

National Education Association Educator's Locally Led Book Clubs Focused on Disability Rights and Inclusion

The National Education Association is expanding its Disability Rights and Inclusion (DRI) initiative through a local-level book club program to deepen member engagement and understanding of disability perspectives at the grassroots level. This innovative approach aims to raise awareness about the experiences of people with disabilities while exploring the environmental, social, and attitudinal barriers that impede true inclusivity and accessibility within local NEA affiliate communities.

Who can participate in the NEA Locally Led Book Clubs?

The NEA Book Club is open to all members! This is a great opportunity for members to take what they learn and share key concepts about disability with their community.

How do the NEA Locally Led Book Clubs work?

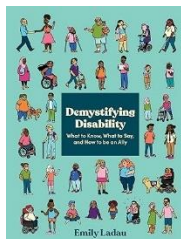
NEA members can register as book club leaders to organize local meetings, either in-person or virtually, focusing on disability rights and inclusion. The program provides up to 12 books and comprehensive online resources per local affiliate. It empowers local leaders to facilitate meaningful discussions and create collaborative learning environments that advance understanding of disability rights within their communities.

Where, when, and how will the Book Clubs meet?

Each local book club leader will share information about the book club and collaborate with interested members to identify meeting logistics, including the number of meetings and their duration, time, location, and format. The reading guide for *Demystifying Disability: What to Know, What to Say, and How to Be an Ally* is structured to complete the book study in three sessions. Local leaders can adjust the reading assignments, number of sessions, and other logistics to meet the needs of the local participants. The reading guides are available at [NEA.org/disabilities](https://www.nea.org/disabilities).

Demystifying Disability: What to Know, What to Say, and How to Be an Ally

By Emily Ladau



Demystifying Disability: What to Know, What to Say, and How to Be an Ally is an accessible guide that educates readers about disability and its intersections, fosters a progressive understanding of disability, and promotes allyship. The book offers readers an opportunity to promote positive change in perceptions, attitudes, and stereotypes about disability and people with disabilities and better understand the firsthand lived experience of disability.

Reading Guide: *Demystifying Disability: What to Know, What to Say, and How to Be an Ally*

What NEA Leadership Competencies are addressed in this book?

You will gain a foundational understanding of advocacy, communication, leading our profession, organizing, and social-emotional learning. Find out more about [NEA Leadership Competencies](#).

What are the main objectives?

As you are reading this book, approach the content with the following objectives in mind:

“If one person who reads this book thinks better of using disability as a slur or insult, or calls their representatives to advocate for disability issues, or adds a ramp to the entrance of their shop, then we’re moving in the right direction.” (p. 3)

“If you have met one person with a disability, you have met one person with a disability.” (p. 5)

“Learning about disability and applying what you learn to your daily life is a journey; keep reading, keep learning, and keep going.” (p. 5)

Session 1: Chapters 1 and 2 (to be read before the first book club meeting)

Pre-Reading Reflection Questions

1. How do you define disability?
2. How do you talk about disability and why? (for example, person-first vs. identity-first language)

Post-Reading Reflection Questions

1. Do you still use offensive terms? What should you say instead?
2. What resonated most with you in these chapters and why?
3. What salient points from these chapters will you apply to your daily life, and how?

Discussion Questions

1. How can we unlearn and disentangle ourselves from the mess of stigma and prejudice toward people with disabilities, especially people with disabilities who have multiple marginalized identities, and move toward a more inclusive, accepting world?
2. What did you learn from these chapters?

Next Steps

Read Chapters 3 and 4 before the next meeting.

Session 2: Chapters 3 and 4

Pre-Reading Reflection Questions

1. What is ableism?
2. Do you have ableist behaviors? How can you work toward changing your own ableist actions?

Post-Reading Reflection Questions

1. How do you create an accessible learning environment for all students?
2. What are ways your learning environment might be inaccessible?

Discussion Questions

1. What does ableism look like in your learning environments?
2. Can you name ableist language and actions of others, and if so, how?
3. Did you know any of the disability rights activists in these chapters?
4. Which of these activists made an impact on your learning?
5. How will you teach others about these activists, and what more do you need to learn to do this?

Next Steps

Read Chapters 5 and 6 before the next meeting.

Session 3: Chapters 5 and 6

Pre-Reading Reflection Question

1. Evaluate yourself on the dos and don'ts of disability etiquette. Where can you improve? What do you do well?

Post-Reading Reflection Questions

1. What are the ways that you might perpetuate ableism?
2. What are specific ways that you can make changes?

Discussion Questions

1. What are you doing with your new insights into the disability experience?
2. Will you advocate for accessibility, and if so, how?
3. How do you become an ally without being a “bad” ally?

Next Steps

Recommend the book to others in your community and have conversations about what you learned.