

DISABILITY AWARENESS FAIR IDEAS

SIMULATION IDEAS

BLIND -Blindfolded to feel braille, walk around space,

FINE MOTOR ISSUES - Put on rubber gloves and then try to tie shoes or button a shirt or put socks on their hands and have them try to pick up a dime.

SENSORY ISSUES - Try on gloves with scratch paper or stick a small piece of scratch paper on the inside of their clothing/ label tags.

ADD/ADHD - Listen to a story on headphones while at the same time having somebody ask them about their favorite school subject/food/movie to experience what kids with auditory-processing problems might face, etc.

DEAF/ HEARING - Put cotton balls in their ears and then listen to instructions at each station.

MOBILITY/ FLEXIBILITY ISSUES - Have participants try to pull a sticker off their back without raising their arms above their chests (e.g., loss of flexibility).

VISION PROBLEMS - Have participants put on non-prescription glasses covered with petroleum jelly and try to read a label on a pill or cough medicine bottle (e.g., blurred vision). For those participants with glasses, you can place plastic wrap over their glasses for a similar effect.

VISION PROBLEMS - Have children hold a large distorted magnifying lens and have them walk on a line of tape on the floor that is hard to see through the lens.

DYSLEXIA - Have participants try to read or draw by looking through a mirror, seeing what someone with dyslexia might see.

Display braces to use

Display adaptive technology to use

Display adaptive devices to use

Sit in a wheelchair, use crutches, etc.

Assistive dogs

Lower limb mobility: Tie a dowel or ruler to the back of the leg so that the leg could not bend. Try putting on trousers, shorts, socks, shoes etc. Walk upstairs. Join in a game which involves sitting on the floor and then getting up and running.

Upper Limb mobility: Put "dominant" arm into a sling or tie a dowel to arm so it can't bend or strap fingers together or Drink a glass of juice, make a sandwich. Tie a shoe lace.

Sight problems: Blindfold, or wear somebody else's glasses (for a short while only - to avoid eye strain) Put together a jigsaw puzzle. Draw a picture. Write your name.

Hearing problems: Wear a walkman or personal radio playing "buzz" (radio tuned between stations) or loud music. Have them join in a game which relies on hearing. Learn the manual alphabet.

WHAT TO DO AS A GROUP

Have the kids talk and write about it in class after trying it.

Have child go outside with their "disability" & put up a tent or some group activity (working in groups)

Find a game that everyone can play is a great way to see that disabled people can participate in many things!

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Disability Awareness Events - Disability Simulations

Things to Consider:

- A disability simulation is any activity designed to give participants a sense of what it is like to experience a disability. Common disability simulations include spending a day in a wheelchair, going into the community blindfolded, or playing sports with one arm tied behind your back. Participants are often joined by a partner who simulates providing supports.
- Increasingly, people are coming to realize that disability simulations rob people with disabilities of their dignity and self respect. While these activities are well-intended, they actually reinforce negative stereotypes about people with disabilities. Disability simulations evoke pity and mistaken impressions about having a disability.
- Disability simulations cannot give participants a real sense of what it is like to experience a disability. In fact, participants get a false sense of what it is like to have a disability. Participants are left with the impression that having a disability is a devastating life experience. Some participants simply choose to end the simulation when it becomes inconvenient, difficult, or uncomfortable.
- In a disability simulation, participants experience many of the barriers and challenges faced by people with disabilities without experiencing the benefits of adaptation and training, assistive technology, or human and animal assistance.
- Disability simulations can't possibly simulate the variety and range of coping skills developed by people with real disabilities. People with disabilities experience unique emotional, physical, and even spiritual responses as they adapt to life with a disability.
- Just as you can never really know what it is like to be a person of another race or gender, you can never know what it is like to have a disability until you have one.

Disability Simulation Dos and Don'ts:

If you do plan to conduct a disability simulation exercise, there are some important ethical considerations you should observe.

1. Do respect participant's right to refuse to participate in a disability simulation activity.
2. Do offer alternatives to disability simulation activities (next section).
3. Don't make a game of disability simulations.
4. Do carefully select disability simulation activities and environments.
5. Do allow participants to choose the type of disability simulation in which they will participate.
6. Do pair participants with a partner who can assist them if needed.
7. Do emphasize the physical, psychological, and societal barriers faced by participants in various settings, rather than the perceived limitations of the disability.
8. Do discuss the importance of adaptation to disability and accommodation strategies.
9. Do provide assistive technology and adaptive equipment.
10. Do supplement disability simulation activities with examples of people with disabilities successfully addressing barriers and challenges in real life situations.

For more information and ideas, visit:

www.disabilityisnatural.com

The Ragged Edge OnLine: www.ragged-edge-mag.com

The Association on Higher Education and Disability: www.ahead.org

Alternatives to Disability Simulations

There are many activities that can increase disability awareness without attempting to simulate the experience of having a disability. Consider the following alternatives to disability simulations.

- Invite people with disabilities to talk about their experiences. For example, people who have mobility impairments, including people who use wheelchairs, can talk about barriers in the community and the need for accessibility. People who are blind can talk about orientation and mobility skills and techniques. Someone who uses a communication device can demonstrate the importance of assistive technology.
- Discuss the ways in which people with disabilities are similar to and have similar experiences to other people.
- Read a book or watch a video about a person with a disability. Talk about how the person was portrayed in the book or video. Talk about the similarities and differences they demonstrate.
- Conduct an informal accessibility survey in the community. Identify and discuss architectural barriers such as steps, curbs, steep inclines, narrow aisles, heavy doors, etc. Identify accessible entrances, curb cuts, ramps, etc.

DISABILITY AWARENESS FAIR IDEAS

Visit local businesses and discuss accessibility with business owners. Make plans to meet with agencies that do formal ADA accessibility surveys.

- Survey accessible parking spaces in the community. Do the accessible spaces comply with ADA regulations?
- Visit local hotels or motels and ask to see accessible rooms. Do the rooms have accessible bathrooms including accessible sinks, roll-in showers and/or shower chairs? Are the rooms located on the ground floor or near an elevator? Does the hotel/motel provide vibrating or flashing alarm systems?
- Come up with your own ideas for alternatives to disability simulations.

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Here is a link to a news story about the fair held at a school:

<http://www.king5.com/news/learning-for-life/Children-learning-what-its-like-for-classmates-with-disabilities.html> or [*http://tinyurl.com/ykzqa4m](http://tinyurl.com/ykzqa4m)