

CREATING SPACE FOR MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE ON DISABILITY, DIGNITY, AND INCLUSION



Personal Connections

Many participants in your group may have personal experiences with disability, whether their own, a family member's, a friend's, or a colleague's. According to the CDC, 1 in 4 adults in the United States lives with a disability, making it likely that disability touches everyone in your discussion space in some way. These lived experiences are valuable and should be welcomed if participants choose to share them, while recognizing that no one should feel obligated to disclose personal information or speak on behalf of all disabled people.

Creating a Respectful Discussion Environment

- **Use person-first or identity-first language as preferred by individuals.** Some people prefer "person with a disability" while others prefer "disabled person." When in doubt, mirror the language used in the film or ask for preferences.
- **Challenge assumptions** about what disabled people can or cannot do, while avoiding the portrayal of disabled people as automatically inspirational simply for living their lives.
- **Center dignity and rights**, not pity or charity. The film's athletes are not seeking sympathy or a way to fix them, but rather equitable access and opportunity.
- **Make space for complex emotions.** Participants may feel anger about systemic barriers, grief about personal experiences, or hope about possibilities for change. All of these responses are valid.



Accessibility Considerations

Before beginning, ensure your discussion space is accessible. Consider whether all participants can fully engage with both the film and the discussion. This might include providing captions, ensuring physical accessibility of the space, allowing for different forms of participation (verbal, written, or visual), and offering breaks as needed.

Remember:

The goal is not to speak for a community we are not a part of but to understand how we can all work together to dismantle barriers and expand opportunities for full participation in all aspects of life.

