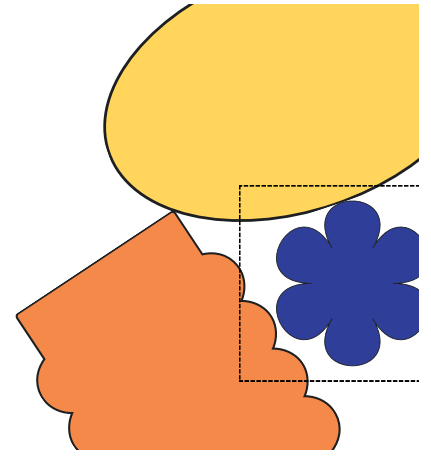# Mission Statement

## What is our mission?

The Society for Students with a Disability (SSD) is a post-secondary student advocacy group under the University of Victoria Students' Union which promotes the full participation and inclusion of students who self-identify as having one or more disabilities at the University of Victoria. The SSD aims to support students who self-identify as having one or more disabilities; in particular, we support students to reduce barriers in the social, emotional, and educational domains of student life.

SSD

Society for Students with a Disability

# Values

*Values from brainstorming at the Council's December 2022 strategic planning session*

## Anti-Racism & Decolonization

We acknowledge that the university resides on stolen Coast Salish Territory, cared for by the Lekwungen-speaking, Songhees, and Esquimalt peoples. We choose to incorporate decolonial ideals into our everyday interactions by beginning our meetings with a territorial acknowledgement, and pushing against colonial systems where possible. We seek to tackle white supremacy with anti-racism. This means we actively respect and acknowledge that students come into our space with a range of positionalities. Racial realities shape our social interactions and we wish to address this by not condoning any kind of racial superiority or supremacy. We are committed to dismantling white supremacy within the SSD and UVSS, and are partnered with stakeholders with similar worldviews. This means we listen when students of colour and their representatives say that we have caused harm, and we actively seek to unlearn and unsubscribe from our problematic racial socialization.

## Community & Connection

Our main goal at the SSD is to create community and connection for folks living with disabilities on and off UVic's campus. We strive to include folks no matter their barriers, and seek to include disabled folks at every stage of organization. Treat

others with respect, kindness, and dignity. We all have our own needs and have something to offer.

## Support & Advocacy

We offer support and advocacy for disabled UVic students. Many students come to us with various issues across campus that impact disabled students specifically, and we work to address their problems directly with the university via advocacy, campaigns, and other mediums of communication to the institution. We are always open to hearing about students' lived experiences and seek to address them at face value, even if the student requires support with respect to a barrier offered through the SSD programming.

## Diversity & Intersectionality

We acknowledge that all students who enter the SSD come in with different positionalities and lived experiences. We honour these different realities by tapping into our other values and incorporating kindness and gentleness into our daily interactions. Intersectionality systemically acknowledges that multiply marginalized and diverse folks are often overlooked. Respect others' perspectives and experiences.

## Justice & Empowerment

Though we encourage students to advocate for themselves, which provides a sense of empowerment, sometimes they need additional support to achieve justice at the University. We seek to empower students and discover justice through our various campaigns, events, workshops, and casual social opportunities.

## Patience & Love

We hold patience and love very high at the SSD. We learn by doing, and are open to gentle and kind mistakes. Intent is key; we hope that by being kind and gentle to one

another, we foster a patient learning environment rich in love and self-determination. This allows students to fully self-actualize and approach situations with curiosity and caring instead of hesitation and fear. Communicate and collaborate with patience. Make space for kind mistakes and questions.

## *Inclusion & Accessibility*

The SSD strives to include all students regardless of their access needs or limitations. We are committed to hybrid and virtual access to our events, workshops, etc. Of course, no space is 100% accessible to all folks, so we are open to learning and hearing from others about how we can improve our practices.