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

References cont.

- Webster, Tony. "Wheelchair Accessibility Ramp - Sortedams Sø - Øster Søgade, Copenhagen, Denmark." Wikimedia Commons, 14 Sept. 2014, commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wheelchair_Accessibility_Ramp_-_Sortedams_Sø_-_Øster_Søgade_Copenhagen_Denmark_(23410826214)