



## **NEA Locally Led Book Clubs Focused on Disability Rights and Inclusion**

### **Facilitator Guide**

This guide provides key information for facilitating a book club. Use these guidelines to create an inclusive, engaging environment for meaningful discussions about diverse experiences.

Remember, your role as a local book club leader is to guide the conversation, not dominate it. Create a space where participants feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences related to the reading.

### **Logistics**

- Schedule meetings at least two or three weeks in advance.
- Use the promotional materials that were attached to the follow-up letter to generate interest and engage potential book club members.
- Start and end meetings on time.
- Provide multiple participation options, such as in-person and virtual.

### **Pre-Meeting Preparation**

- Review the selected book thoroughly.
- Use the reading guides to help guide the discussion.
- Create an agenda with timing for each section.
- Gather any necessary materials or resources and send accessible materials to book club members who need them before the meeting.
- If you are using a PowerPoint presentation please visit the [Locally Led Book Club page](#) and download the PowerPoint template.

## **Suggested Meeting Elements (60- to 90-minute meeting)**

### **1. Welcome (5–10 minutes)**

- Greet and introduce new members.
- Review norms.

### **2. Book Overview (5 minutes)**

- Summarize the book and author's background.

### **3. Initial Reactions (5–15 minutes)**

- Share brief impressions.

### **4. Guided Discussion (30–40 minutes)**

- Explore themes, personal connections, and experiences.

### **5. Reflection (10 minutes)**

- Relate to communities.
- Discuss potential actions.

### **6. Wrap-Up (5 minutes)**

- Summarize the session.
- Announce next meeting.

## **Facilitation Best Practices**

- Create an inclusive environment where all voices are heard.
- Model active listening.
- Encourage diverse perspectives.
- Ensure balanced participation.
- Keep discussions on track while allowing for organic conversation.
- Be prepared to redirect the discussion if sensitive topics arise or correct ableist language.
- Ensure all participants have materials in an accessible format.

A stylized white human figure with arms raised is centered within a white circle. This circle is set against a background of concentric, teal-colored circles that create a ripple effect.

## Discussion Techniques

- Use open-ended questions to promote deeper thinking.
- Employ techniques that provide for equal participation, such as chat responses or a round robin.
- Encourage participants to build on one another's ideas.

## Handling Challenging Situations

- Address off-topic conversations gently but firmly.
- Mediate disagreements by refocusing on the text.
- Acknowledge different interpretations as valuable.
- Be prepared to pause discussions if they become heated.

## Accessibility Considerations

- Ensure meeting spaces are virtually and physically accessible by enabling live captioning on virtual platforms, offering multiple ways for participants to share their thoughts, and sharing accessible meeting materials in advance (e.g., large print, digital copies, PDF format). For in-person meetings, ensuring that there are accessible entries and exits as well as seating that is both accessible and adjustable.
- Allow for various participation methods, such as verbal, chat, and written.
- Be mindful of diverse communication needs. To support diverse communication needs, book club leaders should consider using tools like the chat and closed caption functions in virtual meetings. Additionally, leaders should encourage speakers to turn on their cameras during virtual meetings and ensure that speakers are clearly visible during in-person meetings, which can be helpful for those who rely on lip reading.

## Closing the Meeting

- Thank participants for their contributions.
- Encourage continued reflection beyond the meeting.
- Remind members about the next meeting.