

Inclusive group games



These activities introduce your group or class to inclusion through fun games that explore exclusion, non-verbal communication, and making every day games inclusive. The games can be used for a range of badges and curriculum areas. Your group will gain a better understanding of disability and how to include everyone through inclusive activities and games. We have divided the games into three categories: Non-verbal communication games, adapted inclusive games and understanding exclusion games.

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Non-verbal communication games

These games encourage young people to think about how communication is so much more than words and begin to understand how people who's disability affects the way they communicate might use a variety of tools to communicate.

Invisible Clay

Players 'mould' invisible clay and the other players guess what the object is.

This game introduces non-verbal communication such^[L]_[SEP]as gestures and facial expression^[L]_[SEP]for people who are unable to communicate through spoken language.

Participants will understand that communication is about much more than words.

Activity Instructions

- Sit your group in a circle and explain that you have an 'invisible' lump of clay.
- Hand one player the invisible lump of clay and ask them to silently and quickly mould the clay into an object. Then, using facial expression, gestures, and body language only, silently act out how to use the object.
- The rest of the group can put their hands up when they think they know what the object is.
- Once guessed, the person with the clay passes it to the next player in the circle. The next player takes the invisible clay and sculpts a new object. The activity continues around the circle. ^[L]_[SEP]
- Encourage players to make increasingly unusual objects after the obvious ideas have been used up. ^[L]_[SEP]
- Let your players experiment with the game to see what they come up with. This game is great for developing the communication skills of body language and gestures.

Afterwards talk about non-verbal communication

- Were they surprised that they were able to work out what the object was with no speaking?
- What were the challenges for those moulding and acting out?
- What did everyone think were the most useful non-verbal ways to communicate?
- How this could be used when communicating with someone who could not speak?

Emoji Charades

A non-verbal game where players will learn about the importance of non-verbal communication, such as gestures and facial expressions, for people who are unable to communicate through spoken language. Participants will understand that communication is about much more than speaking.

Activity Instructions

- Divide your group into two teams.
- Ask the teams to write or draw emotions and actions onto pieces of paper (waving, walking a dog, eating dinner) on pieces of paper (or you could print out emojis in advance for this)
- The teams swap pieces of paper and take turns to act out, without talking, one of the emotions or actions for their team to guess (like charades)
- The team to guess the most emotions or actions wins.

Afterwards talk about how easy or hard some of the cards were to act out. Hopefully they found it quite easy to act out some emotions and can reflect on the importance of non-verbal communication such as facial expressions, gestures and actions for people who struggle to communicate verbally. You could also talk about practical applications and if the children have ever used emoji cards or images to say how they feel.

Silent Line-ups

This activity helps the group to understand that they can communicate with each other without speaking. The group will work out how to line up cooperatively using gestures, facial expressions, nods, etc.

Activity Instructions

- The young people are told they need to get in to a straight line according to a specific factor without talking to each other throughout the game. Some examples might be:
 - Height
 - Hair colour (lightest to darkest)
 - Age order
 - Alphabetically based on the first letter of their name
- The young people should use non-verbal communication skills to achieve this. For example, hand gestures and miming.

Afterwards talk about how easy or hard they found the game. Ask them how they adapted the way they communicated so that they could achieve the desired outcome? What are some other ways that you might communicate with a person who is not able to speak?

Adapted Inclusive Games

These games take ideas and activities that the children are familiar with but put a twist on them to help them understand how people have different needs that should be accommodated so everyone can enjoy the game.

Balloon Volleyball

This game helps the young people to understand how it might feel to be excluded and how to adapt an activity to ensure it is inclusive.

Activity Instructions

Balloon volleyball follows the same rules as regular volleyball.

- Set up a net using string or rope across the middle of the room, at above head height.
- Split the group into two teams and position them either side of the net. Choose a few players who must sit on the floor for the duration of the game. They must not move from the spot they are in.
- Choose a few players who must sit on chairs throughout the game and the chair must not move. All other players can be standing and move around.
- Now begin the game of volleyball. Play a few rounds and then swap players into different positions.
- You can make the game more challenging by draping a sheet over the rope so the other team can't see the balloon coming.

Once the young people have played a few rounds, gather the teams together and ask them to think about the following questions:

- Did they feel like they were equally involved in the game when they were sat on the chair or on the floor?
- Did they find it frustrating when they were in different positions?
- Was it more challenging when they couldn't see the ball coming?
- Did they try to include everyone in the team?

Now ask the group to think of a way they could try to make the game more inclusive for those on the floor and chairs. For example, each time the ball comes to your team at least one person standing, one on a chair and one on the floor must touch the ball before it goes back over the net.

What's Going On?

This game helps young people understand how they can support others to be included in a game.

Activity Instructions

- Come up with a game that your young people have not played before. This could be a sporty game, card game or a word game, for example.
- Chose a few young people to wait outside the room or so they are out of earshot.
- Explain the rules of the game to the rest of the group and ensure that they understand the rules.
- The other young people are asked to re-join the group but are not told the rules of the game.
- All the young people should try playing this game. Those that did not hear the rules may find that they are trying to work out the rules as they go along, or are breaking the rules.
- After the game is over, explain that some people may struggle to remember or understand all the rules of a game. For example, a young person with autism may struggle with verbal communication, or a young person with a learning disability may find it difficult to remember a long list of rules or instructions.

Reflect as a group on the following questions:

- What did it feel like to not understand the rules?
- Was it confusing to find out the rules as you went through?
- Did those who knew the rules want to tell those that didn't?
- What other ways could rules or instructions be given when explaining an activity or game
- How could you support another young person who does not seem to understand the rules?

Reverse Musical Chairs

A game of musical chairs where the group has to find a way to include everyone when the music stops. With each new round, the group will be challenged to work even harder to find ways to be inclusive.

Activity Instructions

- You will need a chair for everyone in the group
- Begin with a classic game of musical chairs
- Place chairs in a circle with one fewer chair than there are young people.
- Play music and have the group walk around the chairs.
- Tell the group that when the music stops, they must quickly find a seat.
- Once they have done this and one person has nowhere to sit, tell the group to find a way for everyone to have a seat. They can sit on each other's laps, sit next to someone else on the same seat, or line the chairs up so that more people fit.
- Do a few more rounds, removing a chair each time. Each time the group has to find a way to accommodate someone who would normally be excluded in a traditional game of musical chairs.

Afterwards, ask the group what they liked about the game. Ask them how it feels to be excluded from a game and why might a disabled person be excluded. Ask them to think about other games that traditionally exclude people, which could be adapted to include people.

Understanding Exclusion Games

Tight Hands Game

This is a game where players hold hands in order to exclude others. Your group will experience inclusion and exclusion and will reflect on how it feels.

Activity Instructions

- Begin by explaining that the group will act as if it is excluding someone. Have your group hold hands in a circle.
- One volunteer, the outsider, tries to get into the circle through spaces between people, while everyone else tries to keep him or her out. Remind the group to be gentle when blocking the outsider. [L] [SEP]
- When the outsider gets into the circle, stop the game and ask for another volunteer.
- As a variation you can have two or three outsiders at one time. [L] [SEP]

After playing several rounds, ask:

- What did it feel like to be an outsider? [L] [SEP]
- Did anyone want to let the outsiders inside the circle? [L] [SEP]
- Did you let them slip in? [L] [SEP] Why or why not? [L] [SEP]
- Why is it important to try to include everyone? [L] [SEP]
- How do you think it would feel to be left out just because you are disabled?

The Exclusion Sticker Game

This is a game of forming groups based on one similarity. This activity helps the group to understand the feelings of people who are regularly excluded (e.g. disabled people)

Materials

Enough coloured stickers or different coloured post-its (small) for each player. There should be 3-6 different colours.

Activity Instructions

This activity has 2 stages:

Stage 1: Inclusion

- Ask the players to form a circle and face the outside of the circle (inside or outside).
- Ask the players to close their eyes and tell them that you will put a coloured sticker on their foreheads. Players will see the colour of the others' stickers but not their own.
- Ask the players to walk around for 30 to 60 seconds. Tell the players to group themselves with people with the same colour sticker. They must do this without speaking. Make sure every person is included in a group (but groups can vary in size).
- Once the groups are formed, start a new game by putting a new sticker on everyone's forehead. This time ask the players to form groups where everyone has a different coloured sticker. Again, make sure every person is part of a group.

Stage 2: Exclusion

- Repeat the game a third time, placing new stickers on the players' foreheads.
- This time, distribute the stickers in order to form 2 or 3 groups of around the same size and 1 group of only one child (i.e. one person is excluded from the groups).

Observe the different reactions and ask the following questions:

- How did you feel when you found a group of people you could join?
- How did you feel when you couldn't find a group to join right away? Were you afraid that there was no group for you?
- (To the person who was excluded in Stage 2 of the game) How did you feel when every group rejected you?
- Have you ever had similar experiences at school, at an after school group, or with your friends?
- How do you think you would feel if you were excluded because you are disabled?