

| <b>Dos and Don'ts for the Disability Ally</b>   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>DO</b>   | <b>DON'T</b>   |
| <p>1. DO LISTEN DEEPLY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hear the stories, concerns, hurts</li> <li>• Believe what you hear</li> <li>• Acknowledge the pain and injustice</li> </ul>   | <p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interrupt, rationalize, or get defensive</li> <li>• Say anything – just listen!</li> <li>• Quote scripture or theology</li> </ul>  |
| <p>2. DO ASK QUESTIONS AND LISTEN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore more deeply if comfortable for your conversation partner</li> <li>• Speak directly to the person with a disability</li> <li>• Inquire about               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Accommodations needed</li> <li>○ Experiences, choice of language</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Focus on relationship-building</li> </ul>   | <p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask for a person's diagnosis or medical information, or share it with a third party (don't "out" anyone)</li> <li>• Use ableist language</li> <li>• Direct your question to a caregiver, companion, or interpreter</li> <li>• Focus only on the disability experience</li> </ul>   |
| <p>3. DO PRESUME COMPETENCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assume a person has a way to accomplish things and will ask if assistance is needed</li> <li>• Assume that a person can communicate and understand you</li> <li>• Create space for leadership, then step aside</li> <li>• Check in to gain guidance on issues to be addressed, involvement needed</li> </ul>   | <p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assume you know what someone else needs</li> <li>• Insist on providing help, or help when not requested to do so</li> <li>• Alter your speech pattern and language</li> <li>• Ask for feedback and input, then ignore it</li> <li>• Stereotype based on media impressions or people with apparently similar disabilities</li> </ul>    |
| <p>4. DO ANTICIPATE AND NOTICE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Accessibility and barriers</li> <li>○ Who is and is not present "at the table"?</li> <li>○ Who is and is not in the speaking center?</li> <li>○ Persons being othered</li> </ul>  | <p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assume that anything is truly ADA compliant</li> <li>• Assume people with disabilities are not present out of lack of interest</li> <li>• Allow good intentions to serve as an excuse</li> </ul>   |
| <p>5. DO PLAN AHEAD AND COMMUNICATE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve people with disabilities from the outset, before decisions have been made</li> <li>• Budget for and routinely provide needed accommodations</li> <li>• Provide accessibility information on-line</li> <li>• Provide material ahead of time in the requested accessible format</li> <li>• Consider transportation needs</li> <li>• Consider accessibility in all event aspects</li> </ul> | <p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan an event without ensuring full accessibility</li> <li>• Make expensive plans without checking them first with people needing accommodations</li> <li>• Make it hard to find needed information</li> <li>• Make a promise and fail to keep it</li> <li>• Operate from the assumption that any needs are "special needs"</li> </ul> |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>6. DO SPEAK OUT, ACCEPT CONSEQUENCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Say or do something <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ When you spot, read, hear ableism</li> <li>○ When concerns of a person with a disability are dismissed or ignored</li> <li>○ When safety is compromised</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   | <p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect gratitude or do it for your ego</li> <li>• Be surprised by resistance or hostility</li> <li>• Back down when you ruffle feathers</li> <li>• Let the fear of doing the wrong thing keep you from doing something</li> </ul>                           |
| <p>7. DO ADVOCATE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenge unjust policies and laws</li> <li>• Ask for feedback, follow the lead of persons with disabilities</li> <li>• Pick your battles, but keep the goal of an inclusive society in mind</li> </ul>   | <p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assume someone else will do it, or that someone with a disability will be called to be the advocate for all disability issues.</li> <li>• Jump in without knowing the facts and the history of the situation</li> </ul>                                     |
| <p>8. DO EXPLORE CREATIVE ALTERNATIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice universal design – plan alternatives so all can participate in a way that works</li> <li>• Celebrate that diversity expands possibilities</li> <li>• Remember that many people with disabilities have a wealth of experience finding creative ways to make things work</li> </ul> | <p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insist that the outcome and process should stay the same as it has always been</li> <li>• Assume your role is to be the fixer and problem-solver</li> <li>• Get in the way of the Spirit leading us all to a new day and new way of being</li> </ul>        |
| <p>9. DO CHECK YOUR PRIVILEGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on ways the world is easy for you</li> <li>• Ask for and accept critical feedback</li> <li>• Apologize and move on when you get it wrong</li> </ul>   | <p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deny that ableism and privilege exist</li> <li>• Get defensive or argue if you are called out</li> <li>• Take critique personally</li> <li>• Be hard on yourself if you don't get it right</li> </ul>   |
| <p>10. DO LEARN CONTINUALLY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach learning with humility</li> <li>• Follow blogs of disability activists</li> <li>• Explore intersectionality</li> <li>• Find other allies and hold each other accountable</li> <li>• Teach others what you have learned</li> </ul>  | <p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assume that you have reached the point where you no longer have ingrained ableism</li> <li>• Expect you can be a lone ranger ally</li> <li>• Take yourself too seriously</li> <li>• Underestimate the power of a few people to make a difference</li> </ul> |

Refer to the **Ableism Resource List** for references and more information, and to the **Ableism and Disability Glossary** for definitions of unfamiliar words.

Written by Deaconess Lynn Swedberg