

DISABILITY: WHAT DO I NEED FOR ACCESS?

By: Madeline L. Peters

INSTRUCTIONS

Day 1

Assign each student a type of disability from the categories listed below. Each student will eventually take note of their participation in regular routine activities for a day. For example, students will take note of their participation and actions at home, cooking dinner, going out to dinner, going to a friend's house, going to a movie, doing homework, using a restroom, etc.

Students are to research the characteristics of their assigned type of disability. Once they understand the characteristics of the disability, they are to participate in regular routine activities as a person with their assigned disability. Each student is responsible for analyzing **what they needed in order to participate in everyday routine activities**. At the end of the day students are to journal their thoughts and experiences and bring them to the next class meeting.

Day 2

Each student is to bring their journal to class. Place students in small groups based upon their type of disability. In other words, all students with the assigned sensory disability should be in one group and all students with a physical disability in another group, etc.

Have each group discuss the following questions:

1. What was it like to participate in this activity?
2. What did you need in order to participate in your regular daily routines? (Have students focus on what they needed and ask them to refrain from sharing what they weren't able to do—Examples: I needed my house to be accessible so I could get in it. I would need a ramp to get upstairs I would need wider doorways. My shower would have to be lowered. I would need my cabinets to be lower. I would need the film to be verbally descriptive. I would need a personal assistant etc.)
3. What were the similarities and differences in your experiences?

Large Group Report Out: Have a member from each group summarize their responses to questions 2 and 3 stated above.

After each group reports their experiences to the class ask the students:

1. What have you learned from participating in this activity and from listening to the experiences of others?
2. How will you use your new learning to be a better ally towards people with disabilities?

TYPES OF DISABILITIES

Sensory: Blind, Deaf, Visually Impaired or Hard of Hearing

Physical: Quadriplegia, Paraplegia, other types of mobility impairments

Psychological: Bi-Polar, Depression, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, ADD

Mental: Developmental Delay, Learning Disability, Autism, Asperger's Syndrome

Medical: Diabetes, Cystic Fibrosis, Epilepsy, Chronic Fatigue