Research Brief 109 | April 2023





Inclusive Mindsels

and Behaviors

A Framework for Defining,

Understanding, Teaching,

and Fostering Inclusion

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and Jacqueline Jodl, PhD



A Special Olympics Romania athlete takes pride in his accomplishments at a Unified Champion Schools event









About This Document



This document is called a brief. A **brief** is a written report that talks about an idea that can be hard to understand.

This **easy-to-read** brief uses plain words so more people can understand the idea.

The Special Olympics Global Center for Inclusion in Education made this brief.





- Inclusion means making everyone feel welcome and accepted in a place or in an activity.
 - can have fuller and happier lives.

• The Global Center works with friends around the world. Together they make schools and towns more inclusive so persons with intellectual disabilities and their families





- **Timothy Shriver** is the chairperson of Special Olympics.
- Stephanie Jones is a friend of Special Olympics. She leads the EASEL Lab at the Harvard School of Education. She studies ways to help young people have happier lives by sharing activities with other people.

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Special Olympics Venezuela Youth Leaders are happy to be developing new skills together

3 people worked together to write this brief:

• Jacqueline Jodl leads Special Olympics' youth work worldwide.

1. Introduction

Special Olympics has worked for many years to encourage people to accept and be thankful for everyone.

Everyone means even people who look different from us or who move or think in different ways.



Special Olympics believes the world is a better place because of all the ways people are different.

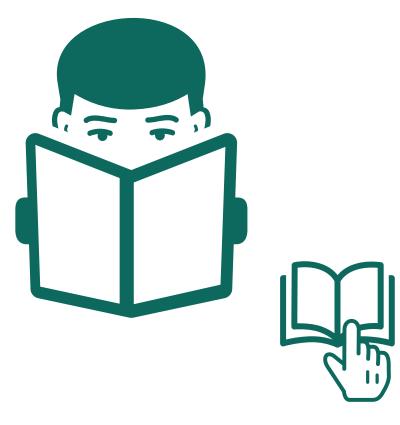
This is part of inclusion.

Some people have never been around people who are different from them.

They try to stay away from different people, especially people who have intellectual disabilities.

This is sad because most people are just like everyone else in most ways once you get to know them.

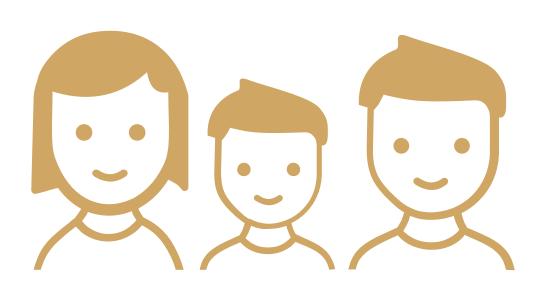
A person with an intellectual disability is mostly just like other people.



A person with an intellectual disability sometimes needs a little help to learn some things in different ways.

People can have more friends when they are not afraid to meet different people.

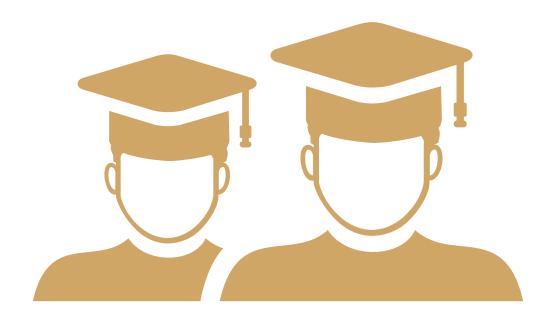
Special Olympics thinks people can learn to accept people who are different and who have intellectual disabilities.



To do this, people should start to meet each other when they are still children or teenagers.



If different children play together in sports, they can be on the same team and become friends.

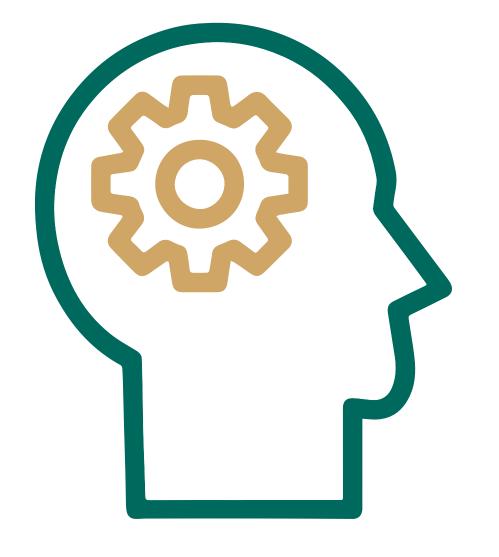


They can learn together in school.



When they grow up, they may even work together in jobs.

2. Inclusive Mindsets and Inclusive Behaviors



People who accept other people who are different from them have an **inclusive mindset**.

That means they think it is good when people with intellectual disabilities join in the activities that everybody else in their school or community does.

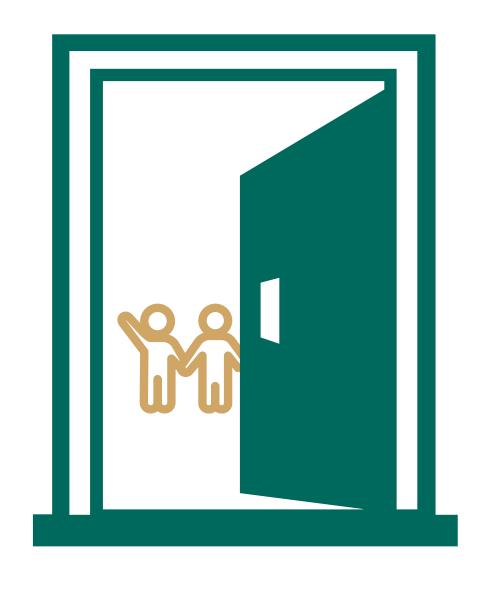
People who have an inclusive mindset can learn to have **inclusive behaviors**.

That means they do more than just **think** that inclusion is good.



They **show** that inclusion is good and that it is good for everybody.

How can we show that inclusion is good?





- We can be sure that people with intellectual disabilities are invited to join activities.
- We can speak up just because they are different.

to defend a person who is being bullied

3. A Framework for Inclusion

Special Olympics and the EASEL Lab want more people to have inclusive mindsets and inclusive behaviors.

Special Olympics and the EASEL Lab believe young people can learn to be **includers** by thinking and acting in ways that are inclusive.

Thinking and acting inclusively will make the world a better place.

This brief will help teachers and community leaders and families help more young people learn to be includers.

This brief explains a framework for inclusion.

- A **framework** describes all the parts of something and how the parts fit together to reach a goal.
- This framework describes the parts that make up inclusive mindsets and inclusive behaviors.
- Teachers and coaches can learn how these parts fit together. Then they can develop lessons and activities that help young people become strong includers.



4. The 3 Pillars of the **Inclusive Mindsets and Behaviors Framework**

The first part of the framework is the 3 main ideas or pillars. Pillars are the strong part that hold the framework together.



The first pillar is Universal Dignity.

- The first pillar is about what we believe and what we value as important.
- Universal Dignity means that:
- o Everyone has value.
- o Everyone deserves respect.
- o Everyone has rights.

The second pillar is Empathy and Perspective Taking.



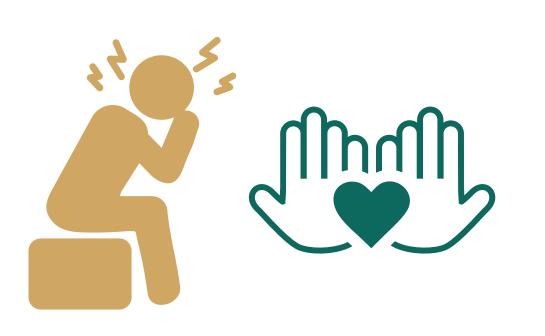
- even people who are different from us.

The third pillar is Courageous Action.

Courageous Action means what we actually do to stand up for other people. You can show inclusive behavior by:

o Being brave, even when it is scary to do the right thing.

o Speaking up if someone is being unkind to someone with an intellectual disability.



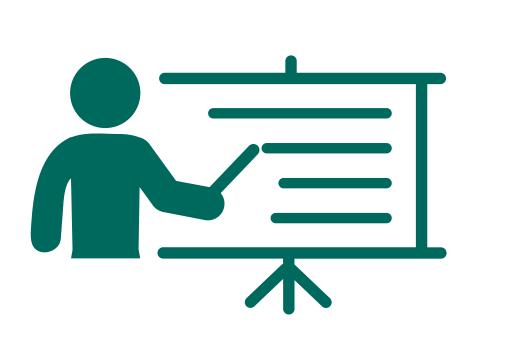
- o Being a leader to make sure everyone is accepted and included.

• **Empathy** means caring about other people,

• Perspective Taking means understanding what other people think and how they feel.

o Helping people who are alone or afraid or in trouble.

Teachers and coaches and families can help young people learn to have inclusive mindsets and behaviors. They can do this by talking with young people about the 3 pillars.







- and making sure they are accepted.
- how it feels to win or lose a game and about how the other team feels.

• Teachers can help young people talk about why it is important to treat every person with Universal Dignity by showing them respect

• Coaches can help young people understand Empathy and Perspective Taking by talking about

Families can teach young people about Courageous Action by working to include every child in activities at school and in the community.

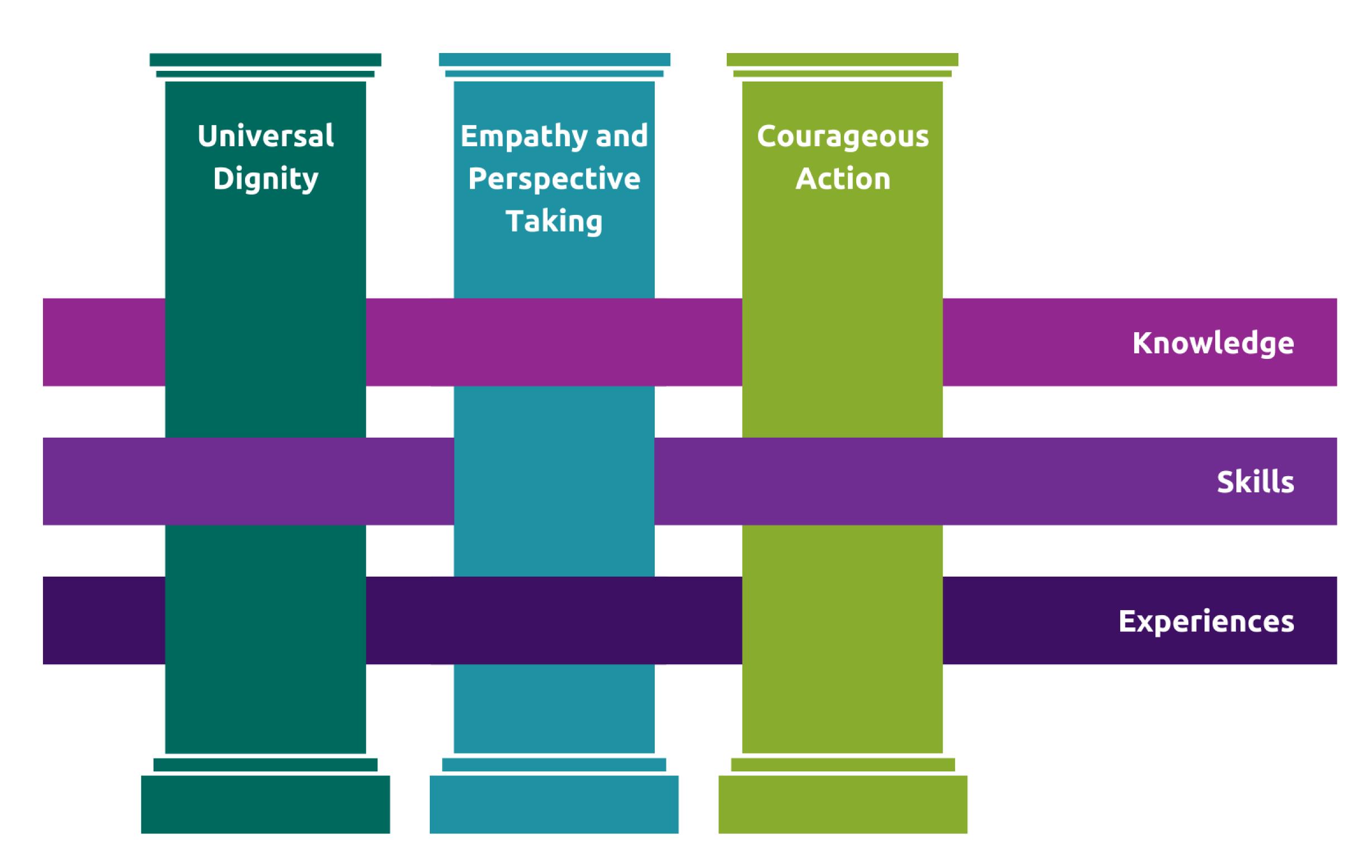
5. Weaving Through the Pillars

An inclusive mindset is like a good piece of cloth. The cloth is strong because some threads go up and down. Other threads go back and forth, in and out. The 3 pillars are like the up and down threads of the framework for inclusive mindsets and behaviors.

To be a strong includer, you must weave your own threads back and forth, in and out, through the pillars.

You have 3 kinds of threads: knowledge and skills and experiences.

You can use these threads to make your cloth of inclusion strong.



Knowledge is what you know about each of the pillars.

For example, to make your Universal Dignity pillar strong, you can learn what the laws say about everyone's rights.



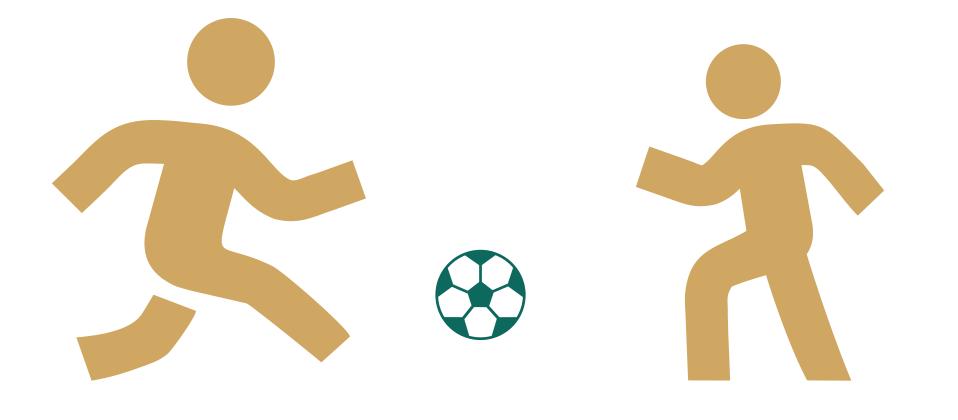
- o 1 very important law is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- To make your Empathy and Perspective Taking pillar strong, you can learn the names of different feelings, such as:



- o happy
- o sad
- o hopeful
- o angry
- o lonely
- o excited
- o afraid
- o calm
- To make your Courageous Action pillar strong, you can learn about people who spoke up for everyone's rights, such as:
 - o Justin Dart Jr., who was an advocate for people with disabilities.
 - o Eunice Kennedy Shriver, who was the founder of Special Olympics.

Skills are the things you can do to practice each of the pillars.

- For example, to make your Universal Dignity pillar strong, you can show respect and kindness to everyone you meet.
- To make your Empathy and Perspective Taking pillar strong, at a sports event you can:



o Think about how you feel and why you feel that way.

o Notice how other people seem to feel.

o Try to understand why they might feel that way.

• To make your Courageous Action pillar strong, at an event you can:



o Wave and smile at people,

o Walk up to people you don't know,

- o Shake their hand,
- o Tell them your first name,
- o Thank them for coming to the event.

Inclusive Mindsets and Behaviors | April 2023

Experiences are the things that happen in your life.

- Experiences help you build knowledge and practice your skills.
- For example, to make your Universal Dignity pillar strong,
- To make your Empathy and Perspective Taking pillar strong,

 - who has hurt feelings.
- To make your Courageous Action pillar strong,

- o You can spend time with other people who are brave includers.

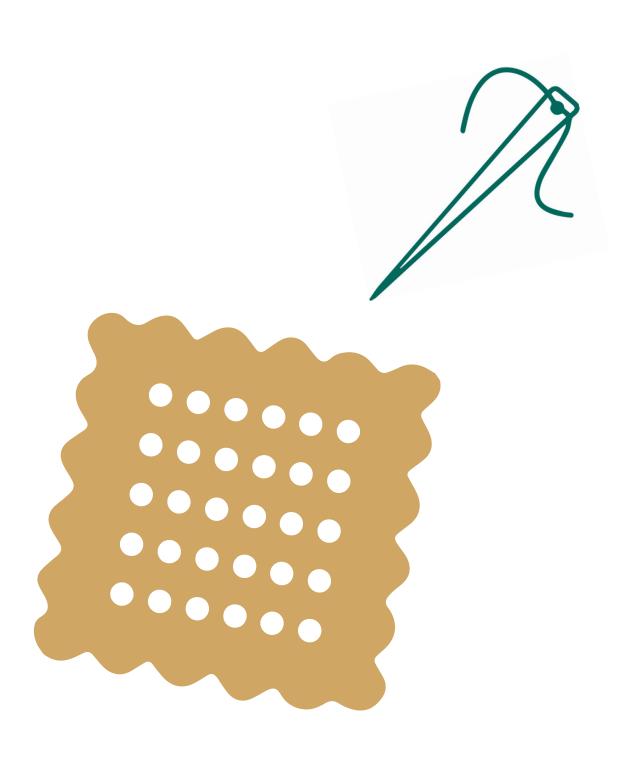
o You can talk with your coach and think of two things you can be ready to say if someone is unkind to you.

o You can talk with your family about ways to help someone who has a hurt leg.

o You can talk about ways to help someone

o You can learn from watching them and being like them.

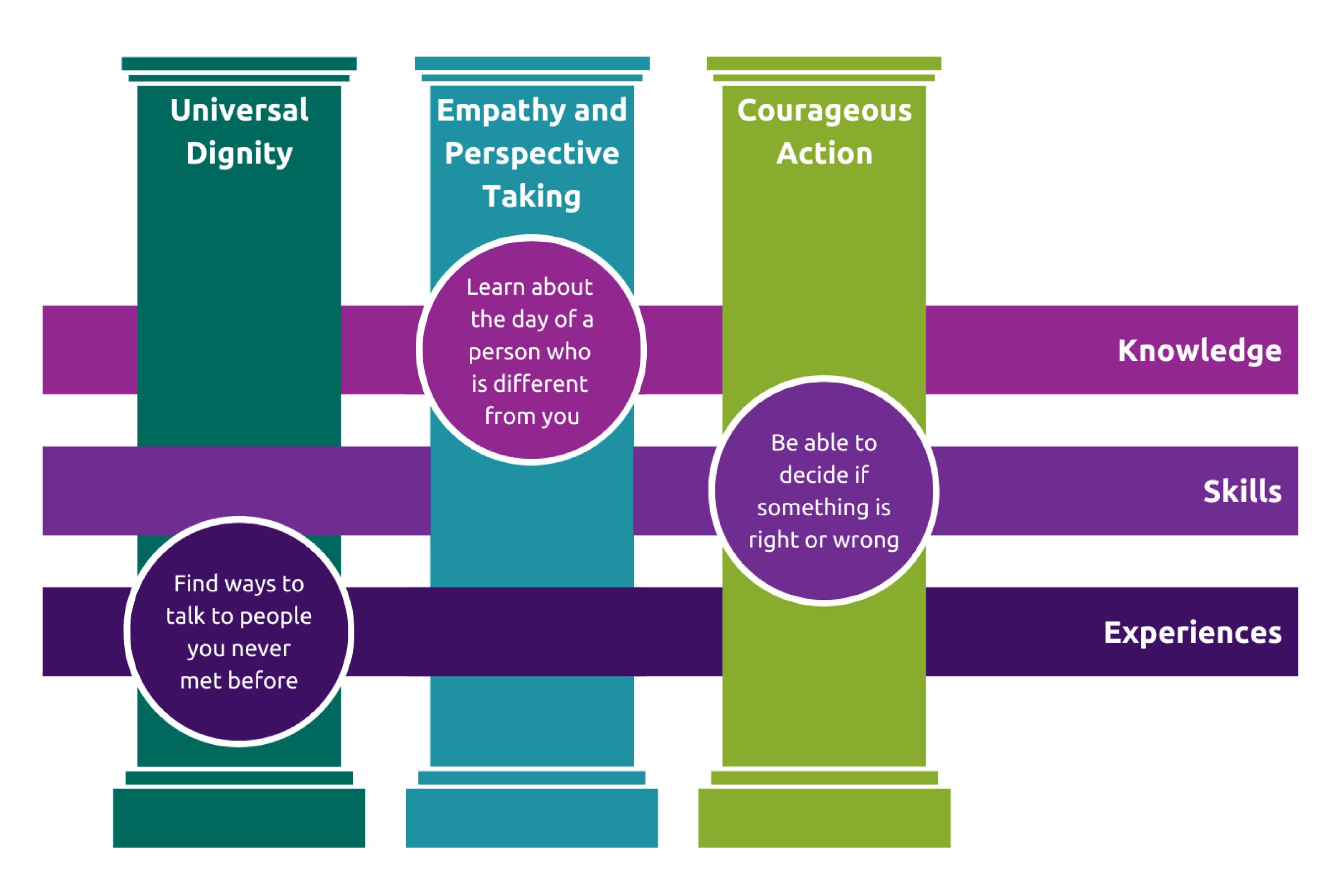
Your threads will not look the same as anyone else's threads. That is because no one else knows exactly what you know. No one else can do exactly what you do. And no one else has lived the exact same life you have lived.



You must weave your own threads of knowledge, skills, and experiences in and out through the 3 pillars.

Your cloth of inclusive mindsets and behaviors will be as unique and special as you are.

The Inclusive Mindsets and Behaviors Framework shows examples of how our knowledge and skills and experiences can help us be strong includers.



6. Where We Learn to Be Includers

Growing and weaving inclusive mindsets and behaviors can happen anywhere.

There are 3 main places where we can learn:

• In **individual** places, when we are alone or with 1 or 2 people:

o We can read or watch a video to learn how to be more inclusive.



o We can say something kind to someone who seems sad or alone.

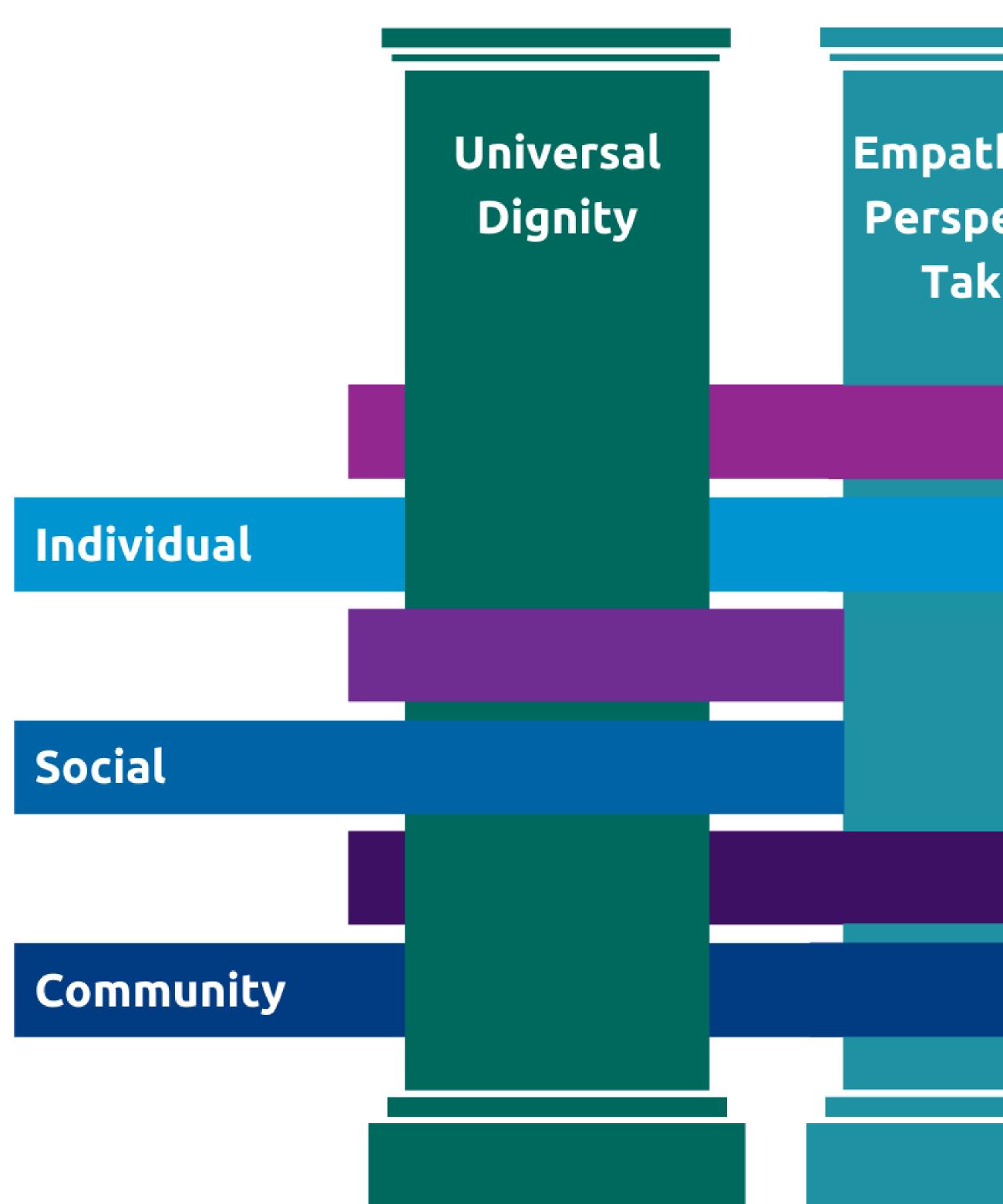
• In **social** places, like in a classroom or on a sports field, and when we are with our families or friends or teachers:

> o We can show our friends and classmates how to invite persons with and without intellectual disabilities to join in an activity together.

• In **community** places, when we are around people we do not know well, like in a church or mosque or synagogue, or at a sporting event, or another public place:

> o We can show strangers how to be brave by speaking up for laws that respect and protect everyone.

The Inclusive Mindsets and Behaviors Framework adds more threads to show the places where we can learn and practice inclusion.



Now your inclusive mindset cloth is very strong.

You can use your knowledge, skills, and experiences.

You can use them in all kinds of places, wherever you are.

No one can knock your pillars down.

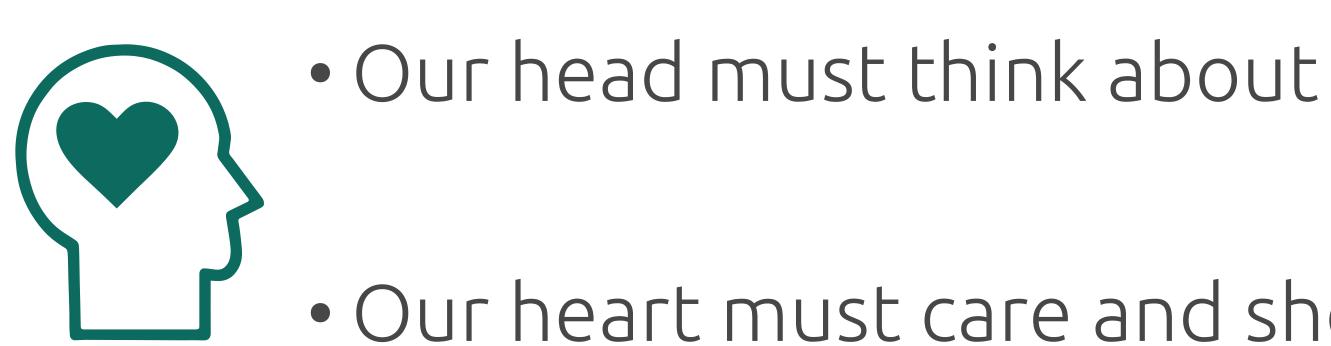
You have courage.

You are an includer!

	Courageous Action	hy and ective ing
Knowledge		
Skills		
Experiences		

7. What Comes Next

Special Olympics and the EASEL Lab have found that weaving a cloth of inclusion takes both our head and our heart.



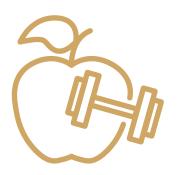
Let's keep weaving our inclusive mindsets together. Let's help everyone be an includer.

Special Olympics and the EASEL Lab will write more briefs. They will show how the framework for inclusive mindsets and inclusive behaviors will help young people be includers in:





Education programs



- Health programs
- Youth leadership programs



Inclusive Mindsets Series

This brief is the first in a series that will talk about research, policy, and programs related to inclusive mindsets and behaviors. This series will talk about the Inclusive Mindsets and Behaviors Framework to help everyone understand, teach, and learn inclusion.

• Our head must think about what it means to be an includer.

• Our heart must care and show the world that everyone matters.







References

You can use these resources to learn more about inclusion.

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Students and educators participate in a Special Olympics Gambia Youth Leadership Summit

SPECIAL OLYMPICS GLOBAL CENTER

FOR INCLUSION IN EDUCATION