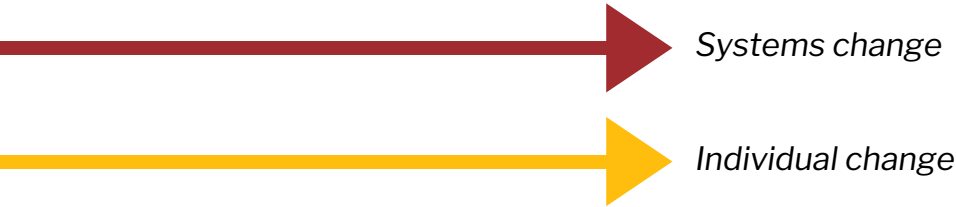


TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

So, what are your next steps? How might you move toward implementation?

Parallel processes



Enacting effective change at the school or system level (whether in one school building or throughout a school district) may be most possible in connection with a parallel process at the individual level. Individuals create policies and engage in practices. When individuals commit to learning and reflecting on their own behaviors, they may better understand areas for growth and barriers to progress, pushing more meaningful change in themselves and the systems in which they work. Just as it is critical for educators and youth service providers to make time for self-care, they – and the learners they serve – will benefit from intentional self-reflection time.

Implementation in school

This [reflection and planning tool](#) can be used as a framework for identifying areas for growth in your school (building and/or district) or program. It presents the themes shared in the Missouri Model for Trauma-Informed Schools and encourages assessment of your school’s/ program’s current environment, brainstorming ideas for implementation, and making specific considerations for students with disabilities, including English learners with disabilities. The tool also prompts you to consider barriers to implementation and steps to dismantle barriers and assists you in prioritizing action steps and creating a timeline and an accountability structure.



Looking inward

This [self-reflection guide](#) can be used as a starting point for thinking about your values, beliefs, assumptions, and prejudices. The questions may provoke discomfort or cause you to question the way you have been engaging with students. That is okay! If you are feeling anxious, embarrassed, or disheartened, that means you are moving through this process meaningfully. Be sure to identify self-care strategies in addition to your areas for growth.



Theories and strategies to consider

The following theories and associated strategies related to disability services are rooted in the core principles of trauma-informed care. They center equity and reflect an understanding of historical and continued trauma and systemic oppression. You may find them useful to consider as you are building and implementing your plan.



Social role valorization

Social role valorization (SRV) is a theory that was developed by Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger. This theory has guided and grounded the development of the community support system for people with disabilities, e.g., inclusive education, supported employment, and living in their own homes with support. Valued social roles are at the heart of the theory: If people are in valued roles (i.e., typical student, member of school club, employee), then they will have more access to the good things in life.

Social role valorization addresses social devaluation, which is too often the norm. The social devaluation of students with disabilities may look like seeing those students as less than, not as important as, or less valuable than their peers. Social devaluation can be traumatic for students.



Possible SRV strategies to address devaluation:

- Embrace positive beliefs and expectations for all students
 - Look at things through the eyes of students and find ways to identify with them
 - Promote a positive image of students to themselves and others
 - Assist students in entering positive and valued social roles
 - Teach students the competencies needed to be in valued social roles
 - Foster positive experiences in skill development, focusing on strengths
 - Recognize the power of imitation and make sure students with a disabilities have many positive peer role models
-
- Encourage reliance on natural supports, just as would be encouraged for other learners
 - Ensure participation and belonging in the school community
 - Be aware of the social gap, e.g., during lunch and recess
 - Engage parents and caregivers as partners and establish positive home-school relationships

Possible SRV strategies to support English learners:

- Make accommodation decisions based on students' individualized needs and strengths
- Support students in building community at school
- Collaborate with parents and caregivers to best serve students
 - Provide interpreters who are knowledgeable about both English learners and special education
 - Offer translated documents and glossaries of English learner and special education terminologies
 - Collaborate with parent advocacy organizations, particularly groups that offer multilingual services

Possible SRV strategies to support learners who have experienced trauma:

- Recognize students' emotional needs and create space and opportunity for them to safely express their emotions
 - Help students identify a safe place/person to connect with
 - Support students in identifying and using coping strategies
- Establish structure within the school or program (with predictability) based on students' unique needs so that they feel safe and secure



Resources:

- [International Social Role Valorization Association – Description of SRV Theory](#)
- [Family Advocacy – Social Role Valorisation](#)

Neurodiversity

How brain differences are framed matters. When disability is viewed as abnormality, it may affect students' self-esteem and their feelings of safety and security in a school community. The concept of neurodiversity challenges the view of disability as a deficit and reflects the idea that brain differences are normal. The Therapist Neurodiversity Collective defines neurodiversity as “the diversity that exists within the human population regarding neurological differences resulting from normal variations in the human brain.”



Trauma-informed IEP strategies that recognize neurodiversity:

The process of developing an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for a student with a disability often is not appreciative of neurodiversity. The IEP process may also not be trauma-informed; IEP meetings can be stressful and anxiety-inducing for children and their families. Educators and staff supporting IEP development have an opportunity to take a trauma-informed approach in their work. The Therapist Neurodiversity Collective shares a variety of resources, including recommendations for IEP makeovers for neurodivergent students, at <https://therapistndc.org/education/>.

There are many other resources available around trauma-informed IEPs and trauma-sensitivity in the IEP process:

- [The National Child Traumatic Stress Network – Trauma-Informed IEPs: Differential Diagnosis and Trauma-informed Assessment in Schools](#)
- [American Psychological Association – Creating trauma-informed individualized education programs](#)
- [Federation for Children with Special Needs – Trauma Sensitivity During the IEP Process](#)
- [Kennedy Krieger Institute – Trauma-Informed Practices: Considerations for the IEP Meeting](#)
- [Virginia Department of Education – Trauma Informed IEP’s Embedding Trauma Sensitive Practices into IEP Development](#)

Medical vs. social model of disability

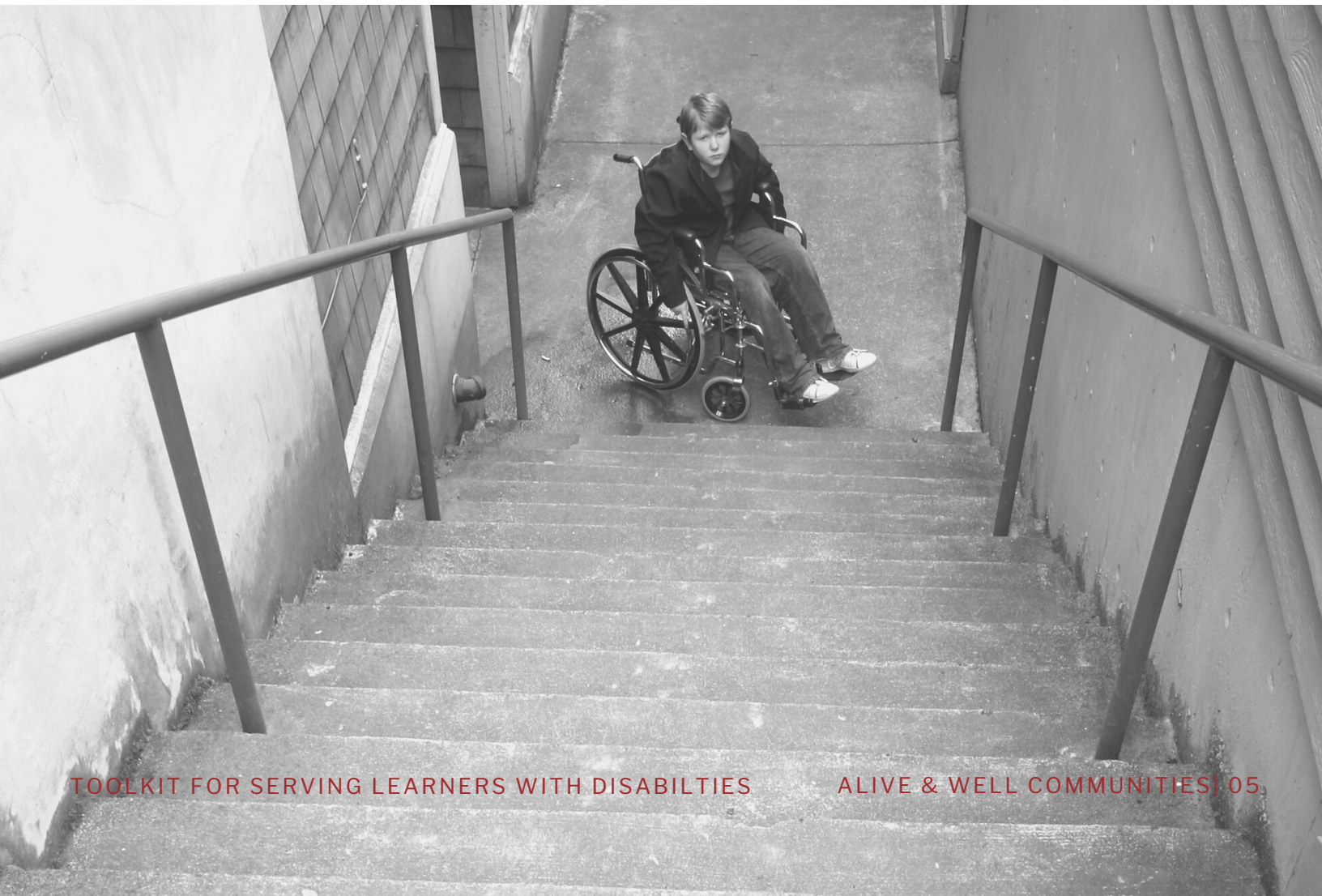
According to the medical model of disability, disability is an individual experience resulting from a medical condition that impairs a person's functioning. An individual is the "problem" and disability is considered an abnormality or deficiency. The social model of disability challenges this framing, looking at disability as a social construct. The social model of disability suggests that disability results from how society is organized; the barriers that exist in the environment limit a person's activities, not a person's differences.

Strategies for integrating the social model of disability:

- Identify and remove barriers in the school's or program's environment that restrict the choices and autonomy of students with disabilities
- Include students with disabilities as full community members
- Utilize a targeted universalism or universal design approach

Resources:

- [Social model of disability \(video\)](#)
- [We need to talk about disability \(video\)](#)
- [Art Beyond Sight – Social and Medical Models of Disability: Paradigm Change](#)





Targeted universalism

With the social model of disability in mind, environments can be re-envisioned and reorganized so they are accessible to all students. Universal Design refers to “the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. An environment (or any building, product, or service in that environment) should be designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to use it.”

Targeted universalism goes a step further: The concept “alters the usual approach of universal strategies (policies that make no distinctions among citizens’ status, such as universal health care) to achieve universal goals (improved health), and instead suggests we use targeted strategies to reach universal goals.” Targeted universalism was developed by John A. Powell as an alternative to the targeted and universal approaches in policy thinking. He explains targeted universalism in this animated video. Targeted universalism shows that serving one group of students intentionally, e.g., students with disabilities who have experienced trauma, will have ripple effects, benefiting all students.

The themes of targeted universalism are also explored in Angela Glover Blackwell’s 2017 article, The Curb-Cut Effect.

Targeted universalism can be applied to policy and practice changes. Targeted universal strategies recognize and address the needs of both dominant and marginalized groups, while paying specific attention to the needs of the marginalized groups. “[Targeted Universalism: Our Path Forward](#)” from the National Equity Project offers suggested first steps for applying a targeted universalism approach in work with youth:

1) *Listen with compassion and look for patterns to understand the structural barriers they are experiencing and the strength and resilience they are demonstrating.*

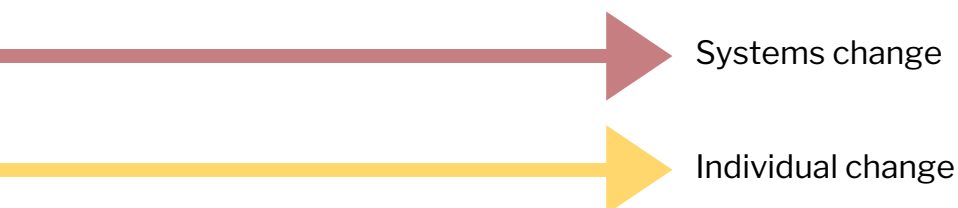
2) *Be willing to get and stay uncomfortable. Notice and reflect on the feelings that get stirred in us when we hear the stories and experiences of our young people and families who are hurting and who we have hurt.*



3) *Build relationships with students based on mutual respect and shared power. Trust the moral and intellectual capacity of young people to lead and resist the urge to dampen their passion or limit their dreams..*

4) *Design formal and informal systems for listening to students and families in an on-going and sustained way using tools such as the [Copilot-Elevate Survey](#), the UChicago Impact’s [Cultivate Survey](#) based on the 5Essentials, and the [Youth Truth Student Survey](#) and the [Youth Liberty Squad Survey](#) which were both created specifically to hear from young people about their needs during the time of COVID-19.*

5) *Most importantly, partner with our students and their families as co-designers of their learning environments and include young people in governance structures and decision making processes in our schools – not in ways that tokenize, but in ways that meaningfully share (and concede) power.*



Resources:

- [Targeted Universalism: Policy & Practice](#)
- [What is Universal Design?](#)

Person-first vs. identity-first language

It is important to be aware of the language you use and its impact. One consideration to make when speaking or writing about people with disabilities is person-first vs. identity-first language. Person-first language puts “person” before the identifier (e.g., person with autism), while identity-first language puts the identity before the person (e.g., autistic person). Those who prefer person-first language believe that disability is something a person “has” instead of what a person “is.” People who prefer identity-first language believe that disability is nothing to be ashamed of and feel empowered by disability as part of identity. Many consider person-first language to be the most respectful default terminology to use. That said, the best approach to take is to ask a person with a disability what language they prefer!

Read these resources to better understand language to use when speaking and writing about people with disabilities:

- [National Center on Disability and Journalism – Disability Language Style Guide](#)
- [Center for Disability Rights – Disability Writing & Journalism Guidelines](#)
- [The University of Kansas Research & Training Center on Independent Living – Guidelines: How to Write about People with Disabilities](#)



Disability justice

Community and historical traumas are rooted in systemic oppression. Ableism is one of these systems of oppression. Ableism is “the overt and covert discrimination and social prejudice against humans with physical, intellectual, communicative or psychiatric disabilities, people with neurological differences and neurodivergent populations.” Ableism is responsible for determining who is considered “normal” and who is considered deficient. The Disability Rights Movement and Disability Studies programs have fought pervasive ableism in society.



The term “disability justice” was developed in 2005 by activists working to challenge the ableism of radical and progressive movements. Disability justice aims to “centralize the needs and experiences of folks experiencing intersectional oppression, such as disabled people of color, immigrants with disabilities, queers with disabilities, trans and gender non-conforming people with disabilities, people with disabilities who are houseless, people with disabilities who are incarcerated, people with disabilities who have had their ancestral lands stolen, amongst others.”

It is trauma-informed to utilize a disability justice lens in work with students with disabilities, including English learners with disabilities, who have experienced trauma. Strategies used in schools and programs should be grounded in the 10 principles of disability justice. The 10 principles include intersectionality, leadership of those most impacted, commitment to cross-disability solidarity, and collective access.

Resources:

- [Project LETS](#)
- [Disability Visibility Project](#)
- [The Abolition and Disability Justice Coalition](#)
- [Movement for Black Lives – End the War on Black Health and Black Disabled People](#)
- [Alice Wong On Ruckuses, Rage And Medicaid \(podcast\)](#)
- [A Disability-Rights Consultant and Social Worker Explains How to Check Your Ableism Every Day](#)
- [National Black Disability Collective](#)
- [Rooted in Rights](#)