

# 10 Ways to Spark Real Mindset Shifts in Educators

## A Guide for Inclusive Leaders



Lasting change begins with what we believe about students, learning, and each other. If we want schools where every student feels a sense of belonging, we must start by shifting mindsets—not just practices.

This guide offers 10 high-impact strategies to help you spark meaningful mindset shifts in your team. Each one is designed to open hearts, challenge assumptions, and create space for more inclusive thinking. And as you explore, you'll find curated links to tools, stories, and resources to help you bring each strategy to life—one conversation, one connection, and one step at a time.

### 1. TELL TRANSFORMATIONAL STORIES

Share real-life examples of inclusion in action—where students and teachers grew in unexpected ways. Stories humanize the mission and make change feel possible.

### 2. CREATE COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

Gently disrupt outdated beliefs by asking questions like:

*"If we believe in belonging, why are some students separated for some or all of the school day?"*

The discomfort opens space for new thinking.

### 3. MODEL VULNERABILITY

Talk openly about your own learning journey. When leaders admit past missteps and show growth, they create a safe culture for teachers to evolve too.

### 4. USE POWERFUL, REPEATING LANGUAGE

Repeat short, memorable phrases to anchor new mindsets:

- *"Support is portable."*
- *"Inclusion is a mindset, not a place."*
- *"Disability is simply diversity."*

### 5. MAKE IT PERSONAL

Invite educators to reflect:

*"How would it feel if someone you loved were underestimated at school?"*

This emotional connection deepens commitment.

### 6. INVOLVE TEACHERS IN DATA INTERPRETATION

Instead of presenting the data, explore it together.

Ask: *"What story does this data tell about inclusion and equity?"*

Shared ownership sparks authentic change.

## 7. USE STUDENT VOICE

Bring in student quotes, videos, or panels (e.g., Meet Mark Radel). Hearing students share their real experiences with belonging and exclusion can shift hearts faster than any mandate.

## 8. CELEBRATE MICRO-SHIFTS

Don't wait for perfection.

Applaud small steps - for example:

- Trying a new co-teaching move
- Shifting IEP language
- Asking a new question in a team meeting

## 9. MAKE TIME FOR MINDSET

Schedule dedicated time for belief-based conversations.

Ask:

- *"What do we believe about who belongs?"*
- *"What assumptions are we holding onto?"*

## 10. CURATE DISRUPTIVE RESOURCES

Share powerful tools that spark reflection:

- Short podcast episodes
- Quick articles or stories
- Video clips from inclusive classrooms and about inclusion