

Forging positive relationships with school



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OUTNUMBERED?

THE PARENT SIDE™



ANY QUESTIONS?

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Our society is steeped in the medical model of disability

Disability is disease.

Disability must be measured, described, categorized, remediated and ideally cured. Disabled people need special solutions and special experts.

Inclusion model

**Diversity is
positive.
Everyone is
capable.
Everyone
contributes.
Everyone
belongs together.**

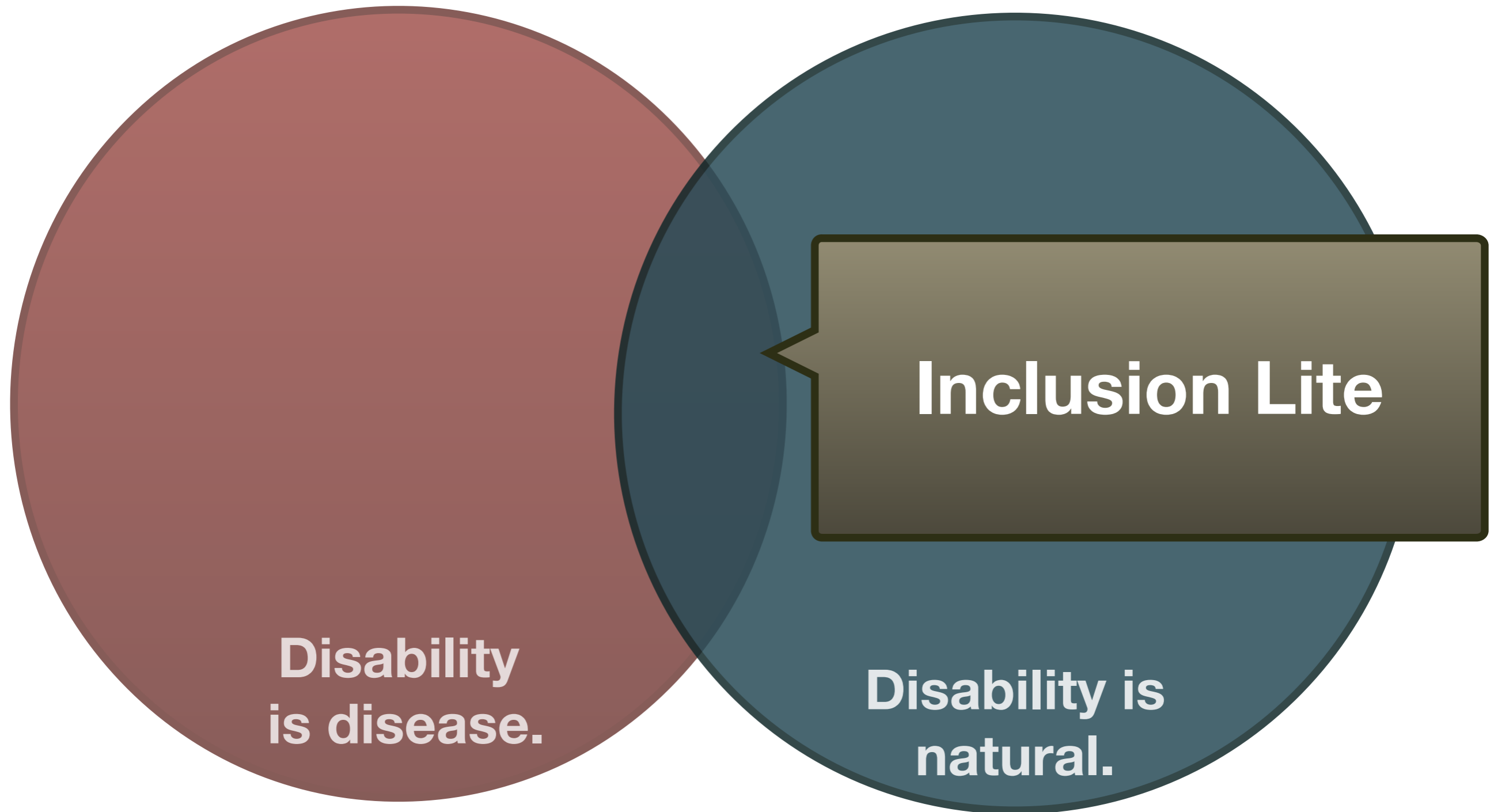
Disability is natural.

These two ideas are incompatible.

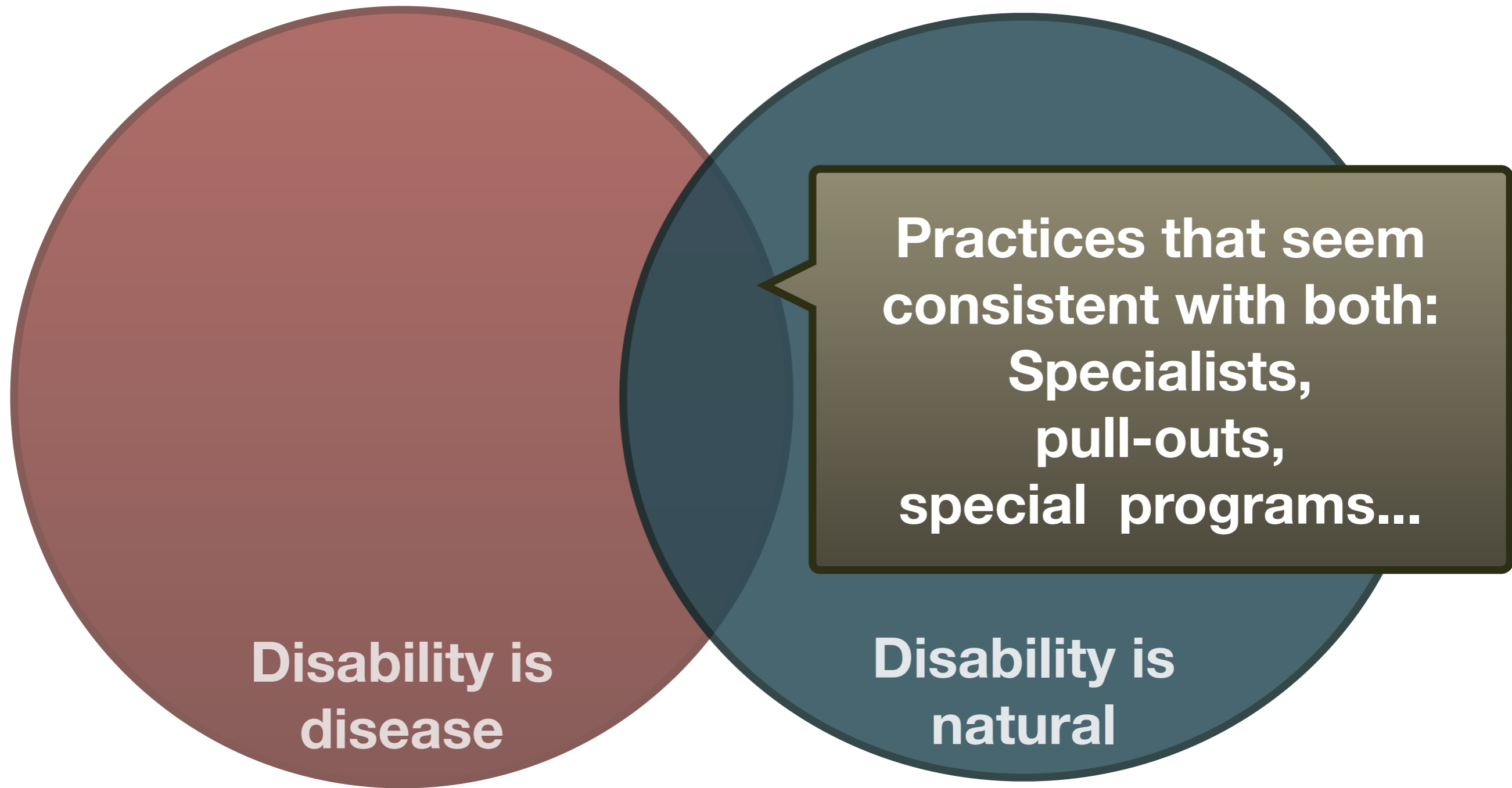
**Disability
is disease.**

**Disability
is natural.**

**Confronted with two opposing ideas,
we look for agreement...**



We have to advocate in ways that challenge the disease model.



Key principles in disability

- **Focus on ability and strengths:**

Focusing on what someone does not or cannot do has no benefit from a pedagogy perspective.

Key principles in disability

- **Focus on ability and strengths**
- **Presume competence**

Key principles in disability

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- **Make the least dangerous assumption**

Key principles in disability

- Focus on ability and strengths
- Presume competence
- Make the least dangerous assumption

Insist on these principles being applied to your child's education.

Key principles in building a partnership with school

Focus on ability and strengths:

- **What is going right?**
- **Where are they demonstrating commitment?**
- **"Sandwich" concerns**

Key principles in building a partnership with school

- **Focus on ability and strengths**
- **Presume competence: ask "how can we do this?" or "why are you doing it this way?" before insisting on a different way.**

Key principles in building a partnership with school

- **Focus on ability and strengths**
- **Presume competence**
- **Make the least dangerous assumption:**

Always better to presume lack of information or awareness than bad intentions

Parenting is deeply personal.

Teaching is deeply personal.

**In parenting,
when in doubt
or deeply stressed,
we revert back to what is most familiar
and what we see our role models doing.**

In teaching: ditto.

Support the school community.

It's less likely that your child is excluded from the school community.

It's more likely that the community doesn't exist or is weak.

Children are at risk of feeling excluded at school for so many reasons. Disability is just one of many.

Building the general community builds capacity to include your child.

Join the school community

**School Council,
classroom volunteering,
coaching,
sharing your interests through a school club,
helping with any curricular activity,
baking for special fundraisers,
running a table at an event...**

Think long-term

**This is a marathon:
pace yourself.**

Changing beliefs is hard work.



Think long-term

Ultimately, we
are the
bystanders.

Our children are
the runners.



Think long-term

- Our job is to build their support system so they can run the race



Imagine yourself as the stage manager.



Imagine school personnel as your in-laws.



Build relationships.



Value each person's perspective.



Insist we include more perspectives, particularly those of your child and of fellow students.



Provide a vision: a new picture.

A vision of needs and labels is very different from a vision of a marathon runner or the lead actor in a play.