Building Community Through Meaningful Participation and Engagement

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Thursday, May 15, 2025

# Slide 2: FACEBOOK Post by Emily Colson 12/6/21

This is Max, my beautiful son with autism. He works at the Juice Station. Tonight he is working extra long hours…no break…no dinner, not because he has to but because he wants to. Several hours ago his boss told him he could leave and finish his jobs tomorrow. Max said he wants to finish his jobs tonight. If you own a business and are struggling to find employees, I encourage you to think creatively. Thousands of individuals - who love to work - are just waiting for the opportunity. If you’re unsure, stop into the Juice Station and ask Max’s boss, Marianne. And while you’re there, pick up a banana smoothie. Thanks to Max, there is one waiting for you.

# Slide 3: Today’s schedule:

## WHAT Inclusion Is (& Isn’t)

* Principles of Inclusion
* Models of Participation

## WHY: The Importance of Inclusion & Belonging

* Disability History & Community
* A Tale of Two Bridges

## HOW: Cultivating Kite Catchers & Community

* Top Inclusion Strategies
* 3 A’s = A Vital Role

# Slide 4: Introductions & Getting on the Same Page

# Slide 5: Introducing Lisa Drennan

Over 4 decades experience empowering individuals with disabilities to achieve their enrichment goals and meaningfully belong in their community.

New England Village – South Shore YMCA – MERGE Founder

# Slide 6: PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSION

# Slide 7: MERGE INCLUSION PRINCIPLES

* Organizational Commitment
* Meet People Where They Are
* Let’s Get to Success
* Meaningful Participation
* Working Toward Full Inclusion
* Everyone Has a Right to Belong

# Slide 8: See “Inclusion Principles” handout

# Slide 9: Inclusion Principle #1

## Organizational Commitment:

* ALL stakeholders have a responsibility and role.
* Resources and support provided at all levels.

# Slide 10: Inclusion Principle #2

## Meaningful Participation:

* Not just physical proximity… instead focus on participating together.
* Everyone has something of value to contribute.

# Slide 11: Inclusion Principle #3

## Meet People Where They Are:

* We change systems to support the person.
* By making accommodations & modifications.

# Slide 12: Inclusion Principle #4

## Working Toward Full Inclusion:

* Supporting a person to be as independent as possible in the least restrictive environment.
* Adaptive or specialized programs (or support) are used as a gateway toward full inclusion, not the end of the road.

# Slide 13: Inclusion Principle #5

## Let’s Get to Success:

* A change in perspective and approach
* Instead of “no we can’t” think “how can we” make this work

# Slide 14: Inclusion Principle #6

## Everyone Has a Right to Belong:

* To be welcomed, engaged, and supported.
* The ADA ensures that persons with disabilities have a legal right to participate.

# Slide 15: Inclusion is…

Inclusion is a way of thinking, a way of being, and a way of making decisions about helping everyone belong.

# Slide 16: Models of Participation

# Slide 17: Participation Models for Persons with Diverse Abilities (1)

Their Choice (and educated choice): Exclusion-Specialized-Integrated-Unified/Peer Buddy-Inclusion

# Slide 18: See “Models of Participation” handout

# Slide 19: Participation Models for Persons with Diverse Abilities (2)

## Exclusion Model

Examples | Benefits | Barriers

Exclusion occurs when participants are directly or indirectly prevented from or denied access to an activity.

# **Slide 20:** Inclusion is NOT Specialized

Specialized or “disability specific” programs are offered with instruction of participants provided in separate environments designed to respond to a particular or various impairments.

What are examples of a **specialized or adaptive** program or support in your communities? Benefits? Restrictions?

# Slide 21: Inclusion is NOT Integration

Integration is a process of placing participants with disabilities in existing activities. A focus is on giving the participants support so they can “fit in” to the existing system.

What are examples of an **integrated** program or supports in your community? Benefits? Restrictions?

# Slide 22: Inclusion is NOT Unified/Peer Buddy

Unified/Peer Buddy models joins people with and without disabilities to participate together in an activity. Typically, there are equal number of persons with disabilities to nondisabled peers who are often engaged as volunteers in this role.

What are examples of a **unified/peer buddy** program or supports in your community? Benefits? Restrictions?

# Slide 23: Inclusion

Inclusion is about intentionally planning for the success of all.

# Slide 24: Inclusion is…

Inclusion is supporting all participants, instructors/staff and the system as a whole so that the full range of participation needs can be met. Focus is on development of good instructional strategies that will be of benefit to all learners. Attention is given toward overcoming barriers in the system that prevent it from meeting the range of differing levels of abilities. The system changes to meet the needs of **all.**

Reflect on when someone you support has participated in an inclusion model. What type of setting, activity or group was it?

# Slide 25: Participation Models for Person with Diverse Abilities

Their Choice (an educated choice)

Exclusion-Specialized-Integrated-Unified/Peer Buddy-Inclusion

# Slide 26: Ways of Participating in the Community

* Segregation- Specialized or “disability specific” programs are offered with instruction of participants provided in separate environments designed to respond to a particular or various impairments.
* Integration is a process of placing participants with disabilities in existing activities. A focus is on giving the participants support so they can “fit in” to the existing system.
* Inclusion is supporting all participants, instructors/staff and the system as a whole so that the full range of participation needs can be met. Focus is on development of good instructional strategies that will be of benefit to all learners. Attention is given toward overcoming barriers in the system that prevent it from meeting the range of differing levels of abilities.

# Slide 27: Let’s Explore Community Participation Scenarios

## Sue works at BITTY & BEAU’s special needs coffee shop

## Tim works at a local Starbucks

## Group home staff brings 3 individuals to church (they alternate between 3 different faiths)

## Bobby joins the church choir where he is a member

* James joins a bowling league with a coworker from Starbucks
* Elain attends bowling at Alley Kat Langes (for students accessing special education)
* John signs up for the Arc sponsored “Drums Alive” class at a local YMCA
* Bank staff bring 2 individuals to the volunteer time at the local food bank

## Asha and Jamie join the water aerobics class at the town pool

* A job coach bring 3 individuals to their job at CVS assisting them with their tasks

## Bitty & Beau’s Coffee Shop | Church With Staff | Working At Starbucks

## Alley Kat Lane Bowling | Volunteering at the food bank | Member of The Church Choir

YMCA Drum’s Alive | Job coach at CVS | Typical Bowling League | Class at the town pool

# Slide 28: Disability History & Community

# Slide 29: An image of Non-Belonging

“Who Is in My Life” Relationship Map

* Family Members: Avg 7%
* Paid Human Service Professionals: Avg 23%
* Other People with Disabilities: Avg 65%
* Friends/Other Citizens: Avg >5%

Content credit to Jack Pealer, Beth Mount, and Tim Voigt

# Slide 30: Disability History

Despite decades of advancement in disability rights and efforts, there are still aspects of our societies that continue to be inaccessible to people with disabilities.

People with disabilities may be **in** our community, but not always members **of** our community.

# Slide 31: True Inclusion…

True inclusion begins when people can stop being guests in their own communities. — Unknown

# Slide 32: Models of Participation

Inclusion is a pathway to friendship.

# Slide 33: Announcing the Building Friendships Toolkit

See “Building Friendships” Toolkit handout

# Slide 34: A tale of two Bridges

# Slide 35: Community Inclusion

## A Tale of Two Bridges

A parable shared by Jack Yates

# Slide 36: Bridge One

Building the first suspension bridge across the Niagara Gorge in 1846 required out-of-the-box thinking. This bridge, designed to carry a railroad between Canada and the U.S., faced a major challenge: how to get the first cable across the gorge.

# Slide 37: Bridge Two

The Brooklyn Bridge by comparison, had it easy— engineers ferried the first cable across the East River.

# Slide 38: Bridge One

But in Niagara, with steep cliffs and raging waters, a boat crossing was impossible. Many doubted a bridge could be built at all.

# Slide 39: The answer

The answer? A kite-flying contest. The winning kite, carried by a strong west wind, reached the opposite shore, where a waiting crew caught it. They then used the kite string to pull across a stronger line, repeating the process over and over until a steel cable four feet thick spanned the gorge— strong enough to support the railroad.

# Slide 40: Connecting our Work

* Individuals with disabilities, their families, and agencies supporting them toward inclusion
* Employers, Recreation and community program providers who may lack the experience or expertise to support individuals with disabilities in their programs

# Slide 41: How Do We Bridge the Gap?

We work to bridge divides between people historically segregated in service systems and their communities. True bridge-building isn’t one-sided; it requires foundations on both shores. To succeed, we must engage allies on the other side —ready to catch the kites we fly.

# Slide 42: Connect the Banks

## Community Inclusion

We must build strong foundations on both sides, find allies to catch our kites, and remember that even the largest bridges start with a single thread of connection.

Slide 43: Who are our kite catchers?

Who are our kite catchers, and how can we build and strengthen our connections with them?

# Slide 44: Top Best Practice

# Slide 45: Top Best Practices

## **Toward Community Inclusion**

# Slide 46: Involve The Individual You Support

* Ensure their voice is heard
  + By engaging a person-centered planning focus
* What makes them shine
  + Their interests, their purpose, their gifts, what they can share?

# **Slide 47:**

“They (their dreams) drive this process. As we go through this process, we want to help those involved with the focus person see the total person, recognize his or her desires and interests, and discover completely new ways of thinking about the future of the person." —Beth Mount & Kay Zwernik

# Slide 48: Working With Kite Catchers – Info Sharing

* Info Sharing
  + Sharing about support needs
* Strengths focused
  + Go ahead and brag! Their strengths, talents, interests
* Good Communication Practice
  + Discuss confidentiality
  + Share on a need-to-know basis only

# Slide 49: Provide Effective Support

* Set up for success
  + Being prepared leads to success for all
  + Ask for schedules or expectations
* Be engaged and responsive
  + Build independence- “Aid & Fade”
  + Available for problem solving
* Facilitate social interactions
  + Ensure before and after activity/work time
  + Model techniques to increase interactions with peers

# Slide 50: Be a Triple A

* Advocate
* Ally
* Ambassador

# Slide 51: See “Disability Etiquette Guidelines” handouts

# Slide 52: I want to…

“I want to live in a world where people with disabilities bear labels like friend, leader, coworker, teacher, and partner, more than special, inspiring, angelic, or sweet.” -Behtan McKinney Fox

# Slide 53: WRAP UP AND REFLECTION (1)

Get the handouts online.

# Slide 54: WRAP UP AND REFLECTION (2)

Reflect and consider:

* Your “AHA” Moment
* Your Takeaway
* What will you implement?
* What will you share?

# Slide 55: THANK YOU! SHARE THE LOVE

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