



## THE PAL PROGRAM

There are 57 million Americans with disabilities - most of those disabilities are invisible. Invisible disabilities are part of the daily lives of school-aged children. When it comes to hidden disabilities, we lack language, and frameworks to talk about what is unseen but very real for many students. This lack of framework leads to silence, snap judgment, misunderstandings, isolation, and stigma. Stigma is the root for many of the tragic consequence that impact students today. How can we relate to what we do not see?

**INVISIBLE  
DISABILITIES  
ARE REAL. HOW  
CAN WE RELATE  
TO WHAT WE  
DO NOT SEE?**

**WHAT WOULD  
HAPPEN IF  
WE TURNED  
STIGMA INTO  
SUPPORT?**

## STIGMA DIVIDES

Among public school students, 13% require special education services. Removal from the general education class often occurs up to 80% of the day - creating a divided community of us, and them, or have, and have not. Many of these students are exiting school without a diploma, without a strong sense of community, self-esteem, or personal agency. What happens to these children will have a lasting effect on their overall well being and their ability to access and impact the world around them.

What would happen if we turned stigma into support?

## OVERCOMING STIGMA

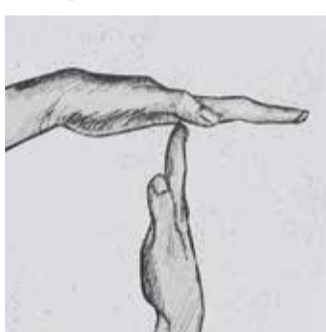
Invisible Disability Project and Conscious Leadership Academy at the University of San Diego, have partnered to research, and develop the PAL Program. PAL is a training program that enters the life of a child, parent, and educator to teach and reinforce a simple framework to reduce stigma and implicit bias, in order to build relatedness and human connection. By incorporating this framework, we can create communities that overcome the barriers and consequences of stigma through relating, empathy, and connectedness.

**BUILDING  
A STUDENT  
COMMUNITY OF  
RELATING AND  
CONNECTEDNESS**



## THE PAL FRAMEWORK

### 1 PAUSE.



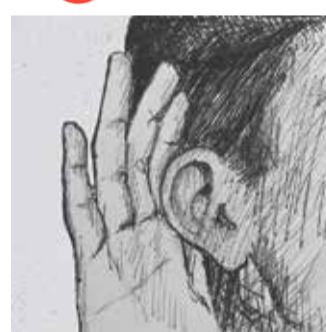
Slow down. Pause. Acknowledge others without judgment. Identify a somatic symptom and connect insightful language to create agency and power.

### 2 ASK.



Ask, or disclose when something unseen is going on. There is power in knowing when and how to reach out and ask. Asking is part of an open relatable and connected community.

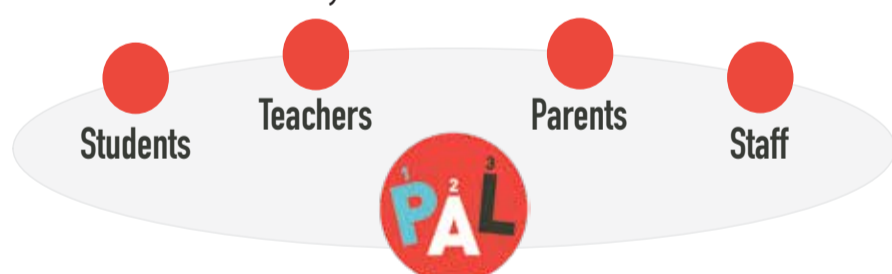
### 3 LISTEN.



Actively listen and create space for peers to share in the unseen. Learn to listen empathetically from another perspective to fully understand others.

## WHO IS A PAL?

Research suggests that when Social Emotional Learning programs are reinforced every day within the school culture, kids have better outcomes academically, socially, and emotionally. This means that parents, teachers staff and students are stakeholders in a connected community.



**KIDS HAVE  
BETTER  
OUTCOMES  
ACADEMICALLY,  
SOCIALY, AND  
EMOTIONALLY**



## YOUR FUNDS ALLOW US

- ▶ Assemble a research and training team of experts to research social emotional learning, implicit bias, and stigma
- ▶ Develop PAL curriculum, scope and sequence, learning objectives, and measurements for learning outcomes
- ▶ Develop PAL training protocol for parents, teachers, and staff
- ▶ Translate PAL curriculum and training protocol to Spanish
- ▶ Methodize and pilot PAL programs in three elementary schools in San Diego County
- ▶ Collect, analyze, and formalize data from our pilot programs
- ▶ Perfect and publish the PAL Program
- ▶ Develop local and national school outreach strategy
- ▶ Ensure program availability across socioeconomic strata
- ▶ Create a more inclusive and equitable world for future generations

**WE ENVISION A  
WORLD WHERE  
PEOPLE WITH  
INVISIBLE  
DISABILITIES NO  
LONGER  
ENCOUNTER  
BARRIERS TO  
PERSONAL  
RELATIONSHIPS,  
EDUCATION, AND  
EMPLOYMENT. WE  
IMAGINE RADICAL  
TRANSFORMATION  
BY CHANGING  
LANGUAGE,  
CHANGING MINDS,  
AND SHAPING A  
NEW CULTURE.**