

# Disability Awareness Conversation Guide

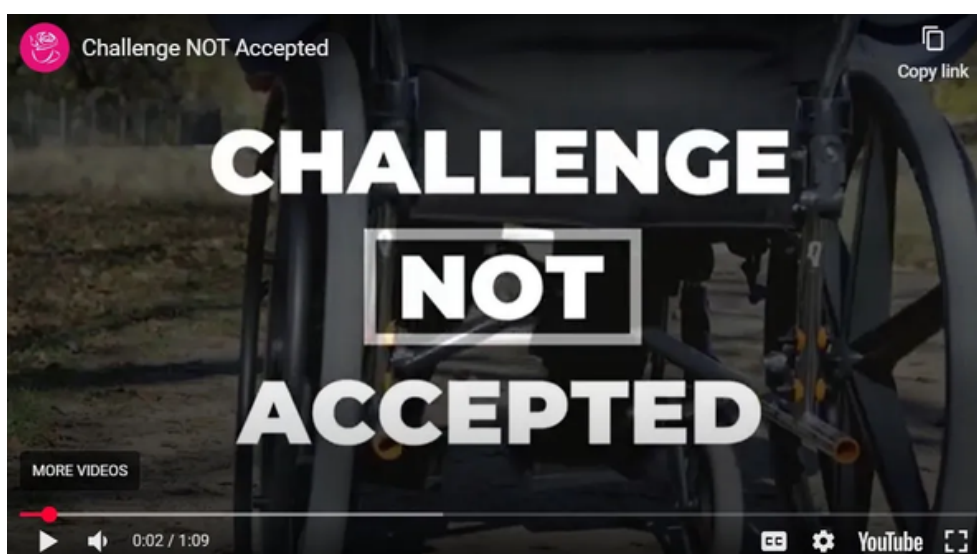


**A light-touch discussion resource to help teams think about inclusion and accessibility in everyday life and work.**

Produced by the Rose Road Association. With special thanks to Peter Hull MBE PLY, Paralympic gold medallist and Rose Road Ambassador, for developing this course with advice from Chris Jay of [Bascule Disability Awareness Training](#).

## Rose Road's Challenge NOT Accepted Video

[Watch our Challenge NOT Accepted Video](#), in which our young people take centre-stage to challenge barriers and the assumptions that they *can't* do things, showing instead how they *CAN* take risks, speak up, express themselves, and join in.



## How to use this Conversation Guide

Think about each scene and young person in the video and discuss what challenges they could face in life.

As you work through the discussion topics, there are thought-provoking questions for you to answer, followed by advice you can take forward and apply both in the workplace and every day life, to help improve the experiences of disabled people.

Topics in this guide:

- **The Social Model of Disability**
- **Challenging Biases**
- **Respectful Language and Etiquette**
- **Effective Communication**
- **Promoting Self Advocacy**
- **The Equality Act 2010**



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## The Social Model of Disability

The social model of disability reminds us that **disability isn't caused by a person's condition — it's caused by the barriers society puts in their way.**

When we remove those barriers, people can participate fully and show everyone who they truly are.

Reasonable Adjustments create an inclusive environment. A reasonable adjustment is **any small change that helps someone** access work, services, or activities equally. Often, these changes cost little but mean a lot.



### Let's talk:

- When you think about disability, do you picture a person's condition or the barriers around them?
- What types of barrier are there? Discuss: physical; economic; legal; communication; educational; technological; transportational; social, cultural and attitudinal barriers
- What does an inclusive environment look and feel like to you?
- What does a "reasonable adjustment" look like where you work?
- Can you think of an everyday space you use that might unintentionally exclude someone?
- Do you know who to ask if you need a reasonable adjustment at work?
- Think about what we all need to feel safe and happy — how can we make sure everyone has that?



### You can:

- Design spaces with ramps or lifts
- Provide accessible toilets, changing facilities, and seating
- Provide easy to operate doorbells/keypads, door handles, light switches etc, at appropriate height levels
- Create space for wheelchairs and mobility aids in social spaces
- Keep shared spaces uncluttered and easy to navigate
- Offer quiet spaces
- Offer accessible transport options
- Offer information in different formats (large print, audio, or digital)
- Ask individuals what adjustments would improve their experience - don't assume
- Encourage open conversations about access and comfort
- Ensure everyone knows their legal obligations and provide disability equality training for staff to help them go further to promote inclusion and accessibility



## Challenging Biases

Everyone holds unconscious **assumptions that could limit a person's opportunity** to be included and participate — but recognising them is the first step to inclusion.



### Let's talk:

- What stereotypes about disability still appear in workplaces or media?
- How could we challenge those assumptions in a positive way?



### You can:

- Expect the same range of goals, wishes and interests from disabled people as from anyone else
- Include disabled people in decisions, conversations, and social activities
- Listen and learn rather than assume what someone can or can't do
- Not make assumptions – don't be afraid to ask



## Respectful Language and Etiquette

How we talk — and listen — makes a huge difference. Respectful language is about **seeing the person first, not the condition.**



### Let's talk:

- What phrases or habits might come across as patronising, even if we mean well?
- How can we make sure everyone feels respected and heard?
- How can we keep learning as language evolves?



### You can:

- Speak directly to the person, not to others about them
- Give people time to respond — especially if they use communication devices
- Communicate with adults as adults, not as children
- Keep learning: preferred language changes over time, and that's okay
- Make sure you're aware of terms that could be offensive and derogatory
- Not make assumptions about disabled people's situations, speak to them and ask them questions as you would anyone



## Effective Communication

Communication happens in many ways — through words, gestures or devices. The **key is being curious and adaptable** to ensure everyone can be heard.



### Let's talk:

- How might someone communicate differently from you?
- How can we make sure everyone's ideas are heard, no matter how they communicate?



### You can:

- Learn about communication methods (braille, sign language, Makaton, AAC devices)
- Check if the person prefers text, email, or in-person discussion
- Be patient — don't rush or finish sentences for someone



## Promoting Self-Advocacy

Inclusion works best **when everyone can speak and choose for themselves** — and when we make sure their voices are heard.



### Let's talk:

- How can we all make it easier for people to share their needs confidently?
- What does truly listening look like in our team or workplace?
- How can we make sure every voice counts?



### You can:

- Ask what someone needs, rather than guessing or assuming
- Support people to express their preferences in the way that works best for them
- Encourage disabled colleagues or customers to share feedback and ideas
- Recognise and value each person's unique perspective



## The Equality Act 2010

This law **protects people from discrimination** and requires organisations to make reasonable adjustments. But inclusion is about more than compliance — it's about culture. [Find the government guidance here.](#)



### Let's talk:

- What does the Equality Act protect?
- How can we go beyond "ticking boxes" to build genuine inclusion?



### You can:

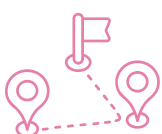
- Know what the Act means for your organisation and we can ensure we comply
- Treat accessibility as an opportunity, not an obligation
- Use the Act as a guide for fairness and empathy, not just a rulebook



## Final Reflections

Inclusion isn't just about physical access — it's about **attitude, empathy and action**. Small changes make big differences, and every conversation helps us see the world more clearly through someone else's eyes.

Before your next meeting, event, customer liaison or workplace change, ask: *"Is there anyone who might find this difficult — and what can we do to make it easier?"*



## Get in touch

If you would like us to visit your organisation and give a talk about the work of Rose Road and how your organisation can get involved, please [email Sam Robson](#), Corporate & Partnerships Manager, or call the team on 023 8072 1203.



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