

# Creating an Inclusive Community

## Allyship Lesson



[Image description: Dark reddish purple silhouette of a young woman holding a backpack and books. Office of the Education Ombuds' orange logo is to the bottom right.]



October is Disability History Month in the state of Washington. Today we are going to learn about how to be allies for people with disabilities. First, I'm going to introduce some of our vocabulary words.

"Raise your hand if you've heard the word 'ally'"

"Keep it raised if you feel like you can define 'ally'"

"Keep it raised if you feel comfortable sharing your definition with the class"

Student shares definition. If no student is comfortable sharing a definition, share definition provided above in "Vocabulary."

Repeat for vocab words "inclusion" and "ableism."

*Differentiation:*

*-Look up ASL signs for "[ally](#)," "[inclusion](#)," and "[ableism](#)."*

*-Include other ways for students to demonstrate that they recognize a word; making a noise, moving their head, writing on a whiteboard, thumbs up close to chest (not high in the air).*

*-Ask students to write or draw what they know about each word instead of raising their hands.*

Transition: "We're going to learning about and using these words throughout the day. Next we are going to explore some examples of ableism in our community."

# What is ableism?

Definition: Discrimination against people with disabilities

*"Ableism, like other terms such as racism and sexism, describes discrimination towards a social group, in this case disabled people, but it also describes how certain ideals and attributes are valued or not valued."*  
(Wolbring, 2008)

One definition of ableism is...(read slide)

Note: Here, the author uses the word "disabled." Some people with disabilities refer to themselves as "disabled" to highlight that it is society's attitudes and environmental and social barriers that "disable" them. This is called "identity-first" language vs. the "people-first" language that we have learned about.

# What is allyship?

Definition: Taking an active stance against discrimination and prejudice

One definition of allyship is...(read slide)

# What is inclusion?

Definition: Intentionally building a community in which each individual is recognized, has access, and participates and belongs as a valued member.

One definition of inclusion is...(read slide) On each of the images in this powerpoint you'll notice an image description, which is one way to make pictures accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired."

**Look for examples of ableism in this video:**



Video link: <https://youtu.be/Gv1aDEFIXq8>

EXTENSION OPTION (closed captioning - 3:40)

Video link: <https://youtu.be/Gv1aDEFIXq8>

# Discussion:

- What are some examples of ableism you saw in the video?
- What are ways you learned that you can support people with disabilities?
- What are some things **not** to do for people with disabilities?
- Did you learn something new from this video?

EXTENSION OPTION: Read and discuss the questions in a pair share, class discussion format, or have students brainstorm and write responses.

# Is this inclusive?



**YES**



**NO**

*[Image description: A green thumbs up hand is positioned above a box that says "YES" in black writing. To the right of the green hand is a red thumbs down hand positioned above a box that says "NO."]*

"I'm going to show you some images that may or may not be inclusive. Show me thumbs up if you think it is inclusive, thumbs down if it is not inclusive. On each of these images you'll notice an image description, which is one way to make pictures accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired."



[Image description: Blue "Public Restroom" sign with arrows going left and right. Below in parentheses, it reads "B.Y.O.P."]



[Image description: A white woman using a wheelchair struggles to reach the faucet in a public restroom]



[Image description: A woman using a motorized wheelchair goes down a very crowded aisle in a supermarket]

Wait for students to show thumbs up or down. "These pictures show ableism that people with physical disabilities experience all the time: the space they are in is not accessible. What makes this inaccessible? What are some ways that it could be more accessible?"

- A. INACCESSIBLE: No braille on the public restroom sign makes it challenging for people who are blind to know where the restroom is
- B. INACCESSIBLE: Soap and faucet that is too far back on the counter makes it challenging for people to clean their hands
- C. INACCESSIBLE: A crowded walkway in a supermarket makes it challenges and dangerous to navigate through and also to choose items from shelves

*Differentiation: Include other ways for students to demonstrate that they recognize ableism; making a noise, moving their head, writing on a whiteboard. Repeat every time thumbs up/thumbs down is requested.*





*[Image description: A concrete ramp lays on top of a flight of stone outdoor stairs]*



*[Image description: A ramp artistically cuts through a flight of concrete stairs outdoors]*



*[Image description: Two thin, metal strips serve as a makeshift ramp with a flight of concrete, outdoor stairs between them.]*

“Sometimes, even when there is a wheelchair ramp it still is not accessible. Are these ramps accessible? Why or why not? How accessible is our school? Where are the ramps? Are they easy to get to?”

A: INACCESSIBLE This ramp does not have handrails, and doesn't not appear wide enough to accommodate all wheelchairs, walkers, and other physical accessibility devices.

B: INACCESSIBLE This ramp looks fun and artistic, but there are many issues with it: people walking through the ramp, lack of handrails, sharp corners, potential for people to slip off the ramp and fall down the stairs.

C: INACCESSIBLE While this staircase has handrails, they are not accessible by the ramp. The ramp also is too narrow for certain kinds of accessibility devices.



*[Image description: An accessible metal door switch with a blue image of a person using a wheelchair is above the words in blue: "Push to open".]*



*[Image description: A still from the television show Felix the Cat displays closed captioning at the bottom. CC states, "Good work, Goldie. Keep it up!".]*



*[Image description: Black, noise canceling over ear headphones with "Philips" written on it.]*



*[Image description: An empty street with a white, painted crosswalk. Curb cuts with yellow bumps are on either side of the street.]*

"We just looked at some ways an environment can be ableist. Our schools, offices, and malls are designed in a way that keep many out. Here are some ways that places can be more accessible. What do these things do? How do they make the environment more accessible? How could they help not just people with physical disabilities, but everyone? Do we have any in our school? Do we need more?"

**Door switch:** this increases access for people who can't hold the door and move through it at the same time. Some of those people include: people carrying heavy things, people pushing carts, people pushing strollers, people with physical disabilities.

**Closed captioning:** this increases access for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing. Accurate and consistent captions can make fun things like cartoons or more important things like the news accessible to all. Closed captioning can also help increase understanding if the speaker has an unfamiliar accent or speaks in a different language.

**Noise-canceling headphones:** These devices help protect hearing, addresses over stimulation and noise sensitivity.

**Curb cut:** Gives people smooth access from the curb to the street. This is helpful for people carrying heavy things, people pushing carts, people pushing strollers, people with physical disabilities. The raised bumps give indicators to people with visual impairments that the terrain is changing.



[Image description: A comic of the doors outside of a red brick school building on a snowy day. The ramp and stairs are covered in snow. A white man in a green winter hat, red coat, yellow gloves, blue snow pants, and brown snowshoes holding a shovel is shoveling snow. A blonde white boy in an orange hat and coat sits in a blue wheelchair next to a group of kids wearing different colored snow gear. The boy using the wheelchair says to the man, "Could you please shovel the ramp?" The man responds, "All these other kids are waiting to use the stairs. When I get through shoveling them off. Then I will clear the ramp for you." The boy responds, "But if you shovel the ramp, we can all get in!"]

"Take a minute to read this comic. What is happening? Why would clearing the ramp give everyone access?"

# Is this inclusive?



**YES**



**NO**

*[Image description: A green thumbs up hand is positioned above a box that says "YES" in black writing. To the right of the green hand is a red thumbs down hand positioned above a box that says "NO."]*

"I'm going to say some things that may or may not be inclusive. Show me thumbs up if you think it is inclusive, thumbs down if it is not inclusive."



*[Image description: A light yellow smiley face has two speech bubbles and one thought bubble. The speech bubbles say "Ugh, school is so lame" and "Homework is so retarded!" The thought bubble says "She's crazy! I can't believe she did that."]*

Say each statement (with the attitude and inflection of someone saying it) and pause after each for students to show thumbs up or down. "Crazy, retarded, and lame are all words that used to describe people with disabilities. When we use these words, we mean it as a bad thing. Using language like this shows that society thinks of people with disabilities as negative. Let's brainstorm: what are some words we can say instead of those words?"

These terms are considered ableist because:

Lame refers to a person who may walk differently

Crazy is a reference to someone's mental ability

Retarded is an outdated term referring to people with intellectual disabilities

\*\*For more information refer to resource "Casual Ableist Language" by Annie Elaine

# **Role Play: Time to ACT IT OUT!**

“Now we are going to act out some instances of ableism that are pretty common in our daily lives. We are going to use a script so everyone can learn and become more comfortable with the words to address ableism.”

# References

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