

NARRATOR:

The Disability & Philanthropy Forum presents Kym Eisner, Executive Director of the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation.

KYM EISNER:

Admitting what we don't know is not a sign of weakness. I will say when I joined the Neilsen Foundation, I was not aware that starting a meeting at 8:00 AM could be hard for someone with a spinal cord injury because of what they need to do prior to coming in the door, so we don't start meetings at 8:00 AM. A five-minute break over the course of a morning for a quick bio break, that's not inclusive. And I didn't know that. Of course, now we make sure that we extend those breaks because they're necessary. And even if they're not in the moment, it sends a story. It's a message to the group that we see you and acknowledge your needs.

Even things, a reception after an event, if you roll into the room and all of the tables are high cocktail tables, how do you feel included? You don't. And so those, to your point, are very small, little steps that there can be a long list of that we can all do to make our environments inclusive. And none of that's ADA compliance; that's being an aware human. And again, I didn't know these things 11 years ago, that's where I was on my journey, but I know them now. Wherever you are, that's the place to start going forward.

NARRATOR:

To continue your learning journey, visit DisabilityPhilanthropy.org.