

**Get Involved in**



**Holiday Celebrations**



**Everyone wants to be included and feel comfortable during holiday celebrations.**

**For some folks its easy to become involved.**

**Others may need some extra support and help to be involved and contribute to celebrations in meaningful ways.**





# IN THIS WEBINAR

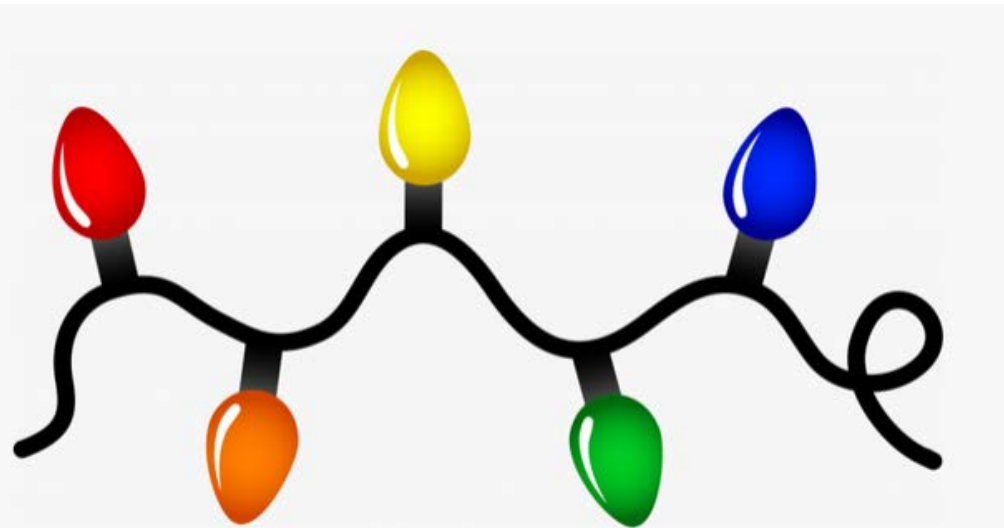
Suggestions on how self-advocates can become involved in a variety of holiday celebrations

Ideas on how friends and family can include folks with developmental disabilities in celebrations

Examples of self-advocates participating in holiday celebrations with their friends and community organizations.

# Work Celebrations and Club/Organization Celebrations

Annual office or club holiday parties can be fun! They can also be full of awkward conversations and anxiety. These may not be people you socialize with on a regular basis or talk to beyond the usual chitchat.



**Do you have a holiday party at your job?**



# **What can friends and co-workers do to make everyone feel welcome?**

- **Post flyers about the holiday party.**
- **Send everyone an email invitation.**
- **You can also specifically invite your co-worker with I/DD in person.**
- **Offer to write down the event details, if that would be helpful.**
- **Ask people how they plan to get to the party. Offer to give them a ride or suggest people they can ask for a ride.**

# **What can self-advocates do to plan?**

- **Ask a coworker to email you the party information or call you with the information**
- **Ask someone to write down the party details**
- **Ask a co-worker for a ride**
- **Figure out the bus route to the party location**

# At the party: co-workers



- Offer to introduce your co-worker or club member with I/DD to people at the party.
- Who might they share similar interests or values with?
- Support them by facilitating a conversation that they can participate in.

# At the party: self-advocates

- Write down some questions to ask questions

What are you doing for the holidays?

Do you have any holiday traditions?

What's your favorite holiday movie?

Do you have your holiday shopping done?

**What other questions might you ask someone?**





# Example

## **Angela & CLAW**

**Champaign Ladies Amateur Wrestling, or CLAW, is a collective of funny, smart, and creative women who perform a line-up of professional-style wrestling matches accompanied by live music.**

**Angela has been a member of CLAW since August 2018.**

**She has been a part of a few performances, including the taping of CLAW's skit for Travis Wayne Hurt's XMAS SPECIAL.**

Angela said that she had a fun time at the taping. She wanted to join CLAW because she “wanted to hang out with strong women and have more female friends.”



**“Angela has provided support in many ways during past CLAW shows. As wrestlers develop their matches, they talk to Angela about how she would like to be involved. She’s been a part of skits and filmed our last show on Facebook Live.”**

Angela says that “Punky and everyone else are happy to have me there. I like being part of CLAW.”

**How have other people made you feel included at work or in a club?**



# Faith Community Celebrations

Some examples of typical ways that people become involved in their faith community's holiday celebrations are to volunteer to do a reading during a service or share their musical talents with a special number or by joining the choir.

Sometimes people with disabilities don't realize that they can volunteer to do these things, too. Or maybe they are nervous to sign up if they aren't confident in their ability to contribute to the service.

**If you are part of a faith community, do you have have special services for the holidays?**

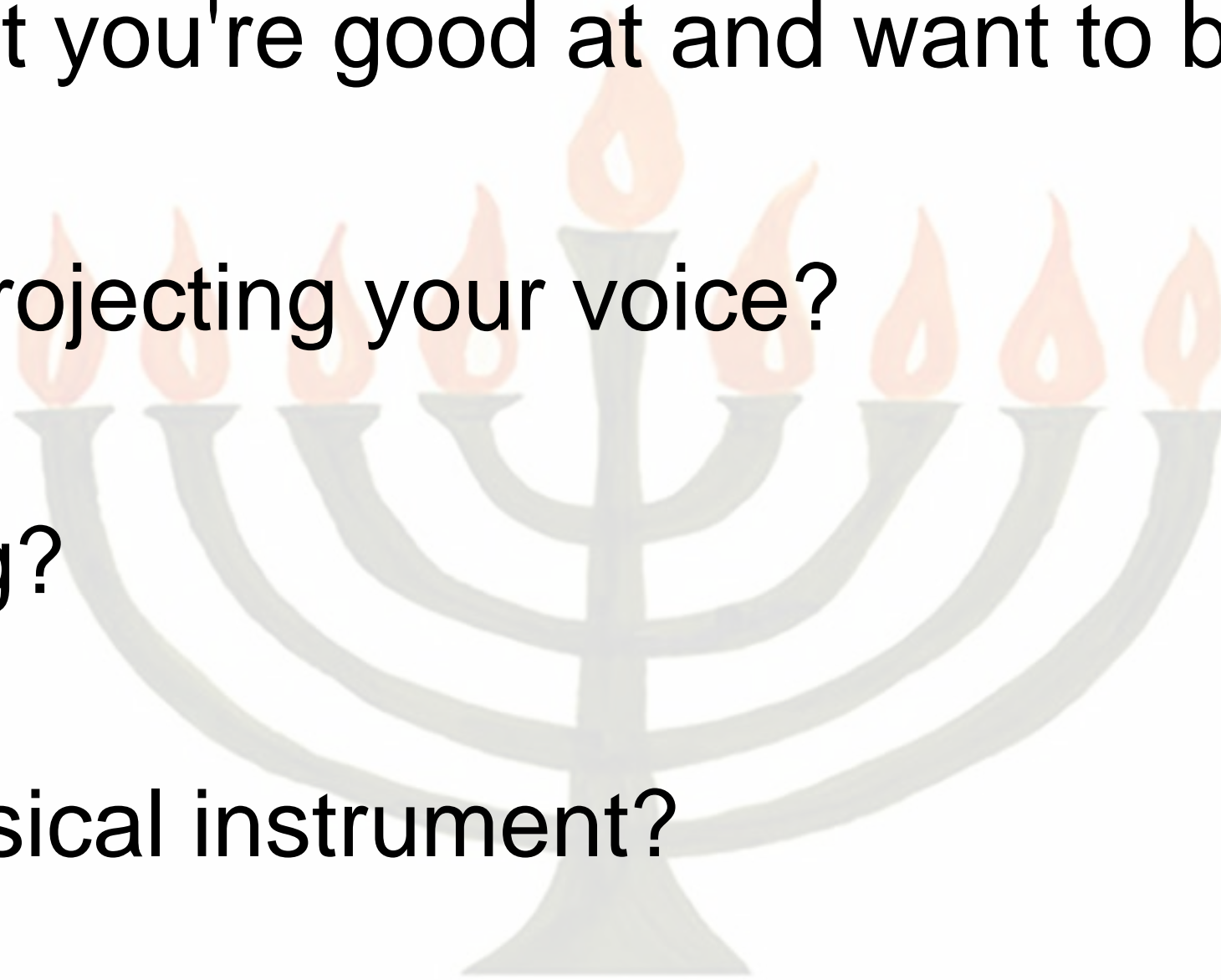


# **What can others do to make everyone feel welcome to participate?**

- **Consider specifically asking members with I/DD if they'd like to be involved**
- **Give plenty of notice and understand that some people may need a while to prepare.**
- **Think creatively about supports and accommodations to include them.**
- **Can they do a reading from their seat in the audience? Or would they like to do the reading with another person?**
- **Help facilitate a partnership with another member of the congregation, or partner with them yourself.**

# What can self-advocates do to participate?

- Think about what you're good at and want to be involved in
- Are you good at projecting your voice?
- Do you like to sing?
- Do you play a musical instrument?
- Are you outgoing and like meeting people?
- Do you enjoy making art?



# Example

## Brian & Community United Church of Christ

Brian is a member of Community United Church of Christ (CUCC) and attends regularly, along with his parents. Brian's regular role in the church each Sunday is as a greeter, but he's looking forward to participating in the annual Christmas Eve Service this year by playing special music.

**Brian takes piano lessons from CUCC's organist, Brian Clark. The two have been preparing duets to perform on the piano and the organ. When asked who makes him feel included and welcome to play special music, Brian said, "I like being there with Brian Clark and Pastor Leah."**





# Family Holiday Celebrations

Holiday gatherings with family are fun, loving times to spend together.  
They can also be crowded, a little tense, and long.

**What do you do with your family for the holidays?**

# What can family members do to help self-advocates be included ?

- Think of opportunities for your family member with I/DD to contribute and have a role in the celebration.
- Develop holiday decorating, baking, or other traditions.
- Prepare a traditional family dish with them.
- Designate a "Quiet Room" at the family gathering.





# What can self-advocates do?



- Ask if there's anything you can bring to the celebration.
- Is there someone you want to spend more time with - a friend or family member?
- Start a tradition of holiday baking together.
- Start a tradition of holiday shopping together.
- Ask the host to designate a quiet room at the gathering.



There are many more creative ways to include people with disabilities in holiday celebrations. Self-advocates and family members, friends or co-workers can work together to find ways everyone can be included.

**Ask these questions:**

- **How do people typically participate in celebrations you attend?**
- **What roles do they have?**
- **How can you support your family member, friend, or co-worker with a disability fill these roles?**
- **Can any of the traditions or expectations be flexible so that everyone can contribute their talents and skills?**





**Holiday celebrations are opportunities to build inclusive community and connections that continue to grow throughout the year.**

**Any Questions?**