



# Allyship and Accessibility in the Disability Sector

*Mistakes Made, Lessons Learned and Best Practices*

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**(he/him)**

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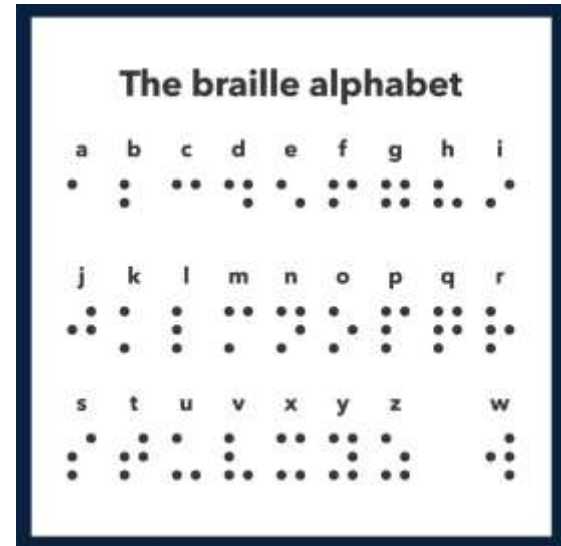
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# Overview

- 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





# My journey into the disability space





# Arguments for Accessibility



*Noise cancelling  
headphones*

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



*Text scanner for printed text  
to speech*



# Brief Overview of Accessibility Movement



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



# Virtual Panel Member

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



*Photo by Erika Shultz/Seattle Times*



# Elizabeth Ralston Video



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# Allyship

- 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***
- “Allyship is a journey, not a destination. You’re constantly learning and you’re constantly evolving.” ***Elizabeth Ralston, MPH***



# 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

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Disability Rights  
WASHINGTON





# 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







# Visible vs. Invisible Disabilities

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





# My Own Mistakes and Lessons Learned

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





# 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





# Virtual Panel Member

**Rebecca B. Jansson (she/her)**  
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# Rebecca B. Jansson Video



**Rebecca B. Jansson**  
**Director of Mainstay/  
SAILS**  
**Seattle Central College**



# 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



# Virtual Panel Member

**Shawn Dobbs (he/him)**

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# Shawn Dobbs Video



# Shawn Dobbs

VP of Marketing & Public Relations  
The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc  
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# Virtual Panel Member

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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



# Tools and Best Practices - Examples

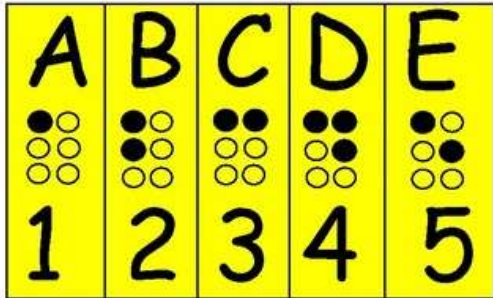
- Wayfinders
- Braille displays
- Large Print
- Visual contrasts in the environment
- Graphics, web design and alt text in images
- Taking the time



# Tools and Best Practices - Examples



*Refreshable Braille Display*



*High Contrast Flash Card*



*High contrast keyboard*





# Tools and Best Practices - Examples



*Way Finding Strips*



**Before**



**After**

*Curb Cut*



# Tools and Best Practices - Examples



*Quiet Spaces*



*High-Contrast Walls and Clothing*



# 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





# Tools and Best Practices - Examples



*Visual Calendar/Planning App*



*Noise Cancelling Headphones*



*Sound Absorbing Panels*





# 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



# 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](#)



# 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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