

HANDBOOK D DAYS



ENHANCING INCLUSIVITY FOR YOUTHS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS THROUGH MULTIDISCIPLINARY INTEGRATION APPROACH

ERASMUS+ KA220-YOU - Cooperation Partnerships in Youth

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HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

The Project **D DAYS: Enhancing Inclusivity for Youths with Special Needs through Multidisciplinary Integration approach**, under the Erasmus+ programme, was born from a shared commitment among partners from Portugal, Greece, North Macedonia, and Croatia to make inclusion a tangible reality for young people with disabilities. D DAYS seeks to promote social inclusion by combining creativity, education, and cooperation in a way that empowers both young people and their communities, while fostering long-term and sustainable change.

At its core, D DAYS promotes inclusion through a multidisciplinary programme built around **Dance, Drama, Art, Yoga, and Sports**. These five interconnected fields form the foundation of a holistic approach that supports physical, emotional, and social development. Through inclusive clubs established in each partner country, young people with disabilities take part in meaningful, creative, and collaborative experiences alongside their peers from secondary schools, guided by trained teachers and youth workers.

Beyond the direct activities, the project aims to create lasting impact by strengthening local capacities, shaping inclusive practices in schools, and influencing community mindsets. By training educators, developing adaptive teaching materials, and building networks between NGOs, schools, and local authorities, D DAYS lays the groundwork for more inclusive local policies and sustainable social transformation.

Aligned with the **EU Disability Rights Strategy 2021–2030**, the **EU Youth Strategy**, and the **Sustainable Development Goals**, the project contributes to a more inclusive, healthy, and cohesive Europe. Through transnational cooperation, the four participating countries exchange expertise, share cultural perspectives, and co-create innovative approaches that go beyond what any one of them could achieve alone.

This handbook reflects that shared journey. It was designed as both a **resource and a collaborative tool** for educators, youth workers, and creative professionals. This handbook is divided into five activity chapters — Dance, Drama, Art, Yoga, and Sports. Within each section, readers will find:

- **General Description & Pedagogical Approach**, presenting the educational and artistic principles that guide inclusive practice in each field;
- **Methodology and Rationale**, explaining how specific teaching strategies and techniques support young people with disabilities;
- a set of **Practical Activities with Students**, offering four complete and ready-to-use 45-minute sessions that teachers can directly implement.

Together, these contributions showcase the creativity, professionalism, and commitment of the D DAYS partnership. They illustrate how inclusion can flourish through movement, art, and collaboration — and how, by working together, we can make Europe a place where every young person feels seen, valued, and empowered to grow.

CHAPTER

01.

DANCE ACTIVITIES FOR AN
INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES

GENERAL DESCRIPTION & PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

This handbook is built on the core belief that dance is not merely an artistic endeavour, but a fundamental human language and a profoundly effective tool for education, therapeutic growth, and genuine inclusion.

Unique Benefits of Dance for Young People with Disabilities

Dance provides a comprehensive platform for development that few other activities can match, engaging multiple neurological and physiological systems simultaneously. The unique benefits of a structured, creative movement curriculum are outlined below:

1. Physical Development and Body-Mind Connection

Dance offers immediate, experiential feedback, which is crucial for students navigating sensory processing differences or motor challenges.

2. Cognitive Skills and Neural Plasticity

Movement is inextricably linked to cognition. By integrating movement with everyday life activities and emotion, we enhance the brain's ability to process and retain information.

3. Emotional Expression and Regulation

The body is a profound communicator of emotion. Dance provides a safe, non-judgmental outlet for emotional processing.

4. Social Interaction and Inclusive Community

The collaborative nature of a dance class naturally encourages positive social skill development.

Core Principles and Values

This handbook is guided by the following principles, ensuring every session is student-centred, and deeply respectful of individual differences:

1. **Person-Centred Adaptation:** We focus on the young people's **ability**. Sessions are designed to be fluid, allowing teachers to quickly modify their class plan to ensure that every young people, regardless of their current functional level, feels happy and engaged.
2. **Strength-Based Focus:** The focus is to highlight and utilise the young people's existing strengths. Success is framed in terms of effort, discovery, and joy.
3. **Predictability and Structure:** Clear, repeatable routines (e.g., the same starting ritual, cool-down, and transitions) are used to create a safe, predictable environment, which reduces anxiety and enhances cognitive focus.
4. **Sensory Integration Awareness:** We maintain constant awareness of the sensory environment (lighting, volume, textures, crowdedness) and offer young people safe choices and modifications to support their sensory needs and regulation.
5. **Cultivating Inclusion, Teamwork, and Belonging:** We actively foster a climate of mutual respect and social reciprocity. Every session integrates explicit cooperative movement activities (**Teamwork**) and shared experiences to ensure each young person feels a vital sense of connection and ownership (**Belonging**) within our diverse and welcoming (**Inclusion**) movement community.

DANCE ACTIVITIES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Session Structure and Adaptability

The **structure of every class is always the same**. This consistent flow creates a safe, predictable environment, which is vital for reducing anxiety and enhancing cognitive focus. Conversely, the **material** (the content, movement vocabulary, and pace) must be entirely **adaptive and fluid** to meet the diverse needs discovered in each session.

The Discovery Class & The Three Plans

The **very first class** with a new group is your **Discovery Phase**. During this first session, at the warm-up, your primary goal is to assess the young people's capabilities and what is possible to do. To ensure success, you'll have to adapt in real-time, so always arrive prepared with three distinct plans:

1. Plan One (Core Choreography):

This is your main goal—the core movement sequence you've built for the class.

2. Plan Two (Group and Travel Dynamics):

travelling movements that require less individual precision but promote social interaction and movement across the floor.

3. Plan Three (Everyday Movement Story):

If Plan One and Plan Two won't work, switch to this plan. It uses real-life, relatable actions that are easier to recall and link.

Standard Class Flow (Applies to Every Session)

Every class session should follow this sequence to maintain predictability and consistency:

1. Welcome and Presentation

(3 to 5 minutes)

- **Gathering and Connection:** Immediately start by gathering the young people into a **circle**, which is the most inclusive shape. **The teacher must be part of the circle** and on the same level as the young people. If possible, encourage them to hold hands. If holding hands is not possible due to sensory or behavioural needs, ensure your body language and proximity still convey that **you are with them and not apart**.
- **Introductions & Set the Tone:** Greet young people with warmth. Say your name clearly. Encourage them to say their names: actively encourage them to interact both with you and with each other; this early social data can be utilised in later classes to continue building social interactions.
- **Establish Expectations:** Let them know what is going to happen: **“We are dancing together today!”** If you think it is important, briefly outline the three main parts: warm-up, learning our sequence, and a cool-down.

2. Warm up

(Duration is Adaptive, typically 10 to 15 minutes)

- **Fun and Relaxed:** Keep the energy positive and low-pressure. Use music that is uplifting and with a clear rhythm.
- **The Decision Point & Movement Audit:** This phase is where you execute your **Movement Audit** (checking young people's abilities in coordination, spatial awareness, stamina, and attention). **Crucially, this is the moment you decide which of the three prepared plans you will follow for the rest of the class.** This warm-up should take **as long as you need**—remember that you are not only evaluating and deciding, but you are also actively **building and practising the foundational movements** required for your chosen plan.

3. Teaching the Core Movements

(15 to 20 minutes)

- **Make It Fun & Relatable:** This is a joyful time for discovery! Keep the energy light and engaging. The movement taught can always be a **mixture of abstract dance movement and relatable, everyday life actions** to maintain interest and cognitive grounding.
- **Isolate and Conquer:** Teach **one movement at a time**. Keep instructions verbal and visual, modelling clearly.
- **Repeat and Internalize:** Use structured repetition. Repeat the movement until the majority of young people show comfort and retention. Use verbal cues, counting, and musical beats consistently (e.g., "Step, clap, step, clap!").
- **The Next Step:** Once Movement One is solid, introduce Movement Two and repeat the process.

4. Putting the Sequence Together

(15 to 20 minutes)

- **Chunking the Choreography:** Start small. Link **Movement One and Movement Two**. **Repeat and repeat** the sequence until it flows.
- **Additive Learning:** Only once the first chunk is secure, **add Movement Three**. Repeat the entire sequence (Movement One, Two and Three). This additive approach prevents frustration and builds confidence.
- **Pace Yourself & Prioritize Joy: Be relaxed!** The goal is successful participation, not perfection. Do not try to fit everything into one class. **Keep the session fun and engaging;** this relaxed, gradual approach will lead to better results, retention, and overall enjoyment than rushing the material.

5. Group and Travel Dynamics

(10 to 15 minutes)

- **Fun and Freedom:** In the first few classes, this section is pure fun! Use **conga lines, Soul Train, or simple partner/group walks** to encourage free movement, interaction, and joyful chaos.

- **Grounded Travel Practice:** Use **actions and everyday activities** (from Option Two) to help young people understand **spatial travel and direction** within the room. For example, instruct them to **“push the car in the supermarket from point A to point B”** across the space, giving the movement a clear purpose and trajectory.

- **Transitional Practice (Later Classes):** As young people become more comfortable, this section becomes a key structural element. The **solo sequence you taught in Step 4** and the **group dynamic** are combined to form a **three- to four-minute choreography** (e.g., Movements One to Three repeated twice, followed by a conga line transition, then Movements One to Three again). This helps them get used to changing positions within the group.

6. Cool Down

(5 to 10 minutes)

- **Slow Down:** Put on **slower, relaxed music**. Dim the lights slightly if possible.
- **Reconnection:** Bring the young people together, perhaps in a circle.
- **Gentle Movement:** Repeat a very easy, slow movement, focusing on **breathing**.
- **Praise and Acknowledge:** Offer specific, genuine praise for their effort and focus.
- **Stretching:** End with slow, intentional stretches, perhaps guided by imagery like **“stretching like you’re waking up”** or “reaching for the stars.”
- **Closure:** Let them know the **date and time of the next class** and say a warm **goodbye**.

Final Note

Above all structure, planning, and movement technique, remember this class is fundamentally **for the young people**. Your ultimate purpose is to provide a moment of **shared joy**, connection, and successful self-expression for everyone in the room.

Class One**1. Welcome and Presentation****2. Warm up**

(assess the young people's capabilities and what is possible to do in section 3,4 and 5 of class)

3. Teaching the Core Movements**4. Putting the Sequence Together****5. Group and Travel Dynamics****6. Cool Down**

--> check Essential Resources and Materials

Tips

- Visual - directions with hands pointing and/or using the room's features (go to the wall, mirror, curtain);
- Voice/tone cues (e.g., rhythmic counting such as '5, 6, 7, 8' or energetic prompts like 'Let's go!');
- Everyday life/fantasy transformed to movement;
- Don't rush, give time for ideas to sink in;
- Don't be afraid to repeat movements or to focus on only two or three core ideas;
- Music can overload senses, do it with or without music, have mood music to fit the young people's needs;
- The first class is about connecting, assessing and having fun;
- Smile, be gentle and make it fun.

Class Two**1. Welcome and Presentation****2. Warm up**

(assess the young people's capabilities and what is possible to do in section 3,4 and 5 of class)

3. Teaching the Core Movements**4. Putting the Sequence Together****5. Group and Travel Dynamics****6. Cool Down**

--> check Essential Resources and Materials

Tips

- **Achieving the Plan:** Your lesson goals can be met using a flexible mix **of abstract movement, relatable everyday actions, and story/fantasy construction;**

- **Music & Trends:** Always choose **music the young people genuinely like** (incorporating current dance trends is highly recommended!) to maximize engagement and relatability;

- **Pacing & Repetition:** The **second class is often a repetition of the first**—don't stress! This repetition is necessary to build strong muscle memory and confidence. As you accumulate more classes, your students will accumulate more information and material.

Class Three

1. Welcome and Presentation

2. Warm up

(assess the young people's capabilities and what is possible to do in section 3,4 and 5 of class)

3. Teaching the Core Movements

4. Putting the Sequence Together

5. Group and Travel Dynamics

6. Cool Down

--> check Essential Resources and Materials

Tips

- The **third class** is when material should start to come together for a simple presentation;
- Keep the structure clear, simple, and enjoyable; aim for a great 30-second presentation rather than a two-minute nightmare.

Class Four

1. Welcome and Presentation

2. Warm up

(assess the young people's capabilities and what is possible to do in section 3,4 and 5 of class)

3. Teaching the Core Movements

4. Putting the Sequence Together

5. Group and Travel Dynamics

6. Cool Down

--> check Essential Resources and Materials

Last thoughts: Celebrate Success and Joy

As you reach the end of the final class, shift your focus entirely from instruction to celebration.

Remember that you and the young people did your best and had fun; don't stress, and don't stress them.

Enjoy the final session: consider making it a relaxed party atmosphere. You could bring a cake and make it a little party at the end of class, take memory photos, and remember to share these joyful moments with the young people and their families. This is a chance to acknowledge their success and belonging.

ESSENTIAL RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

Materials

- **Music Playback Device:** A portable sound system or speaker with adequate volume and quality to fill the space;
- **Diverse Playlists:** Bring music of different rhythms and energies (relaxed, fun, rhythmic) to adapt to the young people's mood and the requirements of the activity (Warm-up, Core Movement, Cool Down);
- **The Three Class Plans:** Always carry the three contingency plans either printed or on an easily accessible device.

Group Dynamics

- Conga line (simple group dance where participants line up, the line then moves forward in a synchronized way. Used as a fun, low-pressure way for the entire group to move **together** and practice **spatial travel** across the room in an inclusive format;
- Line dance (simple group dance where participants face each other);
Soul train for one or two people (organized into two parallel lines of dancers facing each other, creating a central aisle. Individuals take turns moving down this aisle, before rejoining one of the main lines);
- Circles - "**Fish Poll**": a simple, cohesive circle where **everyone performs the exact same movements** simultaneously. Ideal for quiet, low-energy, and calming activities (often used with low light and calm music);
- **Circles – Additive/Memory:** each student repeats the movement of the person before them, then adds one new movement of their own. Great for **fun, memory training**, and building **individual creativity** sequentially.

MOVES / EVERYDAY ACTIONS

- Step touch
- Walking forward and back
- Aleluias
- Mess around
- Digging potatoes
- Salsa/Charleston step
- Travelling in step step step touch pattern
- Cleaning windows
- Stirring the pot
- Pushing the supermarket cart
- Waiting for the bus

Remember

The movements can be linked together to create a simple, sequential **story** and you can also add emotions to change the body movement

Sequence Ideas

Sequence One

- Step touch
- Walking forward
- Step touch
- Walking backward
- Step touch
- Aleluias to the right
- Aleluias to the left
- Step touch
- Mess around

--> Video [HERE](#)

Sequence Two

- Salsa/Charleston step
- Travelling right in step step step touch pattern
- Travelling left in step step step touch pattern
- Mess around
- Digging potatoes to the right
- Digging potatoes to the left

--> Video [HERE](#)

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CHAPTER

02.

DRAMA ACTIVITIES FOR AN
INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES

GENERAL DESCRIPTION & PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

The benefits of Theatre and Basic Rules of Class

There are many reasons why theatre and drama practice can be beneficial for adolescents and especially for young people with disabilities.

The most important word in drama class is **trust**. You will not be able to create, be productive or bring enjoyment to the young people if they cannot trust not only each other but you as well. When talking about young people with disabilities, some of the main techniques to ensure trust will not be possible - such as eye contact or physical touch. Theatre requires a high level of vulnerability and honesty, so you will need to find ways in your exercises to create this sense of security and trust. Whether by openly sharing your own experiences with the insecurities they may be feeling or by opening up the conversation for students to share their own thoughts and concerns. In theatre class there are no wrong answers, no wrong moves, no wrong proposition, as long as no one is hurting anyone - physically or mentally. Theatre class is for failing, trying new things, failing and trying again. If your students believe this, they will not only have much more fun in class, but they will also be able to gain confidence in real life.

This confidence gained in real life will show in their reading - they will become more comfortable with the spoken word; their writing - writing does not have to be serious or right, which makes them freer and more likely to enjoy and explore it; their listening skills - in class, everyone is encouraged to speak their minds, and because all opinions matter, this will improve their listening skills; their notion of space - working on balancing a room and being mindful of the bodies of their peers will help them better understand the space they occupy; their rhythm - music- and movement-based exercises will help with this; and their initiative - many times, you will casually ask for volunteers; with time, this should become common practice, and they will grow comfortable stepping up.

In these classes, students will also gain independence, despite the work being carried out in a group setting. Theatre helps individuals become

more confident and self-reliant. The decisions they make are consistently acknowledged and validated, which encourages self-expression and contributes to the development of a stronger sense of identity.

Here are some basic rules for any class:

- Whenever the class needs to walk through the space, they should imagine they are standing on a piece of wood floating in the ocean. Therefore, they must not all gather on one side of the room; otherwise, it will tilt. They should move towards the empty spaces in the room, keeping their gaze focused on the horizon.
- Never give up - if you feel tired, if you feel silly, if you cannot give 100%, give 80% instead, but never stop. Avoid sitting down unless instructed to do so by the teacher.
- When one person sits down, it invites the rest of the class to follow.
- Copy your peers. When you notice something your peers are doing that seems interesting or fun to try, or when you simply do not know what to do, copy them. You can all learn from one another.
- There are **NO** wrong answers.

The following pages present three different methods for creating a presentation.

On the first day, you will focus on building connection and trust, while also providing a “starter kit” of creative tools.

On the second day, you will introduce additional tools and ensure that students feel comfortable and understand the theatrical language you will be working with.

On the third day, you will begin the creative process with the students and guide the development of the presentation.

On the fourth day, you will rehearse and present the final piece.

DRAMA ACTIVITIES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Poetry

In this method, you must know that all students you will be working with know how to read. You, as the teacher, must search beforehand for 8 or more poems. The poems must not be too long. Look for comedic poems, children's poems, poems connected to adolescence and/or freedom, lyrics of songs, etc. These poems will be present on your first day, but they will not be worked with until the second, so you should encourage your students to bring poems/lyrics of songs they might want to work with.

On each day you will create a path to a presentation of these poems. Use at least four - one per student - but you can use more if your students show interest.

Day One

1. Warm up (10 minutes)

- a. Pick a warm-up of your choosing.

2. Read poems (10 minutes)

- a. Read the poems out loud to get a sense of which poems your students prefer.

3. Mirror (5 minutes)

- a. In pairs, students choose if they are person A or person B, then stand in front of each other, preferably with eye contact.
- b. Person A will lead. They should start to move slowly and person B should imitate them, as if they were the reflection of a mirror.
- c. It is important to not do sudden moves, so that your partner can have the time to reproduce the movements.
- d. Switch roles.

Hypnosis (6 minutes)

- a.** In pairs, students choose if they are person A or person B, then stand in front of each other.
- b.** Person A will lead. They will put their hand in front of Person B's face and start to move it. Person B should follow the hand as if they were hypnotized.
- c.** Person A should play around with different levels, going down to the ground and standing back up, while finding ways to guide their partner through pushing and pulling movements. However, they must never touch their partner.
- d.** Switch roles

Contactless improv (6 minutes)

- a.** In pairs, students choose if they are person A or person B, then stand in front of each other.
- b.** Person A will lead. This exercise is similar to the previous one, but this time the focus does not need to remain on the hand. Instead, the arms can be used to guide the movement of the entire body. The leader may encourage the follower to spin or jump, but must not touch them.
- c.** Switch roles

Group contactless improv (6 minutes)

- a.** This time one student leads the entire group.

Day Two**1. Warm up (7 minutes)**

- a.** Pick a warm-up of your choosing.

2. Reading and accompany with the body (5 minutes)

- a.** Each student must choose the poem they want to work with.
- b.** In pairs, students choose if they are person A or person B.
- c.** Person A will read the poem. They must play around with the sounds when reading - going really fast, going really slowly, high pitch, low pitch, etc.
- d.** Person B must move according to the sound of reading by Person A.
- e.** Switch roles.

3. Reading according to the movement (5 minutes)

- a.** The game will be reversed now.
- b.** In pairs, students choose if they are person A or person B.
- c.** Person A will move their body around, it can be either by dancing or moving freely.
- d.** Person B must use their peripheral vision and read according to the movement that their partner is doing.
- e.** Switch roles.

4. Images for each poem (5 minutes)

- a.** The students must take turns and read their poem out loud.
- b.** Then, in group, they will have 10 to 30 seconds to create an image associated with the poem.
- c.** They should memorize these images.

5. School of fish (6 minutes)

- a.** Students must stand in a square, all turning to one side.
- b.** The person who stands in the front is the leader, and should walk forward leading the group. As the square turns, the person in the front will change and, therefore, the leader changes.
- c.** The student leading should add some movement, slow, like the mirror game, played on day one.

6. School of fish with text and images (8 minutes)

- a.** Repeat the same game, but this time start in a corner of the room. The leader must walk and move their body, while reading the poem that they have chosen to work with.
- b.** When the poem is finished, the entire group must recreate the picture.
- c.** Move on to the next poem.

7. Group contactless improv with poems (8 minutes)

- a.** Repeat the exercise you did on day one.
- b.** This time, the leader is reading their poem while they are guiding the group.
- c.** It can be more fun to drop the paper and just repeat one or two sentences.

Encourage them to think about how their poem will be presented.

Day Three

1. Warm up (5 minutes)

- a. Pick a warm-up of your choosing.

2. Help them create the presentation or direct the presentation

Day Four

1. Rehearsal

2. Presentation

Narrative

This is the most typical theatrical method. You will use Commedia dell'Arte storytelling tools - canovacci - to help the creation of the narratives. Even though you will be directing, there will still be space for creativity and self-expression. However, if necessary, you can create and direct the entire presentation yourself in cases where your students do not provide enough input.

Day One

1. Warm up (5 minutes)

- a. Pick a warm-up of your choosing.

2. Elements (15 minutes)

- a. Stand in a space of the room where you can move freely.
- b. Begin in stillness with eyes closed.
- c. You will repeat the same instructions, for each of the four "elements" - clay, water, air and light. Each step can take up to one minute.
- d. Choose music appropriate to accompany every element - songs with a strong base for clay, bossa nova for water, classical music for air, salsa for light, for example.
- e. Step one - Imagine how your body would feel if it were surrounded by clay/ was made of water/ was made of air/ was made of light.
- f. Step two - Start walking as if you were surrounded by clay/ made of water/ made of air/ made of light. Move more freely and increase your energy gradually - more and more and more.
- g. Step three - Start becoming human. Begin to explore how this movement could belong to a person. Gradually reduce the intensity, giving us less and less and less.
- h. Step 4 - Go back to stillness, observe how your body feels now, after this element has gone through your body.

3. House (15 minutes)

a. Get a chair and find a space with free room around it. Stand in front of the chair and visualise a tiny house, about four m². Place the door and some furniture with your imagination.

b. All the students at the same time will:

i. Unlock the door, enter, find somewhere to put the keys, grab the keys, leave, close the door.

ii. Unlock the door, enter, find somewhere to put the keys, prepare something to eat and eat it, grab the key, leave, close the door.

iii. Unlock the door, enter, find somewhere to put the keys, prepare something to eat and eat it, do something relaxing, grab the key, leave, close the door.

iv. Unlock the door, enter, find somewhere to put the keys, prepare something to eat and eat it, do something relaxing, do a hobby, grab the key, leave, close the door.

v. Unlock the door, enter, find somewhere to put the keys, prepare something to eat and eat it, do something relaxing, do a hobby, check the time, realize you are late, grab the key, leave, close the door.

c. The students will repeat the last sequence but now, they are the person they became when they were surrounded by clay. This movement will come with feelings and with a story - try to find them. ("Who is this person? How do they feel? How old are they? Are they tired? Are they in a rush?", etc.). At the end of the sequence, discuss with your students who these characters were.

d. Repeat this process for the remaining elements. Choose music appropriate to accompany every element.

e. Choose one, either your favourite or the one you found more interesting, to show to the class. The first two students will present their work to the other two students.

4. Boat (5 minutes)

a. Using the character they chose in the previous exercise, students will play a scene.

b. "All characters enter a boat. Everything is all right. Then one of the characters sees a cloud. It's starting to rain. Oh no! A storm! Everything is all right, again. One of the characters realizes there is a hole in the boat. Oh no! It's going down. The characters must find a way to swim out and end the scene."

Day Two

1. Warm up (5 minutes)

- a. Pick a warm-up of your choosing.

2. Improv game (10 minutes)

- a. You can pick one of the improv games listed below. The goal of the game is to create comfort in creation.

3. Caravaggio (30 minutes)

- a. You can pick two or three of these Caravaggio, or you can create your own.

- b. Give them 5 to 10 minutes to discuss and rehearse, then have them present it to you.

- c. The following Caravaggio do not have an ending. Your students should find the ending by themselves. If this is too hard for your students, you can give them an ending created by you.

- d. First Caravaggio: a proud and powerful man was rejected by damsel and, with his pride hurt, decides to imprison her. There are two guards protecting the damsel. One is smart and cunning and the other is dumb and naive. The smart one must convince the dumb one to free the princess.

- e. Second Caravaggio: a farmer is begging god's help because all his crops are dead. An angel appears and tells him that he must trust god, because once he dies he will go to heaven and his dead crops are part of god's plan. Suddenly, the devil appears and tells him he can be happy, rich and never have to struggle again, in exchange the farmer must give him his soul.

- f. Third Caravaggio: an old, wealthy but miserly man dies without revealing where he hid his money. A young man, eager to inherit the fortune, seeks the help of a witch, necromancer, doctor, or scientist to resurrect him. A dumb and clumsy server helps the con artist.

Day Three

1. Warm up (5 minutes)

- a. Pick a warm-up of your choosing.

2. Prepare presentation

- a. Pick one of the Caravaggios to work with and direct the students for the presentation to be cohesive.

Day Four

1. Rehearsal

2. Presentation

Freedom

Day One

1. Warm up (10 minutes)

- a. Pick a warm-up of your choosing.

2. Statues (8 minutes)

- a. In pairs, students choose if they are person A or person B.
- b. Person A will be the sculptor and Person B the block of clay.
- c. Person A will mold the clay to create the statue they want.

Remind them to not create something too hard and uncomfortable for their peers, this is how they can also build trust.

- d. Once they are finished, you will tell them that they are in an exhibition and the sculptor will have to present their piece of art. Ask them the name and the meaning.

- e. Switch roles and repeat.

3. Chair game (15 minutes)

- a.** The rules are explained below in the chapter about warm-ups.
- b.** Do the first round with the normal rules.
- c.** Then tell them the chair is their freedom, and only one of them can have it. They should not give up easily.
- d.** Repeat this exercise. This time, once the battle for freedom has produced a winner and a loser, have them face each other in a stand-off. The winner should sit on the chair, while the loser stands in front of them. Using only their eyes, they should convey the pride of victory and the frustration of defeat. This can be a useful starting point for developing a scene.
- e.** Finally, play the opposite game. The chairs are the freedom but, this time, you want to help your peers stay in chairs. You decide the final number of chairs (probably two).

4. Physical Improvs (5 minutes)

- a.** Pick a physical improv listed below. Maybe "Hi, I am... And you are?". The goal of this is to make them realize that moving their bodies is a silly but fun thing to do. It will help them loosen up, for any kind of creation you want to do. It is also important for your students to realize that there is no wrong answer.

5. Incomplete story (10 minutes)

- a.** Give your students a pen and a paper. Tell them to write down numbers from 1 to 12 (in this case). They must write a word for each number according to:

1 - City 2 - Sound 3 - Favourite place 4 - Special interest
 5 - Emotion 6 - Body part 7 - Body part 8 - Animal 9 - Number
 10 - Object 11 - Liquid 12 - Emotion

- b.** You can use this one, search for one, or create your own story.
- c.** "Once upon a time, in the city of [1] a little girl got lost. She wanted to ask for help but she had a problem. All she could say was [2]. And no one could understand. She decided to go to her favorite place, [3], but it was not a regular [3]. It was a [4] themed [3]. When she entered, she felt [5], because she saw the most weird creature. It had double [6] and half [7], it moved like a [8], and was the size of [9] [10]. It looked like it was covered in [11] and it looked [12]."

- d.** Read out how the story sounds with your students' numbers.
- e.** Give them 5 to 10 minutes to find an ending to the story and then have them share it.

Day Two

1. Warm up (5 minutes)

- a.** Pick a warm-up of your choosing.

2. Words (10 minutes)

- a.** Ask your students to reflect and write down three words they associate with freedom, in three different papers.
- b.** Once they are finished, they should put the papers with the words around the room and place them in space they “make sense” (for example, the word “flying” near a window, the word “dancing” on the floor, the word “music” on top of the sound system, etc)
- c.** Give them another sheet of paper and ask them to imagine that it represents the classroom. They should recreate the position of each word on this paper, placing them in the corresponding locations.
- d.** Finally, they should create a map connecting the words in a way it makes sense to them.

3. Writing (15 minutes)

- a.** You have the option of them now passing the map to the person on their right.
- b.** They will have 15 minutes to write down a love letter to freedom following the logic of the map they are working with. (For example, if the word “dance” and “flying” are connected, they can write “when I dance with you I feel like I am flying”).

4. Share the letters (5 minutes)

a. It is important that you have created a safe space for them to share their letter. Make them feel comfortable and remind them that nothing is wrong.

5. Encourage them to think how they could present their letters (10 minutes)**Day Three****1. Warm up (5 minutes)**

a. Pick a warm-up of your choosing.

2. Create the presentation or start filming

a. In this method, you can easily film separate scenes for each letter and combine them in a final presentation. In this case, you will have the extra work of editing.

Day Four**1. Rehearsal or film****2. Presentation**

EXTRA EXERCISES AND WARM-UPS

Warm-ups:

1. Going through the whole body

a) The most classic warm-up. Start by telling the students to bounce on their ankles, releasing control of the body. Let your arms move freely with no control alongside your body as you hop on your ankles.

b) Put your feet together and your hands on your knees, roll the knees around. Make your students notice how your knees are barely moving what really is warming up is your ankles.

c) Lift one leg and roll your knees, then your whole leg, warming up your hip joint. Finally point your finger at the floor saying: "Look a little ant, right there". Then pull your leg back, bringing it close to your body and saying "Ew, that's disgusting". At this point in the exercise, two things are likely to happen: if you and your students struggle with balance, tell them to stare at an unmoving point to help with balance; if your leg starts to hurt and your students want to give up, encourage them to hold on and do it until you think they have conquered the challenge.

d) Do the same with the other leg.

e) Spread your legs past your hips, just enough to move your hip freely. Start moving to the front and back, tell your students to focus on the movement. Then go side to side. Bring together these 4 points: front, side, back and side. Challenge them to do it in an infinity sign (∞) motion: front, side, back, centre, front, other side, back, centre. Always do rotations in both directions.

f) Next, you'll do a similar sequence but this time moving your chest. Start by going side to side. This is a movement we don't usually do, therefore our body can take a while to get used to it. Use your hand and imagine you are pulling a string that is connected to your chest and pull it side to side, then forwards and backwards, and so forth, according to that sequence.

g) Spin your arms forwards and backwards. Then, if you can, challenge your students to spin them in different directions. This is very challenging, so do it slowly with them: both arms to the sky, then at the same time, one arm goes to the front and the other goes back. You should practice this at home if you want to try it with them.

h) With one arm reach for the ceiling telling them you are reaching for a fruit on a tall tree, then with your other arm reach for the floor, telling them you are catching a basket for the fruit. Feel the stretch and then switch arms.

i) Focus on the head and neck. Start by putting your hands together over your head and doing the “Shakira move”, moving your head from side to side, trying to touch your ears to your forearms. Next, put your arms down and do the “pigeon move”, moving your head forwards and backwards. Finally, do the “owl move”, move in circles: front, side, back, side.

j) To finish, do the screw. The body will start to rotate at the ankles, then the knees, then the hip, then the chest, then the head. Try to go up and down.

2. The tray

a) This one is usually done in sequence to “Going through the whole body”, with the important goal of making your students move through the room, but it can also be done on its own.

b) Pretend you have a tray in one hand. You must keep your palm up at all times, otherwise your tray will fall.

c) Move your arm in this motion: twist your arm inward, keeping it close to your body, then move it outward while holding the tray above your head. Finally, rotate it forward, returning to the starting position.

d) Once you are comfortable with it, try to do both arms at the same time, while moving through space. This will be hard and sometimes you must stop and think how you can find your path.

3. Evolution of species

a) Start on the floor in Alexander's position (search for Alexander Technique of relaxation). Use calm music to help the body relax.

b) Start by moving the toes, trying to understand what is the limit of movement in your toes. Within the time you deem appropriate, join ankles, knees and hips. Then all the lower body should be moving wildly, like a live octopus.

c) Go back to Alexander's position and focus on the heat on the lower body.

d) Repeat same sequence with upper body (fingers, wrists, elbows, shoulders), and then go back to stillness.

e) Start by finding movement on the floor as if you were a reptile. What different ways can you move without lifting your body?

f) Allow the lifting of the chest and knees, like a primate. Find movement.

g) Allow verticality and jumping. Incentivize your students to find movement in all three levels. This is a good exercise to join in with them and raise the energy level in the room.

4. Stop and justify

a) This one is usually done in sequence to **"Evolution of species"**, with the important goal of forcing your students to give answers without being wrong, but it can also be done on its own.

b) While the students are moving freely through the room, you say - "Stop". They must freeze.

c) You choose a student and ask them - "What are you doing?". They must answer what they could be doing in the position they froze in. There are no wrong answers. But they must not repeat what someone else said.

5. Sword

- a)** All the students stand in a line in front of you. You have a very long sword.
- b)** When you swing the sword above their head, they must squat.
- c)** When you swing the sword below their feet, they must jump.
- d)** When you point the sword at them, they must dodge by moving their belly back, with arms to the front.

6. One, two, three

- a)** In pairs, students choose if they are person A or person B, then stand in front of each other
- b)** Person A will say - one
- c)** Person B will say - two
- d)** Person A will say - three
- e)** Person B will say - one
- f)** And so on...
- g)** Once they start getting comfortable, each person must think of a simple movement to replace number one. For example:
 - h)** Person A will say - *claps*
 - i)** Person B will say - two
 - j)** Person A will say - three
 - k)** Person B will say - *jumps*
 - l)** Then do the same for two and three.

7. Name, jump, down, up, freeze, carry on

- a)** Class walking through the room.
- b)** When you say "Name", they must yell out their name, and when you say "Jump", they must jump. Do this for two minutes, maximum.
- c)** Add more commands: When you say "Down", they must sit or lay on the floor, and when you say "Up", they must get up. Two more minutes.
- d)** Add commands: When you say "Freeze", they must freeze, and when you say "Carry on", they must keep walking. Two more minutes.
- e)** Now switch the commands: When you say "Jump", they must yell out their name, and when you say "Name", they must jump.
- f)** If you can, do this with all the commands. If it is too hard, give them less commands.

8. Ninja

a) With everyone's hands together in the centre of the room, you will count "one, two, three, Ninja!" As you count everyone must take three big steps back and finish in a ninja pose.

b) You decide who starts and in what order.

c) In their turn, one must use only one arm to attack the arms of the other player. But one must freeze in the position they finished their attack, whether they got the arm of the other player or not. The attacked player can use one movement to dodge the attack.

d) If one loses one arm, it must be tucked in behind one's back, and play with only one arm. When someone loses both arms, they are out of the game.

9. Invitation

a) Stand in a space of the room where you can move freely.

b) Move your feet to the full extent of the movement. Surprise yourself!

c) With the movement of the feet you will invite the knees, who will invite the hips, who will invite the chest, who will invite the shoulders, who will invite the elbows, who will invite the wrists, who will invite the hands, finally invite the head.

d) Remind your students to not stop moving the parts of the body they were moving in the beginning.

10. Dancing with eyes closed

a) Stand in a space of the room where you can move freely.

b) Have both feet "glued" to the ground.

c) Choose a song.

d) Everybody closes their eyes and dances.

11. Movement to hand

a) In pairs, students choose if they are person A or person B.

b) Person A must dance continually.

c) Person B will accompany person A around the room. Person B puts their hand out where they wish and name a body part.

d) Person A must pass the named part of the body through the space where Person B's hand is. Person A must incorporate this into their dance. This may serve as the starting point for a new "dance move."

12. Chair game

- a)** A circle of chairs turning outward with one less chair than the number of players.
- b)** Everybody dances around the circles.
- c)** When the music stops people try to find a place to sit.
- d)** The player with no seat is out of the game.

Group dynamics

1. 10 seconds objects

- a)** You will give an object to the group/s and then you count from 10 to 0, while they create the object with their bodies.
- b)** Avoid excessive discussion - don't think, just do!
- c)** You can pick your own objects, but here are some examples: table, sofa, car, glasses, train, closet, tree, record player, lamp, plane, scissors, cuckoo clock, shoe, chair, baby stroller.
- d)** There are three ways to play this game.
- e)** One - Separate your group in pairs, in case you feel like certain connections will benefit your students.
- f)** Two - Have the whole group walking through the space, when you yell out an object they must find the first person they see and do the object in pairs.
- g)** Three - Have the whole group walking through the space, when you yell out an object they must come all together and do the object.

2. Forest

- a)** Blind fold one of the students.
- b)** The other students will be the forest. They must create trees, branches, rocks, and leaves along the path the blindfolded student is taking. Once the blindfolded student has passed your obstacle, the students must create a different obstacle in front of them. Students can also create wind sounds or the sound of birds, etc.

3. Mines

- a)** Blind fold one of the students.
- b)** The other students sit in two lines, in front of each other. In between these two lines, you will place random objects (notebooks, balls, pencil cases, etc.) with some distance in between them.
- c)** The seated students must take turns giving one order to the blind folded instructions ("one step to the front", "two steps to the side", "small step back", etc.)
- d)** The goal is for the blind folded student to get past the obstacles.

4. Find the differences

- a)** In pairs, the students must stand in front of each other and look at their pair with great detail. Notice everything about them.
- b)** Then they must turn back to back, and change 3 to 5 (it is up to you) things about their appearance.
- c)** Finally turn back to each other and take turns finding all the differences.
- d)** This exercise can also be done with poses/statues. The students strike a pose and pay attention to each other. Then, secretly, change 3 things about the pose and notice the differences.

5. Three things in common

- a)** In pairs, the students must find 3 things they have in common, and share with the group.

Improvisation

1. Spacing

a) Memory guide

- i) Start sitting in a circle with eyes closed. Ask them to picture their favourite room, with great detail.
- ii) Students will take turns guiding their pair through the room they pictured as if it were inside the classroom.

b) Imaginary spaces

- i) You choose the room the students will go in (kitchen, bedroom, office)

ii) The first student will go into the imaginary room, they must open the door, do one action and leave, closing the door.

iii) The second student must open the door, do the action the previous person did, make up their own action and leave closing the door.

iv) Each player adds an action, being as true as they can to the actions done before.

v) Movement in this exercise should be as precise as your students can. For example, if they are writing down on a paper, they must pick up the pen, it can't just materialize itself in their hand.

2. Physical

a) Hi, I am... and you are?

i) Class walking through the room.

ii) Students start to greet each other, saying "Hi I am [name], and you are?" and the other students should answer their name.

iii) Tell them to pay attention to the way they tend to move their head as they greet people. They must not change the movement. Simply pay attention to the patterns and ticks they have.

iv) Repeat the same for the arms, legs and voice.

v) Now ask them if they still remember the things they noticed at the head. They should increase the intensity of the movement in the head by 100%.

vi) Repeat the same for the arms, legs and voice.

vii) Let them explore the "monster" they have become.

viii) You can expand this exercise by telling your students to stop greeting their peers and become the animal this "monster" reminds them of.

ix) Then you can tell them to become the animal with opposite energy from the animal they were just now.

b) Yes, let's!

i) Class walking through the room.

ii) When someone says "Let's all be [something]", everyone must yell "Yes, let's!" and be that thing.

iii) You can use this exercise to gain their trust. There truly are no wrong answers, they can say unicorn, robot, wind, table, etc. The whole class will support and follow them.

3. Spoken

a) Big Lie

- i) Class seated in a circle
- ii) You will ask your students how they got to class on this day, and everyone, in their turn, must tell the biggest lie of how it happened.
- iii) Incentivise them telling the impossible, but telling it as if it was the complete truth.

b) Gift

- i) Class seated in a circle
- ii) You start by giving one of the students seated next to you a gift. Play the scene to make it more fun ("I hope you like it, I bought it in a second-hand shop", for example)
- iii) As the giver, students can only choose the size and possibly the weight of the gift.
- iv) As the receiver, students decide how to open the gift, what it is, and how to use it for its intended purpose.

4. Narrative

a) Pop-up book

- i) One or two students will be readers, and the other two or three the pop-up book
- ii) You can start by repeating a well known story (Little Red Riding Hood or Three Little Pigs, for example)
- iii) The reader will turn the page and the pop-up book must immediately create the picture. The reader must then tell the story that they see.
- iv) Try to do this without any kind of known story and let the images the students create be what guides the story.

b) Stop and switch

- i) Two students start a scene, if they need help starting tell them they are moving a sofa, or something that requires movement.
- ii) When you want to, you will say "Stop", and the students must freeze.
- iii) Voluntarily, one student must go into the frozen scene and touch one of the students. The touched student will leave and the volunteer will assume the position of the touched student.
- iv) Now the volunteer must start a new scene from the position they have been placed in. The remaining student in the scene must adapt and play out the new scene.

Relaxation

1) Lighthouse

a) Class lying on the floor

b) You will narrate a guided meditation.

c) "Your body is a lighthouse, it sits at the end of a cliff looking at the ocean. You have a strong beam of light coming out of your head, it is warm and bright. You feel the ocean breeze, the seagulls singing, the smell of the ocean. At the end of the endless ocean a small boat appears, it comes towards the shore. Towards you. You recognize the person on the boat, it is someone that you dearly miss. You feel a deep happiness in seeing this person. You feel your light shine brighter as if it were calling them. You feel at peace. You are relaxed"

2. Wrapped in gold

a) Class lying on the floor

b) You will narrate a guided meditation

c) "You feel your body fully relaxed. With every breath you take, you feel your body sink deeper in the ground. Imagine a golden ribbon. This long string of gold will start by wrapping around your feet. It is warm, comforting and radiates a bright light. It continues to wrap around your calves, and then your knees (give them time to feel each part of the body). It wraps around your upper leg and your hips. You feel it around your belly, it is healing you. Then your lungs and your heart. Then your shoulders. Then your arms. Feel it in your hands. Your neck and finally all around your face, you are all wrapped in gold. Warm, light and comfortable."

3. Pass the pulse

a) Class sitting on a circle.

b) Everybody is holding hands.

c) With eyes closed, you must squeeze the hand of the students on your right, in a certain pattern (two short pulses and one long squeeze, for example).

d) The students must pass this pulse to their peers and you should receive the same pattern on your left hand. Just like a broken telephone game.

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CHAPTER

03.

ART ACTIVITIES FOR AN
INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES

GENERAL DESCRIPTION & PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

The importance of art in human life

Art has always been a fundamental form of communication, self-expression, and cultural development. Through colors, shapes, sounds, and movements, people express their thoughts, emotions, experiences, and worldviews, even when words are not enough.

Art knows no boundaries, regardless of age, education, ability, or social status. It is a universal language through which every person can be heard, understood, and accepted.

Art and people with disabilities

For people with disabilities, art has an even deeper meaning. It is a bridge between their inner world and outer reality. Through creative expression, they can:

- Express their individuality and potential
- Improve their emotional state
- Build confidence and sense of personal worth
- Communicate in a way that is not always verbal
- Be accepted and included in society

Often, society sees disability as a limitation, but through art, those limitations disappear. A work of art is not measured by technical perfection, but by sincerity, authenticity and experience it conveys.

Art therapy - a space for growth and development

Art therapy is just such a space - without judgment, without pressure, with complete freedom to explore and create. It uses various art techniques - painting, collage, sculpting, drawing as tools to improve psychosocial health, motor development and communication skills. In that creative atmosphere, people with disabilities are not defined by their difficulties, but by their expression, their imagination, and their art.

Art therapy for people with disabilities

Art therapy is a form of creative therapy that uses artistic expression as a means of communication, self-expression, and personal development.

It offers the opportunity to:

- Reduce stress and anxiety
- Develop motor and cognitive skills
- Boost self-confidence
- Encourage communication and socialization

Who is it for?

Art therapy is intended for children, youth and adults with various types of disabilities including:

- intellectual disability
- autism spectrum
- physical disability
- sensory difficulties
- hearing and vision impairments

Art techniques we use

Painting

Using tempera, watercolors, acrylics - to develop visual thinking and emotional release.

Shaping

Working with clay, plasticine or other materials - develops tactile perception, coordination and concentration.

Collage

Cutting, gluing, combining different materials - encourages creativity, motor skills, and organisation.

Drawing

Drawing with pencil, markers, pastels - enables self-expression, visual communication, and storytelling through images.

ART ACTIVITIES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

WORKSHOP PLAN: “My hands can” with clay – for People with Disabilities

Workshop Objectives:

- To encourage creativity and expression through hands
- To develop fine motor skills and coordination
- To build self-confidence and self-awareness (my hands can do things!)
- To promote participation, inclusion, and collaboration
- To introduce the basics of clay sculpture

Workshop Theme

“My Hands Can” – What can my hands create, help with, do, or express?

Duration

60 – 90 minutes (depending on the group)

Target Group

People with disabilities (of various ages); caregivers, parents, or educators can also participate

Materials Needed:

- Clay (or alternatives: playdough, air-dry clay, modelling clay)
- Sculpting tools (optional)
- Small plates or cardboard pieces as base
- Wet wipes, towels for cleaning hands
- Aprons or old shirts for protection
- Name tags or cards for labeling the artworks
- Camera or phone to photograph the final pieces

Workshop Flow

1. Introduction & Discussion

(10 to 15 minutes)

- Open conversation:
- What can our hands do?
- How do our hands help us every day?
- Can we show love, help, and creativity with our hands?
- Show a few small clay sculptures as examples (heart, tree, person, animal, object)

2. Creative Phase – Clay Sculpting

(45 to 60 minutes)

Task: Each participant will create a symbol of what their hands can do – something they like, feel, or are capable of.

Ideas for inspiration:

- Heart – my hands can love
- Flower – my hands create beauty
- Open hand – my hands help
- House – my hands build
- Figure or animal – my hands make friends
- Abstract shape – my hands are free to create

Participants are free to interpret the theme as they wish.

3. Presentation & Reflection

(15 minutes)

Each participant presents their sculpture (with support, if needed). Guiding questions:

- What did you create?
- What does it represent for you?
- How did you feel while working with your hands?
- Add the artist's name and title of the artwork on a small label

Expected Outcomes

- Unique sculptures that express the power and potential of hands
- Improved creativity, motor skills, and confidence
- Enhanced emotional expression and inclusion
- Ready for a mini exhibition or photo gallery

Optional Extras:

Exhibition Idea:

Set up a small exhibition in the room or at an event titled: "My Hands Can – Art Without Limits"

Alternative Activities:

For participants with limited hand mobility:

- Use handprint textures in clay
- Use alternative materials (sponges, paper, finger)

Art Workshop Plan “Love” - collage – for People with Disabilities

Theme

Love and Technology – Collage for People with Disabilities

Workshop Objectives:

- To encourage empathy and respect for people with disabilities.
- To show the role of love, support, and technology in their everyday lives.
- To express creative ideas through the art technique of collage.
- To develop visual communication and social awareness

Duration

60 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Cardboard/paper for background (A3 or A2 format)
- Magazines, brochures, catalogs (for cutting images)
- Printed photos related to technology and assistive devices (wheelchairs, robots, hearing aids, etc.)
- Glue, scissors, markers, colored pencils, crayons
- Stickers, decorative paper
- Optional: Inspirational artworks on social themes

Target Group

People with disabilities (of various ages); caregivers, parents, or educators can also participate

Workshop Flow

1. Introduction

(10 to 15 minutes)

- Brief discussion:
- What does love mean?
- How can technology help people with disabilities?
- Can art send a social message?
- Show inspiring examples (photos or a short video):
- People with disabilities using assistive technology
- Socially-themed collages

2. Creative Phase – Making the Collage

(45 to 60 minutes)

Task: Each participant creates a collage that shows the connection between love (support) and technology in the lives of people with disabilities.

Instructions:

- Include images/symbols related to:
- Technology: wheelchairs, hearing aids, communication apps, prosthetics, robots
- Love: hearts, family, friends, hugs, helping hands
- Participants can include words or phrases like: “friendship,” “inclusion,” “support,” “equality”
- Use a mix of colors, shapes, and textures

3. Presentation & Reflection

(15 minutes)

Each participant presents their collage briefly.

Discussion questions:

- What message are you sharing through your collage?
- What inspired you?
- How can technology bring love and freedom?

Expected Outcomes

- A finished collage with strong visual and emotional message
- Improved empathy and understanding of people with disabilities
- Encouraged creativity and communication
- Opportunity for an exhibition at school, community centre, or online

Optional:

Suggestion

Organize a mini exhibition of the artworks and invite parents, teachers, or community members – a great way to raise awareness of inclusion!

WORKSHOP PLAN “Flowers” – Acrylic painting – for People with Disabilities

Theme

Flowers

Duration

45 minutes

Technique

Acrylic painting

Target Group

People with disabilities

Format

Group Work

Activity Goals

- Encourage creativity, emotional expression, and self-confidence
- Develop fine motor skills and visual perception
- Promote social inclusion through teamwork
- Foster feelings of happiness, value, and belonging
- Support the principle that the creative process is more important than the

final result

1. Introduction

(10 minutes)

Discussion about the theme “Flowers”:

- What do flowers represent in our lives?
- What colors do they have, how do they smell, where do we see them?
- What feelings do they give us?

Visual inspiration:

- Showing photos/images of different flowers
- Encouraging participants to choose their favorite flower or color

Explanation of the activity:

- Each person will paint their own flower – expressing what they feel
- The works will be combined into a shared “Flower Canvas of Happiness”
- It is important to enjoy the process, without worrying about whether the painting is “pretty” – every expression is unique and valuable!

2. Main part – Painting

(30 minutes)

- Participants work on their own part of a large shared paper or canvas
- Using acrylic paints, brushes, sponges, or even fingers if that helps better expression
- Each paints according to their own inspiration – realistic or abstract flowers

During the work:

- The facilitator encourages and asks open questions (“How do you feel while painting?”)
- Soft, relaxing music may be played
- Assistance is provided if needed (physical support, guidance, verbal encouragement)

3. Closing Part

(5 minutes)

- Assembling the shared painting – placing it in a visible spot
- Short group discussion:
- What did you like the most?
- How did you feel while painting?
- Did you enjoy working with others?

Emphasis:

- Everyone contributed in their own way
- Every part contributes to the whole
- There is no “wrong” way to create art
- Happiness and feeling useful are the most valuable outcomes of this activity

Benefits of the activity:

Emotional:

- Improved mood
- Encouraging positive self-image
- Expressing feelings in a safe and acceptable way

Cognitive

- Stimulating creative thinking
- Focus and memory through color, shape, and repetition

Motor

- Development of hand-eye coordination
- Improving motor control through using different tools

Social

- Promoting teamwork and cooperation
- Building friendships
- Improving communication skills

Note:

In these activities, there is no “right” or “wrong” – every work is valuable. The most important thing is that participants feel included, accepted, and happy, and that their effort is recognized and respected.

WORKSHOP PLAN: “Sunny Day” with Pastels – Creative Expression for People with Disabilities

1. Basic Information

Theme: Sunny Day

- **Technique:** Drawing with pastels (dry or oil pastels)
- **Target Group:** People with disabilities (physical, intellectual, sensory, etc.)
- **Duration:** 60 to 90 minutes
- **Number of Participants:** 6 to 12 (depending on needs)
- **Location:** Adapted classroom / creative space

2. Workshop Goals

Educational Goals:

- To introduce participants to the technique of drawing with pastels
- To learn basic art concepts: color, shape, and composition

Developmental Goals:

- To stimulate creativity and independent expression
- To develop fine motor skills, concentration, and visual perception

Social Goals:

- To encourage cooperation, acceptance, and inclusion
- To boost self-confidence through presenting one's own artwork

Emotional Goals:

- To stimulate positive emotions through bright, warm colors
- To provide a safe space for expressing feelings through art

3. Preparation (Before the Workshop)

Materials Needed:

- White A3 drawing paper
- Dry or oil pastels
- Protective table covers / aprons
- Wet wipes or tissues for cleaning
- Example artworks or photographs of “sunny day” scenes (sun, nature, people, etc.)
- Background music (optional – calming, positive tunes)

Space Setup:

- Spacious tables, well-lit area
- Accessible space for wheelchair users (if needed)
- Workshop can also be held outdoors, weather permitting

4. Workshop Phases and Activities

1. Phase one: Introduction

(10 to 15 minutes)

- Welcome and short introductions
- Open discussion: “What does a sunny day mean to you? What makes you happy when the sun is shining?”
- Show example pictures or artworks
- Explain the goal and the drawing technique

2. Phase two: Creative Work

(40 to 50 minutes)

- Each participant receives materials
- Free or guided interpretation of the theme “Sunny Day”
- Support provided with color choices, shapes, and artistic ideas
- Encourage personal storytelling and emotional expression through drawing

3. Phase Three: Sharing and Presentation

15 to 20 minutes)

- Each participant presents their artwork (with assistance if needed)
- Guiding questions: “What did you draw? How did you feel while creating it?”
- Positive feedback and encouragement from facilitator and peers

4. Phase Four: Conclusion

(5 to 10 minutes)

- Group exhibition and viewing of all artworks
- Applause and recognition for all participants
- Sharing impressions from the workshop
- Optional: group photo (with permission)

5. Notes and Adaptations

- The workshop should be flexible based on individual needs
- Provide assistive support for participants with mobility or communication challenges
- Use clear and simple language
- Be sensitive and inclusive to all types of disabilities

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CHAPTER

04.

YOGA ACTIVITIES FOR AN
INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES

GENERAL DESCRIPTION & PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

Vision & scope

This yoga strand is designed for inclusive, mixed-ability groups (children/teens) and aligns movement, breath and attention to support physical literacy, self-regulation, and social-emotional learning within a predictable group routine. School-based yoga and mindfulness are feasible and potentially effective for improving mental, emotional, physical and behavioural outcomes when delivered developmentally and safely (Khalsa & Butzer, 2016; Felver et al., 2014; Phan et al., 2022).

What the evidence suggests (brief synthesis)

1. Mood & affect: Adolescents show acute improvements in mood/affect after school yoga compared to PE (Felver et al., 2014).

2. Attention & executive function: Kindergarten/primary pupils demonstrate gains in **visual attention** and **reduced inattention/hyperactivity** after 12 weeks of yoga (Jarraya et al., 2019). A 2023 systematic review reports yoga/meditation can improve **ADHD-related** symptoms in youth (Gonzalez et al., 2023). Preschoolers with ADHD symptoms improved after a 6-week yoga programme in an RCT (Cohen et al., 2018).

3. Sleep & recovery: A **two-year** school mindfulness curriculum that included breathing/yoga-informed practices increased **objective sleep duration** in children (Chick et al., 2022).

4. Balance & postural control: Reviews link yoga with better **balance** in healthy populations, underpinning safer movement (Jeter et al., 2014).

5. Autistic children: An RCT found **reduced problem behaviours** and **better motor coordination** after 8 weeks of yoga (Ju et al., 2024).

6. Breathing physiology: **Slow, nasal breathing** increases **heart-rate variability (HRV)** and supports autonomic regulation and emotion control (Zaccaro et al., 2018; Laborde et al., 2022).

Takeaway: These findings justify our emphasis on breath first, predictable flows, and choice-based progression within an inclusive class design.

Pedagogical foundations

(a) Predictable, low-cognitive-load structure. Each lesson follows a stable arc—breath primer --> main flow (Circle or Chair) --> quiet practice (Nidra/Mindfulness). Predictability eases anxiety and frees working memory for quality movement (Khalsa & Butzer, 2016).

(b) Scaffolding & choice (three levels). Every task is offered with: **Support** (e.g., chair/wall/partner handhold), **Standard**, **Challenge** (e.g., longer holds). Choice builds autonomy and safety for mixed ability and energy levels.

(c) Multisensory cueing. Short verbs ("reach, press, breathe"), modelling, **visual cards/icons**, and simple counts (e.g., **3–5 breaths**) keep instructions accessible for varied language/processing speeds.

(d) Sensory-aware environment. Calm lighting, moderate volume, clear personal space, permission to practise with **eyes open**; reduce imagery for students who prefer concrete cues (Phan et al., 2022).

(e) SEL integration. The routines exercise **self-management** (breath), **self-awareness** (interoception), **relationship skills** (cooperative circle work) and **responsible decision-making** (choosing options), mapping to the CASEL 5 competencies (CASEL, 2020).

(f) Universal Design for Learning (UDL). We provide **multiple means of engagement** (choice, relevance), **representation** (demo + icons), and **action/expression** (chair/wall/standing options), per CAST UDL guidance (CAST, 2018/2024).

(g) Trauma-informed stance. Language is invitational ("when you're ready"), touch is **consent-based**, options are always available. Yoga is low-risk and shows promise in trauma-exposed groups, though rigour varies (West et al., 2016; Tibbitts et al., 2021)

Why breath comes first (and how we teach it)

We start with diaphragmatic (belly) and thoracic (chest) breathing, then optionally a wave-breath (belly --> chest / chest --> belly). Slow breathing at four to six cycles/minute is associated with parasympathetic shift and increased HRV, supporting attention and emotion regulation—skills that transfer to the rest of the class (Zaccaro et al., 2018; Laborde et al., 2022). Cues: nasal inhale; long, unforced exhale; jaw/shoulders soft.

Designing the four sessions (rationale)

Lesson one: Circle Yoga (balance + teamwork). Cooperative **handholds** offer external support while students practise **Tree** and controlled leg swings. **Micro-bends** protect joints; squats are shallow and rhythmic. Targets: balance, coordination, prosocial turn-taking (Felver et al., 2014; Jeter et al., 2014).

Lesson two: Chair Yoga (access & alignment). Seated/assisted versions widen access, reduce fatigue and maintain spinal alignment cues. Adult RCTs support **chair-based yoga** as safe/acceptable for people with long-term conditions; we adapt principles for youth settings (Tew et al., 2024).

Lesson three: Sun Salutations + Yoga Nidra. Short, rhythmic flows to raise heat and attention, followed by a **body-scan** and guided imagery for down-regulation (Khalsa & Butzer, 2016; Phan et al., 2022).

Lesson four: Sun Salutations + Mindfulness Savasana. Five-senses imagery ("Forest Walk") builds interoception and calm; related school programmes showed **objective sleep gains** over two years (Chick et al., 2022).

Inclusion for neurodiversity / SEN

Autism: keep predictability high; offer **eyes-open** practice; reduce metaphor; allow a preferred support (chair/wall). Evidence indicates potential reductions in **problem behaviours** and improved **motor coordination** with yoga (Ju et al., 2024).

ADHD: keep sets **short**, instructions concrete, and embed movement breaks; yoga/meditation shows promise for **attention and self-regulation**, with RCT signals in young children (Gonzalez et al., 2023; Cohen et al., 2018).

Motor planning / hypotonia: emphasise **slow transitions** and **external supports**; balance and postural control benefit from graded holds (Jeter et al., 2014).

Safety, consent & risk management

- **Non-slip surfaces, stable chairs (no wheels);** clear floor; adequate spacing.
- Pain = **stop**; discomfort = **modify**. No forced range.
- **Touch is optional** and always consent-based; prefer verbal/visual cues.
- **Contra-indications (relative):** acute musculoskeletal injury, uncontrolled seizures, fever; modify inversions/forward folds as advised; liaise with carers where relevant.
- **Emergency readiness:** first-aid kit accessible; staff know site protocols.

Classroom logistics

- **Group size & ratios:** aim eight to 16 students/circle with one facilitator plus an assistant; reduce numbers if needs are higher.
- **Room setup:** circle or horseshoe; visual schedule visible; water available; soft lighting for relaxation phases.
- **Equipment:** mats; **chairs** for Lesson two and as supports elsewhere; optional blocks/straps; blankets for rest.
- **Teacher preparation:** brief daily script read-through; cue list; plan A/B/C options; music list (60–80 BPM) for flows.

Assessment & documentation

- **Before:** quick baseline (balance with support; ability to follow one-step directions; preferred regulation strategy).
- **During:** observe **breath ease, posture quality, tolerance of 3–5-breath holds, and prosocial behaviours** (e.g., gentle handholds).
- **After:** 1–2 sentence anecdotal note and student self-check (thumb/colour card).
- **Progress markers:** steadier stance; smoother breath; longer holds; clearer self-advocacy ("I choose chair/wall").

Family & community links

Share a one-page **home routine** (3 belly breaths + 1 favourite posture) and a short script for "**calm breath before sleep**". Encourage carers to co-practice once per week; improvements in sleep/settling may generalise (Chick et al., 2022).

Limitations of the evidence

Many school-yoga studies have **small samples**, lack active controls, or show heterogeneity in delivery; conclusions should be **cautious** and programmes monitored for acceptability and safety (Khalsa & Butzer, 2016; Phan et al., 2022). We therefore emphasise **monitoring, choice**, and **progressive** loading.

YOGA ACTIVITIES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Session Structure and Adaptability

LESSON ONE

— Circle Yoga

Goals: breath awareness; balance; group coordination; confidence.

Equipment: mats (optional), visual schedule cards; optional slow music (around 60 to 80 BPM).

Setup: students in a circle, about an arm's length apart; light handholds allowed for support.

Timing overview:

0–5' arrival & greeting

5–12' Part one (seated breathing)

12–14' group breath (inflate/deflate circle)

14–39' Part two flow (right + left cycles)

39–44' cool-down (gentle arm/ankle/shoulder moves)

44–45' closure (one breath together)

Part one: Sit on the floor as comfortably as possible with your legs crossed. Place one hand on the belly and the other on the chest. • Try for five breaths to have only the lower hand (belly) rise. • Then five breaths with only the upper hand (chest) rising.

Optional: After the above breaths, breathe from bottom to top (belly to chest, like a little wave) and then deflate from top to bottom (from chest to belly).

Part two: We inflate and deflate the circle all together. Then we do the following flow:

Circle Routine (Yoga) — Step by Step Preparation

Form a circle and hold hands (light grip, shoulders relaxed). • Base stance: feet under hips, neutral spine, steady gaze (drishti) forward.

Right leg cycle

A. Tree (Vrksasana) — right leg lifted • Inhale: shift the weight to the left leg. • Place the right foot: toes on the floor or sole to ankle/calf (not on the knee). • Long torso, neutral pelvis. Hold hands with your neighbors for balance.

B. Dynamic “front–back” (three cycles) Each cycle = front --> back --> centre. • Front (two to three seconds): Exhale. Move the right leg out of Tree and extend it forward without touching the floor; standing knee soft; toes drawn toward you; hips square. • Back with a forward hinge (two to three seconds): Smooth breathing. Send the right leg long to the back and make a small hinge from the hips, chest long. Stay holding your neighbors for support. • Return to centre: bring the leg close to the support and stabilize. --> Repeat this entire cycle two more times (total three).

C. Close the leg • Inhale: bring the right leg bent to the front. • Exhale: place it on the floor and stand stable.

D. Arm flow (three times) • Inhale: arms up overhead. • Exhale: arms down and sweep back (the arms go behind the pelvis as comfortable). • Rhythm: up --> down --> back = 1 repetition ×3.

E. Squats (three times) • Setup: feet at shoulder width, toes slightly out, arms up. • Exhale: squat (as if sitting on a chair), knees track over toes, short pause around one second at the bottom. • Inhale: rise, torso long. --> three repetitions. • Return to the starting circle stance.

Repeat with the left leg Repeat the entire process from the beginning as a mirror with the left leg (Tree --> three front/back cycles --> close the leg --> three arm flows --> three squats).

Useful cues & safety

- Balance: fix your gaze on a point;
- keep handholds gentle (support, not pulling).
- Knees: lifted foot never on the knee. In squats, knees follow the toes.
- Micro bend in the standing knee to avoid hyperextension.
- Back: neutral; in the hinge, “lengthen” the spine, don’t hunch.
- Breath: keep a smooth nasal breath throughout.

LESSON TWO

— Chair Yoga

Goals: gentle mobility; posture; accessible stretches; breath rhythm.

Equipment: sturdy **chairs with straight backs** (no wheels); straps/blocks optional.

Setup: circle or horseshoe; non-slip floor; adequate space between chairs.

Timing overview:

- 0–6' arrival, posture setup, shoulder rolls (5 back/5 forward)
- 6–12' breathing (5 belly breaths, 5 chest breaths, optional wave breathing 3–5 times)
- 12–38' Part two chair sequence (7 poses), 3–5 breaths each
- 38–43' quiet breathing (4 in / 4 out)
- 43–45' reflection & closure

Part one: We begin with the same breathing as in Lesson one. Ideally choose chairs with a straight back so you can rest against them. If you don't have such chairs, then be careful to keep your back as straight as possible. Place your legs in whatever position feels comfortable—either cross legged or as if sitting normally with feet on the floor. Relax your shoulders by making circular movements backward and also forward. Then follow the breathing mentioned above.

Part two: We follow the photos and the video here.

Explanation: In each pose/posture we stay for three to five breaths, depending on what we can handle.

1. First pose: Place the right hand on the left leg, ideally on the hip (if that's not possible, then place it wherever you can), and raise the left arm. Extend it and bring the body to the other side as if making a side stretch. (three to five breaths) Then do the same on the opposite side. (three to five breaths)

2. Second pose: Turn the upper body backward so that you can hold the back of the chair, while the lower body remains stable. (three to five breaths) Then do the same on the opposite side. (three to five breaths)

3. Third pose: Extend the legs forward and with your hands try to reach your toes. (three to five breaths)

4. Fourth pose: Open the legs and place your hands on your knees; then bring the right shoulder toward the centre between the legs without letting go with your hands. (three to five breaths) Then do the same on the opposite side. (three to five breaths)

5. Fifth pose: Sit with a straight back and bring the left leg to rest on top of the right. Then, placing both hands on the left leg, fold forward. (three to five breaths) Then do the same on the opposite side. (three to five breaths)

6. Sixth pose: Stand up and go behind the chair at a distance such that, if you hinge forward, you can rest your hands on the back of the chair. Keeping the body in a straight line, hinge and brace on the chair back, gently pressing downward. (three to five breaths)

7. Seventh pose: Stand upright at the side of the chair and always face toward the centre of the circle (seeing everyone practising together). Start from the left side of the chair and place the right leg straight on the chair. With the right hand, find whatever balance support suits you (even touching the leg or the back of the chair). Bring the left arm over your head and lean the body toward the right leg (as much as you can). (three to five breaths) Then do the same on the opposite side. (three to five breaths)

Part three: Meditation

LESSON THREE

— Sun Salutations & Yoga Nidra

Goals: rhythmic flow; cardio-respiratory coordination; deep rest and guided imagery.

Equipment: mats; optional soft music; blankets for rest.

Setup: open floor; students spaced comfortably; dim lights for Nidra.

Timing overview:

- 0–5' arrival & breathing check-in
- 5–18' Sun Salutations ×5–10 (adapted to group)
- 18–40' Yoga Nidra (around 20 minutes)
- 40–45' quiet sit & closure

Part one: Sun Salutations ×5–10 depending on the students. See video.

Part two — Yoga Nidra class (kids lying on their backs) Introduction to Nidra Yoga

Instructions for you who are reading this:

- Speak slowly, gently, and naturally.
- Use a friendly and calm tone.
- Pause for 5 to 15 seconds where noted, allowing the children to imagine.

Yoga Nidra (around 20 minutes)

Introduction

(2 minutes)

“Lie down comfortably, in savasana (on your back). Let your body rest on the ground. Close your eyes... Take a deep breath in... and a slow breath out. Let every tension go. You don’t need to do anything—only follow my voice.

[pause 15 to 20 seconds]

From now on, stay still, observing. The body sleeps, but the mind stays awake.”

Sankalpa – Intention (2 minutes)

“Bring to mind an intention, a positive phrase— something that has meaning for you: ‘I am calm and peaceful’ or ‘I open myself to joy.’ Repeat it silently, with trust. This intention will be planted deep in the subconscious.

[pause 30 seconds]”

Body Scan (8 minutes)

“Now we will travel with attention through the whole body. Do not move anything—just listen and observe.

Right hand: thumb... index... middle... ring... little finger. Palm... wrist... forearm... elbow... upper arm... shoulder.

[pause 5 seconds]

Left hand: thumb... index... middle... ring... little finger. Palm... wrist... forearm... elbow... upper arm... shoulder.

[pause]

Right leg: big toe... second... third... fourth... little toe. Sole... ankle... calf... knee... thigh... hip.

[pause]

Left leg: big toe... second... third... fourth... little toe. Sole... ankle... calf...
knee... thigh... hip.
[pause]

Torso: belly... chest... back... shoulders.
[pause]

Head: neck... jaw... lips... cheeks... eyes... forehead... crown of the head.
[pause]
Now feel the whole body together. A relaxed, still body.
[pause 20 seconds]"

Breath (3 minutes)

"Observe your breath. The belly rises with the inhale... It falls with the exhale.

Count silently: 1 on the inhale, 1 on the exhale. 2 on the inhale, 2 on the exhale...
Continue up to 10, and then start again.

If you get lost, simply start again from 1.

[One minute of silence]"

Visualisation (3 minutes)

"Now imagine an image of peace.
Perhaps a beach, with gentle waves touching the sand.
Perhaps a forest, with birdsong and the smell of freshness.
Perhaps the light of sunset, filling the sky with warm colors.
Sink into this image.
Feel that you are there.
Safety... calm... rest.

[pause one minute]"

Repeat intention (1 minute)

“Bring back the intention you set at the beginning. Repeat it silently, with trust and clarity. Let it take root deep within you.”

Return (2 minutes)

“Slowly bring attention back to the body. To the ground that supports you... to the sounds around you... Take a deep breath in... and out.

Gently move the fingers of the hands and the toes. Stretch the body if you wish. And when you feel ready, slowly open your eyes.

Your practice is complete. Feel calm, freshness, and energy.”

LESSON FOUR

— Sun Salutations & Mindfulness Savasana

Goals: movement–stillness balance;
sensory imagination using the five senses;
calm focus to close the class.

Equipment: mats; optional nature-sound
track

Setup: open floor; comfortable spacing;
lights dimmed for relaxation.

Timing overview:

0–5' arrival & regulation breath

5–18' Sun Salutations ×5–10 (as Lesson
three)

18–40' Mindfulness Savasana (around 15 to
20 minutes)

40–45' awakening & seated close

Part one: Sun Salutations (5 to 10 times)
depending on the students. See video.

Part Two — Mindfulness Exercise: Mindfulness Walk in the Forest — Savasana Script for Children & Teens

Duration: 15 to 20 minutes

Suitable ages: 8 to 16 years

Ideal for: relaxation at the end of a yoga or meditation class

Style: warm, simple, descriptive, friendly

Goal: to guide children on an imaginary walk in the forest, activating all their senses with a natural flow.

Instructions for you who are reading this:

- Speak slowly, gently, and naturally.
- Use a friendly and calm tone, not overly “childish.”
- Pause for five to 15 seconds where noted, letting the children imagine.

Mindfulness Script: “A Walk in the Magic Forest”

Introduction to Savasana

“Lie down comfortably on your mat.
If you can, gently close your eyes.
Feel your body getting heavier...
As if you are melting into the mat, like ice cream in the sun.

[pause]

Take a deep breath in...
and let it out slowly...
And another one...
Your body relaxes...
Your mind becomes quiet...
And now we start a small imaginary journey.”

—

The beginning of the walk — the forest

“Imagine you are at the start of a path inside a quiet forest.
The sun shines softly; the trees are tall and green.
In front of you a little path begins...

And you start to walk.
The ground is soft, covered with leaves.
Each step makes a small sound.
You walk slowly, without hurry... as if you had all the time in the world.”

—

Listening to the forest

“As you walk, listen around you...
Can you hear birds singing?
A sparrow? A woodpecker tapping on a trunk?
Maybe you hear a stream flowing... or the wind whispering through the
leaves of the trees.

[pause]

All these sounds are like music... the music of the forest.”

—

Seeing with the eyes of imagination

“Look around you... What do you see?
Trees with trunks thick like hugs...
Mushrooms sprouting from the ground...
Small animals watching you— a squirrel? a rabbit?
Sunlight passing through the leaves and playing on the soil.
Maybe you see something magical...
A little elf behind a trunk?
A shining shooting star hidden in a leaf?”

—

Smelling nature

“As you walk deeper into the forest, take a deep inhale...
What do you smell?
The scent of fresh earth after rain...
Pine, wood, and perhaps something floral...
Maybe you smell something sweet... a wild fruit ripening on a branch...

[pause]

Every smell fills you... calms you... makes you smile.”

—

Touching the life of the forest

"You reach out and touch the bark of a tree. It is rough, strong, full of stories.

You pass your fingers over leaves— soft like velvet... and over moss— soft and cool.

The air touches your skin gently, like a caress.

The sun warms your cheeks.

[pause]

Your body 'remembers' what it is like to feel... not with your eyes... but with touch."

—

A little taste

"As you walk, you see a plant with small purple berries.

You taste one.

The flavor is fresh, sweet, a little sour...

Like tasting the sun of the forest itself.

You savor the moment... and store it inside you."

—

Your centre — in the clearing

"You continue your walk until you arrive at a small clearing.

It is quiet, full of light. You sit there. Or you lie down on the grass.

You don't need to do anything.

Only to feel.

Do you feel good?

Safe?

Light?

Maybe calm?

Maybe full?

[pause]

The forest holds you like a warm embrace."

Return

“Now, slowly, you begin to return...
The path leads you back, to where you started.
But something inside you has changed.
You carry with you everything you felt—
The sounds, the images, the smells, the touches, the tastes... And the
calm the forest gave you.

[pause]”

Awakening & Closing

“Begin to feel your body on the mat again.
The weight...
The room around you...
Make small movements with the fingers of your hands and feet.
Maybe stretch like a little cat.
And when you're ready, roll onto your side.
Stay there a bit, quietly.
Then slowly come up to a seated position, eyes closed.
Place your hands on your heart.
Take one last calm breath.
The forest is still inside you.”

OPTIONAL ENRICHMENTS

- **Music:** slow instrumental (60 to 80 BPM) for flows; nature ambience for rest.
- **Visual supports:** pose cards, step icons, first-then boards, timers.
- **Home practice:** three breaths belly/chest + one posture of choice; draw your favourite part of today's class.
- **Environment checklist:** clear floor; stable chairs; temperature comfortable; lighting soft; volume moderate.

SAFETY & PREPARATION GUIDELINES (quick list)

- Obtain relevant health information; confirm mobility aids and seizure/medical protocols.
- Pain = stop; discomfort = modify; never force range.
- Use non-slip mats; chairs without wheels; wall nearby for balance.
- Cue slow transitions; encourage nasal breathing; hydration available.
- Respect consent and touch policies; prefer verbal/visual cueing.

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CHAPTER

05.

SPORTS ACTIVITIES FOR AN
INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES

GENERAL DESCRIPTION & PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

Vision and Purpose

The Sports strand within the D Days Project has been conceived as a holistic educational tool — one that transcends physical activity to encompass social, emotional, and cognitive growth. Physical education is viewed not merely as exercise, but as **a medium for connection, cooperation, and confidence-building.**

Inclusive sport enables every child to participate and succeed, regardless of physical ability, learning differences, or communication barriers. The philosophy aligns with Education for All (UNESCO, 2017), where participation, belonging, and engagement are valued as much as skill mastery. The sports activities proposed here highlight movement as communication — an avenue through which students express emotion, share intention, and co-construct understanding.

The focus of these sessions is not competition but collaboration. Every game is carefully designed so that success depends on communication, empathy, and teamwork rather than physical dominance. Each movement, throw, or pass becomes a metaphor for inclusion: when one child succeeds, the whole team succeeds.

Pedagogical Foundations and Theoretical Rationale

The approach integrates key principles from **Inclusive Physical Education, Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984), and Social Interdependence Theory (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).**

1. Experiential Learning emphasises that understanding develops through direct experience, reflection, and adaptation. Students are encouraged to play, evaluate, and re-try, forming a cycle of discovery.

2. Social Interdependence Theory proposes that cooperative rather than competitive goals foster positive relationships and intrinsic motivation. Each team's success depends on mutual support.

3. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) ensures that instruction is flexible and responsive. Students can engage through physical action, verbal guidance, or emotional support.

4. Strength-Based Pedagogy shifts attention from limitations to abilities, ensuring that each child's unique contribution is visible and valued.

5. Holistic Education recognises the importance of body-mind integration: movement promotes concentration, emotional regulation, and self-awareness (Bailey et al., 2015).

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the four-lesson programme, students should:

- Develop better balance, agility, and body control.
- Exhibit increased confidence and motivation to participate.
- Demonstrate communication, leadership, and empathy during teamwork.
- Experience reduced anxiety through predictable routines.
- Show greater adaptability, problem-solving, and social awareness.

Instructional Approach

Each session follows a clear, predictable rhythm:

- 1. Warm up (10 minutes)** – rhythmic movement and social connection.
- 2. Main Activity One (15 minutes)** – cooperative skill-building.
- 3. Main Activity Two (15 minutes)** – group challenge or creative game.
- 4. Cool-down (5 minutes)** – stretching, breathing, and reflection circle.

This structure helps SEN students anticipate transitions and feel safe in participation. Teachers use calm tones, simple sentences, and visual signals (e.g., coloured cards, gestures, pictograms).

Inclusion Through Mixed-Ability Teams

All games are played in mixed-ability teams (two SEN + two typically developing peers). Peer mentorship is key: neurotypical students serve as role models, guides, and encouragers. Over time, these roles rotate so that every student experiences both giving and receiving support.

Adaptation and Flexibility

Every sport activity has embedded variations. These may include:

- Shortening distances.
- Adjusting equipment size or texture.
- Allowing walking instead of running.
- Modifying rules to prioritise teamwork over speed.

Teachers are encouraged to observe and dynamically adapt based on energy levels, mood, and focus.

Pedagogical Style

The instructor's role is to **facilitate learning, not command performance**. Each activity begins with demonstration and questioning ("What do you think will happen if we move together faster?"). Reflection encourages self-awareness, not correction. Encouragement replaces punishment; feedback is descriptive ("You both kept the rhythm well!") rather than evaluative ("Good job!").

Broader Impact

Sport provides a social microcosm of community life. When students collaborate to achieve a shared goal, they experience belonging and shared purpose. Through such engagement, inclusive sport fosters **psychological safety**, one of the most powerful predictors of wellbeing and learning readiness (Edmondson, 2019).

SPORT ACTIVITIES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

PART TWO — LESSON ONE:

TEAMWORK AND INCLUSION THROUGH MOVEMENT (EXPANDED)

Duration: 45 minutes

Group: 4 students per team (2 SEN + 2 typically developing)

Goals: Communication, rhythm, coordination, inclusion, empathy

Equipment: Hoops, soft balls, cones, whistle, and optional music

Phase One — Warm up (10 minutes)

Objective: Prepare body and mind for cooperation.

Activity: “Follow the Leader Stretching”

- Students stand in a circle.
- One student demonstrates a simple movement (e.g., arm circles, knee lifts); others imitate.
- After 30 seconds, leadership changes.
- Emphasise smiling, eye contact, and rhythm.

Adaptations:

Visual cards for movements.

Allow seated versions for mobility limitations.

Teacher dialogue example:

“Let’s notice how our bodies feel when we move together. Can we make our circle breathe and stretch as one?”

Phase Two — Main Activity One: Passing Through the Hoops (15 minutes)

- Arrange hoops in zig-zag formation ahead of each team line.
- The first child (SEN) jumps into the first hoop holding a ball.
- They turn, pass the ball to the next child, and advance to the next hoop.
- The pair alternates movement and ball passing until reaching the final hoop.
- The final player places the ball on a cone.
- Each pair repeats the process; the first team completing three successful runs wins.

Adaptations:

- Replace jumping with stepping for students with balance difficulties.
- Use tactile markers or colour-coded hoops for visual clarity.
- Encourage verbal counting to sustain rhythm.

Pedagogical intent:

This task blends sequencing, rhythm, and cooperation. Children learn to anticipate and match each other's timing — a key social skill for both SEN and neurotypical peers.

Phase Three — Main Activity Two: Balloon Battle (15 minutes)

- Place a low volleyball net across the middle.
- 10 balloons on each side.
- Teams throw balloons over the net for 90 seconds, trying to keep their side empty.
- At the whistle, count balloons. The side with fewer wins the round.
- Play 3 to 5 short rounds, with short rest and cheering breaks.

Adaptations:

- Use lightweight scarves if balloons create noise anxiety.
- Lower or remove the net for students in wheelchairs.
- Reduce space if attention span is limited.

Learning outcomes:

Students practise quick reaction, teamwork, and shared joy. Everyone contributes equally because balloons move unpredictably — levelling the field between abilities.

Phase Four — Cool-Down and Reflection (5 minutes)

- Gentle deep breathing.
- Teacher invites feedback: "What did you enjoy the most? How did you help your partner?"
- Applaud all groups equally.
- End with a team cheer ("Together we can!").

Evaluation focus: Team harmony (20 pts), motivation (20 pts), inclusion (10 pts), positive atmosphere (10 pts), synergy (10 pts), adaptability (10 pts), mentorship (10 pts), creativity (10 pts).

PART THREE — LESSON TWO: TRUST AND COORDINATION (EXPANDED)

Duration: 45 minutes

Group: 4 students (2 SEN + 2 neurotypical)

Goals: Trust, communication, orientation, empathy, focus

Equipment: Soft balls, blindfolds (or sleep masks), cones, markers, whistle

Phase One — Warm up (10 minutes)

Activity: "Guided Walk and Call Game"

- Students pair up; one is the "navigator," one the "explorer."
- Explorer closes eyes lightly or wears blindfold while navigator gently leads by voice only for 20 seconds.
- After each short round, roles switch.
- Add simple commands such as "turn left," "stop," "walk three steps."

Purpose: Build trust, listening and spatial awareness.

Teacher cue: > "Notice how your voice can help someone feel safe. Keep your words clear and kind."

Phase Two — Main Activity One: Blind Target Throw (15 minutes)

- Place 2 cones 5 metres ahead forming a goal.
- First player wears blindfold; teammates use verbal guidance to direct throws.
- After 3 accurate throws, next player rotates.
- Team earns 1 point per set of 3 successful goals.

Adaptations:

- Wider target gap or shorter distance.
- Allow hand tactile guidance from a peer for orientation.
- Use auditory markers (e.g., teacher claps behind goal).

Learning Focus: Develops trust, clarity of instruction, and auditory attention.

Teacher cue: > “Use short clear sentences — imagine you are the eyes for your friend.”

Phase Three — Main Activity Two: Obstacle Relay (15 minutes)

- Lay out cones and markers as a zig-zag path (8–10 m long).
- Player runs or walks with ball around each cone, circles final cone, and returns.
- On return, passes ball overhead to the next teammate, who continues.
- The team that completes all rotations first wins the round.

Adaptations:

- Reduce number of cones.
- Permit walking or pushing a rolling ball.
- Add verbal or visual cues for direction.

Pedagogical Intent: Links motor planning with social support — students encourage peers and maintain flow.

Phase Four — Cool-Down & Reflection (5 minutes)

- Students form a circle, closing eyes to breathe and listen to ambient sounds.
- Teacher asks: “How did you help someone today? What did it feel like to trust your team?”
- Emphasise mutual support and gratitude.

PART FOUR — LESSON THREE: COOPERATION AND SYNCHRONISATION (EXPANDED)

Duration: 45 minutes

Group: 2 mixed-ability teams of 4

Goals: Cooperation, timing, non-verbal communication, patience

Equipment: Cones, pilates balls, soft markers

Phase One — Warm up (10 minutes)

Activity: "Mirror Movement"

- Students work in pairs and mirror each other's movements slowly for 30 seconds per turn.
- Encourage focus on eye contact and gentle motion.
- End with group stretch and deep breathing.

Learning Purpose: Improves attention, body awareness and synchrony — foundation for team games.

Phase Two — Main Activity One: Cone Collection Race (15 minutes)

- 8 cones in a semi-circle 5–7 m away.
- 1 child at a time runs to collect a cone and brings it back to the team line.
- Each child collects 2 cones before the task ends.
- Teammates clap and cheer continuously.

Adaptations:

- Shorten distance or use soft markers for wheelchair users.
- Allow pair collection (two students together).
- Introduce colour coding for visual organisation.

Pedagogical Intent: Enhances planning and turn-taking. All students remain engaged through cheering roles, reducing passivity.

**Phase Three — Main Activity Two:
Back-to-Back Ball Run (15 minutes)**

- 2 players hold a pilates ball between their backs.
- Together they navigate a zig-zag course, circle a cone and return.
- If the ball falls, they stop, reset calmly, and continue.
- Team completes 3 successful runs.

Adaptations:

- Larger ball or wider course for stability.
- Shorter distance for lower stamina.
- Peer support by holding hands to re-balance.

Pedagogical Intent: Highlights coordination, empathy and rhythmic movement.

Teacher prompt: > “Listen to each other’s steps — can you move like a single heartbeat?”

**Phase Four — Cool-Down
(5 minutes)**

- Circle stretch with soft background music (60–70 BPM).
- Teacher summarises key learning: patience, co-movement, mutual respect.

**PART FIVE — LESSON FOUR: BALANCE,
PRECISION AND TEAM FLOW (EXPANDED)**

Duration: 45 minutes

Group: Teams of 4 (mixed ability)

Goals: Balance, fine motor control, team synergy, accuracy

Equipment: Hoops, cones, whistle, optional timer

Phase One — Warm up (10 minutes)

Activity: "Hoop Stretch Circle"

- Each child holds part of a shared hoop; the group stretches together in slow motion.
- The hoop symbolises unity — no one lets go throughout the exercise.

Pedagogical Intent: Encourages stability and shared focus.

Phase Two — Main Activity One: Team Hoop Run (15 minutes)

- Place cone and hoop 7–8 m ahead of team.
- First child retrieves hoop and returns holding hands with second player; they carry the hoop together around cone and back.
- Add a new member each round until all move together.
- First team to finish 3 complete runs wins.

Adaptations:

- Walking pace; larger hoops for space.
- Allow rest stops mid-route for balance issues.

Learning Goal: Shared rhythm and non-verbal communication.

Phase Three — Main Activity Two: Hoop Target Toss (15 minutes)

- 4 hoops placed ahead; a cone target 2m beyond throw line.
- Each child fetches one hoop and tries to land it over cone.
- Missed throws retrieved by peers; round ends when all hoops land.
- Repeat a best-of-3 format.

Adaptations: Closer target, two-handed throws, use of soft rings instead of plastic hoops.

Teacher prompt: > "Take a deep breath before you throw. Focus on the movement, not the result."

Phase 4 — Cool-Down (5 minutes)

- Slow march in circle; controlled breathing and gentle stretch.
- Reflective question: "What helped your team stay together today?"

PART SIX — COMPREHENSIVE SAFETY AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Safety Guidelines

1. Preparation:

Inspect equipment daily. Remove slip hazards and mark boundaries visibly.

2. Supervision:

Maintain a ratio of 1 adult per 8 children; assign assistants for SEN students.

3. Medical Readiness:

Obtain parental consent and medical information in advance.

4. Hydration and Rest:

Provide frequent breaks and shade.

5. Emergency Protocol:

First-aid kit and trained staff on site.

6. Psychological Safety:

Eliminate mockery or pressure; praise effort not speed.

7. Sensory Considerations:

Offer ear defenders or quiet zones for students sensitive to noise.

8. Inclusivity Checks:

Ensure wheelchair access and adapted equipment are available.

Evaluation Criteria

Criterion	Weight	Description
Teamwork Harmony	20	How well students show mutual respect, encourage one another, and listen to each other.
Motivation & Dedication	20	Effort, enthusiasm and attendance.
Inclusivity & Engagement	10	Support for SEN members
Positive Atmosphere	10	Mutual respect and encouragement.
Synergy in Performance	10	Fluid group movement.
Adaptability	10	Ability to adjust to changes.
Leadership & Mentorship	10	Guidance from peers
Innovation & Creativity	10	Original approaches and problem solving

Reflective Practices

- After each session, teachers record short notes on team dynamics and individual progress.
- Students use smiley cards or thumb signals to self-evaluate their enjoyment and cooperation.
- Reflection questions (e.g., “What helped me try again when it was hard?”) reinforce self-awareness.

PART SEVEN — ENRICHMENT, REFLECTION & REFERENCES

Optional Enrichments

- **Music Integration:** Use rhythmic drums for tempo training; soft instrumental for relaxation.
- **Visual Supports:** Cue cards with action images (start, stop, throw).
- **Peer Mentoring Programme:** Rotate student leaders each week to foster responsibility.
- **Home Extension:** Encourage families to play adapted versions of balloon or hoop games to strengthen bonding.
- **Cross-curricular Links:** Maths (estimating distance), Art (decorating equipment), and Language (reflective journals).

Teacher Reflection Notes

- Document how inclusion unfolds in practice: Were students supportive? Was the environment predictable?
- Identify which adaptations worked best for particular needs.
- Plan progressive steps for next sessions (e.g., increasing complexity slowly).

Long-Term Impact

After 4 sessions, participants often show:

- Increased confidence to initiate contact with peers.
- Improved balance and spatial awareness.
- Enhanced ability to self-regulate during exciting situations.
- More frequent expressions of joy and pride in shared success.

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CLOSING MESSAGE

As we reach the conclusion of this handbook, we trust that the guidance, activities, and insights presented herein will inspire and enable professionals to create inclusive, engaging, and supportive environments for young people with disabilities. This handbook reflects the shared knowledge, expertise, and dedication of educators and specialists from across Europe, united in the goal of promoting inclusion, personal development, and well-being.

The “D DAYS” project represents more than a series of educational activities; it embodies a commitment to inclusion, creativity, and cross-border collaboration. Each session, exercise, and methodological approach is designed not only to develop physical, cognitive, and emotional skills, but also to foster empathy, understanding, and active participation within the wider community. By combining approaches from Dance, Drama, Art, Yoga, and Sports, the project offers a holistic framework to support the growth and empowerment of every young person.

We encourage all educators and youth workers to adapt these activities to the unique needs, abilities, and interests of the youth, to explore innovative approaches, and to share their experiences with colleagues and peers. By doing so, you help build a strong network of professionals dedicated to creating inclusive learning spaces where every young person can thrive, contribute, and feel valued. We sincerely thank you for your dedication, creativity, and commitment. Together, we can transform educational experiences, foster stronger and more empathetic communities, and make inclusion a tangible, sustainable, and lasting reality.

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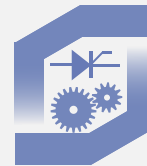


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