



HOW TO INCLUDE A YOUNG PERSON WITH A DISABILITY

Young people need caring adults and a place where they belong. We want to see all young people connected to communities that affirm and celebrate them, no matter who they are or what abilities they have. So how do we include young people with disabilities? We reached out to the Diversity and Inclusion Team for some ideas...

QUICK FACTS

- **17.7%** of Australia's population live with a disability, equating to 4.4million people.
- Only **33.4%** of youth with a disability had completed year 12
- **16.1%** of young people & adults with a disability have bachelor's degrees or higher

WHAT IS A DISABILITY

A disability is a condition involving total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions that restricts everyday activities. It can result from an accident, illness or genetic disorders. A disability may affect mobility, the ability to learn or communicate easily.

UNIQUE CHALLENGES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- Young people with disabilities often experience rejection and seclusion due to peers' misconceptions, or prejudices.
- Feelings of loneliness and isolation may be reinforced by activities and spaces that are inaccessible to persons with disabilities.
- Youth with disabilities face the same issues and concerns as those without disabilities, but societal prejudices & ignorance can complicate & intensify concerns.

HOW CAN I BE INCLUSIVE?

- **Be aware** of your neighbours, school or church friends who have a disability.
- **Welcome intentionally:** Be friendly & welcome young people with a disability as you would welcome other friends, treat them as you would treat any friend.
- **Ask, don't assume:** Ask your friend "What can I do to include you?"
- **Be knowledgeable:** Young people with disabilities have different communication needs – eg/using a hearing aid or a computer for adaptive communication. Ask your new friend the best way to talk with them, be willing to learn. Youth with disability may require special considerations, but they don't need to be treated as 'special'.
- **Pray** with your new friend with a disability, ask them what they would like you to pray for and ask them to pray for you.

HOW DID JESUS INCLUDE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?

- Jesus showed compassion and he always empowered people with disabilities, like in the Story of the Man lowered through the Rooftop (Luke 5: 17-26)
- Jesus recognised that God displays His glory in everyone, such as when Jesus heals a man born blind (John 9:3)

For more information, contact the Diversity & Inclusion team:

diversity.inclusion@salvationarmy.org.au