

# CRIP CAMP CURRICULUM



**Parent Discussion Guide**

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# Welcome

Welcome to the CRIP CAMP Parent Discussion Guide! We put this guide together to offer you a framework for fostering discussion, critical thinking, and action with young adults and others in your life after viewing CRIP CAMP. Whether you are a parent with a disability, someone parenting a young disabled person, or both, we know that the opportunities to think and talk openly about disability and ableism are few in the mainstream media.

Even though we are everywhere, disabled people, disability culture, politics, and activism continue to be silenced and hidden by the mainstream, non-disabled media and culture.

It is our hope that viewing CRIP CAMP and engaging in a critical discussion of the film will advance understanding and interest in disability rights and disability justice for yourself and the people in your families and communities.

Thank you for joining the conversation!

## Preparing for your viewing

Before working through the activities and questions outlined here, we suggest preparing in a few ways.

First download Sins Invalid's "10 Principles of Disability Justice" (<https://bit.ly/2IVrp6h>) and read through it. Depending on the age of the people you are having conversations with, make copies and share them.

Next, review these five core questions guided by the principles of media literacy. Throughout the discussion we encourage you to use the principles of media literacy to support critical thinking. These questions are ones you can always return to during any discussion:

1. Who created this?
2. What values are being shared?
3. What techniques are used to capture my attention?
4. How might others perceive this media differently than me?
5. What is missing?

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# Tips on Talking About Disability and Difference

If disability is already part of your family, you will have developed your own ways of talking about difference and disability. We don't offer these suggestions as the right or best way to frame conversations. We offer them as an opportunity to consider how you already communicate about disability and difference and in what ways that has both expanded and restricted the ways the young people in your life think about disability and difference.

## Offer Language Options

The words we use matter, and there isn't one right way to talk about disability or disabled people. In addition to whatever language you use in your family and community, it's helpful for young people to have a sense of both the range of language available now, and their role in creating new language.

At a minimum, introducing both "person first" language (e.g. "people with disabilities" or "person with Autism") and "identity first" language (e.g. "disabled people" or "Autistic person") challenges the narrow way that disability is usually presented.

The name of the film, CRIP CAMP, offers an opportunity to talk about how communities reclaim words that were used to hurt and transform them into empowering words that help and heal. View a short clip of CRIP CAMP director, Jim LeBrecht, talking about why he named his film CRIP CAMP:

<https://twitter.com/CripCampFilm/status/1242575312967340038?s=20>.

## Address Ableism

Ableism is discrimination based on the belief that there is one right way to have a body/mind. Any time we think or talk about bodies, ableism will show up. One way to prepare yourself to notice ableism is to listen for any statements that are applied to all disabled people.

When ableist language is used, you might say something like: "I appreciate what you're sharing. People often misuse words that can harm disabled people, who may themselves not speak up. I want to speak up now and challenge us to not use terms like 'crazy' or 'lame' when we mean wild or ridiculous."

Another example could be “I want to pause for a moment and acknowledge something you said that we need to discuss further. To say ‘but all these people in the film are intelligent’ is to stereotype disabled people in numerous ways and only value intelligence if it is presented in one way.”

It’s easy to fall into the trap of talking about some words as bad or wrong, and others as good or right. The problem with that is that language is community specific, and a word that is considered hurtful in one community might be considered helpful in another. Avoid shaming or judging anyone for their language; instead treat any such comments as teachable moments and come back to the idea that words can help and words can hurt.

## **Embrace Don’t Erase Difference**

Talking about disability and difference is not about erasing the things that make us unique, it’s about celebrating and highlighting what is beautiful, wise, and magical about having disability community and disabled people in our lives. With the acknowledgment that diversity is a strength, encourage young people in your life to see how difference is good and essential for our shared survival and liberation.

## **Questions Before You Watch**

These questions can be helpful for priming everyone about to watch the film for later discussion. If you discuss them first and then return to them after the film, you can use the questions to gauge how everyone is thinking about the issue before watching the film and after.

- What is the relationship between pride, identity, and culture?
- What comes to your mind when you think of disability? How would you define it?
- How is disability currently portrayed by the media? What stories are, and are not, being told?
- What do you know about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)? What has the ADA been successful in doing for people with disabilities and the movement in general? What has it missed?
- How do disability rights connect with other social issues and causes? Where is there overlap and where are there gaps?
- As you watch the film pay attention to whose stories are being told and whose are not. Who are the people in the film you wish to know more about?

## Questions After Viewing

Below we offer a few general questions. Select one or two to get a discussion started. On the following pages there are time codes of specific scenes in the film, and questions that connect to the ten principles of disability justice found at <https://rb.gy/epfgn3>. Select a few questions for each clip and show the clip before asking the questions.

## General Questions

- How do you feel after watching the film? Were you able to see yourself or someone you know in the film's storyline?
- What was the film's key message? What was it trying to convey to the audience? Do you think that message was conveyed successfully or not?
- Why is it necessary to have a disability activist community?
- Why was the camp such a freeing and revolutionary experience for the campers? How did it empower them?
- Whose stories and perspectives are missing from the film?

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# Specific Questions

## Discussions on Disability

The film begins with director Jim LeBrecht identifying his disability diagnosis while we see family footage of how he got around the house, drank water, and turned on and off lights as a child. Time code: 1:08–1:32

- Why do you think the filmmakers chose to start the film this way?
- Why do you think the first thing people often want to know about someone with a disability is what their disability is, whether they had it since birth, or how they acquired it?

Jim talks about being “allowed” to enter public school, and shares advice from his father about how he should behave. Time code: 1:30–2:00

- What does it mean that he was allowed? Who allowed him? Who gave him permission?
- Would you use the word “allowed” for your ability to attend school? Are there things you are not allowed to do that you wish you could do?
- How have your parents encouraged you to make friends? What advice have your parents given you? Do people come up and introduce themselves to you?
- Do you think those rules are different for kids with disabilities vs. kids without disabilities? What about kids who are disabled but people don’t perceive their disability?

Judy Heumann talks about what it was like growing up in her Brooklyn neighborhood and how she felt like any other kid until she is confronted by a boy she doesn’t know asking her “Are you sick?” She describes the impact this had on her. Time code: 15:58–17:10

- When the boy asked her “Are you sick?” What do you think he wanted to know? Why do you think was he asking?
- How did Judy say she felt when she asked that question?
- Have you ever been asked a question that made you realize that other people see you not for who you are, but who they imagine you to be? How did it make you feel?

Jim talks about the difference between feeling like the world can fit who you are versus feeling like you have to fit yourself into the world. Time code: 38:50–39.23

- In what ways do you feel like you have to fit into a world that’s not built for you?

Denise Sherer Jacobson shares a story about having an affair with a bus driver, and her treatment at the hospital after she began experiencing abdominal pain.

Time code: 50:42–53:34

- Are you surprised by the way Denise was treated by the doctors and the hospital?
- Given that this happened, what would justice look like for Denise?
- What would you do if the doctor did something to you that was wrong?
- Why do you think Denise was treated that way?

Denise describes her experience of getting her first motorized wheelchair. Time code: 58:36–59:01

- An ableist term that is still sometimes used for people who use wheelchairs is “wheelchair bound.” How does that term connect to the way Denise describes her chair as a tool of liberation?
- Why do you think Denise felt liberated getting a motorized wheelchair?
- What does liberation feel like to you? Can you think of a time when you’ve felt that?

### **Disability Hierarchy**

Denise Sherer Jacobson talks about there being a hierarchy of disability, and where she fits into it. Her husband Neil tells the story about what his mom said when he told her he wanted to get married.

Time code: 22:50–24:10

- What are some of the hierarchies you know about in your life and community? Do you think there is still a hierarchy in disabilities communities? If you have a disability do you know where you are placed in that?
- Can you think of a hierarchy where you are near the top? What about one where you’re near the bottom?

### **Disability and Parents**

Campers at Camp Jened have a roundtable discussion about how they deal with and manage their parents. Time code: 32:16–36:33

- What did you think of what the campers are sharing?
- Does any of what they shared feel true for you?
- In what ways is this experience of parents true for non-disabled and disabled young people?

## Disability Community

A voiceover offers description of the Berkeley Center for Independent Living. Time code: 55:16–56:31

- Why do you think a space for disabled people led by disabled people is important?
- How does this clip relate to the disability justice principles of Leadership of Those Most Impacted (#2), Collective Access (#9), and Collective Liberation (#10)?

Corbett O’Toole talks about the experience of finding home among other disabled people and what it taught her about the cost of trying to hide parts of herself. Time code: 56:31–56:57

- Can you imagine pretending to hide a part of yourself because you’ve been told it’s not good or acceptable for people to see it or for people to know that about you?
- How does this clip relate to the disability justice principles of Recognizing Wholeness (#5) and Sustainability (#6)?

## Disability Activism

We see Judy trying to talk to an official who she later describes as giving her “non-answers.” Time code: 1:06:00–1:06:36

- What do you think she means by a “non-answer”?
- Has anyone ever given you a non-answer when you’ve asked a question?

We go behind the scenes of the 504 sit-in. Time code: 1:07:55–1:13:00

- What were some of the strategies and approaches that the protesters used to work together and make sure everybody had a say?
- What are some similarities and differences that you see between the current Movement for Black Lives and the response the Black Panthers gave to Corbett about making the world a better place for everyone?
- How does this section relate to the disability justice principles of Cross Disability Solidarity (#7) and Collective Liberation (#10)?

**Bonus Activity:** Go online and research Brad Lomax, a key organizer of the 504 sit-in and a Black Panther Party member. You can find links below in the recommended readings.

Judy delivers a speech before the ad-hoc committee during the 504 sit in. Time code:

1:17:42–1:19:07

- In her speech, Judy says there will be more uprisings, protests, and taking over of buildings.
- How do you see that in the strategy of current uprisings?
- How do you see the difference in the way protesters are treated today vs. how these protesters were treated?
- Do you think protesters today would be able to take over a building and remain safe?

**Bonus Activity:** To take this discussion further, see How Language is Power activity below.

Dennis talks about arriving in and getting around DC. Time code: 1:20:02–1:20:51

- How would it feel for you to be riding around in the back of a moving truck in the dark, not knowing where you were? What do you think it was like in the back of the truck? What do you think people did?
- Today how do you think a group of disabled people would get around together?

The police respond to the protest outside Joseph Califano's house. Time code: 1:20:52–1:21:12

- Why do you think the police didn't want to mess with a bunch of disabled people?
- How did ableism work to the advantage of 504 protesters in front of Califano's house?
- Do you think it's safe for people to call the police on disabled people? Do you think it's safe for others to call the police on people who protest?

## Disability Identity

When campers at the camp start spreading the sexually transmitted infection known as crabs, camper Al Levy talks about how he imagines it must feel to have someone wash your genitals.

Time code: 27:42–28:45

- What do you think he means when he says it makes people feel small?
- Why is needing some kind of help (like washing your genitals) seen as worse than other kinds of help (like a person making food for someone, or helping someone with their hair or make-up)?
- How is getting help with bathing yourself or using the bathroom different from other kinds of help?
- Do you remember a time when you needed help with something you didn't want to ask for?
- How does this clip relate to the disability justice principles of Recognizing Wholeness (#5) and Interdependence (#8)?

Corbett describes the power of a mixed disability group witnessing each other's experiences and believing each other. Time code: 1:27:04–1:28:08

- Why do you think it's important and powerful to believe people when they tell you they have been harmed?
- Have you ever felt powerful being seen in a way you never saw yourself before?

HollLynn D'Lil talks about how 504 told her she had value, and what that felt like.

Time code: 1:28:09–1:28:27

- How do you know that you're valuable?
- What are things you do that remind you that you are powerful?

In both of these clips Jim describes the concept of "overcoming" his disability (watch both clips back to back). Time code: 54:01–54:31 and 1:30:50–1:31:08

- What do you think Jim means when he says he overcame his disability after moving to California?
- What do you notice about the difference between how Jim talks about the concept of overcoming disability earlier in the film versus at the end?
- How does this idea relate to the disability justice principle of Recognizing Wholeness (#5)?

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# Join the Movement!

The disability rights movement is still happening! How do you see yourself participating? Here are some questions and activities to get started.

## Ask participants:

- Have you noticed parts of your community that aren't accessible? How can we all advocate for change?
- As you saw, everyone contributes to disability activism in different ways. How can you advocate for disability rights in your community? Your state? The country?
- If you do not have a disability, how can you be an ally to the disability community?
- Are disability rights human and civil rights?
- What are some ways accessibility benefits everyone?

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# Activity 1: Examples of Ableism

Begin by asking what they think the term “ableism” refers to. If no one has any ideas, you could prompt them to look at the word and think about the “ism” part and consider what other words end with “ism.” Next, offer this definition of ableism:

Discrimination based on the belief that there is one right way to have a body/mind. Ableism includes actions, thoughts, policies, and systems that people engage in which dehumanize and isolate disabled people. Because ableism focuses on bodies, dictating what makes a “normal” or worthy body and what does not, ableism is something that can be experienced by anyone with a body (which is to say, anyone who is alive).

Offer a few general examples of different types of ableism.

## **Ableism in the physical environment**

The absence of ramps, accessible bathrooms, signage with Braille, large print materials, and more.

## **Ableism in social interactions**

The ways that groups and organizations exclude disabled people either intentionally or through a lack of awareness. For example, basketball can be played by running or wheeling around, but a league that doesn’t allow for wheels excludes people who use wheelchairs from participating. This exclusion has physical and mental health consequences as well as social ones.

## **Ableism in policies and laws**

Policies and laws that assume we all have the same mobility or we all process information in the same way are ableist as they make participation for many disabled people impossible. Policies and laws that allow discrimination based on differences in our bodies and minds are also ableist. For example, public transportation policies designed to save money by eliminating bus routes make reliable transportation difficult for all to access.

## Internalized ableism

The phenomenon where people with disabilities come to believe that disabled people (including themselves) are less worthy of access and rights.

Remind participants that ableism is everywhere. You may point out that in the first five minutes of the film, one of the former camp counselors shares their own limitations and ableist thinking upon first arriving at camp (see time code 5:10–5:30).

Encourage your young person that when they hear or witness something they think may be ableist, they can support the person who made the comment by asking for clarification and offering a re-framing, without attacking or shaming.

Share with them that they are going to watch (or re-watch) a section of the film CRIP CAMP and are going to try and identify examples of different forms of ableism.

Distribute the Examples of Ableism Handout and review it with your child. Let them know they may make notes while watching and will also have a few minutes after watching to make notes on their handout.

Play the first 10 minutes of the film. Next, offer them a few minutes to complete their handout and write down examples of ableism.

After they have had a chance to complete their handout, invite them to share what they understood was ableism in each column.

You may hear a variety of examples. Offer the ideas below to help them get started or help round out their ideas:

Physical Environment	Social Interactions	Policies and Laws	Internal
<p>Jim at work as an adult, having to change how he works to adapt to the non-accessible space.</p>	<p>Jim was not allowed to join the Boy Scouts while his sister was allowed to be a Brownie.</p>	<p>The fact that Jim has a job makes him unique enough to warrant a TV news segment about him. Employment discrimination against disabled people is ableism.</p>	<p>Jim is surprised that he doesn't know who is a camper or who is a counselor. Ableism in how we stereotype what a disabled vs. non-disabled person looks/acts/sounds like.</p>
<p>Jim as a child moving around the house.</p>	<p>Founder of Camp Jened said: the problem was not disabled people, the problem was us, so it's our responsibility to change social barriers.</p>	<p>Jim says he was "allowed" to try public school, because public schools were not required to be accessible, making more disabled kids institutionalized.</p>	<p>Jim is amazed to witness so many disabled people in one place at camp.</p>
<p>Denise describes the camp as a utopia because there was no outside/non-disabled world. An environment where access was prioritized.</p>	<p>Jim's dad told him that he would have to go up to people because they won't go up to him.</p>	<p>Support for each camper, people pushing wheelchairs, everyone playing baseball was such a refreshing novelty.</p>	<p>Jim shares "I wanted to be part of the world, but I didn't see anyone like me in it."</p>

Offer the following discussion questions:

- How did you feel as you were noticing all the instances of ableism?
- Were you reminded of anything you have experienced?
- What would it mean for us if everyone's needs were met?

To wrap up this activity, have your child discuss where they can identify ableism in their home, school, or communities. You may also have them design a map of this location that identifies ableist pitfalls as well as inclusive/non-ableist features.

To extend this activity (additional time needed), have them choose one feature that should be modified for inclusivity and do research on potential solutions, to present to friends, family, or community members.

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### Examples of Ableism Handout

Instructions: As you watch the film CRIP CAMP, identify when and where you witness ableism occurring. Place the examples in the appropriate section based on if it is shown in a physical environment (school, house, subway, etc.), social interactions (communications, group activities), policies and laws, and internally (a person's belief about themselves).

Physical Environment	Social Interactions	Policies and Laws	Internal

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## Activity 2: How Language is Power

Below is a transcript of portions of Judy Huemann's statement to the ad-hoc committee during the 504 sit-in. Make copies of this page and distribute it to your child. After viewing the part of the film where she delivers her statement (1:15:45 and 1:17:42) read the transcript below and do three things:

1. Check ✓ the words that you believe Judy delivered in a powerful way, for example through her tone or pitch.
2. Underline \_ the words that you do not understand in the statement below.
3. Circle ○ the words you believe are powerful.

### Young Judy Heumann:

My statement is one of militancy. My statement is one of support from disabled. This is the beginning of a civil rights movement...

Whether there was a Section 504....there was a Brown versus Board of Education...

[Young Judy takes a steadying breath.]

...the... [exhales heavily] the harassment... the, um, lack of equity that has been provided for disabled individuals, and that now is even being discussed by the administration, is so intolerable that I can't quite put it into words. I can tell you that every time you raise issues of separate but equal, the outrage of disabled individuals across this country...

[She swallows, struggling to remain composed.]

...is going to continue, it is going to be ignited. There will be more takeovers of buildings... until finally maybe you begin to understand our position. We will no longer allow the government to [sputters] oppress disabled individuals. We want the law enforced. We want no more segregation. We will accept no more discussion of segregation. And I would appreciate it if you would stop shaking your head in agreement when I don't think you understand what we are talking about.

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# Resources

## Read

Sins Invalid. 2019. *Skin, Tooth, and Bone: The Basis of Movement Is Our People. Disability Justice Primer 2nd edition*. Available in PDF and hard copy at: <https://rb.gy/jxg4p6>

Eileen AJ Connelly. 2020. “Overlooked No More: Brad Lomax, a Bridge Between Civil Rights Movements.” [Obituary.]

Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/08/obituaries/brad-lomax-overlooked.html>

Day Al-Mohamed. 2016. “Black #Disability History: Brad Lomax, Black Panther—Revolutionary Black Nationalism and Disability Power.” Available at: <https://rb.gy/pqylta>

Bianca Laureano. 2019. “How Do We Hold Each Other Accountable When We Mess Up?”

Available at <https://rb.gy/zqa7gy>

Nic Moreno. 2016. “How—And Why—To Reclaim Your Slurs.”

Available at: <https://rb.gy/kxyvey>

## Watch

TED. 2014. “I’m not your inspiration, thank you very much—Stella Young.”

Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8K9Gg164Bsw>

TEDx Talks. 2012. “‘How Studying Privilege Systems Can Strengthen Compassion’: Peggy McIntosh at TEDxTimberlaneSchools.” Available at: <https://youtu.be/e-BY9UEewHw>

Random House. 2017. “Ta-Nehisi Coates On Words That Don’t Belong to Everyone | We Were Eight Years In Power Book Tour.” Available at: <https://rb.gy/eqjjaq>

## Listen

Disability Visibility Project. 2020. Games (*Episode 71*). Available at: <https://rb.gy/xyvjox>

Come Through with Rebecca Carroll. 2020. *Jeff Yang on the Hard Work of Allyship (Episode 6)*. Available at: <https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/come-through/articles/6-jeff-yang>

Juliette Rocheleau. 2019. "A Former Slur Is Reclaimed, And Listeners Have Mixed Feelings." Available at <https://rb.gy/0mc2pd>

Bob Mondello. 2020. "CRIP CAMP is a Raucous Celebration of a World-Changing Place." Available at: <https://rb.gy/griahw>

Joseph Shapiro. 2015. "How a Law to Protect Disabled Americans Became Imitated Around the World." Available at: <https://rb.gy/ban3gj>