



DISABILITY AWARENESS FAIR

The purpose of the Disability Awareness Fair is to introduce the girls to a variety of activities that mirror common disabilities. It is important to make the girls understand that they are not to “overcome” the disability by figuring out how to “fix” it, rather to try and work with the disability so that they can gain understanding of how it might be for a challenged individual.

Each activity should be set up in its own area. Have all supplies laid out on a table to speed up the activity. If you need pieces of tape or string it is worthwhile to cut them in advance and hang them from the edges of the table. Try to have the same number of girls in each group so that one group does not finish much before the other groups. Girls will travel from station to station doing each activity. Keep the girls at each station until the leader announces that it is time to move.

Although the girls will probably want to focus on the activity, make sure to make the connection with the disability. After all the girls complete the activities debrief them by asking the following questions:

What was difficult? What was easy? Were you surprised at anything?

Did you find a way to compensate for your disability? (Use other hand, use sign language or gestures, etc.)

What other activities might be difficult for a person with this disability?

Are there any devices or techniques that people with this disability could use to help them? (Canes, sign language, magnifying glasses, etc.)

Did you feel that your disability would make people feel uncomfortable?

Have you ever met anyone with this kind of disability? How did it make you feel?

BLIND TRUST WALK

When moving from place to place, blind people may use a guide dog, a cane, and learn to pay attention to a variety of environmental clues. Sometimes another person serves as a sighted guide and functions as the eyes of the blind person. The sighted guide describes what is around and in front of them. One way to describe things is to relate objects to the face on a clock. For example, in describing a plate of food say your

meat is at 3 o'clock, your potatoes are at 9 o'clock, etc. Sighted guides also need to describe noises and the source of the sounds.

SUPPLIES:

Bandanas, objects for an obstacle course – chairs, tables, buckets, etc.

Pair up the girls. Blind fold one girl and have the other girl lead her throughout the room (in and out of the obstacle course). In the first round, the sighted person physically leads the blindfolded person. The second round, the sighted person does not physically lead the blindfolded person, rather she directs her through verbal clues (2 steps in front of you is a table, walk 6 paces to the left to avoid the pole, etc.) When each girl has had a turn, switch. When all of the girls have had a turn, discuss the following ideas:

DISCUSSION:

How did you feel when you couldn't see? Did you keep one hand in front of you? Were you disoriented? What directions were helpful? What directions were difficult? How did it feel to be the sighted guide? Develop a list of suggestions for guiding and helping a person with a vision disability.

ARTHRITIS SIMULATION

Explain to the girls that lots of people get something called Arthritis when they get older. Arthritis is a disease that makes the joints of the hands, legs, fingers, knees, hips etc. stiffen up and it becomes difficult to do normal everyday things. Although most people who get Arthritis developed it in their old age, it is not uncommon for younger people or even children to develop Arthritis.

SUPPLIES:

Gloves or mittens, needles, thread, scissors, small pieces of fabric and easy thread needles (these are special needles that allow you to line the thread up with the top of the needle which has a slit leading to the eye of the needle. When you pull the thread down through the slit, it moves into the eye and the needle is threaded.)

Have each girl put on a pair of gloves or mittens. Then put the needles and the thread on the tables and ask them to cut off a piece of thread, pick up the needle and thread it, tie a knot on the end of the thread and then sew a few stitches on the fabric square. Do not place anything in their hands; lay everything on the table so that they will have to pick up the objects. If you have time, ask them to try and tie their shoes or someone else's shoes or button their clothing while wearing the gloves.

DISCUSSION:

What other activities might be hard to do if you had arthritis? (Writing, drawing, brushing your teeth, dressing, etc.) What activities might be difficult to do if you had Arthritis in your knees? Legs? Hips? Neck? You might want to mention that people who suffer with Arthritis have more difficulty on humid and rainy days.

FEED AND BE FED

Many people need help when they eat. This could be because of loss of control in their arms or because of trembling or shaking in their limbs. This activity is designed to help initiate a discussion of dignity. Help the girls define the word dignity (self respect, self esteem, pride, etc.). Discuss how you might feel if you could not “do” for yourself and needed to have someone help you with your most basic needs. Point out to them that the attitude and countenance of the “helper” contributes to the dignity or loss of dignity of the person being helped.

SUPPLIES:

Cereal and milk (Lactaid milk for girls who cannot drink regular milk or you can use applesauce), Bowls, Spoons, Paper towels (lots!), Bandanas

Divide the girls in pairs and have one girl put her hands behind her back or sit on her hands. She will be the “feedee”. The other girl takes a spoon of milk and cereal and feeds the girl. The “feedee” may not use her hands at all. After a few minutes, have the girls change roles. If there is time, blindfold the girls and have them feed themselves.

DISCUSSION:

How did it feel to be fed? Did you feel helpless? Did you feel like a baby? Was it messy?

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

People with central vision disabilities can see, but they don't see images clearly and they do not focus well. The world is seen as a fuzzy image. Some senior citizens get something called cataracts, which is a film that grows across the lens of the eye. Now a days cataracts can be removed easily with laser surgery, but some people who are visually impaired do not see clearly

SUPPLIES:

Eye charts, (You can make these by typing rows of letters that get progressively smaller – each row can be a different color.) wax paper, scissors, tape to hang up the charts, small pieces of glass or clear plastic sheets (report covers are good or plastic wrap rectangles), Vaseline

Hang the eye charts on the wall and have the girls stand about 5'-10' away from the chart. Ask each girl to read the letters in each line. Some girls will be able to see much further down the chart than others. Ask them to remember the color of the last line that they could read correctly. Now give each girl a piece of wax paper. Ask her to hold it over her eyes and try and read the eye chart up to the same line as before. Then take the small piece of glass or the clear plastic sheet and smear a light coating of Vaseline over it. Now ask the girls to read the eye chart. If you have time try this TUNNEL VISION activity. People with tunnel

vision see a narrow visual field and a small amount of accurate central vision. They have very little or no peripheral vision. Have the girls make binoculars with their hands and place them directly around their eyes. Talk about what they can and cannot see.

DISCUSSION:

Could you read the same way with the wax paper and the Vaseline sheet as you could with your normal vision? How did it feel not to be able to see the letters distinctly? What things might be difficult to do? Could you drive a car? Could you watch TV or a movie? How would lack of peripheral vision affect your everyday activities such as walking to school, crossing streets, playing games, etc.?

HEARING IMPAIRMENT

People who are hearing impaired often get frustrated because they cannot hear clearly. Surrounding noise often makes it even more difficult to hear.

SUPPLIES:

Cotton balls, garbage bag for used cotton balls, scarves.

Play telephone with the girls. (You can play twice if it goes fast). Talk about why the message gets garbled (some people have a hard time hearing a “whisper”).

Now give each girl a cotton ball to stick in the outer part of her ear and tie a scarf around her head to hold the cotton ball in place. Make sure they do not shove the cotton ball down into their ear canal (duh!?!). Play telephone again. The message should be very garbled at this point. Explain how some people with hearing impairments may have a hard time hearing especially if there is a lot of other noise happening around them. Next, have each girl put cotton in both ears and you speak in first a loud, then regular voice, then a soft whisper and see if they can understand. You can also have half the group talk to one another while the other group has to strain to hear you speaking.

DISCUSSION:

How did it feel to have your hearing impaired? Did you feel frustrated? What activities might be difficult if you were hearing impaired? Develop some helpful hints for working with someone with a hearing loss.

LEARNING DISABILITIES – WRITING

A learning disability occurs when a person has problems processing information in order to perform tasks which are generally related to learning. Sometimes a learning disability shows up in the way people write.

This activity will help girls understand how it feels to know how something should look, but somehow between the brain and the pencil, the information gets mixed up.

SUPPLIES:

Labels, pencils, paper, masking tape

Give each girl a sticker to put on her own forehead. Be careful to not get her hair caught in the adhesive. Now ask each girl to stand up and try and write her first and last name on the sticker. Some of the kids will have a hard time doing this since they will have the desire to write the letters backwards. Explain to the girls that this is what kids that have dyslexia deal with. Although they “see” OK, when they write or read sometimes the letters appear to be backwards. Give each girl a piece of paper and ask them to write their first and last name and the following sentence *The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog*. Then ask them to use their non-dominant hand (left if they are a righty, right if they are a lefty) . Ask them to write the sentence (or for the non-writers) their first and last name using the non-dominant hand. Now take a piece of tape and tape the thumb to the first finger of their dominant hand. Ask them to use the same piece of paper and try and write the sentence or their first and last names. What were the results? How did it compare to their normal writing? Ask them to try and button their shirt or zip their pants or tie their shoe or put their hair in a scrunchie, etc.

DISCUSSION:

Were these tasks difficult? Did you succeed at any of them? Which ones? Why or why not? Did you write as neatly as you normally write? Was it easier or more difficult? Can you imagine if the hand you write with was damaged and you had to use your other hand? What might be difficult? What would you have trouble doing? (Writing, cutting with a knife or scissors, tying your shoes, eating, etc.)

Learning Disabilities – Reading

Reading is a skill that is necessary for almost every task in school. When a person doesn’t read well, it’s very difficult to succeed in school no matter how bright or motivated the person may be. A reading disability is the most common type of learning disability. Try these activities to see how it would feel to have a reading disability.

Supplies:

A book, mirror

Hold a book up to a mirror and read it from the mirror. Hold a book upside down and try to read it.

DISCUSSION:

Did you have trouble reading? Did you use your fingers to keep your place? Do you know anyone with a problem like this? How could you help a person with this problem? What are some things a person with a reading problem could do well?

What are some problems that a person with a reading problem might encounter outside of school (reading the movie listing or the TV guide, reading a menu, etc?)

Ambulatory Difficulties

An ambulatory disability is a disability that affects the individual's ability to move around. It can be as simple as limited movement or as profound as no movement at all. Try these activities to give the girls some insight as to what problems an ambulatory disabled person might encounter

SUPPLIES:

Rulers or paint stirrers or slats of wood, masking tape, beans

Take 2 rulers and tape them on to the girl's leg by the knee so she cannot bend her knee. Ask her to walk, skip, run and sit down. Now give each girl a few beans and tell her to put them in her shoe. Put her shoes back on and ask the girls to walk, run, skip, etc.

DISCUSSION:

What was difficult about doing these things if you cannot move your leg?

What else might be difficult to do?

How did it feel to not be able to move freely?

What devices have you seen that help people get around? (Canes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs, braces)

Developmental Disabilities

A developmental disability occurs when there is a general slowing down in a person's thinking and learning abilities. Following directions may be difficult even for people with a mild developmental disability because they cannot learn as quickly or remember as much. This activity will simulate developmental disabilities by changing some of the everyday words to make it difficult.

SUPPLIES:

none

Stand in a circle and name 3 positions:

Hands in air = **Cat**

Hands on waist = **Dog**

Hands on thighs = **Fish**

Practice each motion and name a few times.

Then try:

Right hand on **Fish**

Hands on **Dog**

Left hand on **Cat** and right hand on **Fish**

Right hand on **Dog** and left hand on **Cat**

Now have the girls do the same thing without you doing the action. Then complicate it more by adding, “stand on one foot, feet together, feet apart, etc.”

DISCUSSION:

Did you succeed in the end? Did it take a long time? Was it confusing? How did they feel when they didn’t know what to do?

Visual Disability II

This activity will help the girls develop an awareness of the barriers that challenge people who have major sight limitations.

SUPPLIES:

Paper plates, plastic knives, jar of peanut butter, loaf of bread, jar of jelly, blind folds, paper towels for clean up and garbage bags for clean up.

Place the plates, knives, peanut butter and jelly (with the lids tightly screwed on) and a loaf of bread (tied) on a table. Blindfold the girls and tell them that they will need to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich blindfolded. Prior to letting them start (but after they have been blindfolded), quietly move the jar of peanut butter and the loaf of bread. (This is in effect the same thing that a person without a disability might do, unintentionally, when visiting the home of a person who is blind.)

DISCUSSION:

What were some of the problems encountered? How did you feel when you realized you could not spread the peanut butter in the way you wanted to spread the peanut butter? What might be done to make it easier for a blind person to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich? How did you feel when you realized that the peanut butter and bread were not in the places where you thought they were supposed to be?

Upper Limb Mobility

The girls will develop an understanding of the challenges that people with limited arm mobility or amputation might encounter.

SUPPLIES:

Paper plates, plastic knives, jar of peanut butter, loaf of bread, jar of jelly, blind folds, paper towels for clean up and garbage bags for clean up

Ask the girls to place their dominant hand and arm behind their back. Place the plates, knives, peanut butter and jelly (with the lids tightly screwed on) and a loaf of bread (tied) on a table. Ask the girls to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and cut the crusts off the bread.

DISCUSSION:

What were some of the problems encountered? How did you feel when you realized you could not spread the peanut butter in the way you wanted to spread the peanut butter? What might be done to make it easier to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for a person with only one hand and arm? What other tasks might be difficult for a person who has had an arm amputated?

Muscular Mobility Disability

This activity is designed to make people aware of the challenges faced by people who have a muscular mobility disability such as Muscular Dystrophy, Multiple Sclerosis, and Cerebral Palsy.

SUPPLIES:

Heavy Pairs of Socks (It is important that heavy winter type socks be used.) Small (Snack-Size) Box of Raisins and/or Several Pieces of Tightly Wrapped Candy.

Ask the girls to place two socks on each hand.

Instruct them to either remove ONE raisin at a time from the box and eat it or unwrap a piece of candy and eat it.

Variation

Select a volunteer who is wearing shoes with laces or a button down shirt. Ask the volunteer to place two socks on each hand. Instruct them to tie their shoes or button a shirt.

Discussion:

What were some of the problems encountered?

What was the most difficult part of trying to eat a raisin or a piece of candy?

What are some other tasks that would be difficult for you to do on a daily basis?

Muscular Mobility Disability

This activity is designed to make people aware of the challenges faced by people who have a muscular mobility disability such as Muscular Dystrophy, Multiple Sclerosis, Cerebral Palsy. Participants will develop an awareness of the barriers that challenge people who have a fairly severe muscular control limitation

SUPPLIES:

Ruler, Masking tape, String

Tape and/or tie the ruler between the girl's legs such that their legs are far apart from each other. Ask the girl to walk away from and then return to the group.

DISCUSSION:

Did you feel awkward as you walked?

What do you think people would say or do if you walked like this all the time?

What would be some other limitations or problems if you had to walk like this all the time?

Visual Disability: Blindness, glaucoma, other sight limitations

Participants will develop awareness of the barriers that challenge people who have major sight limitations

SUPPLIES:

Paper Bags, Miscellaneous Items such as spice jar, eraser, scrunchie, whistle, etc, (Select items that might require the use of different senses -smell, touch, hearing)

Blindfold

Prior to the program place approximately 15 small items in a paper bag.

Blindfold the girls and instruct them to identify the items in the paper bag using their senses. (i.e., feeling, smelling, listening)

Discussion:

What were some of the problems the blind person encountered?

What was the most difficult item for the blind person to identify?

In addition to listening, feeling, and smelling; how else might a person with sight impairment identify different items?

Spinal Cord Injury: Limitation of Use of Hands and Legs. (Quadriplegic)

Girls will develop an awareness of the barriers that challenge people who have little to no use of their upper body including arms and hands.

Supplies:

Computer with Word Processing Software, Tall Cup, Unsharpened Pencils, Tall Table, Large 3-ring Binder

Place the computer with the word processing software running on a table tall enough so that the participants do not have to bend their trunk in order to press keyboard buttons with a mouth stick. (NOTE: The keyboard should be tilted slightly forward. This can be accomplished by placing the keyboard on a

large 3-ring binder notebook.) Place a new pencil (mouth stick) in a tall cup with the eraser toward the bottom next to the computer. Ask the girl to sit in a chair close enough to the table such that they will be able to type their name with the mouth stick using only their head, neck, and mouth. (NOTE: They should not move their trunk.) Have them try to access the print menu using the mouse or function keys.

Discussion:

What was the most difficult part of typing your name?

What would it be like if you had to type a 10-page school report this way?

What might be done to make it easier to type?

Group Disability Challenge

It is best to do this activity after the girls have completed the round robin at the other stations.

SUPPLIES:

Bandanas, masking tape, cotton balls, plastic sheets, Vaseline

Divide the girls into teams with 5-6 girls per team. Assign each girl on the team a different disability.

1. Tape their thumb to their pointer finger on their dominate hand
2. Tell the girl she may only use her non-dominate hand – have her sit on her dominate hand
3. Blind fold one girl.
4. Put cotton balls in one girl's ears (hold in place with a bandana or scarf)
5. One girl cannot talk.
6. One girl must look through a plastic sheet covered with a thin layer of Vaseline.

If you need to assign 2 girls to the same disability, that's OK. Give each group a large pile of straws and scotch tape. Their task is to (as a group) try and build the tallest free standing structure that they can. The structure cannot be taped to the floor or the table and all girls must participate within the confines of their disability. Give them about 10 minutes. Give them a one minute warning. The group with the tallest structure wins. The purpose here is not to build the tower but for the girls to gain awareness as to how people with disabilities and challenges function within a group.

Discussion:

What was your disability? What could you not do during this task? Who lead the group? Did everyone participate equally? Why or why not? Were some people overlooked or their ideas disregarded because they could not communicate or complete a task? Did you get impatient with any of your group's participants?

Did you help each other? Did anybody help you when you didn't want them to help? Did you feel like an equal member of the group?