

# Confident Teens With Disabilities

## Resources

- [High school student finds confidence despite stutter](#) (2:55)
- [Teen with albinism says sense of humor helps him overcome](#) (3:25)
- [Confident Teens With Disabilities \(Lesson Slideshow\)](#)

## Identities & Themes

- Standing up for self/others
- School success
- White/European
- Ability and Neurodiversity

## Summary of Resources

The first video features Trevor Acord, a high school student who excels as a leader and communicator at his communications arts high school, never allowing his speech impediment to stand in the way. The second video highlights Matt Smarr, a high school student with albinism. Matt shares about how he finds joy in life and stays resilient, not letting albinism be a barrier for what he wants to do.

### Condition for Belonging: Resiliency and Justice

#### Anti-Bias Education Tenets

- Empathy & Understanding
- Healthy Complex Identities
- Respect Across Differences

#### Social-Emotional Learning Competencies

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills

# Before You Teach

## Vocabulary

**speech impediment** - a condition that affects an individual's ability to speak fluently or clearly.

**albinism nystagmus** - Albinism is a condition in which the body is not able to produce melanin, which pigments skin, hair, and eyes. Nystagmus causes a person's eyes to wobble, or shake, which causes reduced vision.

It's important for students to see representation of people with disabilities who live lives just like they do, as it can help destigmatize disabilities. The thing to be mindful of is to make sure your students don't see a single story about disability being something that needs to be overcome. Be sure to include that in your discussion of the videos, so students develop empathy for people with disabilities, not sympathy for all the challenges they must overcome.

## Teacher Reflection Questions

- How can you help your students learn to see a person beyond their abilities? What learning opportunities can you provide that foster deeper empathy (but not sympathy), connection, and understanding across abilities?
- What skills and strategies do you see your students using to overcome their own challenges?

## Materials Needed for Lesson

- [Confident Teens With Disabilities \(Lesson Slideshow\)](#)
- Ability to project a slideshow and video
- Journal or notebook

## Process of Implementing

- Project the [Confident Teens With Disabilities \(Lesson Slideshow\)](#)
- Introduce the lesson and vocabulary.
- Show the videos.
- After showing the videos, give students time to complete a written reflection to at least one of the journal prompts.
- Lead students through the discussion questions.

## Journal Prompts

- Write a short letter to Trevor or Matt. What did you learn from their story? How might their story help others with a similar struggle?
- What inspires and motivates you, especially when something is difficult? Why?

## Discussion Questions

\*Essential questions are in bold.

- **What stands out to you from Trevor or Matt's stories? Why?**
- How do Trevor and Matt show confidence? Who do you think helped them build their confidence?
- If you were to interview Trevor or Matt, what would you want to ask them?
- **Matt's teacher talked about how he doesn't use the tools available to him that might help him see more easily. Why do you think he does this?**
- What have the adults at Trevor's and Matt's schools learned from them?
- **How are people with disabilities portrayed in the media? Do these videos reinforce those portrayals? Explain using examples.**