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Allyship and Accessibility in the Disability Sector

Mistakes Made, Lessons Learned and Best Practices

Kirk W. Laughlin, CFRE
(he/him)

Principal & Lead Nonprofit Strategist of
Planet Laughlin
kirk@planetlaughlin.com



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Overview

- Introduction to disabilities in the workplace and fundraising space
- Arguments for accessibility
- Allyship & Othering
- Personal mistakes and lessons
- Applied tools and modalities
- Resources for further exploration



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My journey into the disability space

The slide features a decorative border of colorful balloons at the top. It includes a photograph of a building entrance with a sign that reads "the way to the study center", a portrait of Kirk W. Laughlin, and the logo for the Academy for Precision Learning (apl). The footer contains the AFPICON 2023 logo (NEW ORLEANS, APRIL 16-18), the website and hashtag (afpicon.com, #afpicon), and the presenting sponsor (blackbaud).

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Arguments for Accessibility

- A human right
- Equity
- A responsibility of the nonprofit sector

The slide features a decorative border of colorful balloons at the top. It includes a photograph of a person wearing noise-cancelling headphones and an image of a text scanner. The footer contains the AFPICON 2023 logo (NEW ORLEANS, APRIL 16-18), the website and hashtag (afpicon.com, #afpicon), and the presenting sponsor (blackbaud).

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Brief Overview of Accessibility Movement

SIGN 504
ACCO

ADA
Americans with Disabilities Act

- *“Disability is Diversity”*
(ARC of King County, WA)
- *“Accessibility isn’t a strategy or modality - it’s a right”*
(U. of Washington Haring Center)

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Virtual Panel Member

Elizabeth Ralston, MPH (she/her)
Accessibility Consultant
Elizabeth Ralston Consulting, LLC

Photo by Erika Shultz/Seattle Times

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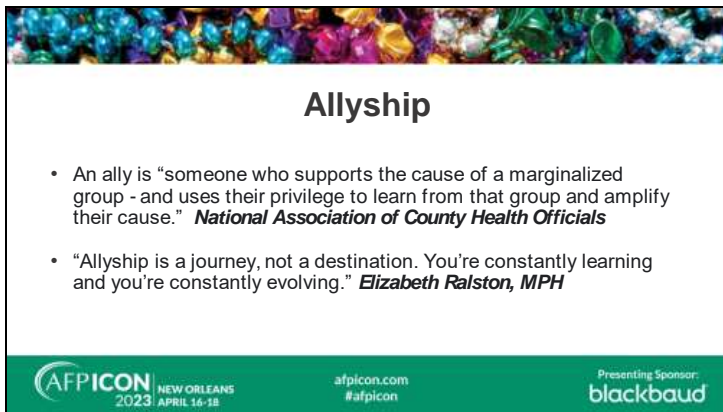
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The slide features a decorative border at the top with colorful, shiny objects. The main content area is white with the title "Elizabeth Ralston Video" in bold black text. Below the title is a large red YouTube play button icon. At the bottom, there is a green footer bar containing the AFPICON 2023 logo (NEW ORLEANS APRIL 16-18), the website "afpicon.com" and hashtag "#afpicon", and the text "Presenting Sponsor: blackbaud".

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The slide features a decorative border at the top with colorful, shiny objects. The main content area is white with the title "Allyship" in bold black text. Below the title are two bullet points: "An ally is 'someone who supports the cause of a marginalized group - and uses their privilege to learn from that group and amplify their cause.'" *National Association of County Health Officials* and "Allyship is a journey, not a destination. You're constantly learning and you're constantly evolving." *Elizabeth Ralston, MPH*. At the bottom, there is a green footer bar containing the AFPICON 2023 logo (NEW ORLEANS APRIL 16-18), the website "afpicon.com" and hashtag "#afpicon", and the text "Presenting Sponsor: blackbaud".

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Advice on Being an Ally

- Acknowledge and respect individual experiences and abilities
- Learn to actively listen
- Observe dynamics of power and privilege
- Focus on your impact, not your intent

INVISIBLE DISABILITY PROJECT™

Disability Rights WASHINGTON

CDC

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Advice on Being an Ally

- You're almost certainly going to make mistakes - so use that feedback constructively
- Lean into discomfort and consider new perspectives
- Avoid pitfalls of your allyship being "one sided" or treating individuals as inferiors

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Abelism, “the savior complex” & the Social Model

- Abelism and “Putting people on a pedestal”
- Infantilizing and othering
- Respectful, person-first language
- Medical model vs. Social model



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Visible vs. Invisible Disabilities

- Varying reactions and assumptions
- Disability as one point within diversity
- Interrogating the workplace & environment



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My Own Mistakes and Lessons Learned

- Blindness awareness and being a guide
- My own neurodiverse students
- Workplace advice




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Mainstay and SAILS Program at Seattle Central College

- **Mainstay** supports job seekers with disabilities by determining needs of the individual, working with employers and partnering with family members & advocates
- **SAILS** provides resources and guidance for students at Seattle Central College with disabilities to reach their academic goals



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Virtual Panel Member

Rebecca B. Jansson (she/her)
Director of Mainstay
Seattle Central College

mainstay-sails.seattlecentral.edu
Rebecca.Jansson@seattlecolleges.edu



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Rebecca B. Jansson Video



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Applied Advice for the Fundraising Workplace

- General accommodations
- Events and materials
- Materials
- Next two panel members are nonprofit leaders and current or former front-line fundraisers with disabilities

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Virtual Panel Member

Shawn Dobbs (he/him)
VP of Marketing & Public Relations
The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.
(Seattle, WA)

<https://lhblind.org/sdobbs@seattlelh.org>



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Shawn Dobbs Video



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Virtual Panel Member

Cole Hardman (he/him)
Director of Development, Major Gifts
Seattle Children's Foundation

seattlechildrens.org
Cole.Hardman@seattlechildrens.org



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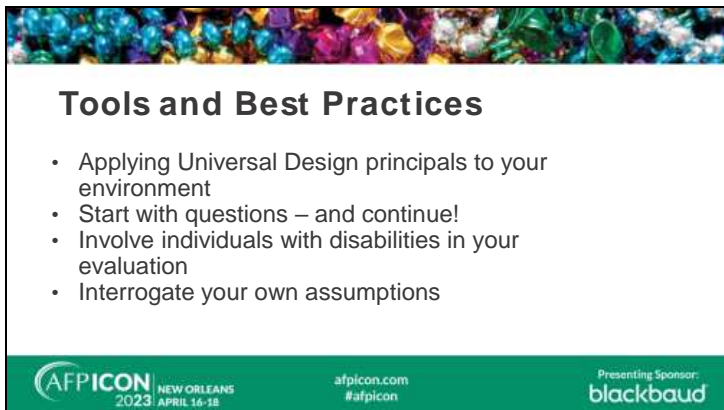


Cole Hardman Video



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Tools and Best Practices

- Applying Universal Design principals to your environment
- Start with questions – and continue!
- Involve individuals with disabilities in your evaluation
- Interrogate your own assumptions

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Tools and Best Practices - Examples

- Wayfinders
- Braille displays
- Large Print
- Visual contrasts in the environment
- Graphics, web design and alt text in images
- Taking the time

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Tools and Best Practices - Examples



Refreshable Braille Display




High Contrast Flash Card




High contrast keyboard

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Tools and Best Practices - Examples




Way Finding Strips



Before **After**


Curb Cut

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Tools and Best Practices - Examples



Quiet Spaces



High-Contrast Walls and Clothing

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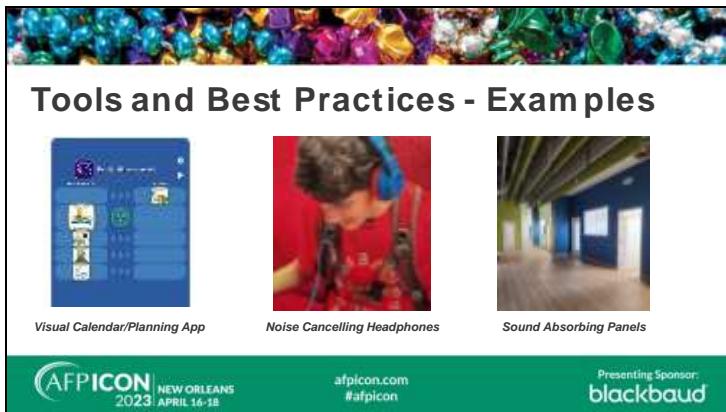


Tools and Best Practices


- Physical design for those with “invisible disabilities”/neurodiversity
- Sound/scent sensitivity
- Guiding notes
- Access to remote work
- Evaluation of your own assumptions

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Tools and Best Practices - Examples



Visual Calendar/Planning App



Noise Cancelling Headphones



Sound Absorbing Panels

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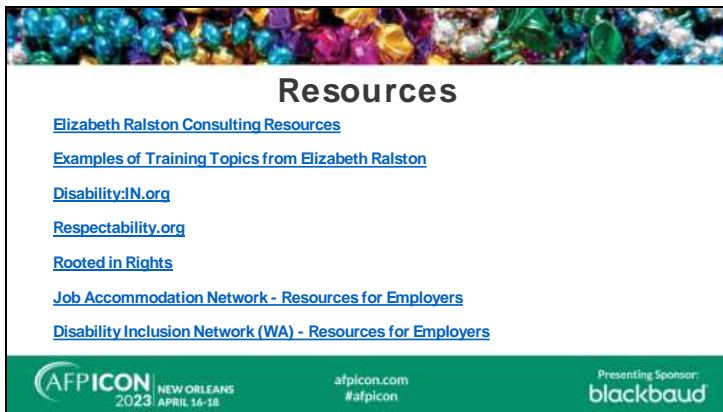


Tools and Best Practices

- Research local and online resources
- Actively involve individuals with disabilities in evaluating
- Make this aspect of equity integral to your organization's culture, policies and practices.
- "Universally design" your organization's culture
- Be open and accepting to feedback and criticism

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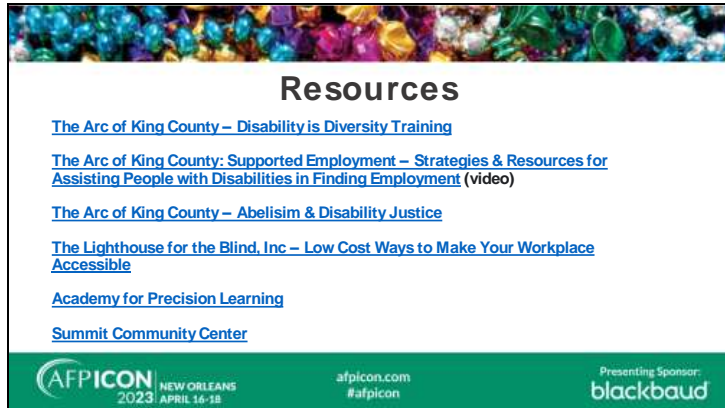


Resources

- [Elizabeth Ralston Consulting Resources](#)
- [Examples of Training Topics from Elizabeth Ralston](#)
- [Disability:IN.org](#)
- [Respectability.org](#)
- [Rooted in Rights](#)
- [Job Accommodation Network - Resources for Employers](#)
- [Disability Inclusion Network \(WA\) - Resources for Employers](#)

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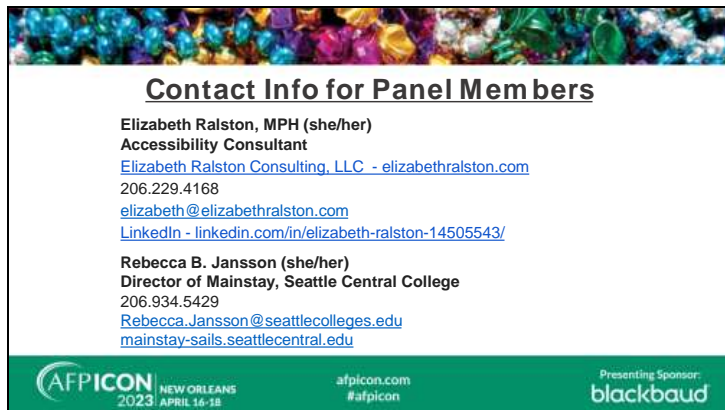


Resources

- [The Arc of King County – Disability is Diversity Training](#)
- [The Arc of King County: Supported Employment – Strategies & Resources for Assisting People with Disabilities in Finding Employment](#) (video)
- [The Arc of King County – Abelisim & Disability Justice](#)
- [The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc – Low Cost Ways to Make Your Workplace Accessible](#)
- [Academy for Precision Learning](#)
- [Summit Community Center](#)

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Contact Info for Panel Members

Elizabeth Ralston, MPH (she/her)
Accessibility Consultant
[Elizabeth Ralston Consulting, LLC - elizabethralston.com](http://ElizabethRalstonConsulting.LLC-elizabethralston.com)
206.229.4168
elizabeth@elizabethralston.com
[LinkedIn - linkedin.com/in/elizabeth-ralston-14505543/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/elizabeth-ralston-14505543/)

Rebecca B. Jansson (she/her)
Director of Mainstay, Seattle Central College
206.934.5429
Rebecca.Jansson@seattlecolleges.edu
mainstay-sails.seattlecentral.edu

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Shawn Dobbs
VP of Marketing & Public Relations
The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.
sdobbs@lhblind.org
lhblind.org

Cole Hardman
Director of Development, Major Gifts
Seattle Children's Foundation
206.987.8119
cole.hardman@seattlechildrens.org
seattlechildrens.org

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Kirk W. Laughlin, CFRE (he/him)

Principal & Lead Nonprofit Strategist of
Planet Laughlin

[LinkedIn - company/planetlaughlin](#)
[LinkedIn - in/kirkseattle](#)

206-289-0612 kirk@planetlaughlin.com



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