



Welcome to this starter pack—a guide to help you organise your very own *Not Without Us: Perspective on Disabilities and Inclusion in Singapore* book club. Here's what you can find on this page:

- I. Discussion questions from selected chapters to help you get started.
- II. Book Club etiquette
- III. Bonus Resources

I. CHAPTER DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

General Questions

1. Why is “Not Without Us” important?
2. What more do you think can be done for inclusion in Singapore”?
3. What were some of your favourite lines or chapters from the book?
4. What was something new or unexpected you learned from each chapter?
5. What was your most important takeaway from each chapter?
6. How did you feel while reading each chapter?

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Editors’ Introduction: Towards a Singapore Disability Studies by Kuansong Victor Zhuang, Meng Ee Wong and Dan Goodley

1. In the introduction, the editors make the case for Singapore disability study. What do you think are key insights that critical approaches to disability can bring for inclusion in Singapore?

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Section 1: Lived Realities and Identities

The chapters in this section focus on the lived realities and identities of disability in Singapore.

1. What were your thoughts on living with or around disability before and after reading these chapters?

2. Some of the chapters use analytic terms, like crip, disability justice, disability identity, disabling spatialities, normalcy. How useful are these terms in understanding lived experiences of disability in Singapore?

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“A Place at the Table: Who Gets to Speak in Singapore?” by Dawn-Joy Leong and Cavan Chang

1. A key point Dawn and Cavan highlight is who gets to speak. In your opinion and experiences, who is being represented in discussions about inclusion and why?
2. How do we embrace non-verbal ways of being?
3. Dawn and Cavan highlight the privileging of speaking and writing in society. How can we begin to challenge this privilege? What kinds of biases do we need to acknowledge?

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“Going Through Life via Touch: A Journal of My Deafblindness Experience” by Tan Siew Ling

1. Siew Ling speaks about her deafblindness experiences and how technology mediates her encounters with the world. What kinds of assistive technologies have you encountered and know of?
2. Siew Ling ends by speaking about building a better world. What aspects should such a world focus on?

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“You Are Not Hard-Of-Hearing Enough: Performing Normativities” by Xie Yihui

1. Yihui grapples with her identity throughout the chapter. As a disabled foreigner living and studying in Singapore, what aspects of normal does she speak of performing? And what does it mean to be normal in Singapore?

“The ‘Right’ Way to Sign: Sign Language, Inclusion and the Deaf Community in Singapore” by Timothy Y. Loh

1. Timothy discusses the complexities of sign language in Singapore, what was new to you about the considerations and implications behind adopting SEE (Signing Exact English) and SgSL (Singapore Sign Language) in deaf education?

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“—I’m writing my way out—and this is a place of refuge—: A Poetics of Illness and Disability” by Cat Chong

1. Cat Chong uses and identifies with “crip”. What does crip mean and what is its significance for Cat during the pandemic? What do you think about her decision to claim the term with pride?

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“‘Being thick-skinned ... is the only way to survive’: Disabling Spatialities Experienced by Mothers of Persons With Autism in Singapore’ by Bella Choo

1. How do caregivers experience disability, or what Bella describes as disabling spatialities? What can we do to make spaces more inclusive instead of disabling?

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“Rethinking Disability With Justice: Grief as Resistance From the Margins” by A.R.

1. A.R. highlights two key terms, disability justice and access intimacy in her chapter. How does she use the two terms to discuss the intersections of race, disability and health? How do knowing these terms now help you think about and discuss these intersections differently (or not)?

Section 2: Visibility and Expression in the Arts and Media

Section 2 focuses on disability in the arts and media in Singapore. As several of the chapters highlight, there has been increased attention paid in the arts and media space towards incorporating disabled people.

1. How can the arts and media uniquely support the goal of building an inclusive society? What does that mean?
2. What does disability representation mean and why is it important?

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“Performing Dementia: Challenging the Boundaries of Disability and Art” by Grace Lee-Khoo

1. Grace discusses a play she put up with her father, Tan Tok, a retiree living with Alzheimer’s. How does her performance challenge notions of art and incorporate disability as a form of generative embodiment?
2. What are some other examples of disability art you’ve come across in the local art scene, or that you hope to see performed in future?

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“Growing the Disability Arts Ecosystem: The Case of the Singapore International Foundation” by Geraldine Chin

1. Geraldine spotlights the case of the Singapore International Foundation, and its efforts to support disability arts. How can organisations support disabled artists and grow disabled leadership?
2. Imagine if your current place of study or work could transform to support disabled people and leadership, how would that happen and what would that look like?

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“Unleashing the Artistic Ability of Students With Special Needs: Towards an Ability-Driven Paradigm in Special Education” by Ivy Chia and Eunice Tan

1. Ivy and Eunice note the introduction of an art curriculum in Singapore. How can the arts allow for better inclusion, specifically in special education?
2. What does it mean to adopt a strength-based paradigm in special education?

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“And Suddenly We Appear: Reflections on Disability Arts” by Alvan Yap

1. Alvan reflects on the emergence of disability-led arts in Singapore. What is disability-led arts, and how is it different from other forms of art involving disabled people? Do you think this is important and why or why not?

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“‘He’s not normal’: Representations of Disabilities on Singapore Television’ by Aaron K. H. Ho

1. Aaron discusses two contrasting representations of disability in Singapore television. After reading about the key differences between *Kin* and *Breakout*, what is your take on what it means to screen disability ideally?
2. Can you think of any other examples of accurate representations/ self-representation of disability that you have seen on screen?

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Virtual Progress: A Disabled Journalist’s Thoughts on the Video Games Industry by Sherry “Elisa” Toh

1. Sherry touches on a topic that is close to many Singaporeans’ hearts and minds – gaming. In your experience, how can gaming be made more accessible?
2. What role does gaming have in terms of building inclusion?

Section 3: Towards an Inclusive Society?

Section 3 moves from the now of inclusion to the future, focusing across the board on possible ways in which inclusion could be realised.

1. What does the future of inclusion look like for you? How can it be realised?
2. A key theme that chapters in this section engage with is meritocracy. What relationship do you think disabled people have with meritocracy?

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“What Counts as Inclusion?” by Justin Lee

1. How did you view/ understand inclusion before and after reading this chapter? If there were any changes in your views, how might you live these out going forward?

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“Meritocracy and Disability in Singapore: The Curious Case of Pathlight School in the Present Time” by ME

1. ME discusses the role of Pathlight in supporting autistic Singaporeans. How has Pathlight challenged and reinforced notions of meritocracy in Singapore? What do you think about Pathlight’s role and contribution within Singapore’s education system?

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“Oh! She’s doing fine: Realities and Concerns of Learners With Disabilities at University in Singapore” by Damaris Carlisle

1. What are issues that disabled students face in higher education, as Damaris highlights? Do you believe that changes can be made to make higher education more accessible to those with disabilities? Why or why not?

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“Disability, Ability and Norms of Work: An Ethnographic Study of Work Inclusion at Dignity Kitchen” by Yeo Kia Yee

1. Kia Yee spotlights the case of Dignity Kitchen in her ethnography. What barriers and support do disabled people face in work inclusion?

2. The chapter ends with the question: “If inclusivity and our self-valuation have hinged on work abilities, do we not want to rethink our value and dignity of being human, beyond how work defines us?” Do you agree with this challenge? How else could we define the “value and dignity of being human”?

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“A Manifesto for Change: Challenging Psychiatric Authoritarianism” by Nurul Fadhah Johari

1. Fadhah uses her own experiences in psychiatric care as an entryway to discuss mental health and psychiatry. What issues does she highlight with psychiatric pathways of recovery?
2. How can peer support spaces enable recovery and meaningful participation?

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“Realising a Radical Suggestion: Disability Rights and Self-Representation in Singapore” by Daryl WJ Yang

1. Daryl makes the case for disability rights and disability self-representation in his chapter. Do you agree that it’s a “radical” idea in the context of Singapore?
2. What does it mean to have disability self-representation in Singapore? Consider this from your own personal experiences at work or at school.

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“The game was rigged from the start”: Singapore’s Neoliberal Meritocracy and the Neurodivergent Experience’ by Jocelyn Tay

1. Jocelyn puts forth the case for a neurodivergent analytic in her chapter. What does that mean and what does a neurodivergent analytic do? How does this add to our understanding of and approach to Singapore’s meritocratic society?

Final reflections

1. How does the collection grapple with inclusion as we know it in Singapore?
2. In what ways can you support the cause of inclusion?
3. How has reading this book informed your understanding of disability/ the lived experiences of disabled people?

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II. BOOK CLUB ETIQUETTE

Thank you to Group Reading Committee and Kei Franklin for helping to craft this section! Here are some tips to help you organise your book club:

- **Establish a workable schedule:** Decide as a group how frequently you'd like to meet to talk about the book.
 - You could read the whole book together (e.g. 1-2 chapters every week/month);
 - Or, you could read specific chapters based on an agreed theme/topic;
 - Or, you might want to join a public reading group that is currently reading the book, and follow their schedule.

Deciding upon the level of commitment and schedule beforehand can help maximise engagement for all members of your book club.

- **Before the book club:** We recommend assigning someone in your group to facilitate the discussion. Most successful book clubs have a clearly defined 'host'—someone who can take the lead and direct the flow of conversation. The host can provide a general overview of the chapter/book, share discussion questions, and help to focus the conversation. This will make the session more engaging and meaningful.
- **During the book club:**
 - You might want to begin with some simple warm-up questions. If you have new members, introduce yourselves (name, age, favorite animal, pronoun, why they've joined the session, etc.). Do a Check-In by asking everyone to describe how they are feeling that day—you can be creative by inviting people to use colors / textures / types of weather to describe how they're feeling, rather than emotions. A good book club is also a fun social space.



- At the first session, you may want to collectively agree on some discussion guidelines, which will help the space be inclusive and safe for all participants. Some suggested guidelines are:
 - Avoid using discriminatory language. (If you're not sure if something sounds discriminatory, it probably is.)
 - Avoid using difficult or inaccessible words and concepts. If you feel that certain terms are useful but it's possible that not everyone knows or understands them, explain them.
 - Agree that it is OK to ask for clarifications and that is also OK to make mistakes—we avoid shaming individuals for any reason.
 - We agree to speak from our own perspective, rather than attempting to represent the opinion of a larger group or anyone else.

- As a 'host', try and be aware of group dynamics. Pay attention to how much space any one individual is taking up. Try to balance out who is speaking, and provide openings for different people to contribute to the discussion. You can also include this in your discussion of group guidelines (e.g. We agree to 'share the mic').

- **At the end of each book club session:** We recommend doing a Check-Out—ask everyone to share how they feel, or any final thoughts they might have.

- **Considerations for online book clubs:** If you're holding your book club online, here are some extra tips for you.
 - Pick a convenient time so that folks from other time zones can join!
 - Mute audio when not speaking.
 - For hearing people, the use of hand signs can be really useful to convey information to each other, without having to interrupt the speaker. Plus they're fun! [There are many hand signs you can use, and this video \(Signs #2, 4, 10 & 11\) is a good example of what we mean!](#) Feel free to come up with your own unique hand signs, and test them out before you start the discussion.
 - Have fun with virtual backgrounds (related to the topic or not)

III. BONUS RESOURCES

Building Inclusion

There is a great focus on inclusion in Singapore society today. We have provided a listing of key efforts towards inclusion. This is a non-exhaustive list, and is meant to be a starting point towards being involved in the community:

List Here:

[Access Arts Hub](#)

[Art:Dis](#)

[Autism Resource Centre / The Art Faculty](#)

[AWWA](#)

[Disability Studies in Singapore](#)

[Dpa](#)

[Enabling Guide](#)

[Enabling Village](#)

[Equal dreams](#)

[lautistic](#)

[Include](#)

[MINDS](#)

[Rainbow Centre](#)

[SADeaf](#)

[SAVH](#)

[SG Enable](#)

[SPD](#)

[St Andrew's Autism Centre](#)



You can pre-order a copy of *Not Without Us: Perspectives on Disability and Inclusion in Singapore* [here](#).

Thank you to Victor for helping us develop this book club starter pack!