OBJECTIVES

• Students will understand that people have different physical and mental conditions that affect a person's ability to move, feel, see, hear, and think.
• Students will be introduced to the idea that these conditions alone are not the disability. Instead it is how society treats the condition that makes it a disability. Students will understand that society needs to change to make the condition less of a disability, not the person.

VOCABULARY

• Acquired Brain Injury\(^1\) – noun
  • mild to serious injury to the brain (as from stroke, brain tumor, or a blow to the head) that is not congenital, hereditary, or degenerative and that causes temporary or permanent symptoms including impairments in cognition (as memory loss or poor concentration), emotional and behavioral changes (as irritability, impulsivity, agitation, and depression), headaches, dizziness, fatigue, seizures, blurred vision, loss of taste or smell, impaired coordination, and numbness or paralysis of an extremity
• Cerebral Palsy\(^2\) - noun
  • a disability resulting from damage to the brain before, during, or shortly after birth and outwardly manifested by muscular incoordination and speech disturbances
• Discrimination\(^3\) - noun
  • the practice of unfairly treating a person or group of people differently from other people or groups of people
• Pity\(^4\) - noun
  • a sympathetic sorrow for one suffering, distressed, or unhappy
  • something to be regretted
• Muscular Dystrophy\(^5\) - noun
  • any of a group of hereditary diseases characterized by progressive wasting of muscles
• Multiple Sclerosis\(^6\) - noun
  • a demyelinating disease marked by patches of hardened tissue in the brain or the spinal cord and associated especially with partial or complete paralysis and jerking muscle tremor

ESTIMATED INSTRUCTION TIME: 20 minutes
Disability History Month Act, RCW 28A.230.158, states that “Annually, during the month of October, each public school shall conduct or promote educational activities that provide instruction, awareness, and understanding of disability history and people with disabilities. The activities may include, but not be limited to, school assemblies or guest speaker presentations.” Available at https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.230.158

Washington State Superintendent DA Policy 3226 Required Observances (includes Disability History Month); Policy 3227, Disability History Month.


- Benchmark 4A – Demonstrates awareness of other people’s emotions, perspectives, cultures, language, history, identity, and ability.
- Benchmark 4B – Demonstrates an awareness and respect for one’s similarities and differences with others.
- Benchmark 4C – Demonstrates an understanding of the social norms of individual cultures.
1. **Teacher shows SLIDE 5: “What types of disabilities exist?”** (Slide attached). The teacher leads class discussion:
   a. The teacher asks the students: What kinds of conditions could be considered a disability? How do these disabilities affect individuals? When and how does someone get a disability? What would you want to be called? If someone calls you kind, smart, athletic, funny – how do you feel about yourself? If someone calls you mean, stupid, slow, clumsy – how do you feel about yourself?
      i. Discuss examples such as: a person who is born blind cannot see; a person who has mental health issues may affect the way the person “feels” inside; a person with a muscular dystrophy may not “move” their hands or feet.
      ii. Discuss examples of when and how people get disabilities:
         1. A disability that someone is born with may include cerebral palsy, intellectual disability, and blindness
         2. Sometimes people are born with a condition that does not show up until later in life such as: muscular sclerosis
         3. A disability that someone acquires may include an acquired brain injury such as injury to the brain after drowning or a car accident.

   b. **Goal of the slide:** Students understand that disabilities vary and may affect the way a person feels, hears, sees, speaks, moves, thinks, and learns. Disabilities may show up at birth or later in life.

2. **Teacher shows SLIDE 6: “How many people have disabilities?”** (Slide attached). Teacher leads class discussion:
   a. The teacher asks the students” “Do you have a guess as to how many people have a disability?”
   b. The teacher answers: Statistics vary, but based on the United States Census, 1 in 5 people have a disability.

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**TEACHER REFERENCES**

The 2010 US Census found that nearly 1 in 5 people have a disability. That is about 56.7 million people (nearly 19% of population) who have a disability. Accessed at https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/miscellaneous/cb12-134.html dated July 25, 2012

In Washington of the approximately 6.8 million people, 12.4% have a disability (844,316 people). Accessed at http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_14_5YR_S1810&prodType=table

According to the World Health Survey around 785 million (15.6%) persons 15 years and older live with a disability, while the Global Burden of Disease estimates a figure of around 975 million (19.4%) persons. Accessed at http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2011/WHO_NMH_VIP_11.01_eng.pdf
This slide introduces at a very basic level examples of the different models of thought that describe disability. This curriculum introduces the medical model, tragedy/charity model, and social model.

In the Medical Model, a disability is viewed as a condition that a person may have and then try to fix. For example, doctors diagnose conditions like muscular dystrophy and then try to identify treatments or cures for that condition. This makes sense when doctors are doing their jobs, but if everyone views conditions this way, then we are focused on what is “wrong” with the person and how to “change” the person to make them better.

Tragedy/Charity Model: The Tragedy/Charity model focuses on the condition and person as an object of pity. This perspective is often used in telethons where images of people with disabilities are used to get others to donate money. The result is that people with these conditions are seen as tragic victims, in need of care and not capable of taking care of themselves. As a result, people with these conditions are treated differently and face “discrimination.” When a person treats another person as a victim deserving of pity, the person with the condition experiences a loss in self-esteem and equal opportunities.

c. Goal of the Slide: Students learn that people with disabilities make up the largest minority and are an estimated 1 in 5 people.

3. Teacher shows SLIDE 7: “How do people think about disabilities?” (Slide attached). Teacher leads class discussion:
   a. Teacher explains: There are different ways to think about a disability. Sometimes the way someone thinks about disability depends on why they are asking about the disability.
      i. The teacher reads the slide to summarize the medical model and the tragedy/charity model.
1. The teacher asks the students after reading about the medical model: If people focus on what is wrong with your condition and how to fix it, how do you think the person feels about the condition?

2. The teacher asks the students after reading about the Tragedy/Charity model: If people use pictures of children to ask for donations of money to fix these children and prevent others from being like them, how do you think those children with the condition feel?

b. **Goal of slide:** Students are introduced to the concept that the way we think about disability affects the way people with disabilities feel about themselves and the way others view them. Through the medical model, people with disabilities are viewed as broken. Through the tragedy/charity model people with disabilities lack value and are deserving of pity.

4. **Teacher shows SLIDE 8: “Another way to think about disability: The Social Model”** (Slide attached). Teacher reads and explains the slide:
   a. The teachers explains that another way to think about disability is called the social model. This way of thinking considers that everyone has different physical and mental conditions, but the condition only becomes a disability because of the way society is structured.

   **b. Goal of slide:** The students are introduced to the social model of disability that sees disability as created by the way the society is set up and because of interactions with society. The result of people with disabilities is that the person does not need to be fixed, but rather society needs to change.

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**TEACHER REFERENCES**

5. Teacher shows SLIDE 9: “Here are some examples” (Slide attached). Teacher leads class discussion:

a. Teacher explains the first example: The individual has a condition resulting in the individual using a wheelchair for mobility. The individual wants to get up the stairs in a court house. However, society is set up in a way that makes the condition a disability: the courthouse only has stairs and no lifts or elevators. To access the court house, the individual is subjected to the embarrassment and danger of having others carry him up the stairs on a stretcher.
   i. The teacher asks: What can we do to change society?
   ii. Answer: Build buildings that have elevators, ramps and lifts.

b. Teacher explains the second example: The individual has a condition and cannot speak. Other people in society expect the individual to talk and when the individual cannot talk, other people ignore the person or jump to the conclusion that the individual is not intelligent. Societal stigma has made the condition a disability.
   i. The teacher asks: What can we do to make this condition less of a disability?
   ii. Answer: A solution is for the individual to use an augmentative and alternative communication device, which is a device that helps a person communicate who cannot communicate verbally. The device shown is a board that assists the individual in communicating without speaking. Another solution is for other people to not assume this person is not intelligent, and for other people to include this person in conversation and community.

c. Goal of Slide: Students explore examples of how the social model of disability takes the focus off the individual’s condition and instead asks what we can do to change society.

a. The teacher explains: by embracing the social perspective on disability, together we are called to action to figure out how to make the world more inclusive of all people. We ask ourselves what we can do to make a physical or mental condition less of a disability. We do not pity a person who has a disability, but instead focus on respecting the individual.

b. The teacher asks the students: Do you have any ideas about what you can do to make different conditions less of a disability?
   i. Answers: The slide lists several answers such as treat people with disabilities with respect; include people with disabilities; find ways to make your community more accessible; and fight for the civil rights of people with disabilities.

c. The teacher can pose some other questions:
   i. Ask: What if you see someone crossing the street who is blind, but where there is no feature to tell them when it is safe to cross the street?
   ii. Answer: Ask the individual if they need assistance or if they want to know when the light turns. Do not just help the individual without asking.
   iii. Ask: What if you see another student at school who uses a wheelchair and you want to talk to them?
   iv. Answer: Do not stare. Talk to the student as you would any other student.

d. The teacher follows the live link to the Youth Credo video. The video runs 3 minutes and 39 seconds. Self-advocates created this video to provide guidance on how to treat people with disabilities. Video accessed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wrNy_2ljVdo
SLIDE 5: “What types of disabilities exist?”

Disabilities may affect a person’s:
- ability to move, see, speak, hear, think, feel, act, or learn

When can a person get a disability?
- A person may be born with a disability.
- Some people are born with a condition, but it does not show up until later in life.
- Some people acquire disabilities later in life.

SLIDE 6: “How many people have disabilities?”

Statistics Vary
- Between 12.4% and 20% of all the people in the world have a disability
SLIDE 7: “How do people think about disabilities?”

How do people think about disability?
The way someone thinks about disability depends on who the person is and why they are asking:
- A doctor thinks about identifying the condition and treating it.
- A person wants to raise money and presents images of children with disabilities asking people to donate to cure these children.

SLIDE 8: “Another Way to think about disability: The Social Model”

Another way to think about disability: The Social Model.

- Disability describes how society sees and treats a difference in the way a person’s mind or body works.
- The parts of our community that are disabling include things like negative attitudes, inaccessible transportation and buildings, and a lack of social supports.
SLIDE 9: “Here are some examples”

- **Society:** Many buildings have only stairs to access upper floors.
  - **Disability:** A person using a wheelchair cannot access much of the building.
  - **Solution:** use ramps, elevators and lifts.

- **Society:** When a person cannot talk, other people assume the person cannot think or communicate.
  - **Disability:** Person who lacks speech is treated unfairly, ignored, and subject to discrimination.
  - **Solution:** find ways to communicate, do not assume, and include.

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- Look for ways to make the world accessible to people with disabilities.
- Treat people with disabilities with respect.
- Include people with disabilities.
- Make sure people with disabilities have the equal civil rights.
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wrNy2ljVdo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wrNy2ljVdo)