

ABILITIES DIGEST

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Upcoming Events

Disabilities Awareness Staff Opportunities at the 2017 National Jamboree

The 2017 National Scout Jamboree is just around the corner --- under 18 months until it starts! The disAbilities Awareness Challenge (dAC) will once again be a highlight activity at the 2017 Jamboree. At this writing we have a staff of 18, and are approved for up to 75 staff members. We encourage you to sign up to staff this activity for either the whole Jamboree (15-29 July 2017) or for half the Jamboree – 15-22 July or 22-29 July). If you know of other Scouters who care about disAbilities Awareness, please invite them to sign up for our team! The dAC Summit location is immediately adjacent to most of the popular high adventure activities at Action Point in the Summit Center.



At the last Jamboree, dAC was busy whenever it was open and there was often a waiting line of eager participants. This year dAC will be better than ever and we expect to surpass previous attendance levels. In addition to the 20 unique interactive activities within the dAC, there will be a staff opportunity to work Disabilities Access Services, which assists participants who have been identified as having disabilities in accessing and scheduling their individual Jamboree program. We also will have the “Invisible disabilities” activity, which will enable participants to experience the Autism Spectrum, as well as ADHD. Our goal is to impart a solid first-hand experience in what it’s like for a person who has a disability to perform specific tasks, sports or activi-

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ties. You are encouraged to review the description of the individual activities and (in most cases) observe the pictures of that activity from the 2010 dAC. See the PowerPoint on scouting.org's Disabilities Awareness page.

Philmont Training This Summer: Serving More Scouts with Disabilities

This summer the Philmont Training Center is offering a session entitled “Serving More Scouts with Disabilities in Your Local Council” during Week 10, August 7-13.

Come learn effective ways to support parents and unit leaders who work with Scouts with disabilities. It’s worth the effort! Facilitators will include members of the National Disabilities Awareness Task Force. This upcoming conference will address building or strengthening council and district disabilities awareness committees that can support training, program resources, and advancement issues, and also provide general support for units serving Scouts with disabilities. Increasing membership and organizing new Scouts with special needs units will be emphasized during the course. Both volunteers and professional Scouters will benefit from the course, and are welcomed to attend.



All participants will come away better equipped to deal with the many questions and situations involved in working with Scouts who have special needs, and to provide support and education for Scouts, families, leaders, and council staff in delivering a quality Scouting experience.

Abilities Training

Three New Disabilities Training Presentations

The National Disabilities Awareness Task Force has published three new training presentations:

- Inclusion - The Key to Disabilities Awareness
- Camping Considerations for Scouts with Disabilities
- Program & Planning Strategies for Working with Scouts with Disabilities



All three educational presentations are available at scouting.org/disabilitiesawareness.aspx. The next three articles provide overviews of these presentations.

Inclusion - The Key to Disabilities Awareness

This new presentation provides leaders and parents with an introduction to inclusion. The objective is to encourage positive, inclusive experiences for all youth in Scouting, especially those with different abilities and challenges. This presentation will look at the importance of inclusion and how it correlates with the Scout Law and Oath. Leaders will understand the differences between mainstreaming and inclusion, its benefits to all members, commitment at every level of Scouting, and what path to take in developing an inclusive program.

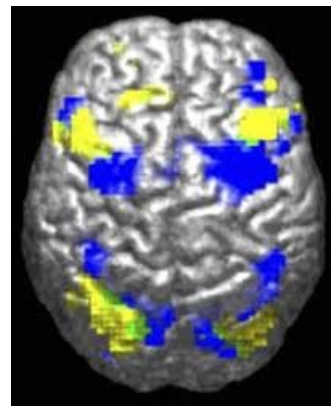


Camping Considerations for Scouts with Disabilities

This new presentation provides leaders, parents, and Scouts with key planning and logistical considerations prior to and during camping trips in order to create a positive outdoor adventure for all Scouts. This presentation can be lengthened to 90 minutes depending on participant activity and the use of the handouts.

Handouts for this presentation offer resources to improve leader knowledge and to better address potential behavioral issues or special needs. These include the following:

- “Know Your Scout” form collects information about a Scout’s individual needs and behaviors to use when preparing troop meetings and events.
- “Special Event Care Plan” collects specific information for supporting a Scout’s participation in an event, particularly if the Scout needs special transportation or other considerations.
- “Accessible Facilities” checklist helps adult leaders review accessibility for Scouts with disabilities.
- “Accommodations for Scouts” suggests when it might be appropriate to make accommodations with respect to timing, scheduling, setting, presentation, and response to ensure success for all participants.
- “Tantrum vs. Meltdown” table helps leaders distinguish between conscious behavior and loss of control.
- “Calming Strategies for Sensory Issues” offers simple ways to help participants calm themselves when the sensory environment starts to give them trouble.



The handouts for this presentation are identical to the handouts provided for the *Program & Planning Strategies for Working with Scouts with Disabilities* presentation.

Program & Planning Strategies for Working with Scouts with Disabilities

This new presentation provides leaders and parents the tools for successful meetings and events in Scouting.



These tools and resources will help with planning Scout meetings, camp-outs, large Scout events, small group events, and program accessibility for each individual Scout.

This presentation can be lengthened to 90 minutes depending on participant activity and the use of the handouts. Handouts for this presentation offer resources for; information gathering, improved communication, calming strategies, facilities accessibility for people with disabilities, providing accommodations, and understanding the difference between a meltdown and a tantrum. The handouts for this presentation are identical to the handouts provided for the *Camping Considerations for Scouts with Disabilities* presentation.

Enhancing Awareness

Disability Etiquette: Person-First and Identity-First Language

The first requirement in the current Disabilities Awareness merit badge is to discuss “proper disability etiquette and person-first language.” Unfortunately, person-first language isn’t always preferred.

Both the phrasing of the requirement and the *Disabilities Awareness* pamphlet suggest that proper etiquette requires person-first language. In person-first language we speak of “people with autism” instead of “autistic people.” The phrase “Bob, who has autism,” emphasizes Bob as a person, independent of his diagnosis. The intent is to reduce the stigma associated with disabilities or special needs and show respect for the individual.

The National Association of the Deaf, however, discourages person-first language. The Deaf community sees deafness as a property of their culture and not as a disability. Members of the Deaf community consider themselves “deaf people” and not “people who are deaf.” This is often called “identity-first language.”



A Peek Ahead

Topics Planned for Future Issues:

Enhancing Awareness: American Sign Language Interpreter Strip

Adapting Advancement: Updated Disabilities Awareness Merit Badge – Teaching it to All Scouts.

And the Survey Says: Results from the 2015 Random Survey

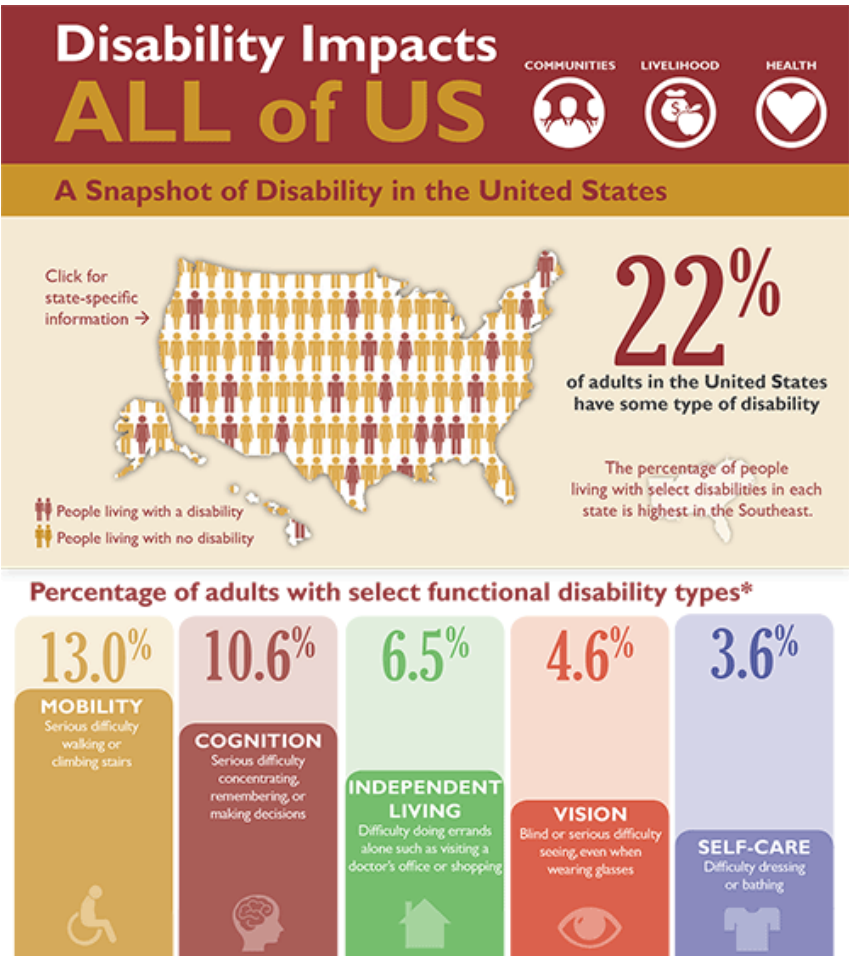
Professional Corner: Organizing a Scouts with Special Needs Unit

Commentators within the autism community have made similar recommendations. A place on the autism spectrum reflects a significant character trait. Terms like “autistic” or “Aspie” (short for Asberger’s syndrome) could sound like taunts, but some use these words as a badge of distinction. Visit the Autism and Scouting web site for an additional discussion of this topic (www.AutismandScouting.org).

When in doubt, use person-first language. While some individuals and communities don’t prefer it, most people will accept it as a show of respect. If members of the community use a different form of language, follow their lead.

In all cases, it is important to respect privacy, especially regarding “invisible” traits like autism and cognitive disabilities. It is wrong to call attention to such traits, especially if you learn of them in confidence. Respect Scouts and Scouters as people and let them show you how they wish to define themselves.

National Survey Finds Disabilities in One in Five Adults



Last summer, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published the first results of improved data gathering on disabilities. The data tracks the prevalence of five types of disabilities: vision, cognition, mobility, self-care, and independent living. The data showed that over 53 million adults reported having some type of disability, representing 22% of the population. The left-hand figure summarizes the statistics (courtesy of the CDC).

According to the CDC, “although disability information has been collected in national surveys for many years, this is the first time functional disability type is included in a state-based health survey. This new information can help researchers and public health professionals better understand the

makeup of adults with disabilities at a state level, and therefore, better plan programs to address the needs of the different disability populations.”

National surveys indicate that approximately 15% of the youth we serve have a disability. The CDC statistics don't include Scouting-age youth, but they find a similar rate (15.8%) of disabilities among younger adults (aged 18-44) nationwide. While mobility disabilities are most common overall, cognitive disabilities are most prevalent among younger adults, impacting 10% of the population. In order to serve our communities, units, districts, and councils, one must develop plans and strategies to support both youth and adult leaders with disabilities.

Helpful Links

Here are links to current materials to aid volunteers and Scouts with disabilities:

Official Materials Posted on Scouting.org

Scouting with Disabilities landing page: www.scouting.org/disabilitiesawareness.aspx

A wealth of material is found on this page, including the new Scouting with Disabilities training presentations.

Other Web Resources

Working With Scouts With disAbilities: www.wswsd.org/

Autism Empowerment website: www.AutismEmpowerment.org

Autism and Scouting Website - www.AutismandScouting.org

Children with Special Needs - www.childrenwithspecialneeds.com/disability-info/

Kids with Special Needs - kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/friend/special_needs.html

Special Child: For Parents of Children with Disabilities - specialchild.com/index.html

Social Media



Twitter: @AbilitiesDigest

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Abilities-Digest/824105334298165>



About *Abilities Digest*

Abilities Digest is the official e-letter of the Boy Scouts of America National Disabilities Awareness Committee. Its intent is to help expand membership through helping parents and Scouting volunteers to improve their understanding, knowledge, and skills related to including and serving the special needs population. Therefore, districts and councils may reprint articles from this publication. Our plan is to distribute four issues of *Abilities Digest* annually, but special editions may go out whenever there is important information to share. Feedback, suggestions, and letters to the editor are welcome at disabilities.awareness@scouting.org.