

Always Assume Competence: Include, Engage, Communicate

Reflection Questions

1. What presumptions have you made about a person with a disability that were proven to be incorrect?
2. How did you overcome it?
3. Are there any (presumptions) that made you uncomfortable and afraid to approach someone with a disability?
4. How does the idea of Always Assume Competence affect your experience interacting with people with disabilities?
5. What does Always Assume Competence mean to you?
6. How can you model assumed competence in your environment?
7. How does the idea of assumed competence affect your perception of the disability community?
8. If you were in the situation of the person you're interacting with, how would you want people to react to you?
9. If you are in a work, school, church/group environment, what are some things you can do to make it more accessible and inclusive?
10. How would you address someone who comes into your work, school or church, etc. and it's unclear whether they are cognitively aware or not?
11. If a person with a disability appears to be trying to voice an opinion, but their companion is talking over them, how can you help let their voice be heard?
12. In general, how do you handle awkward pauses?

Critical Thinking:

What's more harmful? A typically abled person making the presumption that a person with a disability can understand everything said to, and happening around them when they really can't? Or someone noticing another person's disability and jumping to

conclusion that their physical limitations automatically makes them not cognitively aware?

Best Practice:

A typically abled person should strive to approach a person with a disability the same way they would any other... get to know them by asking questions, seeking out common interests, inviting them to share, and in turn, listening to their experiences. If cognitive challenges do become apparent, find out what accommodations need to be made. Even many of those with cognitive limitations can sense when someone is being patronizing.

Giving people the benefit of the doubt is always the best practice. We are all created in God's image. He has given each of us specific gifts for a dedicated purpose, regardless of disability, and that makes us all worthy of human dignity and meaningful communication, as it says in 1 Peter 4:10-11.

**All videos used in this presentation can be found on Brooke's Butterfly Touch YouTube channel. Feel free to share!*