Advancing Disability-Inclusive Futures Through Justice, Community, and Collective Action

When discussing language features used in descriptive writing, it's important to acknowledge the most basic units that make up a text; individual word choice and the connotations they evoke. These are a fundamental aspect of understanding how an author's writing contributes to the overall style, mood, and tone of a text.

What The Day Represents

International Day of Persons with Disabilities calls global attention to the rights, well-being, and lived experiences of disabled people. Grounded in the UN and WHO framework, this day emphasizes:

- Full, equal, and effective participation in all aspects of life
- Removing systemic barriers that limit access to political, social, economic, and cultural spaces
- Recognizing disability inclusion as essential to social progress
- Centering lived experience as a vital form of knowledge

This guide is designed to help individuals, organizations, and communities deepen their understanding of Disability Justice and take meaningful steps toward disability-inclusive futures.

Understanding Disability-Inclusive Societies

A disability-inclusive society is one where disabled people — especially Black, brown, and Indigenous disabled people — can participate fully without facing systemic barriers in:

- Healthcare
- Housing
- Employment
- Education
- Civic engagement
- Public safety
- Cultural life

Inclusion requires more than awareness; it requires structural change. That includes designing with disabled people in mind, investing in disabled communities, and ensuring that institutions are accountable for accessibility and equity.

Advancing Disability-Inclusive Futures Through Justice, Community, and Collective Action

**Reflection Prompts:
Moving from Awareness
to Alignment**

Personal Reflection

- How do ableism and racism shape the way disabled people are treated in your community, workplace, or personal networks?
- What assumptions do you hold about disability that you're actively working to unlearn?

Organizational Reflection

- Where are disabled people missing from leadership, decision-making, or program design?
- What systems or policies within your organization unintentionally create barriers for disabled people?

Community Reflection

- How do your community spaces either support or limit disabled participation?
- What would it look like to redesign these spaces with access as a central value rather than an afterthought?

1. Center Disabled Leadership
Compensate disabled people and uplift their community-led work. Support disabled-led organizations, initiatives, and mutual aid networks.

2. Build Access Into Everything
Make accessibility a first step, not a later fix. This includes physical, digital, linguistic, sensory, and cultural access.

3. Advocate for Policy Change
Push for expanded voting access, equitable healthcare, fair wages, transportation equity, and disability-inclusive emergency planning.

4. Shift Narratives
Challenge stereotypes that portray disabled people as burdens, inspirations, or afterthoughts. Share stories that reflect lived experience, community strength, and leadership.

5. Engage in Collective Care
Check in on disabled community members, prioritize rest, and practice interdependence. Collective care is a core pillar of Disability Justice.

Advancing Disability-Inclusive Futures Through Justice, Community, and Collective Action

How to Support Black and Brown Disabled Communities

Because inequities fall disproportionately on Black, brown, and Indigenous disabled people, your support must be intersectional. Start by:

- Learning about Disability Justice's Black and brown roots
- Challenging anti-Blackness and white supremacy within disability spaces
- Funding and resourcing BIPOC-disabled-led work
- Amplifying Black and brown disabled voices, writers, organizers, and scholars

Questions to Guide 2026 Planning

- How will access be integrated into all programs, events, and digital spaces from the outset?
- What partnerships with disabled-led organizations should be strengthened in 2026?
- What accountability measures will ensure accessibility is upheld and resourced?
- How will your team continue learning about Disability Justice throughout the year?

Additional Resources & Learning

- Disability Visibility edited by Alice Wong - https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/book/

- Sins Invalid – Disability Justice Primer - https://www.sinsinvalid.org/disability-justice-primer

- Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha – Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice - Publisher link: https://arsenalpulp.com/Books/C/Care-Work
  - Bookshop link: https://bookshop.org/p/books/care-work-dreaming-disability-justice-leah-lakshmi-piepzna-samarasinha/9105955

Advancing Disability–Inclusive Futures Through Justice, Community, and Collective Action

Additional Resources & Learning (cont'd)

- WHO Disability Inclusion Tools & Guidance - https://www.who.int/activities/promoting-disability-inclusion

- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD - https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html

Closing Reflection

Disability inclusion is not a single day of recognition — it is a commitment to transforming systems, honoring lived experience, and building a world where disabled people are valued and protected. As we move into 2026, may this guide support you in grounding your work in equity, care, and community power.

A disability-inclusive future is within reach — and together, we can build it.