

Disability Awareness Training Stations



Wheelchair Mobility

Supplies

- Two coaches
- Wheelchairs (one wheelchair per two people in your training group)
- Cones
- Board to go over
- Tray with glass full of water

Instructions

Have trainees pair up in twos, one person in the chair and the other one pushing or supporting. Each person should learn to maneuver in a wheelchair and also learn to assist a person in a wheelchair.

Trainees in chairs learn to:

- Navigate around cones/obstacles
- Over door jams (board)
- Tray on lap with glass of water, see if they can maneuver without spilling

Trainees pushing people in chairs learn to:

- Push people around cones/obstacles
- Over door jams (board)
- Talk about how to push someone up and down curbs
- How to safely transfer someone in and out of a wheelchair, using brakes and putting up footrests- show how to take off arm rests, talk about tilt bars- what they are for, how to use them

Questions to Think About:

- What kinds of things do you think are helpful to someone using a wheelchair?
- What kinds of things do people do that can make someone in a wheelchair feel less important or ignored?
- How can I be more outgoing to someone using a wheelchair?

Visual Impairment

Supplies

- Two coaches
- Blindfolds
- Sunglasses
- Vaseline
- Canes (dowel rods can be used, or Society for the Blind/Association for the Blind may donate canes)
- Obstacles (i.e. chairs, tables, etc)
- Water in pitcher and cups.

**It can work well to place this station near the Wheelchair Mobility Station so that many of the same obstacles can be used.*

Instructions

Have trainees pair up in twos. One trainee should wear the blind fold or sunglasses with Vaseline smeared over the lenses to experience visual impairment or blindness. The other trainee will act as a support and helper to the first. The trainees should reverse roles midway through the time at this station.

Trainees with eyes covered learn:

- How to use a cane to navigate curbs, stairs, etc.
- How to pour water from a pitcher into a cup, feeling when water gets close to top

Trainees without blindfolds or sunglasses learn:

- How to be sighted guides
- Etiquette: announcing yourself by name when entering a room, letting the individuals know when you are leaving the room
- How to correctly guide someone using their elbow
- Stopping at curbs and stairs to alert someone of change
- Talking to the person with visual impairment about stairs and hills, doors, etc.

Questions to Think About:

- When should you offer help to someone with a visual impairment?
- What do you think would be the most difficult thing about having a visual impairment?
- Was it difficult to trust the person guiding you?

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

Supplies

- One coach
- PECS cards
- Communication board

Instructions

People who have Autism, Down syndrome or Cerebral Palsy may not have the ability to communicate verbally. Communication boards and PECS cards were developed to provide visual symbols representing common needs. Have trainees pair up in twos – one partner using PECS cards or a communication board to try and convey messages, the other partner responding appropriately when they understand what is being said. Trainees should take turns, each person using PECS cards or a communication board to communicate.

Questions to Think About:

- Is it easy or difficult to communicate through pictures?
- What kinds of things would be the most difficult to communicate through PECS systems?
- What kinds of situations would be frustrating about PECS?

Manual Dexterity

Supplies

- One coach
- Several gloves with fingers taped or glued together
- Saltine crackers
- Plastic knives
- Whipped cream cheese or jelly
- Shoes with shoe laces
- Beads and string
- 2 bags with items in them (ex. pine cone, hair brush, shower sponge, tube of tooth paste, orange, tennis ball)
- Blindfolds

Instructions

People who have had a stroke or who have a spinal cord injury may lose manual dexterity. Individuals with orthopedic impairments may have decreased dexterity and will need to adapt by learning new ways of doing things, sometimes using specialized equipment and tools.

While wearing the gloves, have trainees do the following tasks:

- Put cream cheese or jelly on crackers with knives
- Tie shoelaces
- Button shirts
- Tie a tie
- String beads
- Identify the items in the bag without looking

Questions to Think About

- What was the most difficult thing to do?
- What surprised you?
- What was the most frustrating?
- What would be the most challenging thing in your own life without dexterity?

Painting by Mouth

Supplies

- One coach
- Lots of disposable paintbrushes and writing utensils
- Paper
- Paints
- Pitcher for water
- Cups
- Paper towels

Instructions

This is a an activity designed to give trainees the chance to see what kind of control it would take to use your mouth to express yourself which might be needed if you were to have a high level spinal cord injury, cerebral palsy or no upper limbs.

Have trainees start by painting or writing their name, then a sentence. Paint pictures of various things, favorite animal, a car, house, sunset. Remind trainees to use clean paintbrushes or writing utensils. When they are done, have trainees put their brushes and utensils into a trashcan so that the next trainees do not accidentally place used utensils in their mouths.

Questions to Think About:

- Can someone who is paralyzed still have artistic ability?
- Can someone who is non-verbal still communicate?
- Can someone who is Deaf still hear the voice of God?
- Can someone who has Down syndrome still be an instrument of God's love to this world?
- So, does someone's physical body determine their gifts and abilities?

Overstimulation Station

Supplies

- One or two coaches
- Small speakers to play music
- Feather dusters
- Bandanas
- Scratchy sponges
- Something smelly (ex: can of cat food)
- Whistle
- Squirt gun
- Children's books
- Flash lights
- Large dried beans

Instructions

This station is designed to recreate what it may be like for someone who has difficulty filtering out distractions – a common difficulty for those with autism.

Place the large dried beans on three chairs sitting in a row. Have three trainees sit in the chairs, tie the scratchy sponges to the back of their necks using the bandanas and have them read the books out loud. While they read, play music loudly and have the other trainees in the group do everything they can to distract the readers by asking questions loudly and using the supplies listed above.

After a couple of minutes, ask the readers about the books they were reading to see if they were able to retain the information. Rotate readers so that each trainee in the group gets the chance to experience a stimulus overload.

Questions to Think About:

- Were you able to retain information in the story that you read?
- Were you able to block out distractions?
- What was the most difficult distraction?
- What were you most sensitive to?
- How would you feel if you were in a classroom that felt like this every day?

Speech Impairment

Supplies

- One coach
- Marshmallows
- Trash can/bag
- Napkins to wipe mouth
- Sentences for one person in each pair to read

Instructions

Have trainees pair up in twos and face one another, standing about 2 feet apart. One trainee is given two marshmallows to place in their mouth (the trainee should not chew them or stick them in their cheeks).

The trainee with the marshmallows in their mouth should read one of the below questions. The other trainee must try to answer the question. The question can only be repeated two times, if the trainee without the marshmallows cannot understand the question, move on to a new question. After a few questions, the roles should be reversed.

Questions to Think About:

- What is frustrating about not being understood?
- Was it frustrating not being able to understand what your partner is saying?
- If someone is having difficulty speaking, what is the best thing you can do:
- Finish their sentence for them
- Tell them to hurry up
- Walk away because they are taking too long
- Be patient, ask them to repeat what you don't understand
- Pretend like you know what they are saying

Hearing Loss/Sign Language

Supplies

- One coach who is familiar with Sign Language
- Sign Language ABC's
- List of words and sentences for lip reading

Instructions

Have trainees pair up in twos or small groups. Have them practice spelling their names using the alphabet hand spelling signs. Have them practice signing some of the other basic signs and experience communicating with their hands.

Next, have the trainees practice lip reading. Only 20% of those who are deaf can lip read proficiently. While sitting across from each other, trainees can practice lip reading using the words and sentences below.

Lip reading:

- AY/EE words- Is it hard to tell the two words are different?
Spade/Speed, Stayed/Steed, Shane/Sheen, Blade/Bleed, Tray/Tree, Grain/Green, Braise/Breeze, Same/Seam, Plays/Please, Rail/Real, Fail/Feel, Main/Meal
- PB Words- Can you tell which is P and which is B?
Pal, bad, pick, better, part, bake, price, break, pike, bike, plant, ball, pizza, butter, play, balloon, popcorn, basket, puddle, bubble, puppy, baby, please, breeze

Advanced sentences:

- Take the plate to the lady in the green dress.
- The man tried to catch the fish with an apple.
- Giraffes can reach leaves high up in the trees because of their height.
- Kate tried to open the gate but her arm was too short to reach over the top.
- Jack was the only bachelor at the picnic flying a kite.

Questions to Think About

- When Sign Language is your first language, do you naturally know English?
- How would the thoughts or dreams be different for someone who speaks sign language?
- Can Deaf people "hear" music?
- Deaf people often do not think of themselves as having a disability, they only "hear" differently, feeling music in their thighs, their chest, their abdomen, using their eyes to observe and pick up details that those of us who are hearing miss.