

Adaptations for individuals with a disability



Adaptations are for everyone

Being able to modify and adapt games and activities for every individual is important to create an environment that fosters success and creates challenge. While this is true for every learner, often we only consider making modifications and adaptations to games and activities when our groups include someone with a disability.

Disability spectrum

Like most things, an individual's disability will fall on a wide spectrum of abilities and nuances specific to that person. As such, it is impossible to understand what adaptation may be needed in an activity without knowledge of the person or the context of the learning. However, there are general principles and guiding questions that we can ask ourselves when trying to include someone with a disability in our sessions.

What can you/they do?

The first question to ask yourself, the learner and the others that know the learner (parents/guardians, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, etc.) is 'what can you/they do?' By asking this question we start to comprehend the learners' abilities and understand the platform that we can build on in terms of movement. Often we are told that a person cannot do this or that,

whereas knowing what they can do gives us a place to start.

Let's try!

When initially searching for strategies that work for the individual, it can take a lot of trial and error. An idea may be constructed with the best intent, but in actuality it does not have the outcome that was intended. This is okay and is a great learning for both you and the individual. Keep trying new things and discussing them with the learner to find what is practical and successful. If a discussion with the learner is not feasible, look to see if the learner is being successful with the purpose of the given task. If yes, then you can keep the modification or adaptation. If success is diminishing or is not present, it may be time to try something new.

Rules and equipment

Another aspect to take in to account is the rules and equipment being used. For example, if you have a participant who uses a manual wheelchair in your basketball unit, the rules for wheelchair basketball are different than regular basketball. Equipment may also need to be modified to create opportunities for success for the individual. For example, if you have a learner with a visual impairment you may need to create or purchase a

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ball that contains lights or a bell.

There is no right or wrong

There are no right or wrong answers when trying to create an inclusive environment. It can take time, mistakes and many opportunities to practice to feel like you have some strategies. The important thing is to try!