



Professional Development with A.B.L.E. - Artists Breaking Limits & Expectations

Since 2016, A.B.L.E. has been creating innovative theatre and film, projects for, with, and by actors with a range of disabilities including Down syndrome, autism, and cerebral palsy. A.B.L.E. has built a methodology rooted in fostering agency and independence, and celebrating the creativity of individuals of all abilities. Let us share what we know with you!

A.B.L.E. offers engaging virtual and in-person Professional Development sessions to help your organization demonstrate your commitment to diversity and accessibility.

While theatre practice underpins all of A.B.L.E.'s work, our sessions can benefit any group who wants to make their space more inclusive - whether that space is a rehearsal room, a board room, or any place in between. We can tailor a session to suit your organization's needs. **Here are just a few of the key skills you can expect to build:**



Collaboration

The heart of theatre is saying "yes, and" to new ideas and contributions and responding and adapting in the moment. Your team can practice these skills in an open, non-judgmental environment, and come away with a greater sense of camaraderie and teamwork.



Communication

A.B.L.E. equally values verbal and non-verbal communication, and models how to proactively accommodate a range of communication and learning styles in our sessions.



Cultural Competency

All sessions are co-led by A.B.L.E.'s Creative Associates - actors with intellectual disabilities. Your team will get to ask questions and learn directly from disabled leaders. You will come away with a greater awareness of the disability community, and actionable ways to work more accessible for individuals with disabilities.



A.B.L.E.
artists breaking limits & expectations



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Here is a selection of 2-hour interactive sessions A.B.L.E. can bring to your workplace:

Communicating About Disability

How we talk about and to each other matters. But it can be hard to know what language to use when speaking about disability. We will explore the Medical, Social, and Affirmative Models of disability and how these have shaped language and attitudes about disability over time. Participants will unpack the history behind some problematic terms and turns of phrase, and workshop advocating for inclusive language in their communities.

Understanding & Engaging the 8 Senses

Using Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences as a framework, participants will learn practical strategies and tools that can support different learning and sensory styles. Participants will trouble-shoot some real-life scenarios from A.B.L.E.'s rehearsals to develop skills for empathetically responding to different needs.

Disability Representation on Screen and Stage

Even though 1 in 4 individuals in the US has a disability, it is still rare to see people with disabilities on our stages and screens. In this session, we'll unpack some problematic disability stereotypes, learn how to spot inspiration porn, and share examples of positive representation.

Top 10 Tips for an Inclusive Rehearsal

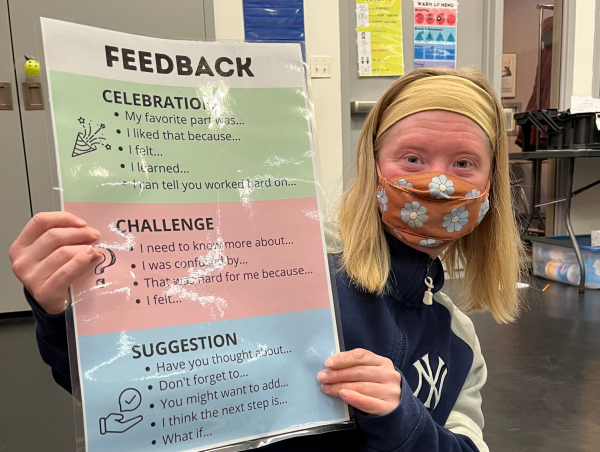
In this session, participants will experience a typical A.B.L.E. rehearsal. Participants will learn several strategies for scaffolding and leading sessions, including creating a sensory toolbox, using effective visual aids, and appealing to varying communication styles.

Improv 101

Play a range of games and exercises aimed at learning the basic rules of Improv: 1) say yes, 2) build on 3) be generous 4) be bold! Working in pairs, small groups, and as a big team, participants will think on their feet and practice creativity and communication skills

We are also happy to create bespoke sessions to fit your group's specific needs and interests.





Don't just take our word for it! Here's what some past participants have to say about Professional Development Sessions with A.B.L.E.:

“ The session was planned out wonderfully and **so much fun!** ”

“ I had so many things to discuss with **my partner and friends** after this class. I learned a lot from this and am putting it into practice. ”

“ I was really, really nervous because I'm not an actor, but I'm so glad I did this. It was so much fun, and **opened up a whole new level of appreciation and understanding.** ”

“ The Creative Associates were **phenomenal!** ”

“ This gave me **context** for better understanding why some students may respond the way they do and **how I can respond more empathetically.** ”

“ This was a **truly excellent workshop.** I sometimes leave short (2 hours or less) PDs and think *"well that was interesting but there were so few practical takeaways"* or *"well I already knew everything they talked about!"* **This felt incredibly relevant, applicable, and engaging the whole time.** I learned new vocabulary as did our teaching artists. I've already recommended ABE trainings to peers at other theatres, **I wish it was a training every Teaching Artist in Chicago took.** ”

“ **We can implement this every day.** definitely going to do an access check before each meeting now. ”

“ Sam and Katie were both so **engaging** and **informative.** I left the session feeling **empowered in my abilities** to communicate about disability, as well as really **motivated to continue learning and listening.** ”

Some of A.B.L.E.'s recent Professional Development partners include:



Ladder

NORTHLIGHT
THEATRE



FAQ's about Professional Development Sessions

When can Professional Development sessions take place? Availability varies throughout the year, but we have a range of daytime, evening, and weekend hours. Please book at least 6 weeks in advance.

Where do sessions take place? Host organization takes responsibility for securing a venue for the professional development session. We do not need to be in a theatre, but do need a room with open floor space for movement (please no concrete!). We can also facilitate sessions virtually via Zoom.

Who leads the sessions? Professional Development sessions are co-led by Teaching Artists and supported by Creative Associates - A.B.L.E. staff members with with disabilities.

Who are the sessions for? A.B.L.E. can tailor sessions for any group who wants to promote a culture of team building, communication, and empathy. Of course, we're happy to support teaching artists, directors, educators, and fellow performing arts professionals, but this work applies to teams from any sector!

How many people can participate in a Professional Development session? Sessions require a minimum of 6 participants, with a maximum of 25 participants for a typical session.

What do participants need for a Professional Development session? Just bring yourself! A.B.L.E.'s teaching team will supply visual aids, props, and support materials, and a resource list so you can continue learning after your session.

What should we expect? Participants can expect an interactive session, where we communicate openly, and honestly, about disability, inclusion and accessibility. A.B.L.E. will send a social story 1 week before your session with specific details about your session.

How much does a Professional Development session cost? Sessions are priced on a sliding scale based on the size of the host organization, number of participants, length of session, and session content. The base price for a 2 hour presentation is \$650.



Ready to learn?

If you want to bring an unforgettable Professional Development session to your team, we would love to partner with you!

For questions, more information, or to schedule a Professional Development, contact:

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