



We Need Champions!

Be a champion for change for students, educators, and others with disabilities.

1 in 5 Americans has a disability, yet people with disabilities are the most invisible group in the United States, and disability is often missing from many diversity efforts.

Each month, we will feature in-depth information on each topic and other learning opportunities on nea.org/disabilities to help you progress on your journey to becoming a disability rights champion.

1. Learn about disability language and disability etiquette.

- Don't use labels, and ask individuals how they choose to identify.
- Avoid using ableist metaphors (e.g., cr@zy, L@m€).

2. Recognize your biases.

- Learn how your unconscious biases can impact your behaviors toward people with disabilities.
- Visit Project Implicit to learn more about your individual biases: implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/

3. Interact with people with disabilities.

- Build relationships with people with disabilities. Research informs us that those who have authentic relationships with people with disabilities act in less prejudicial ways and have greater disability acceptance.
- Don't avoid social interactions with people with disabilities. It is a form of ableism, which refers to societal attitudes, structures, and policies that devalue people with disabilities.

4. Recognize and respond to ableism.

- NEVER assume that someone with a visible or non-apparent disability CAN'T do something. Doing so is a form of ableism.
- Honor intersectional identities, use appropriate language, and adhere to disability etiquette; help guide those who do not.



5. Be aware of accessibility barriers.

- Consider accessibility barriers that are physical, attitudinal, and implicit in education policies and practices.
- Strive to make inclusive environments for everyone. Lack of accessibility results in less inclusion.

6. Engage in critical dialogue.

- Ensure people with disabilities are present in conversations and decision-making. People with disabilities are the experts in their lived experiences.
- Include anti-ableist practices and disability content in your curriculum.

7. Advocate for policies that go beyond compliance.

- Ensure that those most impacted are leading these efforts. “Nothing about us without us.”
- Push for policies that uplift and support broader issues of disability rights and put those who are impacted by multiple marginalized identities at the forefront of these efforts.

For more information, visit nea.org/disabilities.