Welcoming, Engaging and Supporting Volunteers with Diverse Abilities

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Lisa Drennan
MERGE – Diverse Abilities Inclusion Consulting

www.mergeconsulting.org
Welcome & Introductions
Inclusion Philosophies / 101
Disability Etiquette
Reviewing Inclusion Strategies
Group Work
Wrap Up / Q&A
Introducing Myself:

34 years experience supporting individuals with developmental disabilities to reach their enrichment and wellness goals.

Direct Support Staff

YMCA Director of Inclusion

Founder of MERGE Inclusion Consulting

MERGE Diverse Abilities Inclusion Consulting
WHERE ARE YOU AT?

1. Beginners
   Limited or no experience working with persons with diverse abilities.

2. Moderate
   Have had experience working with persons with diverse abilities but looking to expand and enhance your “tool kit”.

3. Experienced
   Many years working in the field supporting persons with diverse abilities and/or personal experience.
PAIR & SHARE DIRECTIONS

• PARTNER UP WITH SOMEONE NEAR YOU

• DISCUSS THIS QUESTION:
  What does successful inclusion in a volunteer setting mean to you?

• WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE A 3-6 WORD STATEMENT THAT ANSWERS THE QUESTION ABOVE

• WRITE YOUR STATEMENT ON ONE OF THE STICKY NOTES PROVIDED

• ADD YOUR STICKY NOTE TO THE WHITE BOARD

• BE PREPARED TO SHARE
### INCLUSION PHILOSOPHIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Commitment</th>
<th>Not Just Physical Proximity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Them Where They Are At</td>
<td>....Meaningful Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let’s Get To YES!</td>
<td>Always Working Toward Full Inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Right To Belong Welcomed-Engaged- Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inclusion is about intentionally planning for the success of all.
VOLUNTEERS WITH DIVERSE ABILITIES
# HIDDEN DISABILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Autism Spectrum Disorder</th>
<th>Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder</th>
<th>Sensory Processing Disorder (sensory avoiding or seeking)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor social and communication skills</td>
<td>Appears “fidgety” unable to focus</td>
<td>Oversensitive to things in their environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to pick up on basic social skills</td>
<td>Wanders</td>
<td>Common sounds may be painful or overwhelming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistent need to know schedules</td>
<td>Excessive amount of energy</td>
<td>Teasing to elicit loud noise from peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty Transitioning</td>
<td>Social skills affected by behaviors</td>
<td>Needing to squeeze things or be squeezed themselves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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DISABILITY ETIQUETTE

➢ Speak directly to a person with a disability, not to their companion, staff, aide, or family member.

➢ Be age appropriate when you speak with someone with a disability.

➢ Ask before you help a person with a disability.

➢ Avoid negative words that imply tragedy: afflicted with, suffers, victim, or unfortunate.

➢ Avoid cute euphemisms: being physically challenged, inconvenienced or differently abled.

➢ When communicating about a person, ask yourself if the disability is even relevant and needs to be mentioned when referring to individuals.

➢ Look past the disability get to know someone by asking questions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAY THIS........</th>
<th>INSTEAD OF THIS........</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persons with disabilities (diverse abilities)</td>
<td>The handicapped or disabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She has autism (or a diagnosis of....)</td>
<td>She’s Autistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He has a mental health condition/diagnosis</td>
<td>He is mentally ill/crazy, emotionally disturbed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children without disabilities or neurotypical</td>
<td>Normal or healthy kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person who uses a wheelchair</td>
<td>Confined to or wheelchair bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible parking</td>
<td>Handicapped parking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INCLUSION STRATEGIES

BENEFITING VOLUNTEERS WITH:

- Autism
- ADD/ADHD
- Sensory Processing Disorder
- Developmental Disabilities
- **ALL PARTICIPANTS**
INCLUSION PHILOSOPHIES

1) Facilitate Social Interactions

2) Flexible Thinking

3) Understanding Sensory Needs

4) Modifications
1) Facilitate Social Interactions

- Look past the disability or differences – get to know your Volunteers likes and interests
- Point out/model good social interactions “I like how you just helped your peer”
- Provide/encourage introductions of volunteers to others (volunteers, employees, customers)
2) Flexible Thinking

- Think outside the box – “this is the way we’ve always done it” doesn’t allow for flexibility

- Be less ridged with your response – think about the end result, how else can you get there?

- Offer choices to help volunteers feel more in control “would you rather _______ or _______?”
3) Understanding Sensory Needs

- Know your volunteers: for sensory avoiding or seeking with temperature, touch, noise, lights
- Be proactive: for example, give an option to avoid large groups
- Mood regulation: ask where they are at “Is it getting too loud for you?”
4) Modifications

- Can the time, location, duration be changed to accommodate someone’s needs?

- Can the way in which they participate be adjusted to make sure they are included?

- Focus on someone’s strengths – if good at organizing have them help with a task like that.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>#1 Visual Schedule</th>
<th>#2 Listed Expectations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#3 Transition Countdown</td>
<td>#4 Positive Language</td>
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</table>
**PREVENTATIVE STRATEGY #1**
**VISUAL SCHEDULES**

- Written and/or icons spell out what is coming next, cross off tasks when done

- Can be used for overall group schedule for the day or for an individual volunteer

- Being able to see the sequence of events helps volunteers to feel comfortable and in control of their day/time
SAMPLE WAYS TO MAKE A VISUAL SCHEDULE
PREVENTATIVE STRATEGY #2
LISTED EXPECTATIONS

- “Rules” of the organization/position/department, reviewed prior to starting & each time volunteering
- Use written text and/or icons as age appropriate, generally 5 expectations – frame in the positive
- Allow for processing time, have them repeat/read back to assure they received the info
**Expected:**

1. Hands and feet to yourself
2. Listen to swim instructors
3. Walking feet on pool deck

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**Camp Expectations**

- Hands and feet to yourself
- Use nice words
- Listen to your counselors
- Stay with your group

= Great Work!!!
PREVENTATIVE STRATEGY #3
TRANSITION COUNTDOWN

- A time monitoring strategy that gives volunteers a concrete visual of the passing of time
- Allows processing time to get ready for the next task
- Having volunteers involved helps them to learn to manage their time
Transition Countdown Example Tools

Remove a Lego as time counts down
## Preventative Strategy #4
### Positive Language

- Focuses on what we would like to see/occur, rather than pointing out the bad

- Opportunity to reinforce appropriate and expected interactions

- You are role modeling for others positive problem-solving techniques
Staff Challenge:
Use a Higher Ratio of Praise to Corrections

#POSITIVELANGUAGE
GROUP WORK DIRECTIONS

• THERE ARE 4 INCLUSION STRATEGIES STATIONS

• FOLLOW PRESENTERS DIRECTIONS FOR BREAKING INTO 4 GROUPS

• SAY HELLO TO YOUR GROUP MATES! YOUR GROUP LEADER WILL HAVE A DIRECTION PACKER FOR YOUR STATION

• FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS FOR YOUR STATION AND GO THROUGH THE EXERCISE WITH YOUR GROUP (DON’T FORGET YOUR BONUS QUESTION!)

• LEADER SHOULD SELECT SOMEONE TO REPORT OUT TO THE LARGER GROUP

LET’S PUT THIS ALL INTO ACTION

INCLUSION STATIONS
What Do You Think?
THANK YOU!
Stay In Touch

www.mergeconsulting.org | 781.724.1918 | lisadrennan@mergeconsulting.org