



# EMBRACE: JANUARY FACILITATOR GUIDE

## DESCRIPTION

Welcome! For the month of January, we will focus on disabilities, both visible and invisible. Including disability in diversity, equity, inclusion & belonging (DEI&B) activities are an essential part of making these efforts truly diverse, equitable, and inclusive. As an organization, our goal is to highlight and celebrate diverse cultures, identities, and lived experiences. We want to learn to be better allies, as well as begin to have meaningful and impactful conversations surrounding diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. The purpose of the EMBRACE program is to facilitate dialogue and opportunities for learning. We will continue to answer why this is important for AEPH sisters to discuss race, identity, and implicit and explicit bias.

Throughout each facilitator guide, you will find 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, if interested. 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.

You do not need to complete the entire facilitator guide. Please use this as a resource as you identify what conversations, topics and activities are valuable and will be engaging for your chapter. This facilitator guide can be done in full, it can be broken up over the month, or you can use portions of the guide to host mini sessions prior to, or following, a chapter meeting. Make these resources work for your chapter.

This programming can be modified for virtual or in person programming depending on the need of your campus. Please partner with your programming specialist if you need help identifying ways to move these conversations online.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your programming specialist. 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 makes you uniquely members of Alpha Epsilon Phi.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will...

- Have a better understanding of disabilities and the language used when talking to and/or describing someone with a disability
- Be introduced to ableist language and review ways to change our conversations
- Review statistics and the implication of disabilities in secondary education settings
- Introduce to the topic of neurodiversity and how we can be change agents in our chapters

## RESOURCES

- **Land Acknowledgement**
  - [A Guide To Indigenous Land Acknowledgement](#)
- **Disabilities: Introduction**
  - [EMBRACE May 2021](#)
  - [Style Guide: People with Disabilities](#)
  - [World Learning: Inclusion](#)
- **Ableist Language**
  - [Word of the Week - “differently-abled”](#)
  - [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#)
- **Statistics and the impact on post-secondary education**
  - [Learning Disability Week: Does your DEI Strategy include learning and development?](#)
  - [Differences between High School and College Disability Services](#)
  - [Inside HigherED: Disability as Diversity](#)
- **Neurodiversity and DEI&B**
  - [It’s time we include neurodiverse people when talking DEI](#)
  - [Coqual: Disabilities and Inclusion](#)
- **Ted Talks**
  - [TEDxUF: Why Business Must Be Fearless With Disability Inclusion](#)
  - [TEDxBrighton: Changing The Way We Talk About Disability](#)
  - [TEDxUGA: The Dandelion Shift: Seeing the Ability in Disability](#)
  - [Ten Insightful TED Talks about Disabilities, Accessibility and Inclusion](#)
- **Chapter Activities**
  - [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#)
  - [Style Guide: People with Disabilities](#)
  - [Disability Awareness Activity Packet](#)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Disability Statistics](#)
- [National Center for College Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Don’t leave disability equity behind when building your DEI initiatives](#)
- [Responding with empathy, not sympathy towards disabled people - Guest column by Jasmine Khanna](#)
- [Disability through the lens of hierarchy of binaries](#)
- [Celebrating Disability Awareness Month](#)
- [Disability Rights at College During Covid-19 Pandemic](#)
- [Learning Disabilities, What are the Different Types](#)
- [Inclusion Innovations](#)
- [Israel Defense Soldiers: Special Needs Soldiers](#)

## PREPARATION

- Schedule a time to hold February programming.
- Read through the facilitator guide in advance.
- Select one of the TED Talks provided in the facilitator guide and create questions to facilitate conversation and dialogue following viewing the TED Talk you chose.
- Send an agenda to the members prior to the program letting them know what you are going to cover.
- Some chapters may have incorporated disability education in their EMBRACE programming last May. If you did not, this is an opportunity to use this facilitator guide in addition to the materials provided [here](#).
- Share the additional resources provided in this guide to chapter members to continue their learning outside of EMBRACE.

## 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.

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### 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 structured 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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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

### FACILITATOR TALKING POINTS

- *Before you begin your session, review the land acknowledgement statement your chapter created. If you need additional tips for creating an indigenous land acknowledgement statement you can review those [here](#).*
  - In November, we created a land acknowledgment statement, before each EMBRACE session we will read it to acknowledge the land we have the privilege to live, study, and meet on today.
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## DISABILITIES: INTRODUCTION

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### FACILITATOR TALKING POINTS

- *As the lead facilitator please review the [May 2021](#) guide on Disabilities: Seen and Unseen to provide additional context and education to your chapter.*
  - **Why do you think disability is a part of the conversation regarding diversity?**
    - *Allow chapter members to respond. There is no one “right” answer.*
  - Diversity refers to the infinite range of individuals’ unique attributes and experiences such as ethnicity, gender, age, and disability. Since disability is a natural part of diversity, it is important to recognize the differences by ensuring that learning and development is a key pillar in our DEI&B strategy.
  - It is one thing to have a strategy to be more inclusive, but a strategy needs to be backed up with ensuring learning and development is tailored to the needs of all individuals in our chapters.
  - As women of Alpha Epsilon Phi, we can commit to disability inclusion. We should seek to include persons with disabilities in our activities, and welcome opportunities to engage with partners on campus in new initiatives.
  - When writing and subsequently having conversations about anyone with a disability - whether physical, intellectual or psychological/emotional - we should always strive to adopt “people first” language.
  - This means that we use words that put the person at the center of a description rather than a label, their status, or focusing on what an individual cannot do.
  - However, many disabled communities prefer “identity first” language. You should always ask the person what their preference is, both in how they are described as having a disability in general, as well as their specific disability.
  - **Can someone provide me with an example of “people first” language?**
    - *Allow for chapter members to respond. Look for answers that put the person first such as “person with a disability” “graduate student who has epilepsy.”*
  - **Can someone provide me with an example of “identity first” language?**
    - *Allow for chapter members to respond. Look for answers that put the person's identity first such as “autistic person.”*
  - It is important that you always ask an individual how they prefer to be referred to - for example, some people consider their disability an intrinsic aspect of their identity, such as “blind person” or “deaf person.”
  - Whether a person's disability is seen or unseen, it is important to know how that specific person would like to be addressed.
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## ABLEIST LANGUAGE

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**FACILITATOR  
TALKING POINTS**

- **Who can tell me what I mean when I say ableist language?**
    - *Allow for chapter members to respond. Look for words like oppressive, derogatory, hurtful, harmful, language used and often not realized to be harmful.*
  - Ableist language perpetuates the inferiority of people with disabilities. At its core, it is oppressive, derogatory, and hurtful, no matter the intention behind its usage.
  - **How many of you believe that you use ableist language everyday without even realizing it?**
    - *Allow for chapter members to raise their hands for yes or no.*
  - Many people will be shocked at how common ableist language is in their own vocabulary. This is often due to being uneducated or unaware of the implications of your word choice.
  - We live in a systemically ableist society, which has allowed phrases like “differently-abled” to grow in popularity for too long.
  - **Why do you think it is important that we learn how to identify people with disabilities?**
    - *All for chapter members to answer.*
  - Many times when you are speaking to someone who has a condition that you are unfamiliar with you may worry about saying the wrong thing.
  - To help alleviate some of this uncertainty, Brown University has gathered some general suggestions for speaking to, and about, people with disabilities.
  - As we mentioned in the introduction to this EMBRACE topic, it is preferable to use language that focuses on someone’s abilities rather than their disabilities.
  - The use of the terms “handicapped,” “able-bodied,” “physically challenged,” and “differently abled” is discouraged.
  - **Why do you think people use the word differently-abled as their go to term to describe someone with a disability?**
    - *Allow for chapter members to respond.*
  - The simple answer is they believe “differently-abled” is less offensive than the disabled person’s actual identity (disabled).
  - With this logic, we view the disabled body through an able-bodied lens. Systemic ableism tells us that there is only one way to do things in the world: the abled way.
  - Instead of creating a more inclusive and accessible world, society often expects people with disabilities to either get out of the way or mold themselves into their best version of an able-bodied individual.
  - “Differently-abled” speaks to this ideology specifically by essentially saying you are capable of doing able-bodied things! Just differently!
  - Many people with disabilities are not capable of doing “able-bodied things.” Their inability to conform should not define their worth, however, in many parts of our society it does.
  - “Differently-abled” upholds that there is a hierarchy of disability based on one’s ability to conform to an able-bodied way of life.
  - When “differently-abled” is used to identify members of the disability community it strips them of their true identity. The word disabled is not a bad word, ableism just tells us it is.
  - In using the word disabled you are actually giving power to the disability
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	<p>community, rather than taking away their autonomy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• However, as mentioned in our introduction, there is always a caveat. While it is discouraged by the larger disability community to use the word “differently-abled,” some disable individuals prefer to identify themselves as different-abled.</li> <li>• We should always honor someone's identity and how they wish to be identified by others.</li> <li>• To learn more, visit <a href="#">The Rolling Explorer Blog</a> and check out their series on ableist language.</li> </ul>
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## STATISTICS AND THE IMPACT ON POST SECONDARY EDUCATION

### FACILITATOR TALKING POINTS

- Together we are going to go over some statistics. Did you know the World Bank estimates that one billion people, or 15% of the world's population, experience some form of disability.
- In the United States, about 26% of people have a disability. This includes both visible disabilities, such as many mobility impairments, and hidden ones, such as psychosocial or emotional conditions.
- *This is a good opportunity to refer back to the [May 2021 EMBRACE](#) program to review visible and invisible disabilities.*
- In 2020, the Bureau of Labor statistics reported that only 18% of disabled people in the United States were employed, compared to the 50% of disabled people in the UK that were employed in May 2021.
- While the employment rate may be alarming to some and not surprising to others, we want to focus on the impact of having a disability and being in the school setting.
- Research shows that college students with disabilities have lower graduation and retention rates than their peers without disabilities.
- Throughout TK-12 schooling there are special education classes and additional resources like auxiliary aids, academic modifications, etc. provided to students with disabilities. However, there is no special education at the college level.
- In more recent years, some colleges and universities have started disability studies departments and programs and others (Syracuse University, Miami University of Ohio and the University of Illinois at Chicago) have created disability cultural centers or affinity groups.
- **What are some ways your campus provides supportive spaces for people with disabilities?**
  - *Allow chapter members to respond.*
- College presidents and administrators understand disability is a part of diversity, however scholars and activists say they do not feel that higher education has accepted that disability is a part of identity that can be celebrated.
- Some activists and scholars feel that disability is often framed as an individual biomedical condition, a technical problem to be solved rather than as a group identity.
- Disability is often confined to offices that work through educational accommodations.
- **Why do you think it is important to provide a space to celebrate and acknowledge people with disabilities outside of academic**

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**accommodations?**

- *Allow chapter members to respond.*
  - There are many intersectionalities in our identity, how people experience their disability is also filtered through their race and other characteristics, and vice versa.
  - The way we acknowledge people with disabilities both inside and outside the classroom can leave a lasting impression. While we were able to discuss disability as an identity to be celebrated and represented, we also have to talk about the challenges students with disabilities experience when they transition from high school to post-secondary school.
  - The educational rights covered by IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) do not apply to post-secondary education.
  - Colleges must comply with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Civil Rights Restoration Act. Simply put, college students have civil rights, but no “education” rights.
  - *Show the chapter the differences in Policies and Procedures for High School vs. College Disability Services - either by printing out [this document](#) and/or displaying it on the screen together.*
  - *As a chapter, discuss the difference between high school and post-secondary education. Questions to consider:*
    - **Why do you think the transition from high school to college may be difficult for students with disabilities?**
    - **What obvious differences stood out to you between high school and college?**
    - **What did you find frustrating?**
    - **What do you wish was different?**
    - **How can we as a chapter provide support to our sisters with disabilities?**
    - **How can we as a chapter ask for more support from our institution?**
    - **Where can we find resources on our campus for disability services?**
  - *Provide a thoughtful wrap up to this discussion.*
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## FACILITATOR TALKING POINTS

- Everyone learns and thinks differently. 1 in 5 individuals in the United States has a learning or thinking difference, like ADHD or dyslexia.
  - While there is a call to grow and improve our diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging efforts, according to Coqual (a global, nonprofit think tank and advisory group founded in 2004 to address bias and uncover barriers to advancement for underrepresented populations in the workplace), learning and thinking differences often classified as disabilities are left out of the conversation.
  - Suppressing differences of any kind was once almost expected, especially if it was to make it easier for the majority. This has led to many people who are neurodiverse to remain silent about their disability in an effort to not be labeled as “different” which oftentimes has been synonymous with “difficult.”
  - Many people remain undiagnosed or uncomfortable talking about their learning and thinking differences because of the stigma they could face from their peers.
  - 1 in 5 individuals living with a learning or thinking difference represent 20% of the domestic buying power. Companies are missing the opportunity to create products and solutions that are inherently more inclusive of more people.
  - When we accept and integrate differences between each other, it often generates a better outcome both in interpersonal relationships and in team projects or work.
  - While some organizations and companies such as Sephora who has taken a step to ensure that people with disabilities account for at least 12 percent of its workforce in distribution centers, many have yet to address the gap of accepting those who fit outside the box for seemingly non-traditional reasons.
  - Companies who have set up the structural and cultural standard of acceptance like SAP who has reformed their HR processes to incorporate neurodiverse talent have seen productivity gains, quality improvement, employee engagement and helped leverage talents of all employees by recognizing individual needs.
  - With greater visibility of the neurodiverse community, we have the ability to have better performance, more cohesive teams, and happier people all around.
  - **So what can we do as a chapter to be more inclusive of our neurodiverse sisters and friends?**
    - *Have the chapter brainstorm answers in groups or 2-4. Share as a larger group.*
  - Building an inclusive, neurodiverse community can start with normalizing discussions such as these. We can bring inclusive language about cognitive differences into our everyday conversations. We can ask one another if we need accommodations for invisible disabilities and begin to build out a more inclusive culture within our chapters and greater campus communities.
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**FACILITATOR  
TALKING POINTS**

- *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, we encourage you to select one of the many TED Talks that are available that address various topics about disabilities. Below are a few to consider watching as a chapter.*
- [TEDxUF: Why Business Must Be Fearless With Disability Inclusion](#)
- [TEDxBrighton: Changing The Way We Talk About Disability](#)
- [TEDxUGA: The Dandelion Shift: Seeing the Ability in Disability](#)
- [Ten Insightful TED Talks about Disabilities, Accessibility and Inclusion](#)

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**Conclusion**

**FACILITATOR  
TALKING POINTS**

- Diversity in higher education can be very selectively inclusive, says Syreeta Nolan, a senior at University of California, San Diego, and co-founder of Disability in Higher Ed. “The Black resource center is inclusive for Black people, the women’s center is inclusive for women, the LGBTQ resource center is inclusive for those who are LGBTQ themselves. But I (she) doesn’t see that intersectionality and I (she) feels weird and off when I (she) try to talk about disability in those spaces.”
  - Nolan has participated in undergraduate research programs for historically underrepresented students, however those were open to her because she is Black, and not because she is disabled.
  - When we discuss disability, we often talk about disability in the context of educational accommodations that are required by law and allow students with disabilities to participate in class.
  - While these accommodations are important, as Nolan said, she is a disabled student, not just a disabled student inside the classroom.
  - When we think about our college/university experience, we often think about the education and experiences we have outside of the classroom. Student involvement is one of the main reasons students stay in college. Being involved in AEPi is a part of that student involvement.
  - Growth does not only happen in the classroom, and as AEPi we should continue to strive to provide inclusive spaces. Organizations such as 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.
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- 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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## CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

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### FACILITATOR TALKING POINTS

- *As a chapter, take these able-ist words and correct the terminology. Have members say why they changed the word, why they would not use the word, etc. Below are some examples. You can find additional words to avoid and use [here](#).*
    - Using the word “the” with a specific disability to describe people with that disability
      - *The preferred term, “people with disabilities,” stresses the humanity of the individuals and avoids objectification. If it’s appropriate to refer to a person’s disability, be sure to use the correct terminology for the specific disability.*
    - The blind
      - *People who are blind*
    - Normal
      - *Using the word “normal” to refer to people who do not have a disability in contrast to people with disabilities should not be used. Use non-disabled instead.*
    - Jane did as well on the exam as the normal students
      - *Jane did well on her exam*
    - Confined to a wheelchair or wheelchair bound
      - *Avoid using terms that define a person’s disability as a limitation. Use wheelchair user or uses a wheelchair*
    - Victim or sufferer
      - *Terms such as “victim” or “sufferer” should not be used to refer to people who have a disability or disease as this is dehumanizing and implies powerlessness.*
  - *Utilizing the [Disability Awareness Activity Packet](#) - choose a few different activities to do as a chapter. You can break the chapter into smaller groups or do the activities as a whole.*
    - This booklet is intended to give you some ideas for helping the chapter understand different disabilities. Keep in mind two people can have the same disability and still be very different.
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