



## I AM NORM

### REDEFINING NORMAL, PROMOTING INCLUSION

### **Discussion Guide for Educators, Parents and Students**

What is the 'I AM NORM' campaign all about?

#### **Background:**

In January 2010, twenty teens with and without disabilities joined forces in our nation's Capital. Their task: create a new campaign promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities in a fun, creative, and out-of-the box way. The teens all had different perspectives on what defines inclusion and what a campaign for inclusion should look like, as well as the message it should convey. Eventually, after 2 days of discussion, the concept of I Am Norm was born.

#### **Who is Norm?**

Who is Norm? We are all Norm! Everyone has at least one thing in common - we are all different.

The I Am Norm campaign rejects the idea that certain people are "normal" and certain people are "abnormal." Whether you are an athlete, musician, video game expert, or have just created your own style, we all have unique personalities, talents and interests to share with the world.

Everyone is normal! No one should be discriminated against just because they have a disability or any other perceived 'difference'. The I Am Norm campaign envisions a world where diverse groups of people come together to support, understand, respect and embrace each other for who they are and what they can contribute – not what they can't. Everyone should be included.

## **What is inclusion?**

Inclusion means:

- Making sure that people with and without disabilities have the same opportunities
- Creating a school, club or team where everyone feels like they belong
- Focusing on cooperation over competition
- Understanding that having a disability is a natural part of life
- Assuming that everyone can be successful

## **Norm's Mission:**

The I am Norm mission statement:

“We believe that diversity makes us stronger, and that discrimination breaks us down. We know that hatred is a learned behavior, and that we can all strive to rise above fear and prejudice. We understand firsthand what we gain when everyone is included in our schools and our communities, and how much we lose when anyone is left out. We are united in our commitment to a world where people of various abilities have equal opportunities.”

## **Be Norm!**

The I am Norm campaign is working to:

- Raise awareness about inclusion through a viral video campaign and website
- Provide opportunities for youth and adults to share their ideas about inclusion
- Promote inclusive practices in schools and community organizations

## **Participate in the Campaign**

Anyone can become part of the campaign and make a difference. Whether through volunteering in your community, making your favorite activity inclusive to everyone, or simply changing your everyday attitudes and words, there is a place for everyone looking to make inclusion a reality.

- **Visit and share the campaign website, [www.lamNorm.org](http://www.lamNorm.org).** You can watch a short documentary on the making of I am Norm, created by 13-year-old summit participant Drew Goldsmith. The site also contains hilarious and educational I am Norm videos submitted from all over the country, as well as actions for inclusion and much more.

These videos are engaging discussion tools for your classrooms, clubs, camps, organizations and living rooms.

- **Create your own I am Norm video or submit a story about inclusion in your school or community.**
- **On Facebook? Join the I am Norm Facebook group** and post your own ideas and resources for the campaign.
- **Spread the word about I am Norm!** Blog, tweet, embed and post the website and video links.

#### Be Norm Every Day

- Be an inclusion leader by example. Make sure EVERYONE feels welcome in the hallway, lunchroom, in sports, at dances, at parties and other activities.
- Be patient with people who have difficulty speaking or use technology to communicate.
- Understand that some people have a hard time socializing because of their disability.

#### In the Community

- Volunteer to work with or coach an inclusive group of children.
- Participate in inclusive recreational programs in your area.
- Take steps to make your favorite hobbies or activities available and accessible to everyone.

#### In School

- Start a disability rights group.
- Ask teachers and administrators how they are making your school inclusive and what you can do to help.

#### Learn More:

- You can learn more about inclusion and download free resources at [www.includingallkids.org](http://www.includingallkids.org), [www.includingsamuel.com](http://www.includingsamuel.com), and [www.kitonline.org](http://www.kitonline.org).