

GIVING ARTISTS WITH DISABILITIES A SPACE TO THRIVE (GREAT BIG STORY)

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR AMERICAN SPACES

This discussion guide is designed for programming at American Spaces. American Spaces should work with their Public Affairs Section to ensure that this topic and video are appropriate for American Spaces audiences.



Photo from Great Big Story

VIDEO INFORMATION

Video Title: *Giving Artists With*

Disabilities a Space to Thrive

Year Release: 2018

Duration: 5 min

English Level: Intermediate

Speaker: Tom di Maria, Executive

Director, Creative Growth Art Center

Themes: Arts, Inclusivity, Accessibility,

Creative Expression, Education,

Community, Helping Others, Self-

Determination

[Link to Video](#)

VIDEO CONTEXT

In the United States, 61 million adults (26% of the U.S. population) live with a disability. According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC), a disability is "any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions)." Different types of disabilities can affect vision, movement, thinking, remembering, learning, communicating, hearing, mental health, and social relationships.

In the U.S., disability rights are civil rights, and people with disabilities deserve the same opportunities as everyone else. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 is a U.S. law that makes it illegal to discriminate against people with disabilities.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Creative Growth, a non-governmental organization in Oakland, California, advances the inclusion of artists with developmental disabilities. They believe that art is fundamental to human expression and all people are entitled to its tools of communication.

Tom di Maria is the Director of External Relations of Creative Growth Art Center. He was awarded the American Folk Art Museum's Visionary Award in 2019 for his work as a global leader in arts and disability.



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KEY VOCABULARY

Ability status (noun): The state of a person's power or skill to do something; how able-bodied a person is

*To follow the Americans with Disabilities Act, we cannot discriminate against people on the basis of **ability status**.*

Disability inclusion (noun) : Including and encouraging people with disabilities to have roles in life similar to those of people without disabilities

Disability inclusion involves making products, communications, and the environment more usable by as many people as possible.

Accessible (adjective): Conditions or features of a place or situation that allows people with disabilities to have access to it

*The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that buildings, facilities, and rooms are **accessible** to those with different ability statuses.*

Developmental disability (noun): Condition that begins during a person's growth in which a part of the body or mind is damaged or does not work well

*Examples of **developmental** disabilities include autism, cerebral palsy, hearing loss, vision impairment, and intellectual disabilities.*

Disenfranchise (verb): To deny or prevent (a person or group of people) from a right or privilege

*People with disabilities are **disenfranchised** if they are not offered the same access to opportunities as all people.*

Verbalize (verb): To express ideas or feelings in words, speech, or writing

*Children with intellectual disabilities are sometimes unable to **verbalize** and describe their experiences.*

Prosthetic (adjective): An artificial device that replaces a missing or injured part of the body

Prosthetic devices include artificial legs, arms, eyes, as well as eyeglasses and hearing aids.

Social fabric (noun): The image of the basic structure of society (relationships, and people) as woven together like threads in a cloth or fabric and that all are interconnected

*The **social fabric** of the community holds people together.*



Discussion Questions

1. Creative expression is the ability to create something that represents ourselves using our minds and imaginations. We can express ourselves through visual art, music, writing, photography, dance, and more. How do you creatively express yourself?
2. How would your ability to express yourself creatively change if you lost the ability to see, hear, feel, or behave as you do today?
3. How are disabilities viewed in your country? What problems do people with disabilities face in your country?
4. Disability inclusion suggests that all people, regardless of ability status, should have the opportunity to create and participate fully in the arts. Are people with disabilities supported to participate in your community?
5. There is a concept called the "spread of disability" (or the "global disability myth") that refers to the fact that people with an observable disability are often treated as if they have multiple disabilities. For instance, people who are blind report that people often speak to them in elevated voices as if they are also hard of hearing or people in wheelchairs say others speak more slowly to them as if they also have an intellectual disability. What impact do you think this has on the self-concept of people with disabilities? What does it say about the way society sees people with disabilities?

Additional Resources

- [Creative Growth Art Center](#)
- [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
 - [Disability and Health Promotion](#)
 - [Facts about Development Disabilities](#)



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