



## Disability Awareness

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*Challenging prejudice: Under 11*

### Identifying the problems:

There are many different forms of disability and these are often categorized as physical, which includes visual and hearing impairment as well as problems with mobility, and learning disabilities when people may need extra support for learning and social integration.

A disability becomes a handicap, when it limits a person's potential. Many people with disabilities can lead full and active lives, if they are provided with essential support. Scouting supports the development of all young people who are members of the Movement and this should include young people who have disabilities. It is also essential for the development of communities that young people recognise and respond to the needs of other members of the community who are less able. All members of the community have the right to play an active role. Developing empathy and awareness of the issue of disability is an important life skill for young people.

People may become disabled in a number of ways, sometimes it is congenital arising during pregnancy or when a baby is born, sometimes it is genetic and arises at various stages of a child's development, sometimes the disability is the result of infectious diseases, sometimes the result of a lack of key nutrients in a person's diet, sometimes the result of accidents or the effects of various causes of pollution in the environment.

Your project on disability should help young people to explore and respond to a specific need in your community. It is important to involve Cub Scouts in this part of the project using participative and dynamic methods. Here are some creative ways of exploring the subject of disabilities with Scouts up to 11 years old.

## Activity 1: Who are the Lucky Ones?

To introduce Cub Scouts to the need to provide support to people who have disabilities and to introduce the need to develop healthy lifestyles to reduce the risk of developing a disability, play the game 'Who are the lucky ones' - see Activity Treasure Chest. Suitable treats should be given e.g. small sweets and at the end of the game there should be a discussion on why some people received sweets and others did not.

Statements for 'Who are the lucky ones?' Cards: ([pdf format - click here](#))

## Activity 2: Community services

Undertake a survey to see what forms of disabilities are present in your community. You could do this by talking with health professionals or visiting places that are designed to support people with a specific disability e.g. limb replacement centres, schools for young people who are visually or hearing impaired etc.

## Activity 3: This is my life!

Ask someone who has a disability to come and talk to the Cub Scouts about their life, their disability (what it is, how it came about, how life is for them or how it has changed if the person has not always been disabled). The person talking to the Cub Scouts should be briefed that young people of this age have a lively curiosity and imagination so the questions may be very direct and not questions that adults would feel comfortable to ask.

## Developing awareness and empathy:

After actively participating in identifying the problem, Scouts need to be helped to develop their awareness of the issues.

Here are some activities which will help Cub Scouts to explore the issue of disability and develop skills and empathy. These activities use the Scout method of active participation and exploration. The project in the community should help the Cub Scouts use the skills that they have developed.

## Activity 1: It's a challenge

Simulate a disability and then ask the Cub Scouts to do an activity. This will help the Cubs to experience some of the challenges and frustrations that are experienced by people with handicaps. Care should be taken when choosing the disability and the activity, not to reinforce stereotypes or cause offence.

Some of the ways of simulating disability are to:

? Cover old spectacle frames in cellophane paper so that the Cub Scouts can see light and some shapes and then ask them to complete a jigsaw or distinguish certain objects e.g. coins of different values etc.

? Use tape to tape fingers together and ask them to make a sandwich or pour some water into a plastic cup.

? Have a silent activity - carry out some of the normal activities where the young people and leaders have to communicate without making any noise.

Afterwards, talk with the Cub Scouts about how it felt to work in this way and what support would be needed for people who have these limitations in their lives.

## Activity 2: I can do it!

Ask the Cub Scouts to undertake a task which is something that would be undertaken by a person with a disability, giving them the support that would be provided. E.g. ask them to draw or paint a picture using holding the pencils or paintbrushes in their mouths or their feet. The results could be displayed as part of your project.

Other activities could include:

? Learn the alphabet and some simple actions in sign language so that simple messages can be developed and understood.

? Make a talking newsletter to report the key activities in your Pack over the last few months.

## Activity 3: Supporting each other

Provide the young people in the Six with a range of temporary disabilities and then ask them to undertake a simple task. If they divide up the task and use the skills of each person the task should be possible. At the end talk about the need to work with others and use and develop each person's strengths, rather than focus on what cannot be done.

## Activity 4: Keeping safe

Many young people around the world are disabled because of accidents. These may occur at home, at school, at Scout events or when playing. There are many dangers for young people; particularly in the form of unexploded ordinance in countries where there is or has been recent conflict. But young people are curious so old buildings, building sites, forests, streams, beaches etc are places that young people will naturally want to explore and it is important that young people develop an awareness of danger so that they can reduce the risk of accidents.

Produce a map of your local community and explore the obvious and hidden dangers with the Cub Scouts. Ask them to think of accidents that they know have happened to use first hand information in making your plans. A local policeman or doctor could be invited to help you.

## Taking action:

Your project should make a difference in the community. Actions need to be developed which are appropriate to the community and are challenging and fun for the Scouts involved. Here are some projects which may be appropriate for Scouts to respond to the subject of disability in your community.

## Project 1: Disability in our community

After exploring the different types of disabilities that are present in your community, choose one group of people to link with and explain the purpose of the link is to help the Cub Scouts learn more about disabilities and take some action to support the group. It is important that this work is built up as a partnership over time and not undertaken as a one off activity.

## **Project 2: Scouting for all - breaking down barriers**

With your Cub Scouts undertake an audit of your building and the services that are provided to make sure that someone with a disability could join the pack. If you already have young people with disabilities look again at the support that is provided and improve on it if you can. Advertise that your pack is open to young people with disabilities and encourage one or more young people to join and provide the necessary support so that they can enjoy Cub Scouting. If you meet in a building that belongs to a school or faith community work with them on the project to introduce the necessary changes.

## **Project 3: Keeping safe**

Use the information provided in the activity 'Keeping Safe' to launch an information campaign to other young people aged 7-11.

### **Measuring change:**

The project is designed to help young people to develop their capabilities, attitudes and values to help provide for and integrate people with disabilities, and then apply these to a project in their community.

Scouts can make a difference in their communities and develop capabilities and empathies related to peace education. Two dimensions of change should be measured - change in the communities and change in the Scouts themselves. Measuring change should be built into the design of the project in a fun, participative way. Here are some activities which will help to measure change.

### **Activity 1: Who are the lucky ones?**

If you have played this game to introduce this topic to the Cub Scouts, play it again but as the Cub Scouts to write their own cards which respond to the situation that you have explored and the project that you have undertaken. This will help the young people to express themselves and their response to the project.

### **Activity 2: Hear my views!**

Play the game 'Just a minute!' with the Cub Scouts - see Activity Treasure Chest. Give each six a topic and ask them all to think about what should be included and then 1 Cub should speak for 1 minute on the topic.

The topics could be:

? My life as a 'hearing impaired' person.

? My life as a 'visually impaired' person.

? Cub Scouts can support people with disabilities by ...

? I keep safe by ...

? The dangers in our community are ...

## Activity 3: Our support in action

If your project has involved working with others in the community or recruiting young people with disabilities into Scouting, record a video or tape diary to hear their views of the project and their thoughts for the future. Involve the views of the Cub Scouts and leaders who were involved and share your results with others.

## Activity 4: My opinion

Play the game True/False (see Activity Treasure Chest) with statements that describe some dangerous situations and/or relate to stereotypes for people with disabilities to see how the understanding and attitude of the Cub Scouts has changed. The situations will need to be adapted to situations in your local community.

### Dangerous situations

? It's OK to play on the railway line as the trains are noisy so we hear them coming.

? The derelict building nearby is a great area for playing hide and seek.

? The river is not very wide here so it must be safe.

? Its OK to run over this old roof because it seems to be strong.

? There are not many cars on the road so it is safe to have bike races.

## Stereotypes

? I cannot hear well so I cannot play a musical instrument.

? I cannot walk without crutches so I cannot be an athlete.

? I have only sight in one eye so I cannot draw well.

? I have a stutter so I will never be able to speak to a large group.

? I cannot see well so it is obvious to look at me that I have a disability.

? Dogs can only be trained to help people who cannot see well.

## Disabilities

? I do not know anyone who has a disability.

? People with disabilities cannot do all the things that other people do?

? I can make a difference to the lives of people with disabilities.

**Case study:** Kuwait - disability awareness and community action.

The Kuwait Boy Scouts Association recognises the need to help its members understand that people in other parts of the world are less fortunate than many of the young people in Kuwait. They used their Gifts for Peace centennial project to increase their activities in the areas of community service and development, particularly for other countries in the Arab Region. The projects included inviting Scouts and leaders from other countries to Kuwait for camps, supporting Scouting in south Sudan through the distribution of clothes, tents and other Scout materials. A key aspect of the project was the provision of educational books, health promotion and a project to collect and distribute spectacles to countries where these are not widely available or affordable to many people.



*Collecting spectacles for people with poor sight was part of their project.*