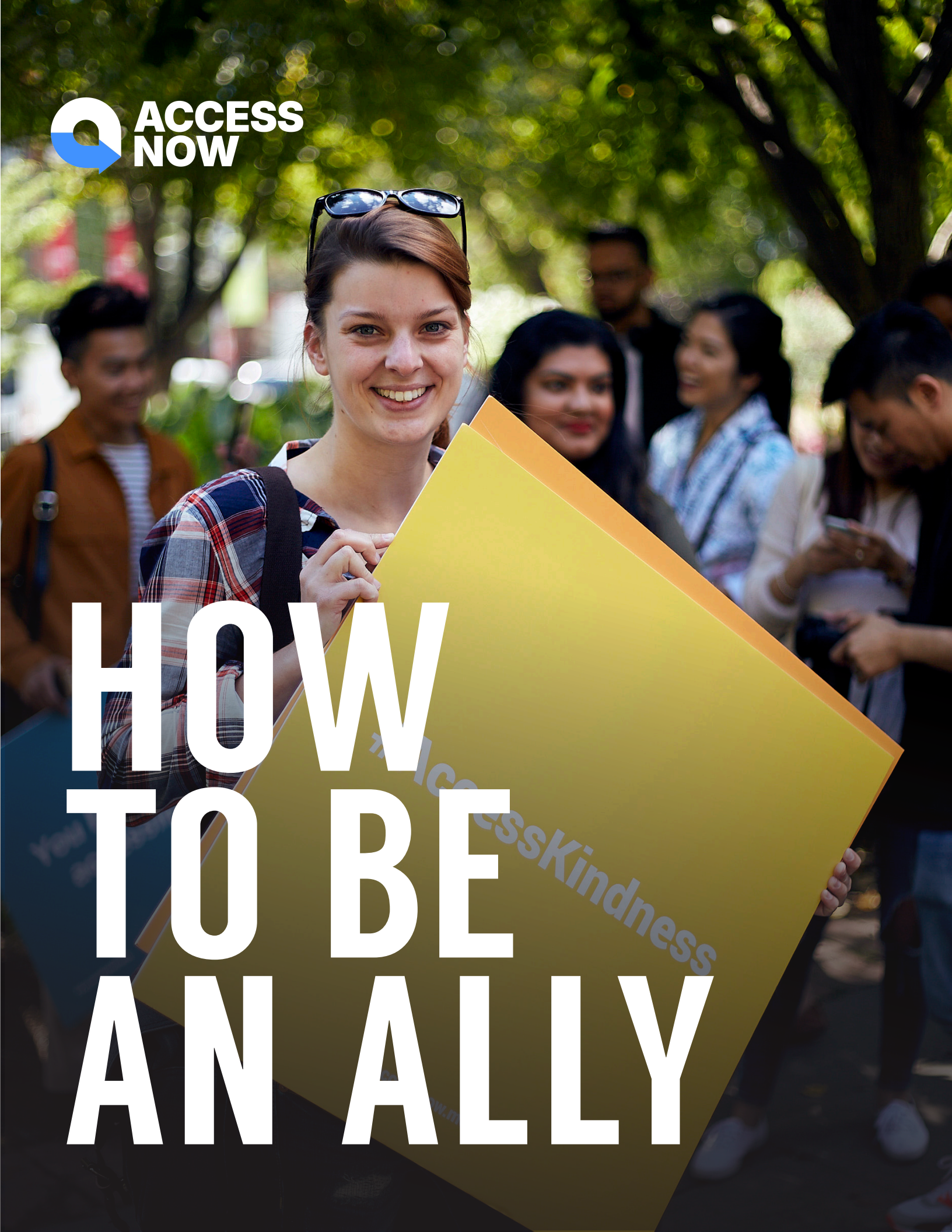
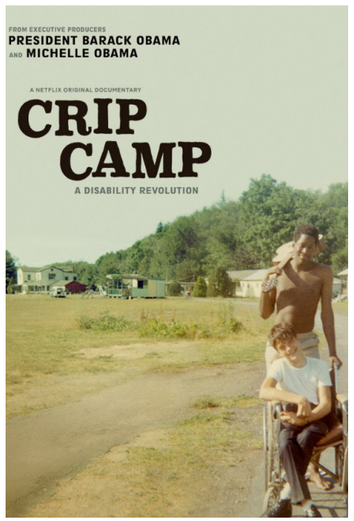
ACCESS NOW

HOW TO BE AN ALLY



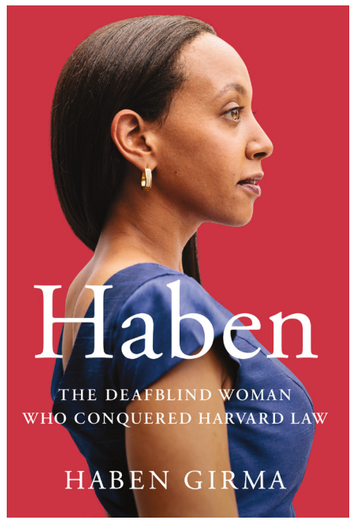
EDUCATE YOURSELF

Be a part of the movement even if you don't have a disability. Speak up when you come across ableist actions, language and/or behaviors. For example, if you encounter microaggressions or if something is inaccessible, amplify, correct, or confront the issue. There are plenty of incredible resources created by disabled people, to learn from. Here are a few of our favorites.



CRIP CAMP DOCUMENTARY

A Netflix film following the journey of the disabled Camp Jened campers, many of whom went on to lead the disability rights movement in the US.



HABEN GIRMA'S MEMOIR

The incredible life story of Haben Girma, the first Deafblind graduate of Harvard Law School, and her amazing journey from isolation to the world stage.

STELLA YOUNG'S TED TALK

A funny but powerful talk by comedian and journalist Stella Yung breaking down society's habit of turning disabled people into "inspiration porn."

HIRE AND PROMOTE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Cast disabled actors for disabled roles. Invite advocates to speak at events and pay them to do so. Purchase from disabled-led brands and businesses. Inclusion is not just about representation but also equality in opportunity.

DIVERSIFY YOUR FEED AND AMPLIFY DISABLED VOICES

Follow disability advocates and influencers on social media. Read and engage with disabled content creators. Amplify their voices by sharing their work. Check out: Jillian Mercado, Chella Man, Haben Girma.

CONSIDER ACCESSIBILITY IN EVERYTHING YOU DO

From dining out to hosting events, make accessibility and inclusion a part of your life. Ask stores why they don't have a ramp or an elevator. Ask podcasts why they don't provide transcripts. Ask your employer to create plans that include people with disabilities from design to delivery.

RESPECT INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES

Recognize that every person is different and there are a variety of ways disability is experienced. Listen to each story and understand that not everyone has the same views and preferences. For example, how people choose to identify themselves (identity-first vs. person-first).

ACCESSNOW

MAKE YOUR CONTENT ACCESSIBLE

Whether it's a website, blog or article, podcast, video or social media post, make sure what you're sharing online is accessible. You don't have to be a brand or "content creator" to do this. If you find content inaccessible, take the initiative to make it accessible. Accessibility is by everyone, for everyone.

01

MAKE YOUR WEBSITE KEYBOARD FRIENDLY

Many people cannot use a mouse and rely on the keyboard to interact with the Web. Accessible websites enable people to access all content and functionality (links, forms, media controls, etc.) through a keyboard.)

02

CHECK FOR COLOR CONTRAST

Color contrast refers to the difference in light between foreground and background. Make sure the colors you use on your website and other media content contrast well to ensure that everyone can distinguish between various elements.

03

OFFER AUDIO DESCRIPTIONS FOR VIDEOS

An audio description (sometimes called a video description) is a form of narration that describes key visual elements of a video for people with no or low-vision. They make your videos more accessible and help people imagine what's happening in the scene when there isn't audio already available to describe what's happening.

04

OFFER TRANSCRIPTIONS TO AUDIO FILES

Transcripts are text versions of all spoken words and important sounds. This is important especially for podcast episodes and content.

05

PROVIDE CAPTIONS TO VIDEOS

Captions are text alternatives of audio content, synchronized with the video. They were developed to aid those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, but are now useful for a variety of situations, such as when in a noisy environment and can't hear the audio or when in a place that must be kept quiet (e.g. library or hospital).

06

ADD ALT TEXT TO IMAGES

Text alternatives convey the purpose of an image, including pictures, illustrations, charts, etc. "Alt text" is used by people who do not see the image. The text should be functional and provide an equivalent user experience, not necessarily describe the image.

07

ASK SOMEONE WITH A DISABILITY

Disability is a spectrum and can be temporary or permanent. Thus how a person is able to access content can vary. While there are accessibility guidelines, it can be tricky to meet every criterion all at once. Be open to feedback, but also take the initiative to ask someone with a disability for their unique experience.

ACCESSNOW

ADVOCATE PROACTIVELY

You don't have to have a disability to be part of the movement for change and equality. Speak up when you come across unjust or ableist actions, language, or behaviors. For example, if you encounter microaggressions or if something is inaccessible, amplify, correct, or confront the issue.

SHOW UP IMPERFECTLY

Being an ally is a process and a journey. Understand that you will make mistakes but know that it is better to be an imperfect ally, than nothing at all. Be ready to learn and be open to being corrected if you misstep. Willingness to change and explore ideas that are different than your own perspective, is one of the most important ways to grow as an ally.