

Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidebook



Special Olympics
Project UNIFY®

Version 1 - July 2013



Special Olympics Project UNIFY® is an education and sports based program started by Special Olympics in 2008 designed to build an inclusive environment among youth with and without intellectual disabilities, as well as empower them to become youth leaders and speak up for change in their community.

Project UNIFY works in three ways:

- 1. Inclusive Sports** – provide students with and without intellectual disabilities opportunities to participate in sports activities alongside one another;
- 2. Youth Leadership & Advocacy** – provide students with and without intellectual disabilities opportunities to take on leadership roles to promote Project UNIFY activities in the school and in the community; and
- 3. Whole-School Engagement** – provide opportunities for all students in the school to participate in Project UNIFY through sustained school-wide activities.

For more information about Project UNIFY, visit specialolympics.org/putoolkit. In the Project UNIFY toolkit, there are many great resources on how to get Project UNIFY into your school, or better an existing program.

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Introduction

Walking down the hallways in your school, you may see a wide variety of students: the student body president, the homecoming king, a student in a special education classroom. Would you describe each of these people as leaders? Do you see yourself as a leader?

Do you believe that in order to be a leader you must be:
 ...popular?
 ...academically gifted?
 ...outspoken?

These traits do not accurately determine who will be leaders. Each one of us can be a leader if we celebrate our unique talents.

An Inclusive Youth Leader believes that people of all abilities can participate in leadership opportunities. This leader sees each peer first as a person, someone who can be part of the team if the team supports his or her leadership growth. Inclusive Youth Leaders pave the path for their fellow students, recognizing that their peers with intellectual disabilities have the potential to be phenomenal leaders, just like their peers without intellectual disabilities.

Who knows what this world can achieve if people with intellectual disabilities lead alongside their peers without disabilities?

While anyone can be designated as a leader, not everyone can be an effective leader. A person who practices Inclusive Youth Leadership, and who advocates for inclusion of people with all abilities, is an effective leader.



This guide will lead you through five Pillars:

Inclusion

Co-Leadership

Teamwork

Communication

Environment

Within each Pillar, it will present challenges and activities that will empower you to work and reflect on how you reach your full potential as an Inclusive Youth Leader.

Are you ready to become a part of the movement that promotes inclusion?

Let's get started! ▶

“ BECOMING AN INCLUSIVE LEADER IS A LIFELONG JOURNEY... NOT A DESTINATION. ”



Inclusive Tip:

Expected Outcome

With the support of this Guidebook, youth who want to learn to be Inclusive Youth Leaders can start or progress on their journey to co-create environments of acceptance and respect.

Co-Create - When two or more people work and lead together towards a common goal, utilizing the strengths each possess.

Goals

- Understand the differences between Youth Leadership and Inclusive Youth Leadership.
- Learn the values and initiatives that Special Olympics Project UNIFY® promotes and how this movement supports young people.
- Reflect on the behaviors, attitudes, and values that the Five Pillars identify in this Guidebook, and how to promote them in everyday life.
- Understand that each person has talents and strengths that he or she can share with the team.

Project UNIFY is the latest civil rights movement – youth are the voice of Project UNIFY and we do have what it takes to make change happen.

Five Pillars of This Guidebook

Pillar #1: Inclusion

The feeling of being physically, socially, and emotionally connected with the community.

Goal: Learn the challenges that exclusion poses and how you can promote dignity and respect for all people.

Pillar #2: Co-Leadership

A way of leading with two or more people, sharing the roles of leadership based on the strengths that each person possesses.

Goal: Identify the value of sharing the roles of leadership and understand how the team can experience success by having mutual beliefs.

Pillar #3: Teamwork

The process of maximizing the talents of each person on the team, and the collective team as a whole.

Goal: Realize how all can contribute to the group, through focusing on strengths and not weaknesses.

Pillar #4: Communication

A skill that, in its many forms, enhances our ability to share and learn with one another.

Goal: Develop strategies to communicate in ways that support the diverse learning styles of all, regardless of ability.

Pillar #5: Environment

The culture and attitudes within which your team is working.

Goal: Discover how you can encourage a culture that is safe, supportive, and empowering for all.

Before Your Journey Begins

As you start your journey toward becoming an Inclusive Youth Leader, you need a strong foundation to understand how to embody this style of leadership.

Think of the connection between sports and leadership. To be successful, a team needs leadership to guide and motivate everyone through practicing, stretching, setting up, and mentally preparing for a game.

Emerging Inclusive Youth Leaders also require preparation before sharing this way of thinking with peers. Below are four steps of preparation for any Inclusive Youth Leader:

- *Awareness* about the initiatives and beliefs that Project UNIFY empowers within youth;
- *Foundational skills* - such as the practice of reflection - to heighten one's skills in celebrating what went well, identifying what was challenging and learning for next time;
- A core *value* of inclusion, which is the center of Inclusive Youth Leadership; and
- *Application* of the behaviors, attitudes and beliefs to all parts of life, especially with the essential leadership skills of co-leadership, teamwork, communication, and environment.



If you are reading this resource, you are most likely to be the *facilitator*. The *participants* are the people who will be engaging in these activities.

Inclusive Tip:

When the word *facilitator* is used in this Guidebook, it refers to the leader(s) who will implement the activities.

All emergent youth leaders must engage in the building of awareness, foundational skills, and a core value (Pillar #1: Inclusion) before proceeding to *Application to All Parts of Life*. After Pillar #1, the facilitator may complete the remaining four Pillars in any order.

Inclusive Tip:

Emergent is when one is presented with a new idea, behavior or plan.

For example, the facilitator may choose to implement the Guidebook in the following order:



Or the facilitator may choose to implement the Guidebook in another way, but ensuring that they implement Pillar #1: Inclusion first.



Proposed Timeline for Implementation

It is recommended that facilitators allocate at least 90 minutes to fully cover each of the Five Pillars in this Guidebook. Leadership is a continually developing process, so covering the entire Guidebook in one day is not recommended. Implementing the entire Guidebook will take approximately 10 hours.

Factors that may lengthen or shorten the time required:

- Size of the Group
- Discussion/Reflection Time Length
- Implementation of Suggestions for Using This Guidebook



Inclusive Tip:

Refrain from rushing through the Guidebook; provide ample opportunities for high-quality interactions, rather than for quantity (i.e. number of minutes).

Suggested Ways for Implementation

To the right are some proposed configurations on content to facilitate based on the available time: ▶

Available Time	Proposed Schedule
1 Hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Special Olympics Project UNIFY • Reflection • Pillar #1 – Pre-Activity & Main Activity with Reflection Questions
2 Hours (with a 15 minute break)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Special Olympics Project UNIFY • Reflection • Pillar #1 – Complete Execution
1/2 Day Summit (4 Hours with 2, 30 minute breaks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Special Olympics Project UNIFY • Reflection • Pillar #1 – Complete Execution • Pillar Execution of <i>Facilitator(s) Choice</i> • Group Reflection

Implementation for Reoccurring Meetings

This Guidebook is a powerful opportunity to strengthen the skills of students in Partners Clubs or other Project UNIFY clubs. The following chart illustrates the suggested implementation over the course of a school year, with each session lasting one hour. ▶

Date	Proposed Implementation
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Icebreakers • Overview of Special Olympics Project UNIFY® • Reflection
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pillar #1 Pre-Activity & Main Activity with Reflection Questions
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review from Pillar #1 – Highlights and Reflections • Pillar #2
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Inclusive <i>Youth Leadership</i> Commitments • Reflect on what you have learned thus far with your group
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pillar #3
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pillar #4
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread the Word to End the Word
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pillar #5
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Planning – How do I/we engage more youth leaders to engage as Inclusive Youth Leaders?

Using This Guidebook

This Guidebook is detailed with activities, reflection questions, and tips. The following information illustrates how to effectively utilize this resource.

Before

In preparation for facilitating a Pillar or activity suggested in this Guidebook:

- Identify the participants' level of understanding about Special Olympics Project UNIFY®. The information below shares guidelines for presenting about Project UNIFY, depending on the experience level of those participants.

Beginners

- Project UNIFY Presentation For Youth.
- *An Overview of Project UNIFY* Handout.

More Experienced

- *An Overview of Project UNIFY* Handout.
- Share favorite memories and experiences.
- Read the selected Pillar or activity you wish to facilitate.
- Identify the resources needed to facilitate the activity (i.e. space, time, materials, printouts).
- Determine if co-facilitating (more than one person leading the activity) would be a possible option.

During

- Brainstorm ways to facilitate the activities – e.g., will the leader stay in the front of the room or move around while leading?
- Read the instructions clearly. If needed, explain them in another way so participants can clearly understand them (writing on the board, providing a worksheet, etc.).
- Ask participants what questions they have about the activity.
- When facilitating reflection, ask for someone to be a notetaker to capture the ideas from the group.

What do I need to do before using the activities in this Guidebook?

How can I best lead these activities, adapting them to meet the needs of participants?

Inclusive Tip:

Check out <http://www.specialolympics.org/projectunifyresources/> for more resources and videos!

Who can lend support in strengthening my skills as an Inclusive Youth Leader?

Cultivate the value for diverse perspectives and insights. As a leader, you don't always have to agree with them, but you do have to listen.

Inclusive Tip:

To encourage questions, say, 'what questions do you have?' rather than, 'any questions?'

Future

- Encourage all participants to share their learning moments, challenges, and surprises by:
 - Writing a Special Olympics Share Your Story Post – specialolympics.org/share
 - Recording a Video Reflection to play as a PSA (Public Service Announcement) at your school.
 - Tweeting using the #ProjectUNIFY hashtag and tagging @SpecialOlympics.
 - Self-Monitoring your progress throughout the Guidebook, by reflecting on the *My Journey As An Inclusive Youth Leader* (refer to, "Additional Resources").
- Learn more about Project UNIFY and these new resources:
 - Like Us on Facebook – www.facebook.com/ProjectUNIFY
 - Join our Project UNIFY WordPress Blog – projectunifyblog.wordpress.com
 - Project UNIFY Resources – specialolympics.org/projectunifyresources/



An Overview of Special Olympics Project UNIFY®

Special Olympics Project UNIFY is an **education-based** project that uses **sports** and education programs to activate **young people** to develop school communities where all youth are **agents of change**, fostering respect, dignity, and advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities.

Project UNIFY is made up of three main components:



Inclusive Sports

Students with and without intellectual disabilities participate in sports alongside each other through Unified Sports® or an Inclusive Young Athletes Program.

Special Olympics Unified Sports®

Brings together athletes with and without intellectual disabilities to train and compete on the same team. Throughout the year in a variety of sports ranging from basketball to golf to figure skating, Unified Sports athletes improve their physical fitness, sharpen their skills, challenge the competition and have fun.

Special Olympics Young Athletes Program™

A play activities program and curriculum for young children – ages 2 through 7. It engages them in games and activities that help develop motor skills and hand-eye coordination and encourages social, intellectual and physical growth. Project UNIFY schools create inclusive Young Athletes Programs that combine children with and without intellectual disabilities.

Youth Leadership and Advocacy

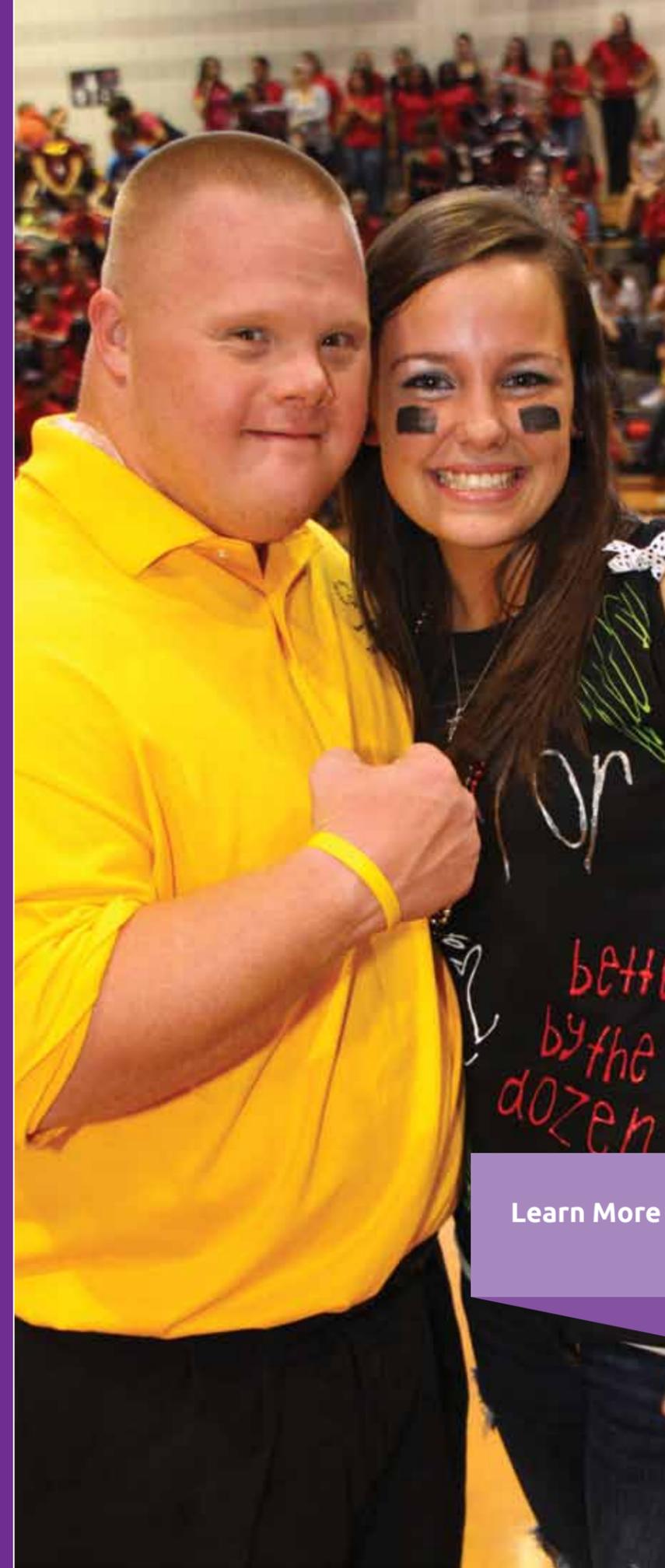
Project UNIFY does not merely allow young people to take leadership roles in promoting Project UNIFY in their schools and communities... it insists that they do so. For youth both with and without intellectual disabilities, these are leadership lessons that last a lifetime, and youth are recognized as the pioneers of an inclusive environment.

Partner's Clubs

A unified school club for individuals with and without intellectual disabilities to develop meaningful relationships, help spread acceptance, and ensure everyone feels included and welcome in their school.

Youth Summits

Students who become advocates want to share their passion and ideas. They also want to inspire and lead others. In Project UNIFY, young people hold summits to bring the message of acceptance and inclusion to even more people.



Whole-School Engagement

When an entire school accepts and includes students and others with intellectual disabilities, it is a powerful community of change. By giving all students, faculty, and staff opportunities to participate, Project UNIFY helps achieve that goal.

Assembly for Spread the Word to End the Word®

A youth-led effort by Special Olympics, Best Buddies International and many supporters to raise consciousness about the dehumanizing and hurtful effects of the word "retard(ed)," while encouraging people to pledge to stop using the R-Word and promote the acceptance and inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities.

Fans in the Stands

Like competitive athletes everywhere, Special Olympics athletes love having fans cheer them on. Fans in the Stands carries out two of the most fundamental parts of Special Olympics' mission: letting Special Olympics athletes know their sports competitions are as important as anyone else's, and making the whole school aware of the abilities of athletes with intellectual disabilities.

[Learn More](#)

What to Learn More? Visit us at www.specialolympics.org/projectunify

The Basics of Inclusive Youth Leadership

The unique characteristic of this Guidebook is its focus on inclusion as a leadership style with its own set of values, behaviors and beliefs. You can find many books on leadership, but barely any on *Inclusive Youth Leadership*.

The following descriptions explain the distinctions between inclusion, youth leadership, and Inclusive Youth Leadership. ▼

Definition of Inclusion

Empowering all individuals to feel comfortable and maximized in their efforts to contribute to society.

- Seeing the ability in all individuals
- Discussing topics as a collaborative team
- Engaging in equitable conversations
- Creating and fostering a safe environment for everyone
- Equity, also known as fairness, utilized in school setting
- Sharing the power of sessions and group activities

Inclusion

Definition of Youth Leadership

Respecting the thoughts and natures of all members in a group, to effectively enhance the talents of everyone, for overall group success.

- Effective communication and active listening
- Delegating tasks and responsibilities
- Guiding a group with confidence
- Inspired to help others
- Unique experiences
- Exemplifies positivity and creativity (unconventional ideas)

Youth Leadership

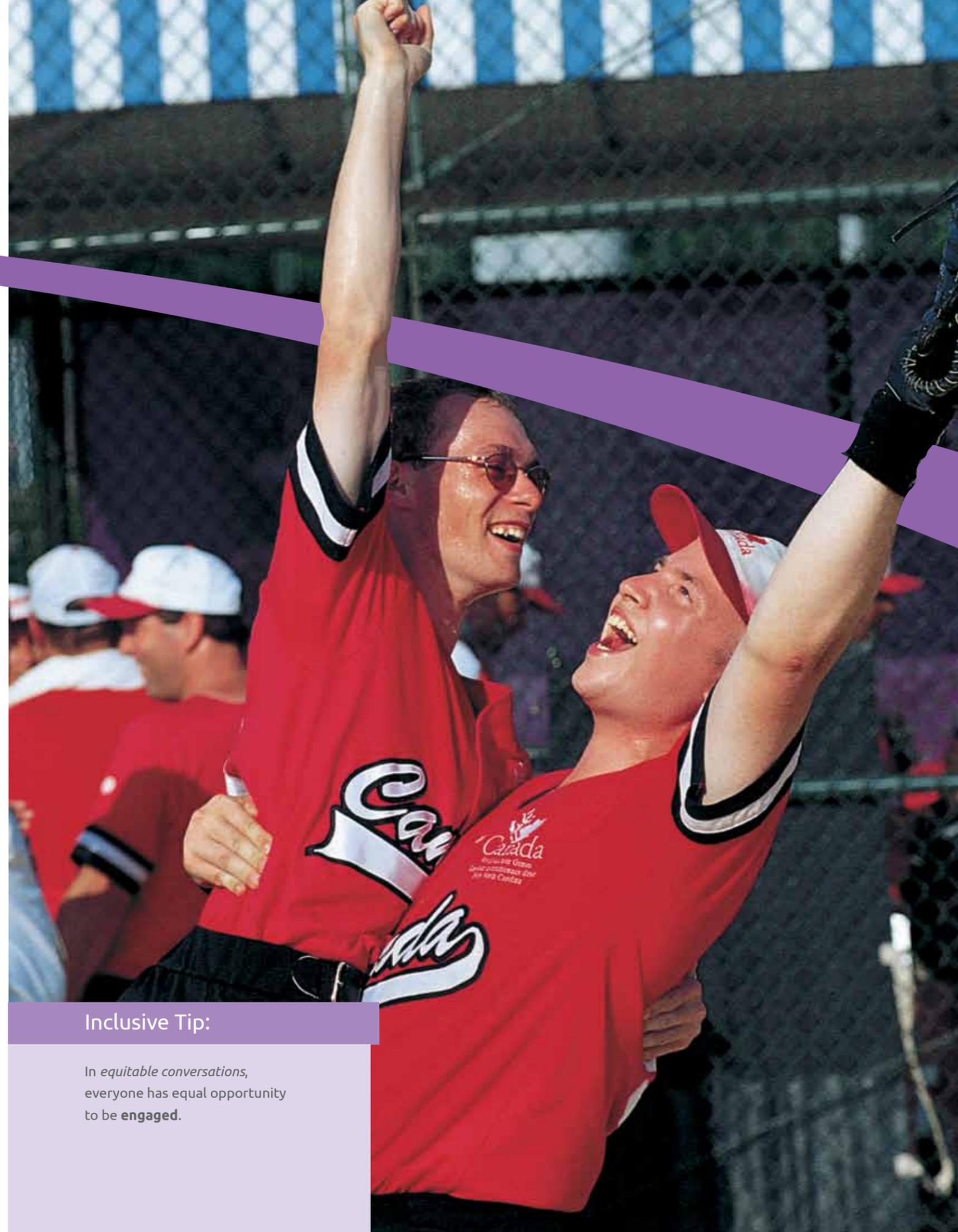
Definition of *Inclusive Youth Leadership*

Leadership grounded in a belief that all people have ability and can engage in meaningful leadership opportunities if given the support, resources, and time through experience and reflection.

- Co-creating tasks that benefit each individual
- Leading as a group toward a goal which the whole group supports
- Individual with strength in a particular activity leads with the encouragement of others on the team
- Using equitable conversations during any communication session, and using words each participant understands
- Determining the wishes and goals of each participant, to create a team effort in building strong individuals
- Respecting the ideas, opinions and views of other people

Inclusive Youth Leadership

Your Growth as an Inclusive Youth Leader



Inclusive Tip:

In *equitable conversations*, everyone has equal opportunity to be **engaged**.

Reflection

Throughout this Guidebook, you will notice sections labeled **Reflection**. By engaging in reflection, you can continuously enhance your leadership and your growth as an Inclusive Youth Leader. Therefore, throughout this Guidebook we have integrated times to step back and consider the big picture for continuing forward in this work.

This information will provide you with guidelines to answer the question, "How and why should I engage in reflection time?"

Reflection

As each of us aspires to enrich our leadership skills, explain our understanding of the world, and learn more about ourselves, we often don't give enough time to reflection. Even though contributing to Evaluations is worthy, we encourage you to commit to Reflection, which is a personal professional development exercise. Reflection can either be an individual or group activity, enriching the connection between you and your world.

Reflection can be

(but is not limited to):

- A **summation** of one's personal experiences, feelings and ideas, which influences the way he or she interacts with the world.
- An **expression** of one's values through his or her behaviors.
- An **opportunity** to synthesize new information with one's existing knowledge, thereby identifying areas of sameness and areas of differences.
- A **springboard** for deepening or modifying one's personal opinions, inner morals, and principles.
- A **learning moment** of sharing one's reflection with the group, painting a clearer and more inclusive picture of the topic.

Differences Between Evaluation and Reflection

Evaluation

Numerical data; rating scales

Describe how one perceives what is happening in the outside world

Identical questions asked to the same group of people

Utilized for future initiatives and reports of "Averaged Data"

Reflection

Personal feelings and insights

Analyze one's inner values and corresponding expressive behaviors

Open-ended prompts, encouraging identification of the connection between oneself and the world

Used for personal development and pursuing values-based leadership

Introductory Reflection Questions for the Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidebook

1. How would you describe the behaviors and characteristics of a leader?
2. What does inclusion, or the feeling of being included, mean to you?
3. Describe the type of environment that empowers you to share and learn.
4. What leadership opportunities are in your school community that unify youth with and without intellectual disabilities?



Pre-Pillar Reflection Prompts for All Participants

What Do You See?

Consider the following statements and reflect on how they apply to you.

Determining Your Leadership	Always	Sometimes	Never
People with intellectual disabilities are valued at my school just like any other student.			
Not everyone can be a leader – you have to be born a leader.			
Inclusion is present at my school – students with and without intellectual disabilities learn in the same building.			
Students without intellectual disabilities also experience the feelings of exclusion.			

Did You Know...

- Three percent of the world's population has an intellectual disability and often face exclusion even today?
- Special Olympics has impacted communities in over 220 countries throughout the world through its mission?

What Do You Think?

- What does exclusion mean to you?
- How can students co-create an environment of inclusion for all students?

Introduction

Throughout history, the exclusion of people with intellectual disabilities has been widely accepted. They have been ignored in schools, the labor force, and society in general. It is time that people with intellectual disabilities are treated with dignity and respect. This change towards inclusion will only happen if students act on it by engaging those with intellectual disabilities and including them in everyday activities.



Outline of Pillar Activities

1. **Activity #1**
 - a. Pre-Activity: Champions Together
 - b. Main Activity: Creating Understanding
 - c. Activity Reflection
2. **Activity #2**
 - a. Main Activity: Co-Creating Change
 - b. Activity Reflection

Goals

- Recognize the importance of feeling included.
- Create a sense of understanding of people with intellectual disabilities.
- Be able to problem-solve and create ways to promote inclusion in the community.

Activity Handouts

1. Pillar #1 Pre-Reflection Questions – One per person.
2. Answer Sheet for the Activity, Creating Understanding.
3. Pillar #1 Reflection Resource – One per person.
4. Pillar #1 PowerPoint Presentation – For facilitator(s).
5. Pillar #1 One-Pager – One per person.

Inclusive Tip:

We are not *advocating* for people with intellectual disabilities; we advocate *for and with* people with intellectual disabilities.

Activity #1

Logistics

- **Supplies**
 - Pre-Activity: *Champions Together* Video, computer, projector
 - Main Activity: Paper and Pencil, answer sheet
- **Suggested Time**
 - Pre-Activity: 10 to 15 minutes
 - Main Activity: 10 to 15 minutes
- **Group Size**
 - Pre-Activity: Entire Group – Activity ideal for either large or small groups; if possible, break out into groups of four for the discussion questions.
 - Main Activity: Entire Group – Activity is best suited for groups of six to eight people, without limit on the number of small groups.

Inclusive Tip:

We encourage facilitators **not** to **watch** the video until presenting – watch and learn *with* the group.

Pre-Activity: Champions Together

To start the activity, watch a video by youth involved in the Special Olympics Movement. In this unscripted video, youth tell their own stories of the impact Special Olympics has had on them, through the power of accepting, including and respecting everyone. Youth have the power to make their community one of inclusion and acceptance. Access this three-minute video at: www.specialolympics.org/revealingchampions

Activity Reflection for Participants

Ask the following questions:

1. Have you ever been a part of something that made you feel included?
2. How has feeling accepted changed your attitude?
3. Have you ever been a part of something that included you but not others? How do you think the excluded people felt?
4. What can you do to make sure that everyone in your school and community is included and accepted?

Activity Reflection for Facilitators

1. What was the reaction of the participants when watching this video?
2. Based on the participants' answers to the reflection questions, what emotions were evident among the participants?

Main Activity: Creating Understanding

Challenge the participants to complete the following activity in three minutes. (You may wish to tell them that their answers will count toward a prize. This will help to establish a sense of urgency. Be sure at the end to give all the participants a prize to make everyone feel included.)

Translate the following Latin phrase into English:
aut viam inveniam aut faciam.

After a few minutes of participants trying to determine the answer *without* technology assistance (e.g. cell phones, the Internet), discreetly distribute answer sheets to some groups but not others. Once time is up, ask students to discuss or journal their feelings about the exercise. Tell students that these feelings will serve as a springboard for the rest of the activity and to keep the exercise in mind as they move forward.

Answer: Either I shall find a way or I will make one.

Activity Reflection for Participants

Ask the following questions:

1. How did the exercise make you feel?
2. Did you sincerely try to complete the challenge?
3. For those that did not get the answer sheets, did it increase your frustration when other groups got the answer and you didn't?
4. Did you feel excluded when you knew that other groups had the answers and you did not?

Activity #2

Logistics

- **Supplies**
 - Main Activity: Paper and Pencil
- **Suggested Time**
 - Main Activity: 10 minutes
- **Group Size**
 - Main Activity: Divide participants into groups of three; no restrictions on size of overall group

Main Activity: Co-Creating Change

Participants will break into groups and select a problem that they believe people with intellectual disabilities face and/or problems that get in the way of having a more inclusive society. Encourage them to write a problem statement that justifies their choice.

Example of a Problem Statement: Students with intellectual disabilities at the high school level can't participate in sports because others don't think that they have enough skill.

The facilitator should read the following questions to all participants and ask each group to discuss:

1. Why did you choose this problem?
2. Why is it meaningful to you?
3. What influenced your group's final decision?
4. What will happen if no one addresses it?
5. How can addressing it make a difference?

After discussing the problem statement, participants should identify several options to determine the best solution to their initial problem. You may want to have them share ideas with other groups to assist the process. Examples of solutions include:

- **Problem:** Students at school use the word "retard" as a way of calling each other "stupid" or "dumb."
- **Solution:** A community campaign to end the use of the R-word (www.r-word.org).
- **Problem:** Students and/or community members mock or make fun of those with intellectual disabilities.
- **Solution:** Host a community tolerance day where community members are encouraged to work alongside people of different abilities to accomplish a task.
- **Problem:** Students at school do not interact with their fellow students with intellectual disabilities.
- **Solution:** Host an ability awareness day, where those with intellectual disabilities share their strengths and talents with community members.

Activity Reflection for Participants

Have each group review the following questions:

- Was there a common theme between problems and solutions of the groups?
- How were solutions similar? How were they different?
- How do these scenarios relate to situations we have been in?
- What did we learn from other groups?

Accomplishing Goals

Throughout this session you have learned the importance of inclusion. During the previous activities you were able to recognize the importance of feeling included, create a sense of understanding of those with intellectual disabilities, and problem-solve by coming up with ways to promote inclusion in your community.

You have the power to make a change and be a part of the inclusion and respect movement. Will you join us?

Tip in Action!

The feeling of exclusion cannot always be seen from the outside. It is important that you accept others and treat them with respect. It is always important to include everyone, even if they do not seem to be excluded.

Pillar 1: Inclusion Reflection

You have just finished Pillar #1 through engaging in the activities, reflections, and discussions necessary to further your journey towards becoming an Inclusive Youth Leader. We encourage you to take this time to reflect on how you understand and promote inclusion in your school community.

Inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities is important because...

Identify inclusive actions and attitudes you will promote (or have promoted) in your everyday life.

**My Inclusive
Actions and
Attitudes**

My favorite experience from this activity:

Inclusive Tip:

If youth who have intellectual disabilities or have siblings with intellectual disabilities want to share, encourage them to do so.

Pre-Pillar Reflection Prompts for All Participants

What Do You See?

Consider the following statements and reflect on how they apply to you.

Determining Your Leadership	Always	Sometimes	Never
Co-Leadership is just another word for saying leadership, but with two people.			
A leader should focus on helping others identify their weaknesses or deficits.			
Co-Leadership works only when the two leaders know each other and have the ability to relate to one another.			
A team cannot share ownership on a project or event – only “a leader” can have that ownership.			

What Do You Think?

1. What challenges do you think co-leadership presents?
2. How are people with intellectual disabilities perceived as leaders?
3. What are the benefits to youth both with and without intellectual disabilities who work, learn, and share together?

Introduction

As many may agree, a “team” is composed of members with diverse skills and experiences who contribute different ideas and views on a certain issue. Each team member brings something to the table because each is excellent in his or her own way.

Co-leadership generates shared power within a group. It promotes respect and flexibility between individuals, and it teaches the importance of working with others. Through co-leadership, we are able to adapt so each person can reach his or her full potential.

In order to practice co-leadership, we must begin by reviewing four relevant components:

Accountability

Owning the outcomes of one’s actions

Equity

Making sure the contributions of each individual are recognized equally and fairly

Partnership

Mutually respectful and trusting relationship between individuals who share common goals

Ownership

An individual making a personal commitment to his or her work and to the mission of the organization



Outline of Pillar Activities

1. **Activity #1**
 - a. Pre-Activity: How I Rank Myself as a Leader
 - b. Main Activity: Getting Close
 - c. Activity Reflection
2. **Activity #2**
 - a. Main Activity: Drawing Through Listening
 - b. Activity Reflection

Goals

- Be able to put the four components of co-leadership into action: accountability, equity, partnership and ownership.
- Recognize the strengths of yourself and your co-leader.
- Identify the importance of co-leadership.

Activity Handouts

1. Pillar #2 Pre-Pillar Reflection Resource – One per person.
2. How I Rank Myself as a Leader Worksheet – One per person.
3. Pillar #2 Reflection Resource – One per person.
4. Pillar #2 PowerPoint Presentation – For facilitator(s).
5. Pillar #2 One-Pager – One per person.

Activity #1

Logistics

- **Supplies**
 - Pre-Activity: Chart – 1 per person
 - Main Activity: Hula Hoop
- **Suggested Time**
 - Pre-Activity: 10 to 15 minutes
 - Main Activity: 15 to 20 minutes
- **Group Size**
 - Pre-Activity: Up to 50 participants
 - Main Activity: Up to 50 participants

Directions for Facilitators

As a facilitator, complete the chart before leading this activity. When presenting, instruct the group to begin by individually filling out the chart (found in *Activity Handouts*).

Inclusive Tip:

You can have more than two people to embody co-leadership.

Pre-Activity: How I Rank Myself as a Leader

Questions	I am always like this	I am sometimes like this	I need to work on this	I need to develop this
I take responsibility for the outcomes of my actions.				
I start a project excited and ready to learn.				
I value the contributions of everyone in the group.				
I am prepared for whatever task needs to be accomplished.				
I make a personal commitment to my work.				
I use resources wisely and can brainstorm new ideas.				
I respect the relationships with my peers.				
I am honest with others and myself; I can be trusted.				
I communicate with others about my goals and wishes.				
I am accepting of all members and compassionate to their needs.				

Main Activity: Getting Close

Directions for Facilitators

Participants stand in a circle shoulder to shoulder, holding hands. Without breaking the chain or releasing hands, pass a hula-hoop from one person to the next.

Reflection Questions for Participants

1. Was the task harder or easier than you expected it to be?
2. How were you able to incorporate **partnership** with the people on either side of you?
3. How did each person’s **accountability** define the group progress?
4. How was **equity** used throughout the activity?
5. Did anyone have to take **ownership** for anything during the activity? (e.g., breaking the chain).
6. How could your experience have been different if you had used all four components of co-leadership?

Activity #2

Logistics

- **Supplies**
 - Poster board, markers, construction paper, scissors
- **Suggested Time**
 - 20 to 30 minutes
- **Group Size**
 - Up to 50 participants

Main Activity: Drawing through Listening

Directions for Facilitators and Participants

1. Before the session, the facilitator and co-facilitator of the session should create a poster with a design on it.
2. Split participants into pairs of two.
3. Each pair must decide which person will draw and re-create the poster and which person will explain. They can decide this according to their respective skills and abilities.
4. One person in each pair will have the opportunity to look at the drawing and must explain it to the other person without using hand motions.
5. The second person must draw with only explanations from their partner; they cannot view the original image. The pairs have 20 minutes to recreate the poster as closely as possible.
6. At the end of the challenge, the drawers will be able to compare their posters with the original posters.

Reflection Questions for Participants

1. How difficult was it to communicate with your partner without being able to use your hands? How did it feel not being able to know what you were trying to draw?
 - **Drawer:** Did you feel there was equity between you and your partner, even though they got to see the original poster and you did not?
 - **Explainer:** How did you take ownership and accountability for the directions that you gave to your partner?
2. Do you feel as though you were equal partners? Did one partner hold more authority or power than the other?
3. How did you determine which person drew and which person gave instructions? Did you use your partner's skill sets to the best of your ability?
4. How does your final project compare with the original? What do you think would have made it easier to recreate the original?

Session Reflection

After the activities, lead participants through the reflection questions below.

- Now that you have completed the co-leadership section, what knowledge do you feel you have gained? How are you better prepared to work with others in the future? What do you hope that those around you learned? Is this information that will be used in the classroom? How so?
- Through the series of activities, what did you learn about the four components of co-leadership? Were you held accountable for your actions? Did you create partnerships while working with others? Did you make sure equity was used at all times? Did you have to take ownership for any of your decisions?

Accomplishing Our Goals

Throughout this session you have learned what it means to be a co-leader. During the previous activities you were able to put the four components of co-leadership (accountability, equity, partnership, and ownership) into action. You recognized the strengths of yourself and your co-leader. Last but not least, you were able to identify the importance of co-leadership. Now go out and show the world what kind of co-leader you can be!

Tip in Action!

By excelling at being yourself, and using the four components of co-leadership, you and your co-Leader will be able to work together with fairness and respect. By focusing on the strengths you already have, you will be able to enhance your leadership style and become an effective co-Leader.

Pillar 2: Co-Leadership Reflection

Identify your top two leadership qualities and explain how you share them with others.

1	2

What are some ways to promote co-leadership?

 	+	 	+	 	=	Co-Leadership
--	---	--	---	--	---	----------------------

What surprised me about co-leadership?

--

Inclusive Tip:

Ensure that you created a poster, prior to the session.

Pre-Pillar Reflection Prompts for All Participants

What Do You See?

Think of a group in which you are currently involved. This could range from Student Councils or even your family or friends. Consider the following statements and reflect on how they apply to you.

Determining Your Leadership	Always	Sometimes	Never
Teamwork is about everyone completing the same amount of work.			
Teamwork works well in sports, but is very challenging for leadership opportunities.			
Teamwork is focused more on achieving a goal with less on including everyone in the work.			
Teamwork requires all teammates to live the roles of being learners and sharers.			

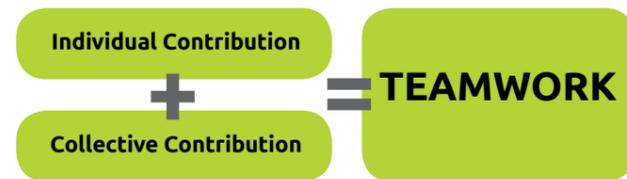
What Do You Think?

1. What functions in society would not be possible without teamwork?
2. Special Olympics Unified Sports® gives people with and without intellectual disabilities the opportunity to play sports together. Why is this valuable?

Introduction

Teamwork is much more than just working with multiple people. It also:

- requires that you be flexible, inspire creativity, and share your talents with the team.
- is rooted in the notion that individual and collective contributions can not only increase the productivity of the group, but also nurture the skills of collaboration, communication, and personal growth for all.



Your talents combined with those of your teammates, yields teamwork!

Many people feel some anxiety when they have to work with a new group of people. However, teamwork does not have to be scary if each member commits to promoting a sense of trust, honesty, and support. This fosters feelings of unity within the group.

This Pillar is focused on the belief that everyone is an asset to the team; if we exclude or do not engage just one person, our collective impact can decline.

Teamwork, as defined in this Guidebook is:

- Ability to co-create a vision, co-develop goals, and embark together on the journey to achieve them.
- Valuing the talents and abilities of each person in the group.
- Focusing on, “How can we use your strengths to benefit the group?” versus “What are you unable to do?”
- Taking time to ensure everyone can contribute, using various means of sharing and learning (PowerPoint, flip-chart paper, index cards, summaries, visuals, and pictures).
- If conflict or disagreement arises, co-create solutions to be able to make progress, rather than coming to a halt.

Outline of Pillar Activities

1. **Activity #1**
 - a. Pre-Activity: Teamwork in Everyday Life
 - b. Main Activity: Together We Conquer
 - c. Post Activity: Inclusion Wordlib
 - d. Activity Reflection
2. **Activity #2**
 - a. Main Activity: Teamwork Brings Results
 - b. Activity Reflection

Goals

In this section you will learn:

- How your actions will change when you transition from “teamwork” to “inclusive teamwork.”
- How to use inclusive teamwork in your leadership initiatives.
- How to share the power and value of inclusive teamwork with your peers and teachers.

Activity Handouts

1. Pillar #3 Pre-Pillar Reflection Resource – 1 per person.
2. Pillar #3 Pre-Activity Handout – 1 per person.
3. Pillar #3 Instructions for Together We Conquer – 1 per group.
4. Pillar #3 Post Activity: Inclusion Wordlib – 1 per person.
5. Pillar #3 Reflection – 1 per person.
6. Pillar #3 PowerPoint Presentation – For facilitator(s).
7. Pillar #3 One-Pager – 1 per person.

Inclusive Tip:

Ask, “How can we use your strengths to benefit the group?”

Activity #1

Logistics

- **Supplies**
 - Pre-Activity: Handout
 - Main Activity:
 - One bag of straws (approximately 100) and one roll of tape per group
 - Timer (or watch)
 - One piece of flip chart paper (or poster board or butcher paper) in the center of each table with the phrase “Inclusive Youth Leadership” printed or written in the center
 - Markers/pens
 - Dice
- **Suggested Time**
 - Pre-Activity: 10 minutes
 - Main Activity: 30 to 45 minutes
- **Group Size**
 - Pre-Activity: Whole group; any size
 - Main Activity: Groups of 5 to 8 people; no limit on number of participants

Pre-Activity Inclusive Tip:

This activity is challenging, so think outside the box and support one another with this activity.

Pre-Activity: Where is the “We” in Team!?

Directions for Facilitators

Create a PowerPoint slide with the objects on the *What do These Have in Common?* handout (you may add or remove objects as you see fit), or make copies and distribute the handout.

Proposed Objects: giraffe, mirror, paper clip, balloon, permanent marker, heart, bell.

Ask the participants to work with the people in their group to identify how the items relate to teamwork and leadership. For example:

- *Giraffe* - as a team, we must be visionary (looking ahead with a long neck) to see our next steps for tomorrow, and for next year!
- *Mirror* - demonstrates self-reflection; as we look into the mirror, we see ourselves looking back at us. Celebrating what went well, identify what was hard and how we can do better next time.
- *Heart* - As team members, our hearts love and respect everyone, regardless of abilities.

Main Activity: Together We Conquer

Directions for Facilitators and Participants

1. Ensure there are five to eight people per group. Each group should have one box of straws and one roll of tape.
2. Ask the group to discuss the following questions at their table:
 - a. How would you describe a leader?
 - b. Do you think that everyone is “a leader”?
3. Hand out the *Instructions for Together We Conquer* to participants.

Instructions for Together We Conquer

1. You are to use only the straws and tape you have been given to create a structure. Here’s the catch - a die will be rolled every 3 minutes and the number will correlate with a “challenge.” Each group will choose one person to assume the “challenge” for the rest of the activity. However, the team must engage that person, despite any challenge he or she may have.
2. Objective – build either the strongest, tallest, or most creative structure.
 - a. These three categories determine how each structure is assessed, and prizes can be awarded!
3. You can use only the materials you are provided.
4. The structure must stand on its own, without any support from your team.

Activity #1 (cont.)

Activity Reflection Questions for Participants

Whole Group Discussion

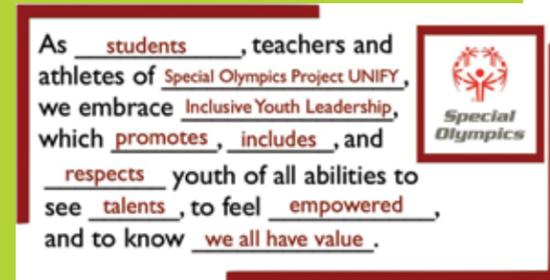
– Organized by Facilitator

- What went well?
- Who on your team delegated tasks?
- How did you include the team members who had imposed challenges placed on them?

Small Group Discussion

- Using the paper provided at your table, draw or write what Inclusive Youth Leadership means to you.

As teachers, athletes, and ___ of ___, we



5. Instruct the teams to begin, and set your timer for three-minutes.
6. After three minutes, roll the die. Your imposed challenge will depend on what number is showing on the die:
 - 1: Eyes Closed
 - 2: No Talking
 - 3: Non-dominant hand
 - 4: No hands
 - 5: One hand, one eye
 - 6: Freebie!

Instructions for Facilitators

1. Continue this for about four rounds, each three minutes in length.
2. If you want, the last round can be “challenge-free,” giving everyone three minutes to complete any last-minute changes.
3. Have the co-facilitators walk around, assessing each structure based on the three categories: strongest, tallest, and most creative.

Post-Activity: Inclusion Wordlib

1. Distribute the hand out “Inclusion Wordlib.”
2. Have the participants work together as a group to create a description of Inclusive Youth Leadership by filling in the blanks. Below each blank there is hint of what should go in the blank. For example, you might write “running” in a blank that hints the word should be a verb.
- ◀ 3. To the left is an example of a completed Wordlib.

Activity #2

Logistics

- **Supplies**
 - One box of playing cards per group
- **Suggested Time**
 - 5 to 10 minutes
- **Group Size**
 - Groups of 5 people

Main Activity: Facilitating Together

Today you’re in need of support from your team – put your heads together to solve the problem that lies ahead.

- Using the playing cards provided, build a card tower that is three levels high and uses at least 25 playing cards.
- Work together to develop a tower that is both structurally sound and creative.
- Once your tower is complete, team members must step away from the structure and count to 15 to ensure it doesn’t topple over.

Activity Reflection Questions for Participants

1. How did the team devise a plan to create the structure?
2. Did certain people look out for certain criteria (e.g., some ensured directions were met, while others were the builders)?

Accomplishing our Goals

Inclusive practices are an ever-growing set of behaviors and community values that can change over time. Thus, our individual experiences of the values of inclusion and teamwork – coupled with the interactive activities and thought provoking prompts in this Guidebook – can either initiate or strengthen one’s knowledge of these important values.

Learning does not stop once you complete these activities; rather, your continual engagement in leadership can enhance your skills and comfort level. Being able to lead a team, or be a coequal on a team, requires ongoing self-reflection and integration of new ways to interact while maximizing the strengths of all.

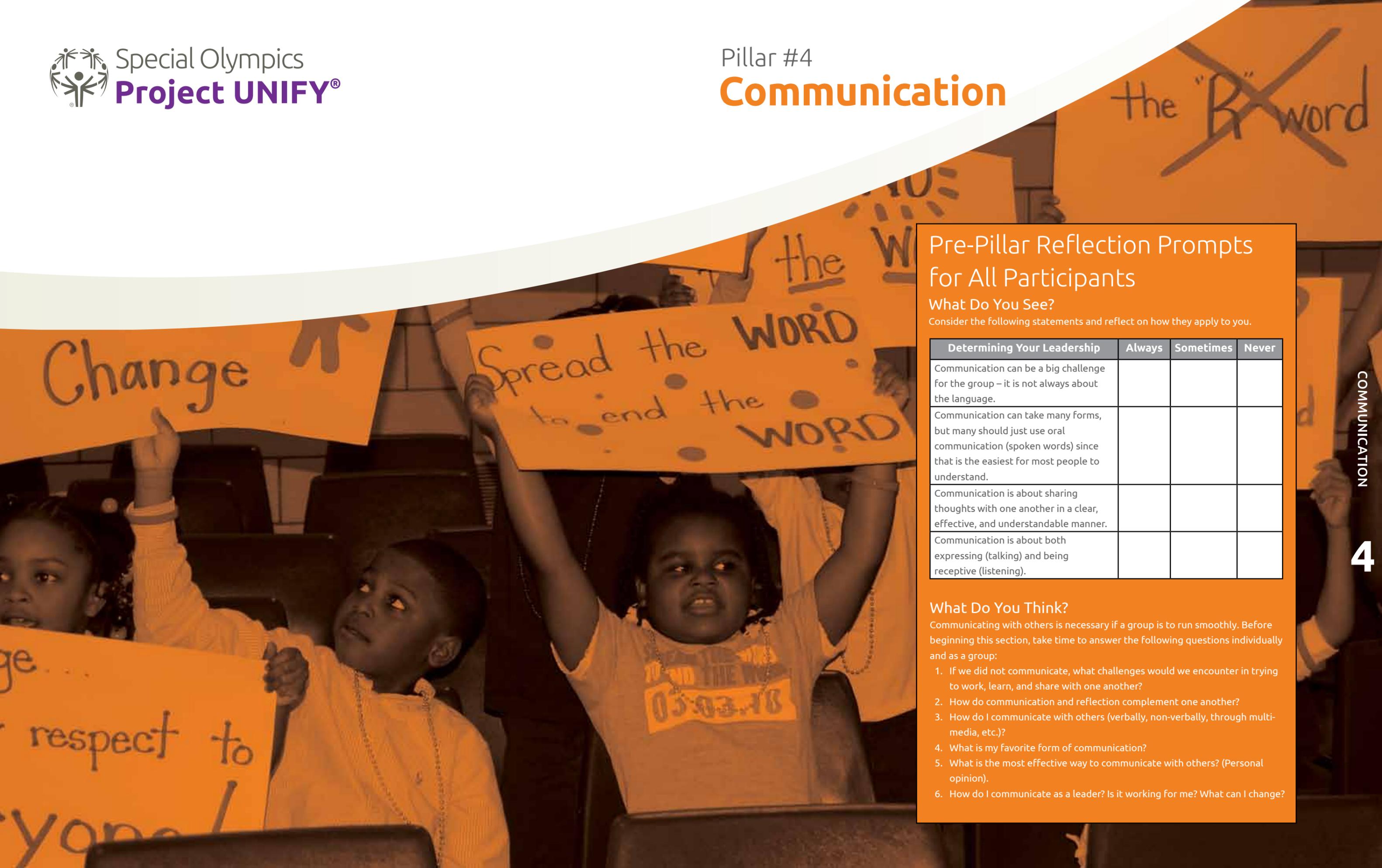
Tip in Action!

Teamwork is a necessary skill for working with a diverse group of people, but lack of effective communication can impede teamwork. Through experience and reflection, you can enhance your communication skills if you are ready to learn!

Pillar 3: Teamwork Reflection

What actions did you and your team use to co-create a structure with straws and tape?

In words or images, share how you would describe **Inclusive Youth Leadership**.



Pre-Pillar Reflection Prompts for All Participants

What Do You See?

Consider the following statements and reflect on how they apply to you.

Determining Your Leadership	Always	Sometimes	Never
Communication can be a big challenge for the group – it is not always about the language.			
Communication can take many forms, but many should just use oral communication (spoken words) since that is the easiest for most people to understand.			
Communication is about sharing thoughts with one another in a clear, effective, and understandable manner.			
Communication is about both expressing (talking) and being receptive (listening).			

What Do You Think?

Communicating with others is necessary if a group is to run smoothly. Before beginning this section, take time to answer the following questions individually and as a group:

1. If we did not communicate, what challenges would we encounter in trying to work, learn, and share with one another?
2. How do communication and reflection complement one another?
3. How do I communicate with others (verbally, non-verbally, through multi-media, etc.)?
4. What is my favorite form of communication?
5. What is the most effective way to communicate with others? (Personal opinion).
6. How do I communicate as a leader? Is it working for me? What can I change?

Introduction

Communication is key to successful leadership. It is vital for group members to focus on and practice communication techniques because all members of the team have to be on the same page to work successfully toward a goal. If there are group members who are unsure about what is happening, it becomes difficult to reach that goal.



Outline of Pillar Activities

1. **Activity #1**
 - a. Pre-Activity: Telephone
 - b. Main Activity: Back-to-Back
 - c. Activity Reflection
2. **Activity #2**
 - a. Main Activity: FAB
 - b. Activity Reflection: Engaging Your Audience

Goals

In this pillar, you and your team members will learn different ways to increase communication so that each member can be an authentic leader. You will each be able to:

- Utilize open dialogue
- Engage in active listening
- Maintain professionalism

Activity Handouts

1. Pillar #4 Pre-Pillar Reflection Resource – 1 per person.
2. Pillar #4 Equitable Conversations Overview – 1 per person.
3. Pillar #4 Effective Communication 101 Presentation – For facilitator(s).
4. Pillar #4 Reflection Resource – 1 per person.
5. Pillar #4 PowerPoint Presentation – For facilitator(s).
6. Pillar #4 One-Pager – 1 per person.

Activity #1

Logistics

- **Supplies**
 - Pre-Activity: no supplies needed
 - Main Activity: ample space for participants to sit
- **Suggested Time**
 - Pre-Activity: 10 to 15 minutes
 - Main Activity: 30 to 35 minutes
- **Group Size**
 - Pre-Activity: Up to 50 participants
 - Main Activity: Up to 50 participants, grouped in pairs

Inclusive Tip:

Try your best to listen and share, even if you think it may be incorrect or confusing.

Pre-Activity: Telephone

Directions for Facilitators

Have everyone in the group sit in either a circle or a line. The facilitator starts at one person and whispers a simple saying into his or her ear. The participants then successively repeat what they heard until it reaches the last person.

Directions for Participants

- Each person is to listen carefully to what the person next to him or her whispers, and then share the message by whispering it to the next person.
- The final person announces to the entire group what he or she heard.

Activity Reflection for Participants

- What was the saying at the beginning?
 - *Call on a few people to share what they heard.*
- How much did it change from person to person?

Main Activity #1: Back-to-Back

Directions for Facilitators

Have participants form pairs. Read the following italicized instructions to the group:

1. *Sit back-to-back with your partner and begin to talk about something that happened to you lately. Something that was a positive experience.*
 - a. Wait about one minute for discussions to begin before proceeding.
2. *Now, move about five feet away from your partner and continue talking, still back-to-back.*
 - a. After about 30 seconds, stop the conversations.

Activity Reflection for Participants

Ask the group members to share about this experience. How did it feel for them to share a good experience with someone who was turned away from them? If the group members do not bring up the following points, ask the group:

- How strong is the need for eye contact when talking with others?
- Did you find yourself missing the nonverbal gestures and facial expressions? Why or why not? Why are these important?
- How easy was it to hear what your partner was saying when sitting back-to-back?

Activity #2

Logistics

- **Supplies**
 - Knowledge of Special Olympics Project UNIFY components and activities to present to the group and convince members to join.
- **Suggested Time**
 - 30 to 45 minutes
- **Group Size**
 - Up to 60 participants

Main Activity: FAB

Directions for Facilitators

1. Ask participants to form groups of four.
2. The facilitator will identify a Project UNIFY component or activity, that the group has to “sell” to the rest of the room. (Example: Spread the Word to End the Word Campaign or Partners Club). Their presentation must be “FAB”:

F: Features and Focus of the Component

Using the five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch) to describe the item, identifying strengths, and benefits, etc.

A: Advantages of the Component

Informing the group about what this “product” can do and how it is used.

B: Benefits of purchasing the Component

Describing what people will gain from “purchasing” this item.

3. The groups will have 15 minutes to brainstorm their methods of selling. After that collaboration time, each group will present its idea to the rest of the room. Presentations should be no longer than two minutes.

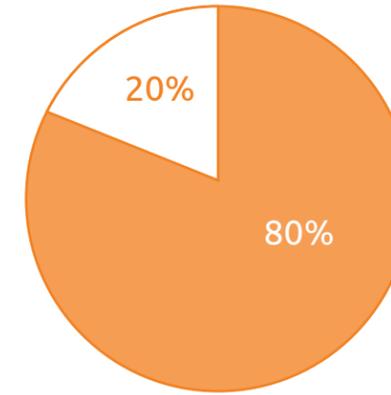
Activity Reflection for Participants

- Which presentation was the most effective and why?
- What could have been done to make the presentations more memorable?

Accomplishing Goals

Based on what you have learned in this Pillar, do you and your team members feel you have enhanced your ability to communicate effectively? Have you defined yourself as an authentic leader? You should each be able to:

- Utilize open dialogue
- Engage in active listening
- Maintain professionalism



Tip in Action!

Effective communication is 20 percent what you know and 80 percent how you feel about what you know. Speak from the heart and communication will come easily.

- how you feel about what you know
- what you know

Pillar 4: Communication Reflection

In communicating with one another, what were benefits and challenges of communicating in the various activities listed within this Pillar?

	BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
+		

If you were working on a project, identify your top two preferences for ways in which you would like to be contacted. Remember to share this information the first time you meet with a group.

Phone Call	Text Message	Video Message	Facebook/Twitter	E-Mail

What are some ways you can overcome communications challenges to promote mutual understanding and comprehension?

Inclusive Tip:

Be sure to celebrate what went well! Then, propose ideas for future enhancement

Pre-Pillar Reflection Prompts for All Participants

What Do You See?

Consider the following statements and reflect on how they apply to you.

Determining Your Leadership	Always	Sometimes	Never
School is a supportive place for me – I am encouraged to try my best and ask questions.			
I am careful with my language to ensure that everyone can understand me and feel included.			
Negative or toxic environments are okay, since I believe “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.”			
Environment is about physical inclusiveness, not social and emotional inclusiveness.			

What Do You Think?

1. What type of environment empowers you to learn and share with your school community?
2. What kinds of behaviors and attitudes lead to a negative and hurtful environment?

Introduction

We often think of environment as referring to outdoor conditions: What is the temperature? Is the sun shining? Is there a breeze? But environment also has a different meaning – the physical and social space in which we learn, share, and work with one another. Ideally, that environment is supportive and encourages us all to do our best and work hard.



Outline of Pillar Activities

1. Activity #1

- Pre-Activity: Social Norms
- Main Activity: *What is a Community?*
- Activity Reflection

Goals

In this section, you will learn:

- Social norms and the value in co-creating them for our interaction and leadership.
- Questions to consider in identifying your own school environment.
- How to promote a supportive and engaging environment for all.
- The differences between physical and social inclusiveness.

Activity Handouts

- Pillar #5 Pre-Pillar Reflection Resource – 1 per person.
- Pillar #5 What is a Community? Worksheet – 1 per person.
- Pillar #5 Reflection Resource – 1 per person.
- Pillar #5 PowerPoint Presentation – For facilitator(s).
- Pillar #5 One-Pager – 1 per person.

Activity #1

Logistics

- Supplies**
 - Pre-Activity: Paper and Markers
 - Main Activity: *What is a Community?* Worksheet
- Suggested Time**
 - Pre-Activity: 10 to 15 minutes
 - Main Activity: 20 to 25 minutes
- Group Size**
 - Pre-Activity: Up to 100 participants; divided into groups of 6-8 people each.
 - Main Activity: Up to 100 participants; divided into groups of 6-8 people each.

Pre-Activity: Social Norms

Directions for Facilitators

- Have participants form groups of 6-8 people, and give each group a piece of paper and a marker.
- Explain to the participants what the hand gestures mean for the Fist-to-Five activity.
 - To gauge the general consensus of the group, we will use the **Fist-to-Five** activity. After a person reads the proposed social norm, all participants will make one of the following hand gestures:
 - Five fingers if he or she **LIKES** the social norm.
 - Show three fingers if he or she thinks the social norm is **OK**.
 - Make a fist if he or she does **NOT** like the social norm.
- If the majority of the room **LIKES** or thinks the Social Norm is **OK**, write the social norm on paper or a place where all can see.

Directions for Participants

- Today we are going to co-create social norms. What are they? Social Norms are expectations identified by a group. Rather than focusing on “rules” that are usually made by a few people, with no input from the group, social norms focus on “the we” as a group.
- To help us understand the social norms we want to identify as a group, complete the following phrase...

“I learn, share and support best when...”

An example of a social norm:

I learn, share, and support best when I have time to complete my work and am not rushed.

- Within your group, create a list of at least 5 social norms. Then we will share with the group.
 - Wait five minutes...
- Please share the social norm your group feels is most important.
 - Wait three to five minutes for sharing with the group.
- To gauge the general consensus of the group, we will use the Fist-to-Five Activity. For example, after a person reads a proposed social norm, each person here will make one of the following hand gestures:
 - If you **LIKE** the social norm, make a high-five!
 - If you think the social norm is **OK**, then show three fingers.
 - If you do **NOT** like the social norm, make a fist.

**LIKE =
HIGH FIVE**

**OK =
3 FINGERS**

**DISLIKE =
A FIST**

- These social norms will be placed for us as a reminder of what we agreed upon, to co-create an environment that best meets all of our needs.

Activity #1 (cont.)

Activity Reflection for Participants

- Do you think co-creating social norms is a better way to promote a safe and supportive culture, rather than solely using rules? How can these social norms help make our community/group more supportive/positive?
- Did you find that you and your peers agreed on the social norms?
- What are some social norms that our society uses, but that might not be specified in writing?
 - Example: if you open the door and there is a person behind you, you hold the door open for them.

Main Activity: What is a Community?

Directions for Facilitators

With the participants in groups of 6-8 people, distribute the *What is a Community Worksheet?* to each participant. They may work together.

Directions for Participants

Within your group, discuss and record your thoughts on the worksheet.

Activity Reflection for Participants

- What are common ways people make you feel supported?
- Before engaging in this activity, what were your generalizations about the differences in physical and social inclusion?
- How can we promote inclusion in our communities as “a must” rather than “an option?”



Inclusive Tip:

Be sure the social norms are visible for all to see during all engagements.

Accomplishing our Goals

Through reflecting about the environment that we best learn and share in, we were able to identify ways in which we can support one another. We realize the challenges that negative environments can pose, and we have tips on how we can be promoters of inclusive communities for people of all abilities.

Tip in Action!

Some Inclusive Youth Leaders may be challenged by our message of inclusion for all people. We encourage these leaders not to give up, but rather to use the challenge as an opportunity to learn new ways to inspire and produce support for inclusive communities.

Pillar 5: Environment Reflection

How will you include the co-creation of social norms into your next leadership engagement?

What are three action steps you will take in co-creating a more inclusive environment for all?

How will you do so?



Pillar #1
Inclusion

INTERBA
HOME
S.O.G.



Pre-Pillar Reflection Prompts for All Participants

What Do You See?

Consider the following statements and reflect on how they apply to you.

Determining Your Leadership	Always	Sometimes	Never
People with intellectual disabilities are valued at my school just like any other student.			
Not everyone can be a leader – you have to be born a leader.			
Inclusion is present at my school – students with and without intellectual disabilities learn in the same building.			
Students without intellectual disabilities also experience the feelings of exclusion.			

Did You Know...

- Three percent of the world's population has an intellectual disability and often face exclusion even today.
- Special Olympics has impacted communities in over 220 countries throughout the world through its mission.

What Do You Think?

What does **exclusion** mean to you?

How can students co-create an environment of inclusion for all students?

Pillar #1

Inclusion Reflection

You have just finished Pillar #1 through engaging in the activities, reflections, and discussions necessary to further your journey towards becoming an Inclusive Youth Leader. We encourage you to take this time to reflect on how you understand and promote inclusion in your school community.

Inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities is important because...

Identify inclusive actions and attitudes you will promote (or have promoted) in your everyday life.

**My Inclusive
Actions and
Attitudes**

My favorite experience from this activity:

Answer: Either I shall find a way or I will make one.

Answer: Either I shall find a way or I will make one.

Answer: Either I shall find a way or I will make one.

Answer: Either I shall find a way or I will make one.

Answer: Either I shall find a way or I will make one.

Answer: Either I shall find a way or I will make one.

Answer: Either I shall find a way or I will make one.

Answer: Either I shall find a way or I will make one.

Pillar #1

Inclusion

One-Pager

Throughout history, it has been widely accepted to exclude people with intellectual disabilities. They have been ignored in schools, the labor force and society in general. It is time that people with intellectual disabilities are treated with dignity and respect. This change towards inclusion will be acknowledged only if students act on it by engaging people with intellectual disabilities and including them in everyday activities.

Goals

- Recognize the importance of feeling included.
- Create a sense of understanding of people with intellectual disabilities.
- Be able to problem solve and create ways to promote inclusion in the community.

Things to reflect upon...

1. Have you ever been a part of something that made you feel included?
2. Why is inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities important to you?
3. What are problems within my school and/or community that prevents inclusion?
4. In what way can you promote inclusion within your community?

Accomplishing Goals

In order to be an effective youth leader it is important that you are familiar with the feeling of inclusion, understand those with intellectual disabilities and problem solve ways to further promote inclusion. You have the power to make a change and be a part of the inclusion and respect movement, will you join us?

Tip in Action!

The feeling of exclusion cannot always be seen from the outside. It is important that you accept others and treat them with respect. It is always important to include everyone, even if they do not seem to be excluded.



Pillar #2

Co-Leadership



Pre-Pillar Reflection Prompts for All Participants

What Do You See?

Consider the following statements and reflect on how they apply to you.

Determining Your Leadership	Always	Sometimes	Never
Co-Leadership is just another word for saying leadership, but with two people.			
A leader should focus on helping others identify their weaknesses or deficits.			
Co-Leadership works only when the two leaders know each other and have the ability to relate to one another.			
A team cannot share ownership on a project or event – only “a leader” can have that ownership.			

What Do You Think?

What challenges do you think co-leadership presents?

How are people with intellectual disabilities perceived as leaders?

What are the benefits to both youth with and without intellectual disabilities who work, learn and share together?

Pillar #2

Co-Leadership Reflection

Identify your top two leadership qualities and explain how you share them with others.

1

2

What are some ways to promote co-leadership?

++=

Co-Leadership

What surprised me about co-leadership?

Pillar #2

How I Rank Myself as a Leader

In the chart below are questions for you to reflect upon. For each question, select the response that best describes you.

Questions	I am always like this	I am sometimes like this	I need to work on this	I need to develop this
I take responsibility for the outcomes of my actions.				
I start a project excited and ready to learn.				
I value the contributions of everyone in the group.				
I am prepared for whatever task needs to be accomplished.				
I make a personal commitment to my work.				
I use resources wisely and can brainstorm new ideas.				
I respect the relationships with my peers.				
I am honest with others and myself; I can be trusted.				
I communicate with others about my goals and wishes.				
I am accepting of all members and compassionate to their needs.				

Pillar #2

Co-Leadership One-Pager

Creating shared power in a group generated by utilizing Co-Leadership; it promotes respect, flexibility, and teaches the importance of working with others.

The four components of Co-Leadership include:

- **Accountability**
Owning the outcomes that are a result of one's actions
- **Equity**
Making sure the voices of each member are equally recognized
- **Ownership**
Having an individual person make a commitment to their work and the mission of the organization
- **Partnership**
Generating respectful and trusting relationships between individuals who share common goals

When introducing Co-Leadership, the four components will help a team recognize the strengths of themselves and the others with whom they are working. It also focuses on enhancing the strengths each individual already possess and using those strengths to achieve an established goal.

When starting your Co-Leadership journey, take a moment to think about the following questions:

- What are some challenges associated with Co-Leadership?
- How are people with intellectual disabilities perceived as leaders?
- What can youth with and without intellectual disabilities gain from leading together?

Once you have had the opportunity to engage in any Co-Leadership activities, reflect on the following questions:

- What knowledge have I obtained from working as a Co-Leader and how can I use this skill in the future?
- How did I use the four components of Co-Leadership to become an authentic Co-Leader?
- What can I do to inspire others to participate in Co-Leadership discussions?

Inclusive Tip

A team of Co-Leaders creates trust. When working with someone else, and utilizing the four components of Co-Leadership, it is important that each Co-Leader trusts the beliefs and actions of each other.



Pillar #3

Teamwork



Pre-Pillar Reflection Prompts for All Participants

What Do You See?

Think of a group in which you are currently involved. This could range from Student Councils or even your family or friends. Consider the following statements and reflect on how they apply to you.

Determining Your Leadership	Always	Sometimes	Never
Teamwork is about everyone completing the same amount of work.			
Teamwork works well in sports, but is very challenging for leadership opportunities.			
Teamwork is focused more on achieving a goal with less on including everyone in the work.			
Teamwork requires all teammates to live the roles of being learners and sharers.			

What Do You Think?

What makes a team **not** work?

What makes a team work?

Special Olympics Unified Sports® gives people with and without intellectual disabilities the opportunity to play sports together. Why is this valuable?

Pillar #3

Teamwork Reflection

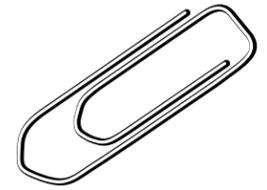
What actions did you and your team use to co-create a structure with straws and tape?

In words or images, share how you would describe **Inclusive Youth Leadership**.

Pillar #3

Pre-Activity Handout

QUESTION: How does each of the following pictures relate to teamwork and leadership?



Pillar #3

Together We Conquer

Instructions

1. You are to use only the straws and tape you have been given to create a structure. Here's the catch - a die will be rolled every 3 minutes and the number will correlate with a "challenge." Each group will chose one person to assume the "challenge" for the rest of the activity. However, the team must engage that person, despite any challenge he or she may have.
2. Objective – build either the strongest, tallest or most creative structure.
3. You can use only the materials you are provided.
4. The structure must stand on its own, without any support from your team.
5. You will have three minutes, per round, before the addition of a new challenge.
6. After three minutes, roll the die. Whatever number it lands on, corresponds with the following imposed challenge:



Eyes Closed



One Hand, One Eye



No Hands



Non-dominant Hand



No Talking



Freebie, no challenge!

Remember, everyone must be engaged, despite any imposed challenges!

Pillar #3

Inclusion Wordlib

With your team, co-create a wordlib about the importance of Inclusive Teamwork. Fill in the blanks with a word that fits in the designated category.

As _____, teachers and athletes of _____, we embrace _____, which _____, _____, and _____ youth of all abilities to see _____, to feel _____, and to know _____.



Pillar #3

Teamwork One-Pager

Teamwork is a skill that requires ongoing practice, experience and reflection. Teamwork can often be thought of as an option, rather than a necessity for all to learn, grow and work together. As Inclusive Youth Leaders, we see the value of teamwork and believe it provides opportunities for all to engage in leadership.

Through these activities, participants were able to understand the value in inclusive teamwork, which is based on the mutual belief that everyone has talent. If we become focused on ones' weaknesses, we start to lose sight of his or her ability.

Inclusive teamwork provides the impetus for participants to:

- Maximize the strengths that each person has;
- Differentiate the tasks per person, based on their interests and preferences;
- Believe that personal growth is equally as important as achieving a set number of outcomes;
- Understand that despite any challenge that is brought forth to the team, that every single person should be included as a 'team member' rather than 'the problem.'

Accomplishing Goals

Inclusive practices are an ever-growing set of behaviors and community values that can change over time. Thus, our individual experiences of the values of inclusion and teamwork -- coupled with the interactive activities and thought provoking prompts in this Guidebook -- can either initiate or strengthen one's knowledge of these important values.

Learning does not stop once you complete these activities; rather, your continual engagement in leadership can enhance your skills and comfort level. Being able to lead a team, or be a co-equal on a team, requires ongoing self-reflection and integration of new ways to interact while maximizing the strengths of all.

Tip in Action!

Teamwork is a necessary skill for working with a diverse group of people, but lack of effective communication can impede teamwork. Through experience and reflection, you can enhance your communication skills if you are ready to learn!



Pillar #4

Communication



Pre-Pillar Reflection Prompts for All Participants

What Do You See?

Consider the following statements and reflect on how they apply to you.

Determining Your Leadership	Always	Sometimes	Never
Communication can be a big challenge for the group – it is not always about the language.			
Communication can take many forms, but many should just use oral communication (spoken words) since that is the easiest for most people to understand.			
Communication is about sharing thoughts with one another in a clear, effective, and understandable manner.			
Communication is about both expressing (talking) and being receptive (listening).			

What Do You Think?

What is the most effective way for me to communicate with others?

In the space below, draw your ideas about inclusive communication - communication with people of all abilities, in learning and sharing together.

Pillar #4 Communication Reflection

In communicating with one another, what were benefits and challenges of communicating in the various activities listed within this Pillar?

+	BENEFITS	CHALLENGES	-

If you were working on a project, identify your top two preferences **for ways in which** you would like to be contacted. Remember to share this information the first time you meet with a group.

Phone Call	Text Message	Video Message	Facebook/Twitter	E-Mail

What are some ways you can overcome communications challenges to promote mutual understanding and comprehension?

Pillar #4 Equitable Conversations Overview

Equitable Conversations occur when...

- All are encouraged to contribute and respected regardless of their past experience, educational background or age.
- Participants stay calm, listen, and are honest when stating their opinions.
- There is a safe and comfortable environment for exploration and expression.

What do Equitable Conversations look like?

- Body language should show receptiveness – e.g., keep arms unfolded. All participants should be actively listening to one another and giving physical cues of understanding, confusion, or interest.
- Everyone is treated with respect, and each person's comments have fair and equal value.
- The intent is to be mutually productive, and everyone is willing to work together toward a mutual goal.

What do Equitable Conversations sound like?

- People are calm, speak honestly to one another, and include everyone in the conversation. No one is talking over anyone else. Generally, there is some sort of structure to the conversation.
- The conversation must use vocabulary that all members can understand. This helps to ensure that everyone is on the same page when working together to accomplish a goal.
- Each participant has an opportunity for an equal voice in discussion topics, issues, and concerns.

What do Equitable Conversations feel like?

- Everyone is treated with respect, and all sides are listening to each other. After the conversation, everyone feels that his or her opinions were heard and taken into consideration. Everyone should feel respected; no one should feel hurt or belittled.

Do's	Don'ts
Respect fellow participants	View certain participants as incapable of contributing valuable information
Listen and value the opinions of others – keep an “open mind”	Ignore the ideas of others
Be aware of vocabulary and tone of voice so everyone can understand	Use derogatory language, such as the R-word
Use different modalities (Visuals, Mind Maps) in expressing complex ideas	Use only one type of presentation or activity
Ask, “What questions do you have?”	Ask, “Any questions?”, which leads to few questions (people might feel singled out or ‘stupid’ if they do have questions)
Co-develop goals and social norms for the group	Impose rules on the group, especially when made by one person
As a facilitator, ask others who have not contributed their thoughts on certain topics (e.g. “Hey Matt, what do you feel about this project?”)	Let a small group of people dominate the conversation, as the other participants might have something to say but are shy or feel unwanted
Provide an agenda before the conversation to give participants time to think about the topics	Provide no information about the topics

Pillar #4

Communication One-Pager

In order to be a successful leader, communication is key. Focusing and practicing communication techniques between group members is vital because all members of the team have to be on the same page to work successfully toward a goal.

The different methods people use to communicate include talking, listening and body language. The way each method is utilized determines how the conversation will feel; either positive or negative.

Communication fosters authentic leadership. Outcomes of communication exercises include:

- Utilizing open dialogue
- Engaging in active listening
- Maintaining professionalism

When looking at effective conversations, there is always one talker and one receiver. One person will share their feelings while the other listens, digests the information, and repeats key points of the conversation. This shows that both parties value the opinions and insights of each other.

Before you begin practicing effective communication, ask yourself:

- How do I communicate with others? (Verbally, non-verbally, multimedia, etc.)
- What is my favorite form of communication? Why?
- How do I communicate as a leader? Is it working for me?

After engaging in various communication activities and exercises, take a moment to think about the following questions:

- How did my view on basic communication change once I practice equitable conversations?
- How can I use effective communication to be an authentic leader?
- What can I do to inspire others to communicate effectively?

Inclusive Tip

Remember, communication works for those who work at it. If you decide to become an effective communicator, you can change your future and open the door to more equitable relationships.



Pillar #5
Environment



| Environment

Pre-Pillar Reflection Prompts for All Participants

What Do You See?

Consider the following statements and reflect on how they apply to you.

Determining Your Leadership	Always	Sometimes	Never
School is a supportive place for me – I am encouraged to try my best and ask questions.			
I am careful with my language to ensure that everyone can understand me and feel included.			
Negative or toxic environments are okay, since I believe “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.”			
Environment is about physical inclusiveness, not social and emotional inclusiveness.			

What Do You Think?

What type of environment empowers you to learn and share with your school community?

What kinds of behaviors and attitudes promote a negative and hurtful environment?

Pillar #5 Environment Reflection

How will you include the co-creation of social norms into your next leadership engagement?

What are three action steps you will take in co-creating a more inclusive environment for all?

How will you do so?

	How will you do so?

Pillar #5 Environment Worksheet

What is a **community**? Co-create a definition.

What behaviors model a "close-knit community"?

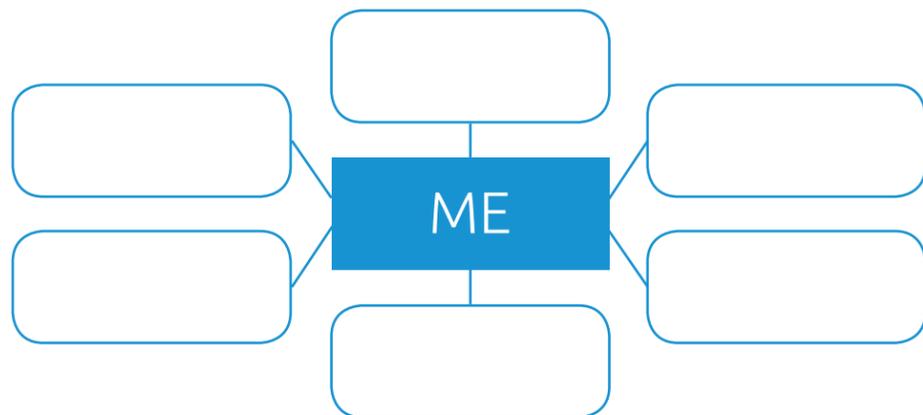
Pillar #5 Environment Worksheet (cont'd)

Read the following statements and identify whether they illustrate social inclusion, physical inclusion or exclusion. Then develop two statements: one that illustrates social inclusion and one that illustrates exclusion.

Statement	Social Inclusion	Physical Inclusion	Exclusion
Even though students with intellectual disabilities and students without intellectual disabilities attend the same school, they never see each other.			
Students with and without intellectual disabilities co-create awareness campaigns about hurtful words, such as the R-Word (retard).			
Students without intellectual disabilities laugh at people with intellectual disabilities, rather than laugh with people with intellectual disabilities.			
Anyone who has mobility needs (i.e. using a wheelchair, crutches) is able to access all parts of the building.			
<i>Social Inclusion Statement:</i>	✓	--	--
<i>Exclusion Statement:</i>	--	--	✓

Who Supports Me?

In each block, identify a person who makes you feel supported and one action they take to make you feel that way.



Pillar #5 Environment One-Pager

We often think of environment as referring to outdoor conditions: What is the temperature? Is the sun shining? Is there a breeze? But environment also has a different meaning – the physical and social space in which we learn, share, and work with one another. Ideally, that environment is supportive and encourages us all to do our best and work hard.

Behaviors that Support a Positive Environment

- Break large information down into pieces – chunking.
- Show support for one another
- Share compliments
- Be courteous and respectful
- Ask questions
- Work with Mentors – Youth and Adult

When starting this Pillar, we learned about...

- Social norms and the value in co-creating them for our interaction and leadership.
- Questions to consider in identifying your own school environment.
- How to promote a supportive and engaging environment for all.
- The differences between physical and social inclusiveness.

Accomplishing our Goals

Through reflecting about the environment that we best learn and share in, we were able to identify ways in which we can support one another. We realize the challenges that negative environments can pose, and we have tips on how we can be promoters of inclusive communities for people of all abilities.

Tip in Action!

Some Inclusive Youth Leaders may be challenged by our message of inclusion for all people. We encourage these leaders not to give up, but rather to use the challenge as an opportunity to learn new ways to inspire and produce support for inclusive communities.



Determining Your Leadership INTRODUCTORY REFLECTION for the Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidebook

Before you begin your journey toward becoming an Inclusive Youth Leader, we ask that you read the following statements and mark your responses.

Statements	Always	Sometimes	Never
I participate in leadership opportunities with people with and without intellectual disabilities.			
Inclusive Leadership identifies the challenges one has and determines what else that individual cannot do.			
Inclusion is the social and emotional connectedness with the school community, where all can learn and share together.			
Co-leadership is two people sharing the same exact roles, equally dividing the work.			
Co-leadership requires partnerships between two or more people.			
You cannot be on a team and be a leader at the same time.			
Teamwork is focused on getting the task done in the easiest and most efficient way possible.			
Communication is focused on spoken communication and impacts the work of Inclusive Youth Leaders.			
Communication is a skill that one masters with just a few months of practice.			
Youth Leaders should regard a safe and supportive environment as a desirable goal but not a necessity.			
A positive environment is one that creates the feeling of being valued and respected.			

The Five Pillars of This Guidebook

This Guidebook focuses on five pillars to support your growth in becoming an Inclusive Youth Leader. Each box below has a Pillar; share your thoughts, ideas, questions, pictures and comments on the words. There are no right or wrong answers, so do not worry if you are unsure of the meanings of any of these words.

Inclusion

Co-Leadership

Teamwork

Communication

Environment

Determining Your Leadership FINAL REFLECTION for the Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidebook

Congratulations! You have taken the first steps in becoming an Inclusive Youth Leader. The completion of this Guidebook does not signal an end, but rather a lifelong commitment to Inclusive Youth Leadership. Before you started, you completed an introductory reflection sheet to determine your leadership. Now, we encourage you to take this final reflection, to help gauge and celebrate your growth as an Inclusive Youth Leader!

Statements	Always	Sometimes	Never
I participate in leadership opportunities with people with and without intellectual disabilities.			
Inclusive Leadership identifies the challenges one has and determines what else that individual cannot do.			
Inclusion is the social and emotional connectedness with the school community, where all can learn and share together.			
Co-leadership is two people sharing the same exact roles, equally dividing the work.			
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Communication is a skill that one masters with just a few months of practice.			
Youth Leaders should regard a safe and supportive environment as a desirable goal but not a necessity.			
A positive environment is one that creates the feeling of being valued and respected.			

The Five Pillars of This Guidebook

Within this Guidebook, there were five pillars to support your growth in becoming an Inclusive Youth Leader. For each pillar, share your learnings, surprises, 'ah-ha!' moments and pictures that are most important to you. Ensure to create and sign your *Lifelong Commitment to Inclusive Youth Leadership!*

Inclusion

Co-Leadership

Teamwork

Communication

Environment



A Lifelong Commitment to
Inclusive Youth Leadership

As a lifelong Inclusive Youth Leader, I will...

Date

Signature

Learning Moments

Surprising Moments

Memorable Moments

My Journey As An Inclusive Youth Leader

As you progress through the Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidebook, we encourage you to reflect on your journey. This resource can be referred to at anytime during your journey, thus writing, drawing and listing your responses is valuable.

Inclusion

Co-Leadership

Teamwork

Communication

Environment

Successful Youth Engagement

The Why

As youth leaders of all talents and abilities understand how to best learn, share and work with one another, there are universal ways to support these types of engagements. Through each of the five pillars in this Guidebook, there is a belief that youth with and without intellectual disabilities can engage in meaningful leadership opportunities to co-create more inclusive and respectful places for all people. This Guidebook supports an individual's growth in becoming an inclusive youth leader. However, there are some strategies and ways to ensure your peers are able to contribute to the team.

Youth Leader Pair Profile

Jill and Mary are a youth pair (partner and athlete) who have participated in their local Unified Sports program. They recently applied and were accepted onto their State Youth Activation Committee. This committee, which is comprised of high school students with and without intellectual disabilities, works throughout the course of the year to organize fundraisers, create youth summits, and participate in Unified Sports events.

They are excited to be part of a Committee that works to promote positive change in the community, but are uncertain of how they will be able to contribute to the team. To the right are their concerns: ▶

The Challenge

Jill and Mary are questioning if they can really be leaders for the State Youth Activation Committee. They recognize that they do have talents that would benefit the team, but fear that their challenges will impede their value to the team.

Jill

- I enjoy speaking in front of a large group of people and do not need a script. I just need a few notes to make sure I cover all the major points.
- I become anxious when I am asked to write formal letters and have a lot of difficulty in creating blog posts.
- I also am not confident in using social media, so I rarely post updates on those platforms.

Mary

- I have a lot of ideas to share with my friends, but sometimes it is hard for me to express them. When others talk too fast with nothing to help me understand what he or she is saying, I become overwhelmed. It takes me a little longer to process new information.
- I am artistic and designed the posters for our recent Spread the Word to End the Word Day Campaign. Many loved the design of it, and I am proud of myself.
- I become shy when speaking in front of large groups of people.

I become anxious when I need to write a letter.

What Should They Do?

In reviewing the strengths and challenges that Jill and Mary possess, below are the challenges they articulated, along with ideas for how they can overcome them. ▼

- Jill has talent in writing speeches - if she shares her ideas out-loud and record herself, then she can write what she spoke.
- Mary loves to design art; together, they can co-create a post that has content and visuals for the reader to better process and understand.

I have a lot of ideas to share with my friends, but sometimes it is hard for me to express them.

- Mary expresses her thoughts through art. She can first draw them, and then reach out to her friend, Jill.
- Jill can support Mary in organizing her ideas, so that she is able to share them with the group.

I also am not confident in using social media, so I rarely post updates on those venues.

- Both Mary and Jill lack experience in using social media.
- Together, they can learn how to use social media through hands-on experience, while supporting one another.

Celebrate their successes

What Does This Mean?

Rather than addressing their challenges alone, they can work together.

Struggle with the support of one another when experiencing challenges

Learn to proceed forward to continue learning and sharing

As you may have guessed, Jill and Mary should absolutely feel comfortable in joining their State Youth Activation Committee. They have strengths and talents to share with the group, coupled with the mindset, "I want to learn more!"

Now that Jill and Mary identified ideas on how to work with one another, there are strategies for how they can effectively engage in leadership opportunities from presenting to a large group of young people, to co-creating a presentation for their State Youth Activation Committee. These strategies can appeal to an audience of all abilities to promote a supportive environment for mutual understanding.

Main Activity: Facilitating Together

Today you're in need of support from your team – put your heads together to solve the problem that lies ahead.

- Using the playing cards provided, build a tall tower that is three levels high and won't wobble or fall over.
- Work together to develop a tower that is both structurally sound and creative.
- Once your tower is complete, team members must climb down from the structure and count to 10 to ensure it doesn't collapse.

Activity Reflection Questions for Participants

- How did the team devise a plan to create the structure?
- Did certain people look out for certain criteria (e.g. ensuring the directions were met while others were the builders)?

- SO --> Special Olympics
- PU --> Project UNIFY
- ID --> Intellectual Disability

Logistics

- Supplies**
 - Pre-Activity: Handout
 - Main Activity:
 - Timer (or watch)
 - Dice
- Suggested Time**
 - Pre-Activity: 10 minutes
 - Main Activity: 30 to 45 minutes

Strategies for Co-Leadership

The following are ideas on how to support co-leadership between athletes and partners.

Using Visuals for Mutual Understanding

- Many can benefit from having information visually displayed in either a typed, written or picture form.
- Avoid acronyms or abbreviations since some may not remember what they mean & represent.
- Bold** and/or *italicize* important areas to draw the readers' attention.
- Utilize bullets or number lists to describe steps and connecting points.
- Use fonts that are easy-to-read and large.
YES: Leadership is inspiring...
NO: Leadership is inspiring...
- Some may benefit from having a hard copy of resources, rather than viewing them on an electronic device.

Processing Information

- Use Graphics to Organize Information



- Take **Reflective Breaks** frequently, to help with processing and understanding – “In Summary...”



Using **Reflective Breaks** to create a summary of the information presented can help many.

- During an explanation, strive to use lists when articulating your points.

In response to a friend, ***“I appreciate you sharing your ideas. I have four reaction points. First...”***

This prepares the listeners to identify and focus on four points you wish to share.

Take-Away Points – After an activity or meeting, ask each participant to share his or her own take-away moments, ideas, tasks and/or surprises from the meeting.



This is an example of a reflective way to conclude meetings.

Presenting

- Visual Aids on Slides

Notice the **pink star** in the bottom left of the PowerPoint Slide. This means that Jill is responsible for covering the content in this slide. The next PowerPoint slide has a **blue star**, which means Mary is responsible for that slide. This avoids confusion of “which slide am I supposed to be presenting on?”



- Co-Create an Outline for Your Presentation (more than one person presenting)
 - Identify who will be ‘the leader’ for each slide;
 - Strategize how questions will be asked and answered; will there be a visual cue on who should answer or taking turns?
 - Organize the process of switching slides; will one person present while the other switches the slides or will the presenter feel comfortable of switching the slide him or herself?

Helpful Questions and Actions

Helpful Questions	Actions
What questions do you have?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage all to ask questions for clarification and understanding. Refrain from discouraging questions by perceiving them as hindrances.
Please share your reflections and reactions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for participants to think about the content presented, with the focus on soliciting her or her thoughts.
Based on what I said, share with me how would you repeat them using your own words?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages all to deepen their understanding, since being able to explain a concept or give directions requires much comprehension.
What does this mean to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When encountering a word or concept that may be confusing, ask fellow peers what it means to them.
What do you agree with and what is challenging for you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During times of discussion, some debates arise, which is valuable. However, to ensure that the conversation is equitable and safe, encourage all to share reactions on what they agree with, prior to proposing changes or other remarks.
What will happen next? What are your individual next steps, and the collective group next steps?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This phrase determines if everyone understands the next steps moving forward, to avoid confusion or miscommunication.
What have I learned?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A simple question that can yield powerful insights.

School Climate and Youth

Introduction

In Pillar #5, you learned how the environment affects our interactions and perceptions of our connectedness within the school community. Special Olympics Project UNIFY® is committed to empowering youth leaders of all abilities to promote a positive school community that fosters the environment necessary for inclusion. This resource is designed for youth, by youth, to support our mutual understanding of this concept, known as school climate.

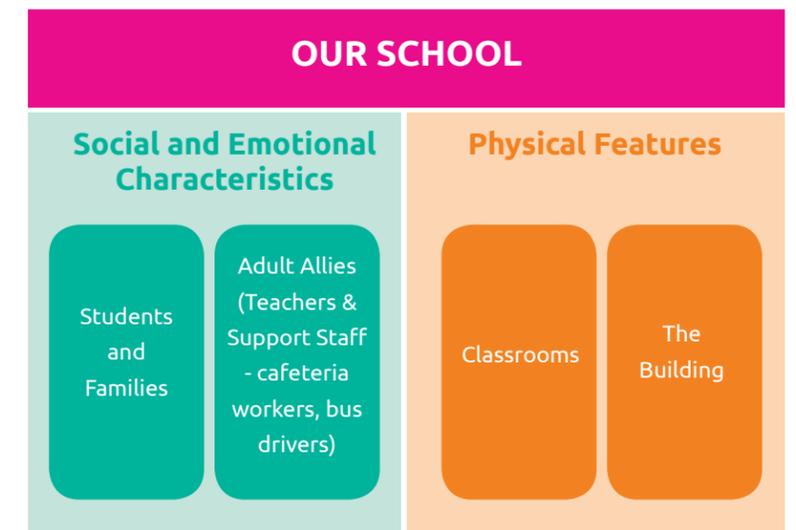
School Climate ...

- “...is the quality and character of school life that fosters inclusion, acceptance, respect and human dignity for all students.”
- “...impacts how students feel, their willingness to get involved, their excitement to contribute and their sense of self and others.”

School climate can be referred to as the temperature of the school, which can be positive or negative, challenging or boring, and either supportive or hurtful. Students are not a product of school climate, but rather should be engaged in co-creating an environment where all are valued and included.

What is the Youth Role in School Climate?

To help young people understand our vital role in co-creating a positive school climate, below is a visual to help you understand the meaning and implications of school climate.



Social & Emotional Characteristics

There are two main groups of learners in schools: (1) students and families and (2) adult allies. They share common social and emotional characteristics within school climate, as shown with the boxes below.

Experiences

Feelings Towards Oneself and Others

Expectations

Communication

Character

To the right are questions for you to consider when determining what kind of school climate you experience. ▶

Experiences

- Have I been bullied?
- How do I experience fun while learning?
- How am I encouraged to share my thoughts and ideas?
- How do I feel challenged to do my best, yet also have my peers and teachers support me?
- Am I given attention and praise when I am showing acts of kindness? Or, do I only receive attention when I show mean behavior or words?

Feelings Towards Oneself and Others

- Do I feel respected by my peers and teachers?
- Do I feel like an asset to the community?
- Do I feel safe walking in the hallways and playing outside at recess times?
- Do I feel appreciated and recognized for the talents I have?
- Am I encouraged to work with my peers to help each other with our work?
- Do students and teachers who I have yet to meet, greet me or say friendly words to me?

Expectations

- Are the expectations for our behavior and interactions with one another for the safety and wellbeing of us all?
- Do the students and teachers mutually decide upon expectations?
- Are the 'rules' applied for only certain people, such as the students? (i.e., Only teachers are allowed to have drinks in the classroom.)

Communication

- Does the non-verbal communication from my peers affect if I will participate in class? (i.e. my peers become frustrated with me when I ask multiple questions in class.)
- Does my teacher provide my family with updates about my work? Or, does my teacher only communicate with my family when I misbehave or received a bad grade?

Character

- How are the following values expressed or lacking in school?
 - **Honesty** – being truthful, in respectful ways.
 - **Inclusiveness** – see each person as unique and a valuable member in my community.
 - **Equity** – students of all abilities, talents & challenges are welcomed to join any extracurricular activity, just like me.

Physical Features

There are two main physical features that construct schools: (1) classrooms and (2) the building. Below are physical features to examine that also contribute to school climate.

Mutual Responsibility for the Physical Environment

- Am I responsible for cleaning up after myself?
- Do I respect and not damage or harm the property in school?

Welcoming and Creative Decorations

- Do I have an input in what the school and classroom looks like?

Showcasing the Work Of All!

- How is 'my mark' celebrated in school? Are students' work (besides academic achievement) shown and shared with the community?

Equal Access

- Are students or teachers who use wheelchairs or crutches able to access all parts of the school? Are those entrances and accommodations welcoming and clean? Or, are they far away and not cared for much?
- Are students who may have mobility challenges able to participate in extra-curricular activities?

REFERENCES

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"National School Climate Center: School Climate." National School Climate Center: School Climate. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 May 2013.

Mutual Responsibility for the Physical Environment

Welcoming and Creative Decorations

Showcasing the Work of All!

Equal Access

Becoming a Better Facilitator

Introduction

Implicit in the Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidebook is your role as a facilitator or co-facilitator in sharing this information with other youth in your school and community. To successfully serve in this role, it is beneficial to better understand the role of a facilitator and how to be successful in this position.

A facilitator helps guide participants through the learning process, while giving them ownership of and responsibility for their own learning through discovery. As a facilitator, it is important to remember that the focus of the program is on the learner and their experiences and discoveries, rather than the specific content or the individual facilitator.

Tips for Inclusive Youth Leadership

Co-Facilitators

When assessing your role as an Inclusive Youth Leadership facilitator or co-facilitator, it is first important to consider how your physical performance and delivery impacts the message you are trying to share with your audience. This is most evident in your presence and vocal delivery throughout your facilitation experience.

Below are important concepts to understand in helping to improve your physical performance as a facilitator. ▼

Presence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impactful first impression • Poised posture • Interactive hand gestures while talking • Eye contact with audience • Engaging facial expressions

Vocal Delivery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varying pitch and tone to convey emotions and importance • Changes in speaking rate • Pauses to emphasize important information • Limiting unnecessary filler words (i.e. um, well, like)

In addition to your physical performance as a facilitator, it is important to think about how you interact and relate to your audience before, during and after your program. Below are questions to consider as you identify your own facilitation style: ▼



Finally, Inclusive Youth Leaders must consider the overall content they are sharing and how their content affects their ability to be a successful facilitator. Below are questions to consider as you develop the content that will drive your facilitation experience:

- Does the overall content flow make sense to participants?
- Are the transitions content driven, linking the program pieces together? Do they help in keeping the participants interest?
- Is the key learning point for each section delivered clearly and directly?
- Are the activities done correctly?
- Is the setup and debrief for each activity clear and learning-focused?
- Are the necessary facts shared accurately? (Dates, names, etc.)

Top 10 Facilitation Mistakes

1. Talking too much and not allowing for pauses and discovery.
2. Telling a story with no relevant point.
3. Not providing real-life examples.
4. Repeatedly calling on the same few individuals.
5. Going off on a tangent.
6. Always staying up front and not moving around.
7. The “I know everything and you don’t” attitude.
8. Failure to manage group dynamics.
9. No clear call to action in the program conclusion.
10. Not ending on time – especially ending late.

Resources for Adult Allies

While the Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidebook focuses on activating young people to become engaged advocates for inclusive leadership, there is also a distinct role for adults in providing support and guidance to youth as they go through this journey. In this context, adult supporters are referred to as **Adult Allies** because their role is to help, not hinder, young people.

For students embarking into Inclusive Youth Leadership, an Adult Ally is an individual who:

- articulates and believes in the value of youth;
- understands how youth communicate and collaborate with each other;
- asks probing questions, rather than provide answers, that allow young people to explore their assumptions and generate their own ideas;
- recognizes risk, then supports and guides others through adversity;
- sets the tone for pushing beyond perceived limits;
- identifies and promotes the gifts, skills and assets of each young person;
- supports peer-to-peer acknowledgment and celebrations among all young people for individual and group milestones;
- understands the value of patience and adjusts time expectations to allow for students of all learning styles to fully engage;
- makes a connection with youth that extends beyond the parameters of the school day or school walls;
- asks or invites other adults to participate and support young people.

Adult Ally Support: Pillar #1 Inclusion

Definition

As mentioned in the Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidebook, inclusion refers to empowering individuals to feel comfortable and maximize their efforts to contribute to society. In the school and disability settings, inclusion often takes two forms:

1. *Physical inclusion* – students with disabilities fully incorporated into general education classrooms, and
2. *Social inclusion* – students with and without disabilities participate in activities together outside of the classroom.

However, in the context of inclusive leadership, inclusion emphasizes the importance of engaging all students, while maximizing each individual’s opportunity to share their talents and abilities. Adult Allies should also be able to recognize the opposite of inclusion – **exclusion** – and what it looks like in the leadership space.

Throughout the inclusive leadership experience, look for key indicators that may signal exclusive practices and remind students of their commitment to inclusion. Indicators include:

- Partners only interacting with partners and athletes only interacting with athletes.
- Students cutting someone off or “taking over” if another student is taking additional time to share their point or experience.
- Students use language like “those kids” that demeans the value of students with intellectual disabilities.

Tip for Supporting Pillar #1

The focus on Inclusion in Pillar #1 is exceptionally important for students to grasp in their journey to become Inclusive Youth Leaders. Without a strategic understanding of the principles of inclusion, students may fail to recognize the value of inclusive leadership when it’s sometimes easier to “do it alone.”

To help students embody the ideals of inclusion throughout their lives, it is necessary to ensure students understand that inclusion and inclusive leadership are not simply “nice things to do”; rather, they provide valuable opportunities for the voices of all students – those with and without intellectual disabilities – to be heard.

Adult Ally Reflection

How can the values of inclusion positively impact my work and interactions with young people?

Adult Ally Support: Pillar #2 Co-Leadership

Definition

Pillar #2 in the Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidebook describes co-leadership as a shared power that promotes respect, flexibility and cooperatively working together. The four components of co-leadership – accountability, equity, ownership and partnership – play an integral part in helping youth leaders understand and interpret co-leadership in action.

Co-leadership is not just two youth being leaders together, but rather, having a shared and equitable leadership partnership.

Tip for Supporting Pillar #2

Adult Allies should understand the value in supporting co-leadership, which requires the sharing of power. To emphasizing the value of using strengths, rather than focusing on weaknesses, is key to support the partnership between a youth pair. Allowing one person to take the leadership, with the other person disengaged, creates a one-way learning dynamic. Help youth identify ways that can engage all people, through using strategies listed within the Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidebook.

Adult Ally Reflection

How does your role as an Adult Ally correlate to a co-leadership partnership?

How will the focus on accountability, equity, ownership and partnership drive your engagement with young people?

Adult Ally Support: Pillar #3 Teamwork

Definition

Teamwork is not a new concept for anyone, as it’s something we’re all taught at a very young age. However, effective teamwork, which inspires creativity, increases productivity and nurtures collaboration, is an essential concept for youth participating in inclusive leadership activities.

Successful examples of teamwork exhibit environments where:

- open and honest communication is encouraged
- participants disagree with respect
- issues are resolved immediately with little to no confrontation
- teammates value each other’s time and input

Conversely, examples of poor teamwork exhibit environments where teammates:

- blame each other when things go wrong
- have one-on-one conversations that exclude others
- disagree for the sake of disagreeing
- allow group issues or concerns to go unresolved

Tip for Supporting Pillar #3

Adult Allies help young people develop as leaders by providing support, guidance and encouragement in and outside of the leadership experience. To be successful as an Adult Ally, it is important to not only establish a mentor-mentee relationship, but also develop trust with young people by becoming a “member of the team”.

Throughout the activation of the Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidebook, when appropriate, join in the Guidebook activities. Do not take over and try to lead the activities – that is the role of the youth co-facilitators – rather, participate as a member of the team. This allows you to share in the learning and growth process with your youth leaders.

Adult Ally Reflection

In what situations in your own life or work have you modeled positive examples of teamwork? How can those situations serve as examples for young people?

In what ways can you support young people as ‘teammates’ versus an adult or authority figure?

Adult Ally Support:

Pillar #4 Communication

Definition

We've always been told – "communication is the key to success" – and for success in Inclusive Youth Leadership, communication will most definitely be key. However, the focus of Pillar #4 is not necessarily on the mechanics of proper communications, but rather, the importance and execution of effective, inclusive communication – known as equitable conversations. As an Adult Ally, it is valuable to understand the do's and don'ts of equitable conversations to help guide students in their execution of such practices.

Do's

- Have respect for each other
- Value the opinions of all
- Be aware of tone and vocabulary
- Use various communications tools to express ideas
- Engage participants who are quiet or disengaged
- Share agenda and background information ahead of time

Don'ts

- View some as incapable of contributing
- Ignore the ideas of others
- Use derogatory or hurtful language
- Use only one type of presentation or activity
- Allow a small group to dominate the conversation
- Share little to no information about the topics

As one student puts it, *"When engaged in equitable conversation, everyone feels that they are able to get their point across, and that their view is considered just as much as everyone else's. Everyone should feel that they are being respected; no one should feel hurt or belittled. Everyone feels good about the conversation, even if everyone doesn't agree."*

Tip for Supporting Pillar #4

Just because everyone is told they "can" contribute and participate in activities, does not mean they will. Equitable communications require all participants to be engaged in and aware of their fellow leaders to ensure youth of all abilities are actively able to be involved, even if they are not the loudest speaker or fastest thinker.

A great reminder for youth – sometimes *listening* is just as important as sharing.

Adult Ally Reflection

As an adult, how do you typically communicate with young people? Is this different from the way in which you communicate with your adult peers? How and why?

Tip for Supporting Pillar #5

Environment is not just a one-time activity, rather something to continually monitor and assess. Remind co-facilitators to regularly check the "pulse" of the leadership environment to ensure participants feel supported and "safe", and are reminded of their responsibility in creating such environment.

Adult Ally Reflection

What can I do to foster an environment that positively supports youth leadership development?

Adult Ally Support:

Pillar #5 Environment

Definition

As defined in the guidebook, environment is the physical and social space in which we learn, share and work with one another. As a whole, Pillar #5 helps youth leaders understand the concept and importance of school climate by explaining it in terms of positive and negative environments, and allowing young people to make their own determinations about what makes them feel comfortable and safe. The following chart illustrates some important characteristics of positive and negative environments:

Positive Environment

- All youth are encouraged to share thoughts and ideas and feel comfortable to do so
- All youth receive praise, support and guidance from adults and peers
- All youth feel accepted, respect, included and valued by their peers
- School/community is physically safe and stable for learning and growth

Negative Environment

- Youth feel a lack of purpose and are discouraged from collaborating or sharing
- Youth feel excluded, rejected and belittled by their peers
- School/community is uncertain, unsafe and unsupportive of individual needs

Understanding the Continuum of Youth Involvement

	<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> PARTICIPATION → VOICE → LEADERSHIP → ENGAGEMENT </div>			
EXAMPLE	ACCOUNTABILITY	DECISION-MAKING	ADULT ROLES	YOUTH ROLES
School leadership is holding a student assembly to raise awareness about how the school engages students with disabilities. A group of students is asked to pass out flyers and to serve as hosts and to introduce the special speaker for the assembly.	Adults are accountable for all aspects of the process and/or activity including whether or not young people are present. Youth have some secondary accountability to participate in the activity.	Adults make all decisions.	Adults develop the idea, plan and organize all aspects of the activity or event which a cadre of young people will actually carry out.	Youth are involved in the "doing" of the activity but not in the planning, development or reflection.
School leadership wants to improve how they engage students with disabilities in the classroom and broader school activities. They have invited two youth to participate on a task force of faculty and staff to develop a list of ideas for action.	Adults maintain accountability for decision-making and actions. Youth may have specific accountability for smaller roles and activities that involve youth specifically.	Adults ultimately make the decision with the consideration of youth input. If youth have a vote, they are typically outnumbered or adults have ultimate veto power.	Adults develop and set the agenda and facilitate the process. Adults include the input of youth in this process. This can be through consideration of youth input via focus group or meeting or through youth being involved in and having a formal vote.	Youth are part of conversations regarding planning and implementing an idea. Their input is considered, but they may or may not have an official "vote".
Students want to raise awareness about challenges for students with disabilities in their school. They get an adult sponsor who gets the OK for them to have school assembly on the issue and have an expert speaker come. Youth participate and have voice in the planning and development of the assembly by serving on committees, as a committee chair, introducing the speaker, promoting the event etc.	Youth and adults share accountability at all levels of the work. Adults have secondary accountability for ensuring that youth are prepared and supported in a way that they can achieve success.	Youth and adults share decision-making power often requiring a specific and mutually agreed upon decision-making process.	Adults are involved in the full process and support the development of individual youth and the flow of the process, but in a way that balances power and leadership with youth. Adults allow youth to struggle and make mistakes in a safe environment.	Youth are involved at all levels of idea or project development and have formal and informal leadership roles in the process.
Youth plan, organize all aspects of, and host a student assembly focused on more equitable schools for students with disabilities. They ask a supportive teacher to serve as an advisor. They know the issue deeply and have talked with their peers including students with disabilities to garner insight. They have developed ideas for school improvement that they message to their peers and to school leadership directly.	Youth have primary accountability at all levels of the work.	Youth ultimately make the decisions with the inclusion of adult input and "vote".	Adults provide a support role and share ownership and commitment but with some deference to the youth. Adults hold one "vote" on the team.	Youth are the primary drivers of the work from conceptualization to implementation and reflection. Youth "own" and understand the work deeply.



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Tips for Shared Learning Among Youth and Adults

Adult Do's	Adult Don'ts	Youth Do's	Youth Don'ts
<p>Come willing and ready to listen and learn</p> <p>Help keep the other adults in check</p> <p>Help ensure a safe environment for all to offer their input and ideas</p> <p>Articulate clearly the roles, responsibilities and expectations for all youth and adult participants</p> <p>Articulate from an adult perspective why youth voice is so important</p> <p>Ensure and articulate the importance of youth input and its impact after the event</p> <p>Prepare youth to be facilitators and co-facilitators and work to make sure a youth is the first to speak</p> <p>Lead with a question</p> <p>Have fun!</p>	<p>Assume that you know more or have more valuable knowledge than the youth</p> <p>Team up with or allow other adults to dominate the conversation</p> <p>Allow the outspoken or more experienced youth to dominate or rule the experience for all</p> <p>Assume that everyone understands why they are there and how they need to be together</p> <p>Create an atmosphere of tokenism</p> <p>Set up youth to feel engaged and important only to have them involved in a fruitless event or conversation</p> <p>Facilitate everything or be the first to speak</p> <p>Deliver answers</p> <p>Act like you would rather be or need to be somewhere else</p>	<p>Come willing and ready to contribute ideas, listen and learn</p> <p>Encourage all youth participants to contribute to the process and speak their truth</p> <p>Step Up and respectfully articulate when you feel an adult is dominating a conversation</p> <p>Bring honesty, energy and your unique ideas and experiences to the conversation</p> <p>Respect people with different backgrounds and experiences</p> <p>Follow up by taking your ideas and information back to your own school and community</p> <p>Have fun!</p>	<p>Assume adults won't take you seriously or aren't really interested in hearing the truth from your perspective</p> <p>Team up with people you know or who share ideas in an attempt to "win" a conversation</p> <p>Defer leadership and/or expertise to adults</p> <p>Show up just because someone told you to or because you got out of school</p> <p>Assume that everyone has had your same experiences</p> <p>Leave this as a one-time experience and go back to your school and community without working to change anything</p> <p>Complain about being bored without helping to make things fun</p>

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Co-Authors of the Guidebook



Jamie Behymer

My name is Jamie Behymer, and I am a student at Cactus Shadows High School in Arizona. In my school district, I serve as a partner for Special Olympics Unified Sports in Golf, Cheerleading, Tennis, and Track and Field. I am a member of Special Olympics Arizona's Youth Activation Committee and the National Youth Activation Committee (YAC).

Within Special Olympics, I have become a leader through advocacy. On and off the playing field, I have been honored to work with athletes and give them a voice in my community.

As a member of the "Arizona YAC Pack," I have been able to foster the Project UNIFY movement in schools across the valley. With the National YAC, I have been able to co-create this Guidebook with my fellow team members to implement in schools across the country.

The Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidebook is a necessary resource for all students because it represents the future. It promotes the importance of youth co-leading to generate and sustain social inclusion.

"Leadership is inspiring, empowering, and collaborating with others to travel on the journey of success together."



Roberto Equia

My name is Roberto Equia. I am a Special Olympics athlete living in Boise, Idaho, and a graduate of Centennial High School. I have participated in Special Olympics Floor Hockey, Softball, Volleyball and Track and Field. I am a member of the Special Olympics Idaho Youth Activation Committee and the National Youth Activation Committee (YAC).

Being part of the National YAC, I have learned to help others, speak in front of large crowds and promote respect.

Once students read the Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidebook, they will be able to understand the importance of Inclusive Youth Leadership and keep on doing it.

"Including others and respecting people is what inclusion means to me."



Danielle Liebl

My name is Danielle Liebl. I am a senior at the College of Saint Benedict in Central Minnesota, with a double major in Peace Studies and Theology. During the year, I serve as a coach, volunteer, Global Messenger, Youth Activation Committee member, board member and athlete for Special Olympics Minnesota. In addition, I serve as a cochair on the Inclusive Youth Leadership Committee of the Special Olympics National Activation Committee. Throughout my time as a co-chair, I have had the opportunity to witness the co-creation of the Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidebook, which you now hold in your hands.

My hope is that those who use this guide will become committed and devoted agents of change. Through my experiences in Special Olympics, I have become a strong leader who is not afraid to use my voice, passion, and talents to promote change and equality within this world. I can only hope and wish the same for those Inclusive Youth Leaders who will be challenged through the many activities and reflections that are in this guide. My hope is that you become the co-creator of a beautiful reality that replaces the many injustices in this world.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead



Oh Sang (James) Kweon

My name is Oh Sang (James) Kweon. I am a recent graduate of Boise High School in Boise, Idaho. In Special Olympics, I've served as an active Unified Sports partner in Floor Hockey and Basketball, and also am grateful for my time in the Idaho Youth Activation Council and National Youth Activation Committee (YAC).

Through Special Olympics, I've gained the amazing opportunity to work with some of the most genuine people, whether it's the athletes on the basketball court or in a Summit discussing the progressive change of inclusion.

I'm proud to say that students in Idaho have really grown to accept those with or without special needs. With the National YAC, we've developed this Guidebook so that we may further this progress on a larger national scale.

The Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidebook is crucial, not only to introduce the ideas of acceptance and inclusion, but more so to spark the means to this goal.

"The world is our temple. Every brick and every pillar is vital, much like the ideas and thoughts of every individual create the world."



Clement Coulston

My name is Clement Coulston and I am a student at the University of Delaware pursuing a degree in Elementary Teacher Education with a minor in Special Education. I started first as Unified Partner for Special Olympics Delaware to where today I coach soccer, bowling, basketball and swimming. I am on the Special Olympics Project UNIFY® National Youth Activation Committee and have served in many leadership capacities. Being the co-chair of the Inclusive Youth Leadership Sub-Committee has empowered me to educate, motivate and activate our peers to promote Inclusive Leadership as 'the norm' rather than an 'ad hoc' event.

The Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidebook is a resource that is not just a leadership curriculum. It is an impetus for living a life committed to social justice, inclusion, and respect for all people. Through hands-on experience, youth leaders of all abilities will become cognizant of how they – yes they – are the leaders of today! We are not hindered by our challenges but rather we are empowered to use our talents to share with the community.

"Celebrating our achievements while reflecting on our challenging encounters, is what makes us stronger. We do not struggle against one another, we struggle with one another, so we can learn and grow together."



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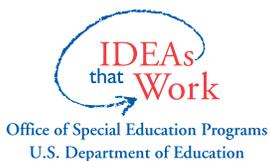
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The U.S. Department of Education, through the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs, is a major funding source for Special Olympics Project UNIFY®. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is dedicated to improving results for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities ages birth through 21.