



Before it begins...

Before watching the **PEOPLE LIKE US** doc, take a moment to write down your thoughts.

List things that bother you about people with intellectual disabilities:

List any expectations you may have for individuals with intellectual disabilities:

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Documentary Discussion Guide

1. Have you ever interacted with someone who has an intellectual disability? What was it like?
2. What moment from the documentary stood out to you? How did it personally **influence** your life?
3. After watching the **PEOPLE LIKE US** documentary, did any of your fears or expectations about people with disabilities change?
4. Why is it important to get to know people individually?

“Some people will say, ‘All kids with Down syndrome are just so sweet.’ Well, very often. But if you say that it’s like saying all people of another category have the same characterization. So, I think just **leaving that door open** and allowing them to figure out what the **individuals** are like is best.”

–**Charlene Schultz**, Ryder’s teacher

5. Each person in the documentary is accustomed to people negatively judging them. Yet none of them were nervous to perform. How can they have so much confidence?
6. Think of a time you were **belittled**. Does the resilience of the people from the documentary inspire you to respond differently?

“She gets one of the best qualities of life that I’ve seen anybody get.”

–**Kirsti Mutz**, Emma’s sister

7. What defines a **good** quality of life? Do you believe people with disabilities can have a “good quality of life?”
8. How can you most appropriately handle the times when you don’t know how to respond to people with disabilities? Who can you talk to when you feel awkward or uncertain?

“Society’s way of looking at Sean has been like **he’s invisible**. They look at him and then look away.”

–**Deb Holland**, Sean’s mom

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“I want strangers to treat me as I am. I just don’t want them to think I’m not smart. But **I am** smart.”

–**Brittanie Harvey**

9. What ways have you unintentionally communicated to people with intellectual disabilities that they are “not smart” or inferior? In what ways are they excluded from your community?

10. What can **YOU** do to be inclusive?

11. How have the six people in the **PEOPLE LIKE US** documentary inspired or challenged you?

12. Research shows that **information and contact** are needed to transform negative attitudes into inclusive mindsets. How can you integrate these two aspects into your life and your community?

“We put expectations on these individuals with intellectual disabilities because we don’t want them to be rejected, **we don’t want them to be hurt**, we don’t want them to be ‘broken,’ when they’ve been **hurt** and **rejected** by us **not** allowing them these opportunities. I don’t want to treat them as liabilities to be managed, but I want to see them as assets to be **enjoyed** in our society. And there is so much that they have to offer that we just have to open our eyes and see and **allow them the opportunity** to have.”

–**Kirsti Mutz**, Emma’s sister

Regardless of ethnicity or ability, it is always best to use “people-first” language (putting the person before the label).

So, rather than saying, “*that disabled person*” you say, “*that person with a disability*,” because people are defined by the fact they are a person before they are defined by any sort of physical or intellectual disability they may have.

WHY THE FANCY WORDING?

For more resources, visit

PEOPLELIKEUSdoc.com    **@PEOPLELIKEUS**doc
Info@PEOPLELIKEUSdoc.com