A CAMPAIGN TO REBRAND THE WORD WALKING
Campaign Statement

How I Walk is a movement to rebrand the word walking by challenging individual and societal perspectives. The visual campaign aims to promote walking as an inclusive physical activity term that is individualized. We envision a future of community health inclusion, one in which health promotion activities are accessible to all.

A truly facilitating community is one in which health promotion activities are as accessible to people with disability as they are to people without disability. All individuals have the right to conditions and resources that ensure optimal health. However, ingrained socioeconomic disadvantages and environmental, programmatic and attitudinal barriers within the community are now widely recognized as major contributors to health disparities experienced by people with disability. The lack of participation in physical activity is a serious public health concern for all Americans, but even more so for the approximately 56 million Americans with disability who are at a much greater risk for developing serious health problems associated with a sedentary lifestyle. The high incidence of secondary conditions such as obesity, fatigue, pain, deconditioning and depression reported among people with disability, combined with environmental barriers that discourage participation in community-based health promotion programs, present an opportunity for health professionals to target people with disability in their long-range plans.

Recent national community health initiatives have been developed to promote walking as a way for Americans to meet the recommended amount of physical activity for health benefits. The U.S. Surgeon General has issued a Call to Action on Walking and Walkability as effective strategies for increasing active living and a healthier nation. A Call to Action from the U.S. Surgeon General’s office is a science-based document intended to stimulate action nationwide to solve a major public health problem. In 2011, the Every Body Walk! Collaborative was formed to increase awareness about the health benefits of walking by encouraging 30 minutes, five days a week while addressing barriers to make walking a part of everyday life. The Every Body Walk! Collaborative, has convened an alliance of national and local partners who support walking as a beneficial health activity for Americans.

Walking is a simple form of physical activity with substantial health benefits. It can also serve as a starting point for reducing sedentary behaviors and a gateway to other forms of physical activity. Given equal access to walking spaces and the adoption of livable community policies, walking is a viable form of physical activity for Americans of all ages and abilities.

The How I Walk social marketing movement was formed to influence perspectives on walking. The visual campaign aims to promote walking as an inclusive physical activity term that is individualized. There are various ways to walk, and now is the time to rebrand the word walking so that everybody is included in walking initiatives.
PUBLIC HEALTH CONTEXT

Key Facts:

General Health

- Approximately 56 million Americans today have a disability.
- There are > 5.5 million children and adolescents with a disability.
- Fewer than 50% of Americans meet the minimum guidelines for moderate physical activity – walking is the easiest and most affordable way to correct this problem.¹
- Nearly half (1 in 2) of all adults with disability get no aerobic physical activity compared with 1 in 4 adults without disability.
- Working age adults with disabilities who do not get any aerobic physical activity are 50 percent more likely than their active peers to have a chronic disease such as cancer, diabetes, stroke, or heart disease.²
- Significant disparities (barriers) exist in access to health care, with 29 percent of people with disability showing unmet need compared to 12 percent for people without disability.
- Lack of physical activity is a contributing factor to the obesity epidemic.
- Obesity rates for adults with disabilities are 58% higher than for adults without disabilities and 38% higher than for children without disabilities.
- People with disability are often left out of health promotion initiatives.
- Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.³
- Being healthy and having a disability is not an oxymoron!
- Children with disabilities are more likely to rely on walking and bicycling in order to live independently later in life.
- Many doctors and other health professionals cite moderate physical activity, including walking, as a “magic pill” for excellent health. It can maintain the body’s systems in good condition and reduce the risk of chronic illness.
- Walking is particularly important for the elderly, people with disability, and lower-income people who have fewer opportunities to participate in sports or formal exercise programs.⁴

Walkability/Active Transportation

- Incomplete streets impede livability.
- Streets are often difficult to navigate for people who use wheelchairs, have diminished vision, can’t hear well, or for people who move more slowly. Nearly one in five Americans face at least one of these challenges.⁵
- Providing transportation choices for everyone, including those with disabilities,
improves livability by connecting citizens to their community and by reducing dependence on more costly alternatives, such as paratransit or private transportation service.⁵

- People who live in neighborhoods with sidewalks on most streets are 47% more likely to be active at least 30 minutes a day.⁶
- Designing communities that support active travel also creates recreational opportunities, promotes health and can even lower health care costs.⁶
- In 1974, 66% of children in the U.S. walked or rode a bicycle to school, and by 2000, that number dropped to 13%, more than an 80% decrease.⁷
- Walking to school is good for children’s cognitive health and learning ability. It improves children’s concentration, boosts moods and alertness, and enhances memory, creativity, and overall learning.⁷
- Walking is critical for accessibility:
  - One-third of all Americans are not able to drive, either because they are too old, too young, too poor, or have some from of disability.¹²
  - 1 in 5 Americans faces a physical limitation that affects his ability to travel for his daily needs.⁹
- Universal design benefits everyone, not just pedestrians with a disability.
- Complete Streets accommodate the needs of all users: pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders, of all ages and abilities. By adopting a Complete Streets policy or ordinance, a municipality signifies its commitment to all citizens and modes.

Sometimes policy, systems and environmental changes are not applied equally to every member of a community. This can actually increase health disparities (e.g., obesity, loneliness, anxiety) among certain subgroups, including people with disability, by predisposing them to poorer access to the key social determinants of health such as social participation, safe and affordable housing, transportation, good health care and access to healthy foods and physical activity environments.

Entrenched socioeconomic disadvantages and structural, programmatic and attitudinal barriers within the community are now widely recognized as major contributors to the health disparities and barriers to health promotion and physical activity confronting people with disability. The disability and public health community traditionally encourages the use of inclusive synonyms when promoting walking such as wheeling, rolling, and pushing. However, the future is community health inclusion and true inclusion happens when perspectives are challenged and attitudes are transformed.
OVERALL GOAL

This campaign aims to:

- Influence perspectives on walking by encouraging a transformation in individual and societal attitudes about people with disability.
- Spur health promotion providers and walking advocates to adopt the rebrand walking mentality to promote inclusion in all walking initiatives.
- Encourage consumers to become self-advocates by sharing their mode of walking through social media activation.
- Share promising practices and resources on including people with disability in walking initiatives to foster more inclusion among public health programming.

CORE MATERIALS/ACTIVITIES

Visuals and graphics:

- 11 key message graphics
- 5 narrative graphics
- Image sharing gallery
- Key facts infographics
- How I Walk supporter web-badge

Text products:

- Campaign toolkit
- Fact sheets
- Promotional excerpt
- Press release

Multimedia products:

- Campaign videos for...
  - Athletes
  - Kids
  - Adults
  - Community
  - Veterans

Social Media:

- Campaign using #HowIWalk hashtag linked to visuals asking people to engage through Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook showing from their points of view:
  - Their form of mobility/ how they walk
  - Barriers and facilitators to walking in their community
Launch Event Ideas:

- Download How I Walk campaign materials to add to local physical activity related events.
- Host an inclusive walk for people of all abilities in your community and capture How I Walk multimedia to share using #HowIWalk.
- Join and promote the How I Walk Thunderclap.

VISUALS

The How I Walk visual treatment will be used to:

- Send a strong message to society about people with disability and the importance of rebranding the word walking.
- Use real people with all abilities to spread awareness of the various ways to walk.
- Ask people to share “how they walk” as a tactic to generate views/action for the social media campaign.

The campaign visuals are available for download and distribution at nchpad.org/howiwalk.

WEBSITE

- All campaign materials are available on the campaign landing page at nchpad.org/howiwalk.

MESSAGES/CALLS TO ACTION

The following messages aim to guide the development of communication products and opportunities with the main audiences in mind being public health professionals, walking advocates, consumers/public, and other relevant stakeholders.

- All individuals have the right to conditions and resources that ensure optimal health.
- Given equal access to walking spaces and the adoption of livable community policies, walking is a viable form of physical activity for people of all ages and abilities.
- Now is the time to rebrand the word walking so that everybody is included in walking initiatives.
• Stop the synonym surplus! Every body walks. Let’s create inclusion in walking.
• Use inclusive imagery showing people of all abilities walking instead of inclusive synonyms like rolling, pushing, or wheeling.
• Some use two legs, some use two wheels. Make walking an inclusive term!
• Rethink the way you speak about walking!
• Inclusion in health promotion is a winnable battle. Join the movement to rebrand the word walking.
• Walking is a human right. Demand safe and accessibility streets for walking and active transportation.
• We want to see how you walk! Share your mode of walking on social media using #HowIWalk.
• All modes of transportation should be accessible to all people at all times—systems designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities will meet the needs of everyone.

SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVATION

Facebook

• Like the official Facebook page for How I Walk (/NCHPAD).
• Post information or share status updates about inclusive walking events happening in your area and use the hashtag #HowIWalk.
• Share the campaign graphics, messages and videos.
• Encourage your audience to share the various ways they walk using the hashtag #HowIWalk.
• Sign on to the How I Walk Thunderclap and promote via your networks.

Twitter

• The official Twitter handle for How I Walk is @NCHPAD.
• When you tweet about How I Walk or walking for people of all abilities, use the hashtag #HowIWalk so everyone can follow the conversation.
• Tweet the campaign graphics and videos.
• Sample tweets to help you spread the word about How I Walk:
  • Now is the time to rebrand the word walking to include everybody in walking initiatives. Join the #HowIWalk movement! bit.ly/howiwalk
  • Stop the synonym surplus! Every body walks. Join @NCHPAD to create inclusion in walking. bit.ly/howiwalk #HowIWalk
  • Some use two legs, some use two wheels. Make walking an inclusive term! bit.ly/howiwalk #HowIWalk
  • Rethink the way you speak about walking! @NCHPAD is rebranding the word walking visit bit.ly/howiwalk to learn more. #HowIWalk
  • Inclusion in health promotion is a winnable battle. Join the movement to rebrand the word walking. bit.ly/howiwalk #HowIWalk
• Walking is a human right. We must demand safe & accessibility streets. Join @NCHPAD’s #HowIWalk movement. bit.ly/howiwalk
• @NCHPAD wants to see how you walk! Share your mode of walking on social media using #HowIWalk. bit.ly/howiwalk

**Instagram**

• The official Instagram account for the How I Walk campaign is @NCHPAD.
• Share the campaign graphics on Instagram and use the hashtag #HowIWalk.
• Share photos or videos of walking and walkability for people of all abilities and use the hashtag #HowIWalk.

**REFERENCES**


³Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19 June - 22 July 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Official Records of the World Health Organization, no. 2, p. 100) and entered into force on 7 April 1948. The definition has not been amended since 1948.


⁵National Complete Streets Coalition http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets/complete-streets-fundamentals/factsheets/disabilities

⁶Active Transportation to Prevent Obesity and Improve Health. (.pdf) Active Living Research, June 2013.

⁷Jackson, Dr. Richard; Sinclair, Stacy. Designing Healthy Communities. USA: John Wiley & Sons, 2012.


**COMPLETE STREETS**

“Complete Streets” is an initiative from Smart Growth America that seeks to create streets and roadways that promote healthy lifestyles for all by being safer, more efficient, and more livable than streets which currently foster speeding vehicles and, conversely, congestion and traffic jams. The National Complete Streets Coalition provides resources, as well as technical support and assistance, to transportation planners and others working to improve community livability and create streets and roadways that are truly designed with all users in mind.

One of the key components of Complete Streets is that they truly consider all users, regardless of ability level, age, or mode of transportation. Complete Streets incorporate tenets of inclusion and universal design to combat the barriers of incomplete streets and to ensure that built environments, technology, and traffic flow promote the best possible pedestrian and transit experience for all users. Barriers caused by incomplete streets include:

- unpaved, broken, and/or disconnected surfaces
- lack of curb cuts, ramps, and other appropriate assistive implements for elevation change
- one-dimensional traffic signals (for example, a visual signal with no audible component)
- wide intersections and roads and increased speed limits that promote less crossing time for pedestrians and more, faster motor traffic, endangering pedestrians, cyclists, and other motorists
- public transit “islands” that are not connected to sidewalks or other accessible paths and routes

Complete Streets take into account the above and other barriers and address them in planning and policy work. Additionally, Complete Streets advocates may target existing policies and developments and advocate for amending them to create more accessible environments. Absent these barriers, community streets, roadways, and pedestrian infrastructure are vastly improved, providing tangible benefits not only to people with disabilities, but to all users. For example, curb cuts can benefit individuals who use assistive walking devices, as well as parents pushing strollers, or individuals without cars who utilize push carts to carry purchased items home. Shorter crosswalks and extended crossing times benefit all individuals who have decreased mobility, including people with disability, poor physical fitness, large loads of items, or adults corralling several children. While these examples may seem simple, when applied to real-world instances the benefits are tangible and lead to increased individual and community health and engagement.

Complete Streets represent an excellent opportunity to engage in inclusive, community-wide health promotion. The Coalition’s website, linked below, features resources on how to create and adopt a Complete Streets policy. Additionally, it hosts an interactive map highlighting all communities with existing policies, as well as the degree to which those plans have been put into action. Individuals, coalitions and organizations, and/or local governments that want to increase usability of community streets and roadways and, transitively, community members’ health, physical activity, and community engagement, may wish to attempt to create and enact a plan within their communities, or seek out the opportunity to work on the community’s existing Complete Streets policy.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- National Complete Streets Coalition
- Complete Streets: Disabilities
- Complete Streets: Policy Atlas
- Complete Streets: Fundamentals
RESOURCES TO SUPPORT WALKING MEETINGS IN THE WORKPLACE

WHAT IS A WALKING MEETING?
A small group meeting that does not require technology or note-taking where employees are encouraged to walk.

BENEFITS OF WALKING MEETINGS

- Reduction in sedentary behavior
- Spark creativity, freshen perspectives, generate new ideas
- Relationship building among co-workers
- Improved physical and mental well-being
- Adding additional meaning to meetings

WALKING REBRAND
Walking is an inclusive physical activity term that is individualized regardless of mobility limitation. There are various ways to walk. It is encouraged to rebrand this term while changing individual and societal attitudes through visual imaging so that everybody is included in walking initiatives.

HELPFUL LINKS FOR PLANNING A WALKING MEETING

- EveryBody Walk! Collaborative: Hosting Walking Meetings
- Feet First: Guide to Walking Meetings
- CDC Steps to Wellness Guide (page 52)
- University of Notre Dame: Host a Walking Meeting
- Dr. Ted Eytan: The Art of the Walking Meeting
- Walksteps.org: Establish Walking Meetings at Work

TIPS FOR INCLUDING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY IN WALKING MEETINGS

- Arrange the meeting in advance allowing individuals to bring proper footwear or assistive devices.
- Set the path ahead of time ensuring the same start and finish.
- Ensure that the path is accessible to all persons. Terrain should be a smooth, firm surface with no steep slopes. It should be free of obstacles within the path of travel and include curb cuts at all transfers. Follow the link for a Sidewalk Accessibility Assessment Form.
- For walkers of different abilities, some adjustment in speed may be necessary. The meeting should move at the pace of the slowest person.
- Consider high levels of ambient noise. A bullhorn can be used to ensure the speaker is heard by all.

OTHER WORKSITE WELLNESS RESOURCES

- National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity Healthy Meeting Toolkit
- NCHPAD Deskercise! 20 Ways to Get Moving While you Work
  - 11x17 Deskercise Poster
- NCHPAD A Culture of Inclusion in Worksite Wellness
LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

WHAT MAKES A COMMUNITY LIVABLE?

A livable community is one in which healthy choices are the easiest, most attainable ones. Livable communities improve the health, wellness, and overall quality of life of its members.

Some examples of health and wellness opportunities that affect the overall livability of a community are the availability and variety of:

- quality health and other support services
- health promotion programs and activities
- nutritious food and food sources
- safe, accessible physical activity opportunities and environments
- affordable, strategically-located transportation options
- affordable, appropriate, varied housing
- entertainment, shopping, recreation, and cultural opportunities and venues

In inclusive livable communities, efforts are made in planning, action, and evaluation to ensure the livable components of the community are accessible and provide access to equitable health and wellness benefits to all individuals and groups within the community. Together, inclusive livable community components create lifestyle opportunities for individuals that promote independence, healthy relationships, social engagement and community involvement, physical and mental health, learning and growth, and increased overall well-being.

The following are just a few of several examples of inclusive livable community initiatives:

- Complete Streets that implicitly include measures to ensure access, use and safety of pedestrians who may have additional needs, such as those with disabilities, children, and the elderly
- Created and promoted walking, rolling, jogging and cycling routes that are maintained to a point that they can accommodate all users, regardless of ability level or assistive device
- Walking and running groups that plan, scout, utilize and evaluate routes to ensure accessibility for all potential members
- Food stores and farmers markets that feature ideal, accessible placement of healthy nutrition items and/or visible, knowledgeable assistants available to assist consumers with additional shopping needs
- Community gardens that feature inclusive features such as rollable ground and plants at specific heights to allow for all potential users to participate in gardening
- Playgrounds and other public recreation spaces that feature accessibility features such as ramps and rollable surfaces so all users and participants can use, enjoy, and benefit from them

NCHPAD provides outlines and recommendations for these and other programs throughout Building Inclusive Healthy Communities. If there are additional inclusive livable community opportunities or initiatives you are interested in seeing promoted or learning about, contact an information specialist and we will provide information and possibly create additional resources to be featured on the site.

ADDITIONAL LIVABILITY AND LIVABLE COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

- AARP Livable Communities
- Partners for Livable Communities
- Smart Growth America: Complete Streets Help Create Livable Communities
- Walkable and Livable Communities Institute
CREATING INCLUSIVE WALKING CLUBS

Walking represents one of the best, most available options for engaging in low-impact physical activity—in fact, it is the most popular form of physical activity in the US.

Not everyone walks in the same manner. Some individuals walk upright; others walk with a limp or other gait abnormality; many use an assistive device to aid in walking, such as a wheelchair, cane, or walker.

Walking clubs are exactly what they sound like: groups of people who get together to enjoy the physical and mental benefits that come from walking and social interaction and engagement. Walking groups are a tremendous opportunity to promote and improve health and wellness on multiple levels for individuals in a community.

If you are creating a walking club or group in your community, “scout your routes” to ensure that walks are inclusive of all potential participants. When creating or choosing a route for a group walk, conduct a walking audit in advance to ensure it is fully accessible for all potential walkers, regardless of ability level, age, or fitness level. Ensure the following features exist to create a fully inclusive route:

- Route is flat or features minimal, gradual elevation change(s)
- Elevation changes greater than one-half inch feature ramps to make them more feasible
- Paths are at least 36 inches wide throughout the entire route, and at least 48 inches wide for turns
- Slopes are no more than 1:20 rise-to-run ratio, and cross slopes no more than 1:48
- All surfaces are smooth (sidewalks, paved trails, boardwalks, etc.) and do not act as obstacles (broken, splintered, non-existent in areas, no connectivity, etc.)
- Connectivity exists throughout the route in the form of seamless accessible features such as curb cuts, ramps, and crosswalks
- Crosswalks are well marked and feature multiple signals (audible and visual)
- Curb cuts and other elevation and surface changes are marked in some manner to alert participants, such as with truncated domes

When creating a new route, include individuals with a wide range of ability and fitness levels in the planning and audit process. This route creation committee can ensure that routes are appropriate for all potential members of walking groups, create a consensus on the overall difficulty of the route for all potential participants, and highlight any areas that may be especially problematic and/or need to be avoided.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- American Heart Association: Walking Clubs
- Mayo Clinic: Walking Groups
- United States Access Board, Chapter 4: Accessible Routes
INCLUSIVE SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Safe Routes to School is a national organization dedicated to helping local schools and school systems create safe walking and biking routes to and from schools. The number of students who walk and bike to school (as opposed to carpool or bus) has plummeted over the past decades. In that same period of time, childhood overweight and obesity numbers have risen as kids have spent less time engaging in physical activity. Safe Routes seeks to tap into the physical, mental, and social benefits associated with living a healthy, active lifestyle by providing students with opportunities to engage in such lifestyles through walking to school with groups of fellow students.

While there has been a general increase in inactivity and weight amongst all children, this is even worse in children with disabilities. There are approximately three million school-age children in the United States, and they are over four times as likely to experience reduced physical activity opportunities due to barriers as kids without disabilities. Inclusive Safe Routes to School programs provide an excellent opportunity to promote this much needed physical activity, as well as the mental and social benefits that come from physical activity, program participation, and peer interaction.

NCHPAD has created The Discover Inclusive Safe Routes to School Guidebook, which offers extensive insight, recommendations, and resources for creating or adapting a Safe Routes program that benefits all children by utilizing inclusion as a cornerstone principle. Some topics covered in the Guidebook include:

- benefits of and barriers to participation in Safe Routes programs for students with disabilities
- inclusive planning and design accommodation recommendations
- strategies for inclusive participation
- recommendations on promoting the program through various media
- volunteer training recommendations
- additional resources including assistive technology descriptions, sample flyers, further readings, and program evaluation forms

To learn more about and receive the Guidebook and/or to receive any additional information or technical assistance regarding creating an inclusive Safe Routes to School program, please contact NCHPAD.

ADDITIONAL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL RESOURCES:

- SRTS Home Page: http://saferoutespartnership.org/
CONTACTS

If you need more information, contact the National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD). Key contacts are listed below:

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CAMPAIGN TOOLKIT

How I Walk

A Campaign to Rebrand the Word Walking

www.nchpad.org
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(800) 900-8086