

## Overcoming Disabilities

Month: Apr.

Week #: 30

Day: b. Tues. Time: To be

# Simulation Game: 'Not Able To'

Life Tree Learning Systems ©

### Objectives/Aims

The students will: gain empathy for those with a disability; learn how to help a person with a disability.

### Materials

See 'Props.' under Group Activity

### Illustration

I wonder what it's like to be a person with a challenging disability, where I'm 'not able to' easily do the things I usually do?

### Background

The term 'disability' means: a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, for example, walking, seeing, thinking, speaking or hearing. People with disabilities are the nation's largest minority (54 million people), and the only minority group that any person can join at any time.



### Group Activity

1. Review what was learned the previous day.

2. Say, "Today we're going to play a simulation game called 'Not Able To.' During this game you're going to pretend to not be able to do something you usually do, something that you probably take for granted, like walking or talking or reading. To help you play your role you will have a prop, such as a blindfold, and there will be a rule that you will have to follow, like, 'Read all books upside-down.' If you already have a disability, you can either continue as 'yourself' or take on another disability. (Note: Students with 'invisible' disabilities/learning differences should not be forced to acknowledge their special need in front of others unless they wish to do so. However, they might want to share it with their friends in confidence so that they will understand the special needs.) If you choose not to have a disability, and usually we don't have that choice when it comes to a disability, then you will be one of the 'helpers.'

3. Explain each of the disabilities and what the students won't be able to do first. Then, either by arbitrarily selecting or by lottery, choose each student's disability. Explain that in real life they would not have a choice as to the disability that befalls them.

### Disability

- Blind

### Prop

blindfold or dark glasses

### Rule

No peeking

- Neuropathy of the hands (numbness or weakness)

oven mitts

Must leave oven mitts on at all times

### Group Activity (continued)

- Amputee with hand prothesis	ice tongs or tape fingers together	Can only use tongs in dominate hand
- Dyslexic	none	Must read all books upside-down
- Dysgraphia	none	Use only non-dominate hand for writing
- Deaf	ear plugs or ear muffs	Ear plugs may not be removed
- Mute	none	Can't talk
- Stutterer	none	Say each word three times each
- Paraplegic (legs paralyzed)	wheelchair	May not stand up or walk
- Club foot	shoes w/dif. sized heels or ankle weight	Shoes need to stay on at all times
- Speech impediment	paper tube end stapled shut	All talking must be done through tube
- Cataracts	glasses smeared with Vaseline or covered with cellophane tape	Glasses must be worn at all times
- Paralyzed leg	leg splint and/or crutch	Splint may not be removed; crutch must be used
- ADHD	egg timer	Every three minutes the student has to do something different

- Helper: Can only help disabled students when asked. Will not do things for them that they can do themselves.

#### 4. Other possible rules:

- The simulation game is only for the classroom. If a student leaves the classroom, they can leave their disability behind. (Explain this is not the case in real life.)
- The time limit for this simulation game is:\_\_\_\_\_
- Students are still expected to work hard and do their best job possible, whatever the task. All works accomplished will count for double since it required twice the effort.

### Group Discussion Questions (After designated time is over.)

1. How did it feel to be disabled?  
A: Answers ranging from frustrating to fun.
2. What were you not able to do? And conversely, what were you able to do?  
A: Answers will vary.
3. Do you think people with disabilities focus on what they're able to do as opposed to what they can't do? Why?  
A: They focus on what they can do otherwise they might get frustrated, feel sorry for themselves or even give up.

### **Group Discussion Questions (continued)**

4. Why might it be a good idea to tell your friends about an invisible disability?

A: So that they will understand the special needs associated with the disability and will be more helpful.

5. How did you want to be treated while you were a person with disabilities?

A: Respectfully, kindly with patience, etc.

6. Why did the helper only help when asked and then only did those things the person with disabilities couldn't do themselves?

A: Helping when not asked is being paternalistic. It's like treating someone like a baby. And you don't do something for someone else that they can do themselves because that can make them dependent on you and cause them to think they are not capable.

7. What do you admire about people with disabilities?

A: They are strong, courageous, persistent, etc.

### **Variations/Extensions**

1. To shorten the activity, or if you don't have enough props, the students can draw a disability out of a hat and then go to perform a specific task (e.g. go get a book off the shelf, write a letter).

2. Towards the end of the simulation take the students out to recess. This will give them another perspective on their disability in a movement intensive activity.

### **Conclusion**

Say, "Today you experienced what it is like to have a disability, if only for a short time. What we often take for granted, like walking, talking and the like, is often a daily struggle for a person with disabilities. Imagine, day after day after day it goes on, and the disability never goes away for your entire life... It takes real courage and fortitude to face these daily challenges and not let them get you down and depressed. People with disabilities deserve our admiration and not our sympathy. These are strong and courageous people."

Apr. 30 b. Tues.

## Overcoming Disabilities: Simulation Game: 'Not Able To'



**I wonder what it's like to be a person with a challenging disability,  
where I'm 'not able to' do the things I usually do?**