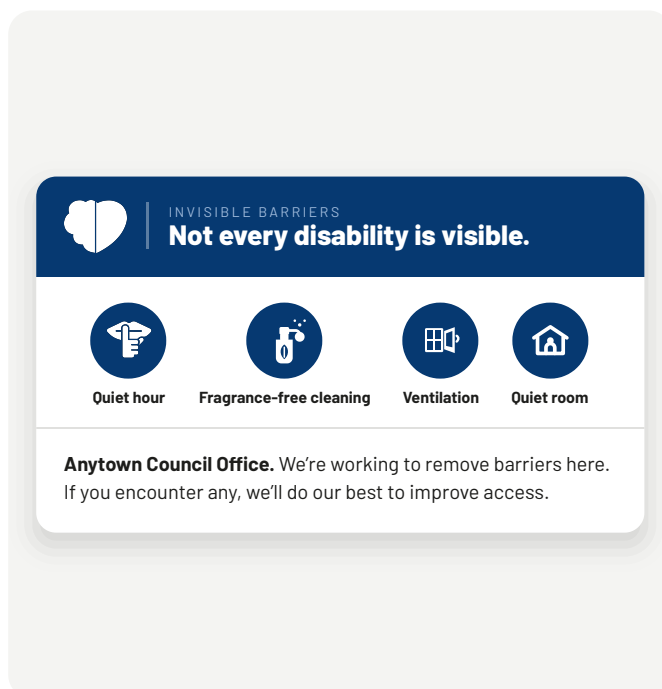
The ID card – or lanyard, for local authorities and shops to hand out, or to print at home.



The seat card – for events, buses or meetings.



The badge – simple, everyday visibility.



The door sign – shows at a glance which barriers have been removed.



Free to use – and open to standardisation.

This is a key lever: the **Cor.System** is **free to use and adaptable** – any local authority, business or individual can use and adapt it, and new heart-brain designs are welcome. It is designed with existing standards in mind and **could become standards-compliant** in future, so it can feed into official debates and public signage.

SUSTAINABLE – IN THE BROADEST SENSE

Modular & complementary

Can complement and connect existing schemes instead of creating more isolated solutions.

Shared & international

Largely language-independent and open – usable in many places.

UN SDGS



Can support health

Understanding can protect. Lack of recognition, invisibility and isolation are considered risk factors for mental-health crises.

Low-impact & low-material

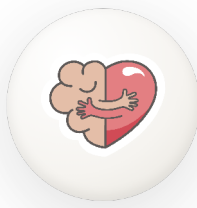
The gesture and the word need no materials; digital templates save on production and transport; signs are modular and work in black and white.

ONE OPEN SIGN – FOUR WAYS: PRINT, SHOW, SAY, WRITE



Show

The hand sign



Print

Badge, card & sign



Say

The code word



Write

"Cor." in a message



A little heart, a little understanding – that can make all the difference.

And as many people as possible getting to know the Cor.System. Let's start together.

You're free to use all of it: the sign, the hand sign,
the code word and the templates for IDs, badges and signage.
Free to use – your own versions welcome.

An open concept like the **Cor.System** has no advertising budget –
its currency is trust.

TEMPLATES & MATERIALS

[Gate-fold leaflet \(PDF\)](#)

[Digital flyer \(PDF\)](#)

[ID card in Canva \(multilingual\)](#)

[More downloads for Invisible Disabilities Day \(German\)](#)

[More about the Cor.System \(German\)](#)



Watch the video
youtu.be/9xrS7yMFgMg

In German ·
auto-translated subtitles
on YouTube

Logo: markenliebe
Concept: Rebecca Lefèvre

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We're a volunteer-run non-profit. We keep learning, we make mistakes along the way, and we welcome constructive feedback.