



EMBRACE: MAY FACILITATOR GUIDE

DESCRIPTION

Welcome! For the month of May, our conversation will focus on disabilities, both visible and invisible. Many times when organizations think about Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, we often forget to include education and resources about persons with disabilities. Alpha Epsilon Phi wants to continue to provide education and resources to be a more inclusive and equitable organization. The purpose of this month's program is to provide further education, resources, and facilitator questions to be more inclusive and educated allies for those living with disabilities.

Throughout the facilitator guide, there are guided conversations and links to other resources you may use with members. This programming is meant to be open to all members of Alpha Epsilon Phi. These resources will allow your chapter to have open and honest conversations, while continuing to build upon the trust shared between you. We encourage you to share these resources with the entire chapter so that others may also participate. The purpose of the activities included in our monthly programming are to reinforce the information covered while engaging in an activity that allows for open communication, reinforcement of the educational materials, and an opportunity to work with your sisters.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your programming specialist as they will be able to provide additional assistance and answer your questions.

We encourage you to engage with one another in honest dialogue, enriching your sisterhood, while continually exemplifying the high ideals and moral character that make you uniquely members of Alpha Epsilon Phi.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will...

- Define disability
- Define disability inclusion
- Identify ways to be an ally

RESOURCES

- **Disabilities, Seen and Unseen**
 - [CDC Website: Disability and Health Overview](#)
 - [Invisible Disabilities Association](#)
- **TedEd Talk and Facilitator Questions**
 - [Our fight for disability rights - and why we're not done yet](#)
 - [Invisible Disabilities: Seeing Others With Compassion](#)
 - Facilitator questions **in the guide below*
- **Disability Inclusion**
 - [A Brief History of the Disabilities Rights Movement](#) **Send to chapter members prior to program to read*
 - [Disability Inclusion](#)
 - [Don't Forget Disability: 3 Ways to Increase Accessibility in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion \(DEI\) Work](#)
 - [Invisible Disability Project](#)
 - [How to Include People with Disabilities](#)

PREPARATION

- Schedule a time to hold May programming
- Read through the facilitator guide in advance
- Send an agenda to the members prior to let them know what you are going to cover.
- Email the following articles to chapter members to read prior to discussion:
 - [A Brief History of the Disabilities Rights Movement](#)
 - [7 ways to be more inclusive of people with invisible disabilities](#)
 - [Q&A: Is the disability community part of your Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts?](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Email all additional resources linked below following the chapter program
 - [8 Most Powerful TED Talks on Disability](#)
 - [10 Insightful TED Talks about Disabilities, Accessibility and Inclusion](#)
 - [International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 3 December](#)
 - [Diversity, Inclusion and Disability Awareness Calendar](#)
 - [Red Shirt Day & National Accessibility Week Resources \(Canada\)](#)
 - [10 Awesome Books for Adults about Disabilities, Accessibility and Inclusion](#)
 - [How to Teach Children About Disabilities and Inclusion](#)
 - [Organizations that Support People with Disabilities](#)
 - [Do Your D&I Efforts Include People with Disabilities?](#)
 - [Opinion: How 2021 can be more disability-inclusive](#)
 - [Invisible Disability Project](#)
 - [How to include workers with disabilities in your DEI initiatives](#)

FACILITATORS

- Any of the following officers/chairs can facilitate this programming:
 - VP-Programming
 - DEI Chair
 - Jewish Heritage Chair
 - Additional officers or chapter members – provide opportunities to keep members engaged

HOW TO USE THIS FACILITATOR GUIDE

- Text formatted in standard font is identified as a “talking point” and is intended to be read aloud by the facilitator.
- Text formatted in *italics* is intended as a note for the facilitator; italicized text is not meant to be read aloud.
- Text formatted in **bold** denotes a series of questions to engage participants in a dialogue.

FACILITATOR TALKING POINTS

- *The purpose of this section is to give you reminders to make your EMBRACE meetings cohesive and to ensure that members are connecting with one another. Some members may be further along in their understanding of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging work; others may not be as comfortable to share. Remind everyone that this is a safe space and encourage everyone to participate openly and honestly. Below are some questions to ask.*
 - Welcome everyone!
 - Check in on how each member is doing – this programming is designed to provide a safe space for discussion.
 - Encourage members to continue DEI&B conversations outside of structure EMBRACE programming.
 - *Make sure to leave time at the end of the meeting to allow for members to ask any questions.*
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DISABILITIES: SEEN AND UNSEEN

FACILITATOR TALKING POINTS

- **The topic of disability can make people uncomfortable, even considered taboo by some. There are many reasons for this; what are some reasons why you think people may feel uncomfortable talking about disabilities, both seen and unseen?**
 - *Allow for members to answer, there are no right or wrong answers.*
- For some it could be a learned behavior, misconception and misunderstanding, or stereotype just to name a few.
- **Why do you think it is important to have open and respectful conversations about disabilities?**
 - *Allow for members to share answers, look for answers like: to promote understanding and awareness, empathy, acceptance. Be sure to add, to begin dealing with more pressing issues and barriers that exist at an individual, organizational and system level which continue to hinder and hold back people living with disabilities from fully participating in all aspects of life.*
- Thank you all for sharing.
- It is important that we understand the variety of different disabilities impacting people today. In the United States, approximately 26% of adults, about one in four, live with some form of disability. This number is slightly lower in Canada with approximately 22% of Canadians living with some form of disability.
- There are many types of disabilities - both visible and invisible.
- Some people may be born with a disability or impairment, while others may have resulted from illness, injury, or old age.
- It is also important to note that just like there are many different types of disabilities, there are many different lived experiences and perspectives of people who live with or who identify as living with a disability. There is no single, uniform experience of disability.
- **What is a disability?**
 - *Allow for members to answer.*
- According to the CDC, a disability is “any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions).”
- **What types of disabilities exist?**
 - *Allow for members to answer. Look for words such as: vision, movement, thinking, remembering, learning, communicating, hearing, mental health, social relationships. If members do not say those words, please add to the discussion.*
- Oftentimes we think of people with disabilities as a single population of people, however this is an extremely diverse group of people, with a wide range of needs.
- Two people with the same disability can be affected in very different ways. Some disabilities may be hidden or not easy to see.
- According to the World Health Organization, disability has three dimensions: Impairment, Activity limitation, and Participation restrictions.
- **What do you think Impairment means?**
 - *Allow for members to answer. If they do not mention this please add, Impairment in a person’s body structure or function, or mental functions.*
- **What are some examples of Impairment?**
 - *Allow for members to answer. Examples can include loss of a limb, loss of*

vision or memory loss.

- **What do you think Activity limitation means?**
 - *Allow for members to answer. Look for difficulty seeing, hearing, walking or problem solving.*
 - **What do you think Participation restrictions mean?**
 - *Allow for members to answer. Look for words to describe restrictions in normal daily activities.*
 - **What are some examples of participation restrictions?**
 - *Allow for members to answer. Look for words like: walking, engaging in social and recreational activities and obtaining health care and preventative services.*
 - **Who can tell me what an invisible disability is?**
 - *Allow for members to answer.*
 - Thank you so much for those answers. According to the Invisible Disabilities Association, an invisible disability is a physical, mental or neurological condition that is not visible from the outside, yet can limit or challenge a person's movements, senses, or activities.
 - An "invisible," "non-visible," "hidden," "non-apparent," or "unseen" disability is any physical, mental, or emotional impairment that goes largely unnoticed. An invisible disability can include, but is not limited to, cognitive impairment and brain injury; the autism spectrum; cognitive impairment and brain injury; chronic illnesses like multiple sclerosis, chronic fatigue, chronic pain, and fibromyalgia; deaf and/or hard of hearing; blindness and/or low vision; anxiety, depression, PTSD, and many more.
 - The body is always changing, so disability and chronic illness may be unstable or periodic throughout one's life.
 - **What challenges do you think exist for people living with invisible disabilities?**
 - *Allow for members to answer, there is no correct answer.*
 - The very fact that these symptoms are invisible can lead to misunderstandings, false perceptions, and judgements.
 - One example of this can be people who park in an accessible parking space with a placard, but they look fine. You may wonder if they should even be parking there.
 - **What are some times where you may have thought a person was doing something they shouldn't, but could have been because they have an invisible disability?**
 - *Allow for members to share answers. They could mention someone not attending an event (not realizing this person lives with anxiety or depression), people not wearing masks during Covid, people with dogs on airplanes (oftentimes people assume they are ESA animals to skip paying their flying fee), etc.*
 - **Why is it important to understand and define invisible disabilities?**
 - *Allow for members to respond.*
 - When we define invisible disability, it helps us understand the subtle difference and challenges each person experiences in their daily life.
 - It is important to mention that just because a person is living with a disability does not mean they are disabled.
 - Oftentimes people think the term, disability, only refers to people using a wheelchair or walker.
 - People often judge others by what they see and conclude a person can or cannot do something by the way they look.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why is this attitude towards disabilities wrong? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Allow members to answer. There is no right or wrong answer.</i> ● This assumption of others can make people living with disabilities, seen or unseen, feel unheard and unsupported. ● International disability expert, Joni Eareckson Tada, explained it well when she told someone living with debilitating fatigue, “People have such high expectations of folks like you (with invisible disabilities), like ‘come on, get your act together.’ But they have such low expectations of folks like me in wheelchairs, as though the thought is that we can’t do much.” ● Everyone living with a disability is different, with varying challenges and needs, as well as abilities and attributes. We need to listen with our ears instead of judging with our eyes.
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TED TALKS

FACILITATOR TALKING POINTS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As we mentioned earlier, there is not a uniform experience of disability, and it is important to speak with, listen to, and learn from the stories and experiences of the individuals around us. ● To further your education I encourage you to watch the many TED Talks that are available that address various topics about disabilities. ● Together we are going to watch two different TED Talks together, the first is by Judith Heumann, a lifelong advocate for the rights of disabled people. ● <i>Screen share the TedEd Talk, make sure to have your volume on.</i> ● What was something that shocked you about the TED Talk? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Allow members to answer, look for answers like: the doctor suggested she be placed in an institution, the school principal told her she couldn’t attend the elementary school, she didn’t attend a real school until she was 9, students after 21 were sent to work training programs, other countries do not have the same laws and opportunities, that women with disabilities experience violence, countries have quota systems to employ persons with disabilities, living in communities without the appropriate support, etc.</i> ● What types of discrimination did Judith face? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Allow for members to respond. Look for answers like inaccessible high schools, her medical exam to become a teacher, she was denied her job because she couldn’t walk, etc.</i> ● What other rights movements inspired Judith in challenging the system within the United States of people’s view that if you had a disability, you needed to be cured, that equality was not part of the equation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Allow for members to answer. Look for the Civil Rights Movement and the Women’s Rights Movement</i> ● What year was the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) signed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Allow members to answer. President Bush signed the ADA on the lawn of the White House on July 26, 1990.</i> ● President Bush finished what President Nixon had vetoed, and what almost had not passed in the House or the Senate. In his speech he stated, “Let the shameful walls of exclusion finally come tumbling down.” ● In our lifetime we have always seen ramps on the streets, we do not remember a time where buses were not accessible, when trains were not
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accessible or when there were not wheelchair-accessible bathrooms. We have always seen sign language interpreters, closed captioning and braille. But this has not always been the case, and there is still room for improvement.

- **In 2006 the treaty was adopted for the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. What are some interesting things about this?**

- *Allow members to answer. Look for answers like, more than 165 countries have joined this treaty, the first international human rights treaty focused on persons with disabilities.*

- **What can we do to be better allies?**

- *Allow members to share. There are no correct answers.*

- **Why do you think we chose this TED Talk?**

- *Allow for members to answer.*

- This was just one example of the challenges and discrimination people in the United States have had to face and continue to face. Together we can make a difference not only in our chapters, or our country, but in the world.

- Now I want to share a second TED Talk, from Valerie Kosson who shares her experience with living with invisible disabilities.

- *Screen Share the [TedEd Talk](#), make sure to have your volume on. (You can choose to end video at 9:01)*

- **What is something that shocked you about the TED Talk?**

- *Allow members to respond. Look for answers like: the wait to decide when to provide medical intervention (the nurse placing her thumb allowed for Valerie to live)*

- **What did Valerie say she and other micro preemies are experiencing now as young adults?**

- *Allow for members to respond. Look for answers like: missing hunger signals, the ability to feel time passing, short term memory function.*

- **Why do you think we chose to share this TED Talk?**

- *Allow for members to respond. Look for things like, not realizing what another person is going through, not understanding challenges others face if they do not openly share them.*

- **Why is it important for us to know about invisible disabilities?**

- *Allow for members to respond. There are no correct or wrong answers. We are looking for members to acknowledge the need to be allies and to be understanding and to listen to others.*

- **What are ways we can be better friends and allies to people?**

- *Allow for members to respond.*
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**FACILITATOR
TALKING POINTS**

- *Prior to the chapter program, email out [A Brief History of The Disabilities Rights Movement](#), [7 ways to be more inclusive to people with invisible disabilities](#), and [Q&A: Is the disability community a part of your Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts?](#)*
 - **Having read more about the Disabilities Rights Movement, what are some things you learned that you did not know previously?**
 - *Allow for members to share their responses and reactions.*
 - **Now that we have a better understanding of what exactly is a disability and the history behind the Disabilities Rights Movement. What is Disability Inclusion?**
 - *Allow for members to answer, there are no right or wrong answers.*
 - According to the CDC, disability inclusion is making sure everybody has the same opportunities to participate in every aspect of life to the best of their abilities and desires.
 - This means including people living with disabilities in everyday activities and encouraging them to have roles similar to their peers who do not have a disability.
 - Inclusion is mandated by law, but meaningful education about disabilities goes beyond legal compliance. Creating an environment where people feel included and valued allows for a well-rounded and fulfilling life.
 - This involves more than simply encouraging people; it requires making sure that adequate policies and practices are in effect in a community or organization.
 - An inclusive culture begins with understanding and being able to identify differences instead of pretending those differences don't exist.
 - Disability inclusion allows for people with disabilities to take advantage of the same health promotion and prevention activities experienced by people who do not have a disability.
 - **I want you to think about this past year, COVID-19 testing sites, Black Lives Matter protests in your community. Now imagine being in a wheelchair and trying to access the COVID-19 testing site, imagine being hard of hearing or vision impaired, wanting to stay on top of the news about the protests happening in your community. These are only two examples, from this year in which persons living with disabilities were not included in the dialogue. Why do you think we need to include disability education and disability rights in every organization's DEI&B plans?**
 - *Allow for members to respond. There are no correct answers, encourage a dialogue.*
 - Disabilities affect more than 1 billion people worldwide. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, people "...with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."
 - Organizations like Alpha Epsilon Phi can create change. We can show the world that we truly see the value in everyone, and there are plenty of steps that we, as leaders, can take to improve disability inclusion, accessibility, and equity.
 - **Having read the article "7 ways to be more inclusive to people with invisible disabilities", what are 3 key takeaways you want to share with the chapter?**
 - *Call on 3-6 members of the chapter share their keytakeaways.*
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- The Invisible Disabilities Project (IDP) encourages us to look at defining our body and mind separately, as two diverse entities. We are both bodily diverse and neuro diverse.
 - After our program today we will send you additional resources to learn more. The IDP has created projects and services dedicated to disrupting the silence around what it means to live with an invisible disability.
 - **You may be wondering how can we make a difference, a change? In what ways can we as a chapter work to improve the relationship between the way people function and how they participate in society and our own organization, while making sure everyone has the same opportunities to participate in every aspect of life to the best of their abilities and desires?**
 - **Let's brainstorm together ways in which we can improve as a chapter, as a Panhellenic community, a campus community and within society. What ways can we be better allies for people with both seen and unseen disabilities and what steps are needed to do so?**
 - *Allow for members to answer. Ask them to discuss the ways the chapter, the campus Panhellenic, the campus as a whole, and the community in which you live day to day can be more inclusive.*
 - *Look for answers like: changing our campus culture, communication, acknowledgement and understanding of the widespread nature of disabilities, training, event planning to increase conversations and awareness, get specific, include people living with disabilities in the conversation.*
 - Inclusion is not a light switch that we can just turn on or off, it is more like a dimmer that you push forward into the light with intentionality and focus. It is a journey.
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