



TOOLKIT FOR INCLUSIVE SPORT AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES

A practical resource for adapting activities and
spaces for young people with different abilities

TITLE:

Toolkit for Inclusive Sport and Leisure Activities – A practical resource for adapting activities and spaces for young people with different abilities

PROJECT:

“Capacity building in youth work for inclusion of youngsters with different abilities through quality youth sport work, outdoor and leisure programmes”, funded by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)

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PUBLISHERS:

Active youth in happy Europe (AMUSE); Serbia
Building the Balkans (BtB); Kosovo

EDITOR:

Danijela Matorčević

AUTHORS:

Danijela Matorčević
Berna Xhemajli
Predrag Tomašević

GRAPHIC DESIGN:

Nikola Radovanović

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SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

Project title: "Capacity building in youth work for the inclusion of young people with disabilities through quality sports, outdoor and recreational activity programmes"

Project Summary:

This project was created to respond to the sporting, social and recreational needs of young people with disabilities. Several studies show that young people with disabilities are among the most marginalized and poor within the world's youth population and are more likely to face severe social, economic, and civic disparities than their peers without disabilities, even in developed countries.

When it comes to sport, for people with disabilities or chronic conditions, regular participation in physical activity is not always accessible, and participation rates are up to three times lower than those of people without disabilities. These people, for example, may find it difficult to find a suitable sports or physical activity program in their immediate vicinity, mainly due to the lack of specific staff training. On the social side, partner organisations noted a lack of programmes tailored to the needs and interests of young people with disabilities. This scarcity limits their opportunities for participation, as they often do not find activities that align with their preferences and abilities. Even when programmes are available, they often do not adequately address the diverse needs of young people with disabilities, including people with different types and degrees of disability.

These identified needs will be addressed through capacity-building initiatives, with the ultimate goal of creating an inclusive and empowering environment for young people with disabilities, through sports, outdoor and leisure activities.

Project objective:

The general objective of the project is to develop the capacities of organisations and professionals working in the field of youth work for the inclusion of young people with disabilities through quality sports, outdoor and recreational activity programmes.

Our role as youth workers and youth organisations must be to promote blended and inclusive youth work, so that activities with young people with disabilities aim to empower and fully include them in social, economic and decision-making life.

Specific objectives of the project:

The specific objectives of the project are:

1. To strengthen the capacities of youth work organisations and youth workers (in all our countries, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo) on how to raise awareness among young people and youth workers about the inclusion of young people with disabilities (YWD) through quality sports, outdoor and recreational activities within youth work programmes.
2. To strengthen the competences of youth work organisations in adapting spaces and methods in a qualitative way for sporting, outdoor and recreational

activities aimed at mixed groups of young people, both with and without disabilities.

3. To strengthen the skills of youth work coordinators for active participation, through quality management of spaces intended for sports, outdoor and recreational activities, with mixed groups of young people, both with and without disabilities.

The project activities are:

WP1 - Project Management:

- T1.1 – Preparatory activities and procedures for project execution and planning
- T1.2 – Online Kick-Off Meeting
- T1.3 – Online mid-term evaluation meeting
- T1.4 – Online Final Evaluation Meeting

WP2 - Raising awareness of mainstream youth and youth workers for the inclusion of young people with disabilities:

- T2.1 – Development of a handbook for youth workers for the organisation of workshops aimed at changing civil society perceptions of persons with disabilities (PWD)
- T2.2 – Development and testing of an online course to organize advocacy activities to change civil society's perception of PWDs
- T2.3 – Creation and publication of 10 TikTok videos to promote inclusion, made by people with and without disabilities
- T2.4 – Local training visits

WP3 - Toolkit and online course

- T3.1 – Toolkit with recommendations for youth workers/coordinators
- T3.2 – Online course for coordinators and leaders of local youth organisations
- T3.3 – Collection of good practices and interviews

WP4 - Curriculum Development and Implementation of Local Training Courses

- T4.1 – Curriculum for the capacity building of youth organizations for the empowerment of PWDs in the management of inclusive sports spaces
- T4.2 – Local training courses to test the curriculum

WP5 - Project visibility and dissemination

- T5.1 – Development of the project dissemination plan and daily implementation
- T5.2 – Project website
- T5.3 – 6 online campaigns
- T5.4 – Local Final Conferences

INTRODUCTION AND STRUCTURE OF THE TOOLKIT

Inclusive youth work goes beyond physical access. It requires intentional design, adapted methodologies, and competent youth workers who understand how to create environments where young people with different abilities can participate equally and meaningfully. In the field of sport, outdoor and leisure activities, young people with disabilities often face structural and methodological barriers that limit their participation and social interaction.

This Toolkit was developed within the project “Capacity building in youth work for the inclusion of young people with disabilities through quality sports, outdoor and recreational activity programmes”. The project aims to strengthen the capacities of youth work organisations and professionals to design, manage and implement inclusive sport and leisure programmes that promote interaction between young people with and without disabilities.

The purpose of this Toolkit is to provide both a conceptual framework and practical tools to support youth workers in adapting spaces, methodologies, and organisational approaches to ensure inclusive participation. It combines key concepts related to inclusion in sport and leisure with ready-to-use workshop formats that can be applied in diverse community settings. The Toolkit content and workshops target directly youth with disabilities as it is designed specifically in including them in different adaptive sport and movement methodologies.

The Toolkit is structured in two main parts:

Part I – Concepts and practical guidance

This section introduces relevant and essential concepts, and operational recommendations necessary for implementing inclusive sport and leisure activities. It covers areas such as inclusive design principles, adaptive sports equipment, communication and signage, sensory considerations, programme adaptation strategies, training of staff and volunteers, team composition, safety and risk management, policy and legal considerations, cultural competency, evaluation mechanisms, collaboration with disability organisations, funding, awareness and advocacy, mental health and well-being, tailored activity planning, parent engagement, use of technology, and peer support approaches.

These concepts provide the foundation for understanding how inclusion can be translated into everyday youth work practice with young people with disabilities.

Part II – Practical educational activities and workshops

This section presents a set of activities and workshops based on adapted sport and movement methodologies. Each presented activity/workshop includes a background, duration, clear objectives, listed methods and methodologies, step-by-step implementation guidance, adaptation options for mixed-ability groups and recommendations for easier multiplication. The workshops are designed to be flexible, scalable and suitable for low-resource community environments. List of workshops:

- Nature walk challenge

- Urban orienteering for mixed abilities
- Inclusive dance & rhythm
- Introductory Yoga
- Youth Leadership in Sport: Designing a mini-inclusive activity
- Tactile rope and ball challenges
- Core control games for functional stability and balance
- Boccia-inspired inclusive target games
- Goalball-inspired sound ball teamwork
- Cooperative parachute and scarf movement games
- Adapted relay without speed pressure
- Inclusive obstacle-course co-design
- Accessible leisure space audit: mapping barriers and solutions
- Inclusive frisbee and flying-object games
- Peer buddy sport lab: supporting participation without over-helping

The Toolkit has been developed in cooperation between project partners and refined through piloting with 100 youth workers and young people across Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, Kosovo and Serbia. Feedback collected during the implementation phase has been incorporated to ensure that the material reflects real needs and practical challenges in youth work settings.

This resource is intended for youth workers, coordinators, sport facilitators, volunteers and youth organisations working with mixed groups of young people. It can be used independently, as part of local training initiatives, or within broader capacity-building programmes.

Through this Toolkit, we aim to contribute to a more inclusive youth work practice in which young people with different abilities are not only participants, but are active contributors and equal members of their communities.

Part I: Concepts and recommendations

Inclusive design principles

Inclusive design in sport, outdoor and leisure activities means planning spaces, equipment and programmes so that young people with different abilities can participate together on an equal basis. It goes beyond minimum accessibility standards and focuses on creating environments that are usable, safe and welcoming for as many people as possible, regardless of mobility, sensory, cognitive or psychosocial differences. In youth work, this involves thinking simultaneously about the physical environment, the structure of activities and the social climate of the group.

According to Sport and Recreation Victoria (2024), key inclusive design principles include equitable use, flexibility in use, simple and intuitive information, perceptible information, tolerance for error, low physical effort and appropriate size and space for approach and use¹. In practice, this means, for example, designing routes and play areas that can be used by wheelchair users and non-wheelchair users, offering multiple ways to complete a task, and ensuring that instructions are communicated in clear, multimodal formats (visual, verbal, tactile). Youth workers should consider circulation paths, resting points, shade and shelter, as well as quiet zones for participants who may need reduced sensory input.

Inclusive design is a continuous process rather than a one-time checklist. Youth workers should regularly consult young people with disabilities and their families, observe how spaces and activities are used, and make small and ongoing adjustments based on this feedback. By integrating inclusive design principles into everyday planning, youth organisations have the chance to create conditions where participation, safety and dignity are promoted for all young people, and where mixed-ability groups can share meaningful experiences in sport and leisure settings.

Adaptive sports equipment

Adaptive sports equipment enables young people with different abilities to participate in sport, outdoor and leisure activities in ways that are safe, dignified and meaningful. Rather than being specialised “extras” for a few individuals, adapted and adjustable tools should be integral components of inclusive programme design. This includes both highly specialised devices (such as sport wheelchairs, sit-skis, hand cycles or prosthetics) and simple, low-cost adaptations like lighter balls, brightly coloured markers, tactile grips or modified bats. When youth workers understand the

¹ Universal Design. (2024, November 6). Sport and Recreation Victoria. <https://sport.vic.gov.au/resources/universal-design>

basic possibilities of adaptive equipment, they can open existing activities to a much wider range of participants.

The primary purpose of adaptive equipment is to reduce or remove functional barriers, so that the focus of participation can shift from limitation to enjoyment, skill development and social connection. Some good practices include choosing equipment that can be individually adjusted, such as altering height, weight, grip or stability, and combining this with flexible rules that allow different ways to complete the same task. There are also some frameworks such as the STEP model (Space, Task, Equipment, People) that can support youth workers in systematically thinking through how a ball, racket, target or mobility aid might be modified to better fit the needs of each participant while keeping the group together. This framework was introduced in 2002 by the Youth Sport Trust, and it is still applicable for inclusive programme design.

Access to adaptive sports equipment is often unequally distributed because of cost, lack of information or limited local suppliers. Youth organisations can respond by building partnerships with disability sport organisations, adaptive sports clubs and donors, sharing equipment between programmes, or creating low-cost adaptations with locally available materials. It is essential that youth workers involve young people with disabilities in decisions about what equipment feels safe, comfortable and empowering for them, and allow time for trying different options. In this way, adaptive sports equipment becomes a tool for autonomy and participation, rather than a source of stigma or separation from the peer group.

Communication and signage

Clear and accessible communication is a core condition for inclusive sport, outdoor and leisure activities. It helps young people with different abilities understand what is expected, navigate spaces independently and feel safe and welcome in group settings. Inclusive communication combines plain, concrete language with visual, tactile or auditory supports, so that participants with different literacy levels, cognitive profiles, sensory needs or language backgrounds can access the same information. This includes how youth workers speak, the written materials they use and the way information is displayed around activity spaces.

Inclusive signage plays a key role in reducing anxiety and disorientation. Signs should use high-contrast colours, large and readable fonts, intuitive pictograms and consistent placement so that routes to entrances, toilets, changing rooms, quiet spaces and exits are easy to follow. Information about rules, safety procedures and activity steps should be broken down into short, simple messages and, where possible, reinforced with symbols or images². Wherever sound is used (for example, whistles, music or verbal announcements), youth workers should consider how to

² xsign. (n.d.). Improving inclusivity in leisure facilities with signage. Retrieved from: <https://xsign.com/improving-inclusivity-in-leisure-facilities-with-signage>

complement it with visual cues, especially for participants who are deaf or hard of hearing or who experience auditory processing difficulties.

It is essential to ensure that communication is interactive. Youth workers are encouraged to routinely check understanding, invite questions and offer multiple ways for participants to express needs or discomfort. This can be done verbally, in writing, through symbols or through a trusted peer. Furthermore, providing advance information about what will happen during a session, what choices participants have, and where they can go if they need a break supports predictability and emotional safety. By planning communication and signage with diverse abilities in mind, youth organisations create environments where young people can move more independently, make informed choices and participate with confidence in mixed-ability groups.

Sensory considerations

Sensory experiences are a major factor in whether young people with different abilities feel comfortable, overwhelmed or excluded in sport, outdoor and leisure activities. Many participants may be sensitive to noise, bright lights, crowded spaces, strong smells or unexpected touch, while others may actively seek sensory input through movement, pressure or stimulation. Inclusive youth work recognises this diversity and plans activities and environments that reduce unnecessary sensory stressors while still offering engaging and meaningful experiences. This approach benefits not only neuro-divergent young people, such as those on the autism spectrum or with sensory processing differences, but the whole group.

Sensory-informed planning starts with mapping potential triggers in the space and programme such as loud music, whistles, echoing gymnasiums or sports halls, fluorescent lighting, sudden transitions or chaotic queuing. Youth workers can make straightforward adjustments, such as moderating sound levels, using visual signals instead of loud whistles, providing shaded or quieter areas outdoors, and allowing participants to wear hats, sunglasses or noise-cancelling headphones where needed. Offering clear visual schedules and advance information about the sequence of activities helps many young people anticipate what will happen and reduces anxiety linked to unpredictability. It is also important to consider the sensory properties of equipment and clothing, for example allowing alternatives if certain textures or fits are uncomfortable³.

Creating “sensory-friendly” options within a session does not mean removing all stimulation or segregating participants. Instead, youth workers can design flexible activities with different intensity levels, build in short breaks, and normalise the use of self-regulation tools such as fidget objects, movement breaks or access to a quiet corner. Consulting directly with young people and caregivers about individual sensory

³ Sensory Inclusive Schools. (2025, May 11). How to plan a sensory inclusive school sports day. Retrieved from: <https://www.sensoryinclusiveschools.org/pages/news-how-to-plan-a-sensory-inclusive-school-sports-day>

profiles helps to identify practical adjustments that make participation more sustainable over time. By integrating sensory considerations into everyday practice, youth organisations support better regulation, focus and enjoyment, and reduce the risk of overload and withdrawal from mixed-ability sport and leisure programmes.

Programme adaptation strategies

Programme adaptation strategies help youth workers adjust sport, outdoor and leisure activities so that young people with different abilities can participate together in meaningful ways, without creating separate or lower-quality experiences. Inclusive adaptation focuses on modifying elements such as space, rules, equipment, group roles and communication while keeping the core purpose of the activity intact. This approach allows youth workers to flexibly respond to diverse needs, energy levels and preferences within the same group, while maintaining shared goals and a sense of belonging. Models such as the STEP Tool and the Inclusion Spectrum offer practical frameworks for planning and reviewing activities and can be easily integrated into everyday youth work practice.

STEP Tool and the Inclusion Spectrum

According to Special Olympics (2021), the STEP Tool is a simple framework used to adapt activities so people with different abilities can participate. The framework is described as follows:

- Space: Adjusting the environment, such as changing the size of the playing area, the distance to targets or the type of surface (e.g., hard floors for easier movement or grass/carpet for more challenge).
- Task: Modifying how an activity is performed, for example using different throwing techniques, breaking skills into smaller steps or allowing the activity to be done sitting or standing.
- Equipment: Using different or adapted equipment, such as balls of different sizes, balls with bells for visually impaired participants or grip supports to help hold equipment.
- People: Organising participants in supportive ways, such as working in pairs or using partners to assist with balance, guidance, or motivation.

The STEP Tool helps make activities more inclusive by adjusting the environment, the task, the equipment and how participants interact⁴. Using the STEP framework, a simple throwing game can be adapted by: reducing the Space (shorter distance to the target), simplifying the Task (fewer steps, more time), changing the Equipment (larger, lighter, brightly coloured balls) and adjusting the People dimension (pairing participants in mixed-ability teams or assigning supportive roles such as “ball collector” or “scorekeeper”). By systematically reviewing these four elements, youth workers can design activities that are neither too easy nor too difficult, and that allow each participant to experience success.

⁴ Special Olympics. (2021). Guidance on adaptive equipment: Special Olympics sport for athletes with high support needs. Retrieved from: https://www.sotx.org/files/misc/guidance+on+adaptive+equipment_so+sport+for+athletes+with+high+support+needs.pdf

In addition to the STEP Tool, youth workers can use the Inclusion Spectrum, an activity-centred framework developed to guide decisions on how to organise physical activity for young people of all abilities. This framework was developed by Ken Black and Pam Stevenson in 2012. According to Black & Stevenson (2012), the Inclusion Spectrum describes five complementary ways of structuring sessions, such as:

- Open activity – everyone does the same activity together, with minimal or no adaptations, because the task is already accessible to the whole group.
- Modified activity – everyone takes part in the same game or exercise, but elements such as space, rules, equipment or player interaction are adapted so that participants with different abilities can be included.
- Parallel activity – participants follow a common theme (for example, throwing, balance or navigation), but work in smaller groups at different levels of difficulty or with different adaptations, according to their needs and abilities.
- Separate activity – for some parts of a session, it may be more appropriate for a young person to practise a skill individually or with peers of similar ability, in order to build confidence or focus on specific goals.
- Disability sport activity – non-disabled peers are included in disability sport formats together with disabled participants (sometimes described as “reverse integration”), which can strengthen mutual understanding and shared ownership of adapted sports⁵.

The Inclusion Spectrum helps youth workers choose, for each part of a programme, the most appropriate type of activity based on the composition of the group, the nature of the sport, the environment, available equipment and staff capacity. Used together, the STEP Tool and the Inclusion Spectrum offer some practical and easy-to-apply models for adapting both the structure of sessions and the content of activities. Effective programme adaptation is an ongoing and collaborative process where youth workers are encouraged to observe how participants engage, invite feedback from young people with disabilities and their families, and continuously refine activities from session to session. Small adjustments such as offering alternative ways to score, allowing extra time, rotating roles, or providing options to play seated or standing, can significantly increase participation and confidence. The integration of such structured adaptation strategies into everyday practice, enables youth organisations to balance safety, challenge and enjoyment in their inclusive activities, hence, ensuring that mixed-ability sport and leisure programmes remain both inclusive and engaging over time.

Training for staff and volunteers

Training for staff and volunteers is essential for turning inclusive principles into everyday practice in sport, outdoor and leisure programmes. Well-prepared teams are more confident to welcome young people with different abilities, adapt activities safely and respond appropriately to diverse support needs. Basic disability awareness, knowledge of common barriers and familiarity with inclusive tools such as STEP and

⁵ Black, K., & Stevenson, P. (2012, August 6). The inclusion spectrum. ICOACHKIDS. <https://icoachkids.org/learn/inclusion/the-inclusion-spectrum>

the Inclusion Spectrum help youth workers deliver activities in a more flexible and person-centred way. Training should be accessible to both professional staff and volunteers, recognising that many community activities depend on non-paid contributors.

Effective training combines introductory learning about disability models and rights with practical, scenario-based exercises where participants practise adapting real activities, communicating with different participants and managing mixed-ability groups. Ongoing professional development, peer learning and mentoring help staff and volunteers consolidate skills over time, update their knowledge and share successful strategies and challenges from their own sessions. Involving people with disabilities as co-facilitators or guest speakers ensures that lived experience shapes the content, language and priorities of the training⁶.

Youth organisations are highly encouraged to integrate inclusion-related competences into all roles connected to sport and leisure, from coordination and coaching to event management and communications. This can include clear expectations in role descriptions, regular reflection on practice and opportunities for staff and volunteers to access external courses or e-learning modules focused on disability inclusion in sport.

Creating inclusive teams

Creating inclusive teams means organising sport and leisure activities so that young people with and without disabilities can play and collaborate as equals. Mixed-ability teams work best when everyone has a clear role, the rules are understandable and success is defined not only by winning but also by cooperation, effort and mutual support. Simple strategies such as rotating roles, using buddy or small-group systems, and valuing different types of contribution (physical, social, organisational), help more participants feel that they belong on the team.

Youth workers play an important role in shaping this kind of team culture. They can set basic agreements on respect, fair play and listening, and intervene if someone is excluded or repeatedly left without a role. It is helpful to invite young people with disabilities to express what helps them feel included and to encourage non-disabled peers to act as allies rather than “helpers”. When teams are intentionally organised in this way, mixed-ability sport and leisure activities become spaces where diversity is normal, and every participant has something meaningful to contribute.

Safety and risk management

⁶ KIT. (2025, July 24). 4 ways to build inclusive sports and recreation programs for children with disabilities. Retrieved from: <https://www.kit.org/build-inclusive-sports/>

Safety and risk management are essential foundations for inclusive sport, outdoor and leisure activities. Young people with and without disabilities may face different types of risk, including physical injury, misuse of equipment, environmental hazards, or experiences of bullying and abuse. Research on risk management in youth sport programmes by Garner (2025) emphasises that a proactive approach means identifying potential risks in advance, planning how to reduce them, and making sure that staff, volunteers, participants and caregivers know what to do in case of an incident. This helps create an environment where participation is encouraged, but where basic protections and emergency procedures are clearly in place⁷.

Furthermore, this article shows that key elements of risk management include regular checks of facilities and equipment, appropriate staff-to-participant ratios, and clear rules about behaviour, supervision and boundaries. Youth workers should ensure that adaptive and assistive equipment is used safely and inspected regularly, that spaces are accessible and free of avoidable obstacles, and that warm-up, hydration and rest are integrated into active sessions. Simple tools such as incident report forms, medical information and emergency contact sheets, and a basic emergency action plan (for example, what to do in case of injury, extreme weather or a participant in distress) help teams respond in a calm and coordinated way.

Protecting young people also includes safeguarding against psychological harm and abuse. Organisations are encouraged to adopt and implement child and youth protection policies, including background checks where relevant, codes of conduct for staff and volunteers, and clear procedures for reporting concerns. Risk management should be a shared responsibility, with opportunities for young people and caregivers to raise safety concerns and suggest improvements. When safety and inclusion are planned together, youth sport and leisure programmes can offer challenging, enjoyable experiences while minimising preventable harm⁸.

Policy and legal framework

Inclusive sport, outdoor and leisure activities do not only rely on goodwill and good practice; they are also supported by clear policy and legal obligations. At international level, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) recognises the right of persons with disabilities to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport (Article 30)⁹. This includes commitments by states to promote participation in mainstream sport, support disability-specific activities, ensure access to venues, and guarantee equal

⁷ Garner, G. (2025, May 14). Youth Sports Risk management tips: How to keep your athletes safe. My WordPress. <https://safeathlete.org/youth-sports-risk-management-tips/>

⁸ Trusted Coaches. (2020, January 1). Risk management tips for youth sports organizations. Retrieved from: <https://trustedcoaches.mystagingwebsite.com/risk-management-tips-for-youth-sports-organizations/>

⁹ United Nations. (2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Article 30 – Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport. <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/crpd/article-30-participation-in-cultural-life-recreation-leisure-and-sport>

opportunities for children with disabilities in school and community settings. European policies and strategies on disability and sport build on these commitments by encouraging member states and organisations to remove barriers and invest in accessible programmes and infrastructure.

At national and local levels, youth organisations must operate within the laws and regulations that prohibit discrimination and require reasonable accommodation in education, sport and community services. These may include disability rights legislation, equality acts, health and safety regulations, and child protection frameworks that apply to all young people, with or without disabilities. Internal policies such as inclusion statements, safeguarding policies, codes of conduct and accessibility plans, help in translating legal requirements into concrete responsibilities for staff, volunteers and partner organisations. Youth workers are not expected to be legal experts, but they should be aware of the main rights of young people with disabilities in their country, know where to seek advice, and ensure that their programmes align with both the spirit and the letter of these frameworks.

Cultural competency

Cultural competency in inclusive sport and leisure means recognising that young people with disabilities are shaped not only by their impairment, but also by their language, ethnicity, religion, gender, socioeconomic background and local community norms. Youth workers should be aware of how these factors influence attitudes toward disability, participation in mixed-gender or mixed-ability activities, clothing and privacy needs, and communication styles. Culturally competent practice avoids stereotypes and seeks to understand how families and communities view sport, leisure and disability, so that activities are respectful and relevant rather than imposed.

Practically, this involves asking rather than assuming, offering real choices, and adapting programmes in dialogue with participants and their families. Youth workers can check whether proposed activities, dress codes or touch-based games are acceptable in a given context, provide options for gender-separate or mixed groups where needed, and incorporate examples and role models that reflect the diversity of the communities they serve. Whenever possible, organisations should involve young people with disabilities from different cultural backgrounds in planning, facilitation or advisory roles. This helps ensure that inclusive sport and leisure programmes do not simply “add” disabled participants to existing structures but genuinely reflect and respect the multiple identities and experiences present in their communities.

Case studies and best practices

Case studies and best practices are very useful for youth workers who are starting to organise inclusive sport, outdoor and leisure activities with young people with disabilities. They show how inclusion can look in real life, not only in theory. A good

practice does not need to be a big or expensive programme. It can also be a small local activity, such as adapting a football game so that a young person using a wheelchair can play as a team strategist, organising a sensory-friendly walk in a park, or creating a calm corner during a sport day for participants who need a break.

When youth workers use case studies, they should not copy them without thinking. Every group is different, and each young person has their own abilities, preferences, fears and support needs. A good practice from another organisation should be used as inspiration, and then adapted to the local context. For example, an inclusive basketball activity from one city may not work in the same way in a rural youth centre with limited equipment, but the same principle can still be used: flexible rules, mixed teams, different roles and enough time for participation.

It is recommended that youth workers collect their own local examples. After each inclusive activity, they can write down what worked well, what was difficult, what participants said, which adaptations were useful, and what should be changed next time. Even short notes can later become valuable learning material for the organisation. Including voices of young people with disabilities is especially important, because their feedback shows whether the activity was indeed inclusive or only looked inclusive from the outside.

Best practices should always be presented honestly. It is useful to describe not only success, but also challenges. For example, “the first session was too noisy, so in the second session we reduced music and introduced visual instructions” is a very strong learning example. In this way, case studies become practical tools for improvement, reflection and multiplication of inclusive youth work.

Evaluation and feedback mechanisms

Evaluation and feedback mechanisms help youth workers understand if an inclusive sport, outdoor or leisure activity was indeed accessible and meaningful for young people with disabilities. Evaluation should not be seen only as a form to fill in at the end. It should be part of the whole activity: before, during and after implementation. Before the activity, youth workers can ask participants or families about support needs, accessibility concerns, health considerations and preferred ways of communication. During the activity, they should observe if participants are engaged, if someone is left aside, if the pace is too fast, or if instructions are not clear enough.

Feedback should be simple, accessible and adapted to the group. Some young people may answer verbally, while others may prefer emotion cards, smiley faces, thumbs up/down, drawing, stickers, body signals or short one-to-one conversation. It is important not to ask only “Did you like it?”, but also more concrete questions, such as: “What helped you participate?”, “Was anything difficult?”, “Did you have enough choice?”, “Did you feel safe?”, “What should we change next time?”

Youth workers should also collect feedback from assistants, parents, volunteers and co-facilitators, but the voice of young people with disabilities should remain central. Sometimes adults may think that an activity was successful because it looked

organised, while a participant may have felt tired, overwhelmed or not really included. Therefore, direct feedback from participants is essential.

Evaluation becomes useful only if it leads to changes. For example, if participants say that the music was too loud, the next session should have lower sound or a quiet option. If someone says they wanted more time, the facilitator can reduce the number of tasks. Small changes based on feedback show respect and build trust. In inclusive youth work, good evaluation is not about proving that everything was perfect, but about learning how to make the next activity better.

Collaboration with disability organisations

Collaboration with disability organisations is one of the most important steps for creating inclusive sport, outdoor and leisure activities. Youth workers do not need to know everything alone. Disability organisations, self-advocacy groups, parents' associations, inclusive sport clubs, special educators, therapists and community support services can offer very practical knowledge about accessibility, communication, safety and suitable adaptations.

This collaboration should start before the activity is implemented, not only when a problem appears. For example, if a youth organisation wants to organise an inclusive outdoor activity, a local disability organisation can help check the route, suggest suitable communication methods, identify possible risks, or advise on what kind of support participants may need. They can also help reach young people with disabilities who are often not included in regular youth programmes.

It is important that cooperation is respectful and not tokenistic. Disability organisations should not be contacted only to “approve” an already finished activity. They should be invited to co-plan, give feedback, support facilitation when needed, and share their experience. When possible, persons with disabilities should be involved as co-facilitators, advisers or peer role models. This gives stronger quality to the activity and shows young participants that disability is not only connected with receiving support, but also with leadership and contribution.

Youth workers should also be clear about roles and expectations. Before cooperation starts, it is useful to agree who is responsible for communication with participants and families, accessibility checks, safety information, support persons, equipment and follow-up. Good collaboration is based on trust, regular communication and shared learning. In the long term, partnerships with disability organisations can help youth organisations become more confident, more inclusive and more connected with the real needs of young people with disabilities in their community.

Funding and resource allocation

Inclusive sport, outdoor and leisure activities do not always require large budgets, but they do require careful planning of resources. Youth workers should think in advance about what is needed for young people with disabilities to participate safely and

meaningfully. This can include accessible transport, adapted equipment, personal assistance, sign language interpretation, quiet spaces, visual materials, additional facilitators, insurance, refreshments, or renting an accessible venue.

A common mistake is to plan the activity first and think about accessibility later. In that case, inclusion becomes an “extra cost” instead of a normal part of the programme. It is better to include accessibility costs from the beginning. For example, if a youth centre organises an outdoor sport day, the budget should already consider accessible toilets, transport for wheelchair users, shaded resting areas, adapted balls, and enough staff or volunteers to support the group.

Resource allocation is not only about money. It is also about time, people, knowledge and equipment. Many useful adaptations are low-cost: using tape for visual markings, creating picture instructions, borrowing equipment from a local sport club, using chairs for seated participation, or adapting rules so participants can choose different roles. Partnerships with schools, municipalities, disability organisations and sport clubs can help organisations share resources instead of buying everything alone.

Youth workers should also document what resources were used and what was missing. After each activity, it is useful to write down: Which adaptation was most useful? What equipment should we keep? Did we have enough facilitators? Was the venue suitable? This helps the organisation plan better in the future. Good funding and resource allocation means that accessibility is not treated as a favour, but as a basic condition for equal participation.

Awareness and advocacy

Awareness and advocacy are important parts of inclusive youth work, because many barriers faced by young people with disabilities are not only physical, but also connected with attitudes, fear, low expectations and lack of information. In sport, outdoor and leisure activities, young people with disabilities are sometimes seen as “too fragile”, “not able to participate”, or only as persons who need help. Awareness activities should challenge this view and show young people with disabilities as active participants, team members, leaders and contributors.

For youth workers, awareness raising can start with small actions inside their own activities. For example, they can use respectful language, present different ways of participation as normal, invite young people with disabilities to choose roles, and speak openly with the group about fairness, support and dignity. It is also useful to share positive examples from local activities: a young person who created a new game rule, a mixed team that adapted a sport together, or a group that improved access to a youth centre.

Advocacy goes one step further. It means speaking and acting for concrete changes. This can include asking a municipality to improve access to a park, encouraging a sport club to open activities for mixed-ability groups, or presenting young people’s feedback to a school or youth centre. Advocacy should not be done only on behalf of

young people with disabilities, but with them. Their voices, stories and priorities should guide the message.

Simple advocacy actions can be very powerful: a photo exhibition about accessible leisure spaces, a short video made by young people, a meeting with local decision-makers, or a public inclusive sport day. The key is to make the message clear and practical: inclusion is not charity, but equal participation. Through awareness and advocacy, youth workers can help communities understand that young people with disabilities do not only need access to activities; they also have ideas, skills and energy that enrich the whole community.

Mental health and well-being

Mental health and well-being are closely connected with participation in sport, outdoor and leisure activities. For young people with disabilities, inclusive activities can support confidence, social connection, relaxation and a sense of belonging. At the same time, some activities can also create stress if they are too loud, too competitive, physically uncomfortable or if participants feel observed, judged or pushed beyond their limits.

Youth workers should create an environment where young people feel emotionally safe, not only physically safe. This means using clear instructions, predictable structure, respectful communication and enough time for participants to decide how they want to join. It is important to avoid pressure such as “you must try”, “everyone has to do it” or “be brave”. Encouragement is useful, but it should never become forcing. A young person who chooses to observe, rest or take a quieter role is still participating.

Well-being can be supported through small and realistic practices: starting with a calm welcome, offering breaks, including breathing or grounding moments, creating a quiet corner, checking if the music or noise level is comfortable, and allowing participants to express discomfort in different ways. For example, a participant may use a red card, gesture, short sentence or support person to say that they need a pause.

Youth workers should also pay attention to group relations. Bullying, laughing at someone’s movement, ignoring a participant, or over-helping can strongly affect well-being. The facilitator should react early and clearly, while keeping dignity of everyone involved. Inclusive leisure activities should help young people feel respected, capable and connected. When mental health and well-being are taken seriously, sport and outdoor activities become not only physical exercises, but also spaces where young people can feel accepted and stronger in their everyday life.

Tailored activity plans

Tailored activity plans help youth workers prepare sport, outdoor and leisure activities according to the real needs of the group, instead of using the same activity for everyone in the same way. In inclusive youth work, one activity can have the same general aim for all participants, but different ways of participation. For example, in a ball game, one young person may throw, another may roll the ball, another may give directions, and another may keep the score or choose the target.

A tailored activity plan should include basic information about the activity, space, materials, safety considerations, communication methods and possible adaptations. Before the session, youth workers can ask participants, families or support persons about mobility needs, sensory sensitivities, health limitations, communication preferences, triggers of stress, and what helps the young person feel comfortable. This information should be used respectfully and only for better support, not for labelling participants.

It is useful to prepare more than one option for each activity. For example: seated and standing versions, short and longer routes, quiet and more active roles, visual and verbal instructions, individual and team tasks. This allows the facilitator to adapt quickly during the session without stopping the whole activity. A good plan should also include rest moments, a calm space, and clear steps for what to do if someone feels overwhelmed, tired or unsafe.

Tailored planning does not mean separating young people with disabilities from the rest of the group. On the contrary, it helps everyone participate together with dignity and choice. The facilitator should observe the group during the activity and be ready to change distance, rules, equipment or roles. After the session, it is useful to note which adaptations worked well and which should be improved next time. In this way, tailored activity plans become living documents that grow with the group and support more meaningful participation over time.

Parent and caregiver engagement

Parents and caregivers can be important partners in inclusive sport, outdoor and leisure activities, especially when youth workers are still getting to know the young person. They can share practical information about communication, mobility, health needs, sensory sensitivities, medication, fatigue, fears, preferred support and previous experiences in group activities. This information can help the facilitator prepare safer and more meaningful activities.

At the same time, youth workers should be careful that parents and caregivers do not replace the voice of the young person. The young person should be addressed directly and included in decisions about participation as much as possible. For example, a parent may explain that their child needs support during movement, but the facilitator should still ask the young person: “How would you like us to support you?” or “Do you want to try alone first?” This supports autonomy and dignity.

Good engagement starts before the activity. Youth workers can send a simple information sheet with the aim of the activity, place, duration, accessibility details,

materials needed and contact person. They can also ask if there is anything important to know before the session. During the activity, caregivers may stay nearby if needed, but their role should be clear. Sometimes their presence gives security; in other cases, the young person may participate more freely when the caregiver is not too involved. After the activity, short feedback from parents and caregivers can be useful, especially regarding tiredness, emotional reaction or practical barriers that were not visible during the session. However, this should be combined with feedback from the young person. A respectful relationship with parents and caregivers helps youth workers build trust, reduce risks and improve future activities, while keeping the young person at the centre of the inclusive process.

Technology use

Technology can support inclusion in sport, outdoor and leisure activities when it is used in a simple, accessible and meaningful way. It should not replace human support, but it can help young people with disabilities understand instructions, communicate needs, follow activity steps or participate more independently. For example, a visual schedule on a tablet, a timer on a phone, a short video demonstration, or picture cards can make an activity clearer and less stressful.

Youth workers can use technology before, during and after activities. Before the session, they can send accessible information to participants and families, such as location, duration, photos of the space, what will happen, and what to bring. This is especially useful for young people who feel safer when they know the structure in advance. During the activity, technology can support communication through speech-to-text tools, pictograms, audio instructions, enlarged text, translation apps, or sound signals. After the activity, participants can give feedback through online forms, voice messages, photos, drawings or simple digital polls.

Technology should always be adapted to the group, not the opposite. Some participants may benefit from digital tools, while others may feel overwhelmed by screens, sounds or too much information. Youth workers should prepare non-digital alternatives as well, such as printed visual cards, paper schedules, colour signs or verbal explanations. It is also important to check if internet connection, battery, sound level and visibility of the screen are suitable before the activity starts.

Privacy and consent must be respected. Photos, videos or recordings should never be taken or shared without clear permission from participants and, when needed, parents or caregivers. Technology should be used to increase access, choice and safety, not to expose or label young people with disabilities. When used carefully, even simple tools such as a phone, timer, camera or printed QR code can make inclusive activities more understandable, engaging and easier to repeat in different community settings.

Peer support and mentorship

Peer support and mentorship can strongly improve participation of young people with disabilities in sport, outdoor and leisure activities. Many young people feel more confident when they have someone close to them who explains the task, supports communication, helps them understand the space, or simply stays nearby during the activity. This support can come from another young person, a trained volunteer, an older peer, or a person with disability who already has experience in inclusive activities. However, peer support should always be based on respect and choice. A peer supporter is not there to control, decide or speak instead of the participant. Good support starts with asking: “Do you want help?”, “How can I support you?”, or “Do you want to try alone first?” This is especially important in activities where physical assistance may be needed, such as moving through a sport space, holding equipment or guiding someone. Support without permission can make a young person feel uncomfortable or less independent.

Mentorship can also be useful for longer-term inclusion. For example, a young person with disability who has already participated in inclusive sport activities can mentor a new participant by sharing experience, explaining what helped them, or encouraging them to take a role in the group. This can reduce fear and create a feeling of belonging. Mentorship should not only be between non-disabled and disabled young people; young people with disabilities can also be mentors, leaders and role models.

Youth workers should prepare peer supporters carefully. They need simple guidance on communication, consent, patience, confidentiality and how to avoid over-helping. It is also useful to rotate roles, so that support is not always one-directional. In a good inclusive group, every young person can sometimes give support and sometimes receive it. Peer support and mentorship should therefore strengthen autonomy, friendship and equal participation, not dependency.

Part II: Practical activities/workshops

1. Nature walk challenge

Workshop title: Nature walk challenge

Duration: 90 minutes

Background: Short and accessible walks in nearby outdoor spaces such as parks, courtyards, gardens or quiet streets, can help young people with different abilities experience movement, nature and social interaction in a relaxed and supportive way. However, many traditional outdoor walks or hikes are too long, too fast or physically demanding for some participants, particularly for young people with mobility, sensory, health-related or psychosocial difficulties.

The activity proposes a short and adaptable nature walk that includes simple sensory checkpoints and shared observation tasks. The focus is not on distance, speed or physical performance, but on exploring the surrounding environment together, noticing small details and supporting one another as a group. Participants can walk, use a wheelchair or mobility aid, move slowly, take breaks, observe from one place, take photos, collect sounds or describe what they notice.

This activity supports inclusive outdoor youth work because it shows that nature-based leisure does not have to be difficult or adventurous to be meaningful. Even a short route around a youth centre, school yard or local park can become an inclusive learning and movement experience if it is planned with accessibility, choice and safety in mind.

Aim of the workshop: To provide an inclusive outdoor movement experience in nature that encourages shared exploration, sensory awareness and mutual support within a mixed-ability group.

Objectives:

- To give participants the chance to take part in a short guided outdoor walk at their own pace;
- To encourage observation of the surrounding environment using different senses;
- To support young people with different abilities to participate in outdoor leisure activities in a safe and flexible way;
- To strengthen cooperation, communication and group awareness within a mixed-ability group.

Competences addressed:

- Physical and motor competence;
- Creative thinking;
- Analytical and observation skills;
- Communication and teamwork;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;

- Environmental awareness;
- Empathy and respect for diversity.

Methodology and methods:

- Input;
- Outdoor movement activity: Nature walk challenge;
- Sensory exploration;
- Individual and group observation tasks;
- Peer support;
- Reflection and Debriefing.

Workshop flow:

I. Introduction to the activity, and to space and accessibility requirements (15 minutes)

The facilitator welcomes participants to the activity and briefly explains that the group will take part in a short nature walk in the nearby area. He/she makes sure to emphasise that the activity is not a race and that everyone can move at their own pace. Participants can walk, roll, pause, stay in a smaller area, take a seated role, or ask for a shorter option if needed. There is no need to walk far or fast. The most important thing is that the participants notice things together and that everyone participates in a way that feels safe and comfortable.

Together with the group, the facilitator agrees on a few simple rules:

- staying close enough to see or hear the rest of the group;
- informing the facilitator when a break is needed;
- respecting different walking and movement speeds;
- not touching plants, animals or objects if we are not sure they are safe;
- asking before helping someone;
- stopping when the facilitator gives the stop signal.

Then, the facilitator introduces the concept of “sensory checkpoints” where he/she explains that during the walk the group will occasionally stop to observe or experience elements of the environment using different senses, such as sound, colour, texture, shape or smell. Simple visual cards or symbols representing each checkpoint can be shown to the group (optional). Before going outside, the facilitator reminds participants about practical accessibility points:

- The route is short, safe and pre-checked.
- There will be places to stop and rest.
- Paths are wide enough for participants using wheelchairs or mobility aids where possible.
- Toilets and meeting points are explained clearly.
- Participants can choose a shorter route or stay near the starting point.
- The facilitator or support person will stay at the back of the group.

After this introduction, the facilitator gives participants 10 minutes to take their jackets and/or things they might need (water, mobility aids, sunglasses, headphones, etc.) and meet at an agreed point for starting the walk.

II. Nature Walk Challenge with sensory checkpoints (45 minutes)

The group follows the facilitator in the walk. They choose a short, pre-checked and accessible route close to the meeting point such as a park close by, courtyard, garden, quiet street or safe outdoor area near the youth centre. Participants are encouraged to walk at a comfortable pace while staying within the group. Ideally, one facilitator stays at the front of the group and another at the back, especially if the group is larger. Along the route, the facilitator introduces 3–5 sensory checkpoints, where the group pauses for several minutes to observe the environment. Examples for the sensory checkpoints include:

- Sound stop: Participants pause and listen quietly, identifying different sounds such as birds, wind, traffic, leaves or footsteps/voices of people nearby. Participants who are deaf or hard of hearing can focus on vibrations, visual movement or what they can see happening around them.
- Colour stop: Participants look for three different colours in the environment. They can point, say the colour, take a photo, show a card or ask a peer to describe it. This can be adapted for participants with visual impairments by using high-contrast objects or verbal descriptions.
- Texture stop: Participants gently touch safe surfaces such as tree bark, stones, benches, leaves or grass and describe how they feel. Nobody should be forced to touch. Participants who do not like tactile input can observe, describe visually, or choose a peer to describe the texture.
- Shape stop: Participants look for shapes such as circles, lines, triangles, curves or patterns in natural or built elements. This can include windows, paths, leaves, fences, stones or clouds.
- Calm stop: The group stops in a quiet or shaded place. Participants are invited to take three calm breaths, sit down if possible, or simply observe the space in silence for a short moment.

Participants who prefer not to walk longer distances can remain near the meeting point and carry out similar adapted sensory tasks within a smaller area together with a facilitator. They can also take photos, collect observations, draw what they see, or prepare one question for the group when it returns. The walk can also be adapted by shortening the route or offering a seated observation activity around a courtyard or garden.

III. Debrief and Reflection (30 minutes)

After returning to the starting point, the facilitator gives participants a short break, especially if the group includes young people with fatigue, chronic health conditions or sensory overload. After the break, participants gather in the training room for a reflection and debriefing session. The facilitator invites participants to share reflections about the experience using some of the following questions:

- What did you notice during the walk that you might normally overlook?
- How did it feel to move together as a group at different paces?
- What part of the activity did you enjoy the most?
- Was any part of the walk difficult or uncomfortable?
- What helped you participate?
- What would make this walk more accessible next time?
- Where else could we organise a similar inclusive walk?

Participants are invited to share their opinions by responding verbally, by raising their hands to agree, by using prepared emotion cards or by drawing or writing simple

symbols. The facilitator concludes the activity by thanking participants and briefly summarising the experience and the main learning points.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, flipchart and flipchart papers, post-its, simple visual cards or symbols representing sensory checkpoints (e.g. ear for sound, eye for colour or shape, hand for texture), paper and markers or small cards for reflection (optional), mobile phone or printed map to follow the pre-planned route, optional camera or phone for photos, water, first aid kit, and any accessibility supports needed by the group.

Background documents and further reading

- Sense. (n.d.). How to lead an accessible sensory walk. Retrieved from: <https://www.sense.org.uk/our-services/activities-for-disabled-people/sport/sport-and-physical-activity-resources/how-to-lead-an-accessible-sensory-walk/>
- Sense. (2021). Making walks sensory (toolkit on sensory walk adaptations). Retrieved from: <https://deafblindness.info/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/sense-active-making-walks-sensory-toolkit.pdf>
- Resources on inclusive outdoor learning and accessible nature-based activities.

Recommendations for future youth workers multiplying this workshop:

- It is important to test the walking route in advance to ensure safety and accessibility. The facilitator should check distance, surface, slopes, traffic, benches, toilets, shade, noise and possible barriers.
- The facilitator should avoid choosing a route that is too ambitious. A short, accessible and enjoyable route is better than a long route where participants become tired or excluded.
- It is useful to prepare a shorter option or stationary version near the starting point. This should not be presented as “less participation”, but as another valid way to join.
- For larger groups, the organisers should involve at least two facilitators (or someone from their team) so that participants who need a slower or shorter option can be supported.
- The facilitator should adjust the number of checkpoints and the total duration according to weather conditions and the group’s energy levels. Participants can also be encouraged to suggest new checkpoint ideas such as “smell stop”, “memory stop”, “something beautiful stop” or “photo stop” for future sessions.

Adaptation tips for mixed-ability groups

- For participants with physical disabilities or reduced mobility: choose a flat and accessible route, avoid stairs and narrow paths, include rest points, and allow wheelchair or mobility aid use without pressure to keep the same pace as others.
- For participants with visual impairments: describe the route clearly, use verbal orientation, offer a trusted guide if wanted, and include sound, smell and texture-based checkpoints.

- For participants who are deaf or hard of hearing: use visual cards, gestures and written instructions. Make sure stop signals are visible, not only verbal.
- For participants with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties: use simple instructions, repeat the sequence of the activity, show visual cards and keep checkpoints concrete and easy to understand.
- For autistic participants or participants with sensory sensitivities: explain the route in advance, avoid very noisy or crowded areas, allow headphones or sunglasses, and provide a clear option for a quiet break.
- For participants with anxiety or psychosocial difficulties: allow them to walk with a trusted peer, observe first, stay closer to the facilitator, or take a smaller role such as photo observer or checkpoint helper.
- For participants with chronic health conditions or low stamina: keep the route short, include sitting breaks, avoid extreme weather and allow participants to stop without having to explain publicly.
- For mixed groups in general: remind participants that the group adapts to the pace of its members. The aim is shared experience, not completing the longest route.

2. Urban orienteering for mixed abilities

Workshop title: Urban orienteering for mixed abilities

Duration: 150 minutes

Background: Short orientation activities in familiar urban spaces can help young people with different abilities develop navigation skills, cooperation, observation and problem-solving in a practical way and low-risk environment. However, traditional orienteering activities are often too fast, physically demanding or complex for some participants, especially when existing urban maps are difficult to read or instructions are only given verbally. This can exclude young people with mobility difficulties, visual impairments, intellectual disabilities, sensory sensitivities, anxiety or low stamina.

This workshop adapts the idea of orienteering to a mixed-ability youth work context. In this activity participants work in small teams, use simple maps (when applicable in the urban area) or visual route cards, follow a short and pre-checked urban route, and complete easy checkpoint tasks on clear checkpoint markers (physical markers placed or identified in the environment). The focus is on shared roles among the group / collaboration, on moving safely together, noticing accessibility features and barriers, and making decisions as a team. It also allows participants with different abilities and mobility levels to contribute meaningfully to the activity.

The activity can be organised in a park, school yard, youth centre surroundings, pedestrian zone or quiet neighbourhood area. The maps and checkpoints are chosen in advance by the organisers and facilitators, according to the chosen urban area.

The activity supports inclusive outdoor and leisure work because it helps young people understand how urban spaces can support or limit participation. At the same time, it gives participants a concrete experience of teamwork, peer support and inclusive leadership.

Aim of the workshop: To support mixed-ability teams in navigating a short urban route together by using simple maps and checkpoint markers, while practising cooperation, shared decision-making and inclusive leadership.

Objectives:

- To introduce basic orientation and map-reading in an accessible way;
- To support participants in planning and completing a short route with checkpoints and simple tasks;
- To encourage teamwork, shared roles and inclusive decision-making;
- To help participants observe accessibility features and barriers in the local environment;
- To strengthen confidence in using public or community spaces together.

Competences addressed:

- Physical and motor competence;
- Communication and teamwork;
- Creative thinking;
- Analytical and observation skills;

- Problem solving;
- Inclusive decision-making;
- Spatial awareness;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence.

Methodology and methods:

- Input;
- Small group work – Urban walking and orienteering;
- Peer support;
- Accessibility observation;
- Reflection and discussion.

Workshop flow:

I. Welcome and introduction to the activity and safety rules (30 minutes)

The facilitator welcomes participants to the activity and invites them for a short introduction of themselves. The facilitator also explains that the group will take part in an adapted urban walking and orienteering activity. He/she explains that the activity will be done by having some rules and checkpoints to follow. Then, he/she explains that to do so, they will work in small teams and follow a short route using simple maps and checkpoint markers.

After the initial introduction and instructions, the facilitator introduces basic safety rules to agree upon, such as:

- staying together and not leaving anyone behind;
- respecting traffic rules and using safe crossings and pavements;
- group moving at the pace of the slowest member;
- informing the facilitator if someone feels unwell or needs a break; as well as contacting the facilitator if they feel lost, unsafe or uncomfortable;
- participants asking before helping or guiding someone.

Then, the facilitator introduces the map and checkpoint cards using clear symbols and large print, and checks understanding through simple questions such as identifying the starting point or interpreting symbols (examples: starting point, checkpoint, toilet, rest place, crossing, return point, emergency contact, etc.). All these points are defined according to the urban area in the local context.

Participants are divided into mixed-ability teams (3–5 participants per team), ensuring that each team includes different strengths and that no participant is left alone.

II. Small group work I: setting team roles and practising with maps (30 minutes)

Each team receives a map or route card and chooses roles. Roles can be adapted according to the abilities and preferences of participants. The facilitator invites each team to assign or rotate roles, which consist of the following possible roles:

- Navigator (suggests directions using the map);
- Time/pace keeper (ensures the group moves at a comfortable pace);
- Safety watcher (observes traffic, obstacles, steps, holes or crowded areas and surroundings);
- Checkpoint recorder (marks or notes checkpoint tasks);

- Support buddy (provides peer support when needed and only after asking);
- Photo or symbol reporter (takes photos or chooses symbols, if appropriate and with consent).

The facilitator explains that roles can be shared or rotated. A participant does not need to read the map or walk the full route to have an important role. Groups are given time to practise using the map in a small and clearly marked area near the starting point. They identify one or two simple points on the map, practise moving together, and check if everyone understands the instructions. The facilitator supports the teams that need more time and adapts the map if needed, answers questions and ensures that all participants understand the task and feel comfortable with their roles. After this, participants are given 10 minutes to take their jackets and/or things they might need and meet at an agreed point for starting the walk.

III. Small group work II: Urban orienteering route with checkpoints (60 minutes)

All teams start the route / activity. The facilitator suggests a time gap of 5-10 minutes between starting points for each team to avoid crowding. The route is planned to be short, safe and pre-checked by the facilitator and organisers. The route includes 4–6 checkpoints located within a manageable distance from the starting point. At each checkpoint, groups find a visible marker (symbol or coloured sign) and complete a simple task. The tasks should be concrete and connected with accessibility, observation and teamwork, such as:

- Checkpoint 1: Find a resting place - Teams look for a bench, wall, chair or safe place where someone could rest. They note if it is easy to reach.
- Checkpoint 2: Accessibility feature - Teams identify one feature that supports accessibility, such as a ramp, wide path, tactile paving, clear sign, shade or accessible toilet.
- Checkpoint 3: Possible barrier - Teams notice one barrier, such as stairs, narrow pavement, loud traffic, difficult crossing, broken surface, poor signage or lack of sitting places.
- Checkpoint 4: Team decision - The team chooses between two route options and explains why one feels safer or more accessible.
- Checkpoint 5: Communication point - The team creates one simple sign, gesture or short instruction that would help someone understand where to go.
- Checkpoint 6: Inclusion idea - The team suggests one small improvement that would make this space easier for young people with different abilities to use.

Participants who prefer not to complete the full route can stay near the base area with the facilitator and take part in an adapted version of the activity, such as a shorter route or map-based tasks, photo observation, accessibility sorting cards, or designing their own checkpoint for the others. The facilitator remains available to provide support where needed. Safety is more important than completing all checkpoints.

IV. Return to the training room, reflection and discussion (30 minutes)

After completing the route, all teams return to the starting point or training room and briefly review their experience together. The facilitator first gives a short break, especially if the group includes participants with fatigue, sensory overload or health-related needs. The facilitator then invites all groups to do a reflection within teams, using the following questions:

- What helped your team work well together?
- Which roles were most useful? / Which role was useful for you?
- Did everyone have a chance to contribute?
- What did you notice about accessibility features / barriers in the environment?
- What would you change in this route to make it more inclusive?

They have 10 minutes for this team reflection. Then, the facilitator follows up with a short group discussion, where each team shares one positive aspect and one suggestion for improving inclusion. The facilitator concludes the activity by highlighting key learning points related to teamwork, shared responsibility and awareness of accessibility in everyday environments.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, flipchart and flipchart papers, post-its, printed maps of the area or route cards (large print, high contrast), laminated checkpoint markers or printed symbols for checkpoints, checkpoint task cards for each team, role cards, accessibility observation sheet, 1 mobile phone per team for safety and coordination, first aid kit, visual cards for “start”, “stop”, “break”, “return”, and optional camera or phone for photos.

Background documents and further reading

- Sense. (n.d.). How to lead an accessible sensory walk. Retrieved from: <https://www.sense.org.uk/our-services/activities-for-disabled-people/sport/sport-and-physical-activity-resources/how-to-lead-an-accessible-sensory-walk/>
- Local accessibility guidelines for public spaces, parks and pedestrian routes.

Recommendations for future youth workers multiplying this workshop:

- It is important to have in mind the following space and accessibility requirements: a nearby urban area with accessible pavements and crossings, a short route with flexible options, clearly defined starting and ending point, as well as access to toilets where possible.
- The facilitator and organisers should test the route in advance and adjust checkpoints to fit the group’s pace and prepare simpler task alternatives if needed.
- It is better to choose a shorter and safer route than a long and complicated one. The aim is not sport performance, but cooperation and accessibility awareness.
- Maps and checkpoint cards should be simple. If the map is too detailed, some participants may feel lost or stressed.
- Roles should be meaningful and flexible. Not everyone has to walk, read the map or lead the route. Observation, safety checking, recording and giving directions are also important contributions.
- The facilitator should prepare a base-area version of the activity for participants who cannot or do not want to complete the full route.
- If photos are taken, consent must be checked. Some participants may not want to be photographed or may prefer that only objects and spaces are photographed.
- The activity should not finish only with “we found the checkpoints”. The reflection about accessibility is the most important learning part.

Adaptation tips for mixed-ability groups

The activity should be delivered with flexible participation options, allowing participants to choose different roles, adjust their pace and take breaks when needed. Facilitators should ensure that communication is clear and supported by visual cues and encourage peer support so that all participants can contribute meaningfully regardless of their abilities.

- For participants with physical disabilities or reduced mobility: choose a route without stairs where possible, avoid narrow paths, include rest points and allow mobility aids, wheelchairs or shorter route options.
- For participants with visual impairments: provide verbal descriptions, high-contrast maps, tactile or simplified route cards, and a trusted guide if wanted. Avoid unclear crossings or visually confusing spaces.
- For participants who are deaf or hard of hearing: use written instructions, visual signals, role cards and clear meeting points. Do not rely only on verbal safety warnings.
- For participants with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties: use simple maps, pictures, repeated instructions and concrete tasks. Keep the number of checkpoints limited.
- For autistic participants or participants with sensory sensitivities: explain the route and timing in advance, avoid very crowded or noisy areas, and allow headphones, sunglasses, breaks or a predictable role.
- For participants with anxiety or psychosocial difficulties: allow them to stay with a trusted peer, choose a non-leading role, remain near the facilitator, or take part in the shorter version.
- For participants with chronic health conditions or low stamina: keep the route short, include planned breaks, avoid extreme weather and allow participants to stop or return without pressure.
- For mixed groups in general: remind teams that success means returning together safely, with everyone included in some way.

3. Inclusive dance & rhythm

Workshop title: Inclusive dance & rhythm

Duration: 120 minutes

Background: Dance and rhythm-based activities offer young people an accessible way to move, express themselves and connect with others without requiring advanced technical skills. However, many traditional dance formats focus on performance, complex choreography or physical precision, which may discourage participation from young people with different abilities, especially those with reduced mobility, coordination difficulties, sensory sensitivities, anxiety, low stamina, visual or hearing impairments, or previous negative experiences with group movement activities. Having this into consideration, this workshop is designed to introduce a guided dance and rhythm session based on simple movements, clear structure and flexible options that include seated movements, standing, low or higher intensity. The focus is to gain understanding on shared experience, enjoyment and creative expression rather than performance or correctness of a certain dance. Participants can move seated or standing, use only upper body movements, tap rhythm with hands or feet, use scarves or objects, follow visual cues, create simple gestures, observe, guide the rhythm, or contribute with ideas for the group sequence. The workshop supports inclusive youth work because it shows that dance can be adapted to many different bodies, communication styles and energy levels. It also helps young people experience movement in a positive and non-competitive way, where every contribution can become part of the shared rhythm of the group.

Aim of the workshop: To create a safe and supportive environment where young people with different abilities can explore rhythm, movement and creative expression together without performance pressure.

Objectives:

- To introduce simple and adaptable dance and rhythm activities for mixed-ability groups;
- To encourage participants to explore movement as a form of self-expression;
- To support participation through seated, standing, low-intensity and creative movement options;
- To strengthen cooperation, listening and mutual respect within the group;
- To show that dance and rhythm can be inclusive, playful and non-competitive.

Competences addressed:

- Physical and motor competence;
- Creative expression;
- Communication and teamwork;
- Rhythm and coordination;
- Cultural awareness;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Empathy and respect for diversity;

- Self-confidence.

Methodology and methods:

- Input;
- Demonstration;
- Gentle warm-up;
- Rhythm exploration;
- Mirroring and pair work;
- Group movement sequence;
- Creative expression;
- Reflection and discussion.

Workshop flow:

I. Introduction to the activity and safe movement agreements (15 minutes)

The facilitator welcomes participants and explains that the session focuses on enjoying movement and rhythm rather than performing or “getting steps right”. After this, he/she introduces some simple agreements for the activity and invites participants to suggest some as well. Some of the agreements can be:

- choosing one’s own level of intensity;
- respecting personal space;
- ensuring that any physical contact happens only with clear consent;
- nobody has to perform alone;
- nobody laughs at someone’s movement;
- ensuring we can pause, sit down or take a break when needed;
- following the stop signal.

The facilitator writes all these agreements in the flipchart paper, to be visible throughout the whole session. Participants are invited to position themselves comfortably in the space, by being seated, standing or using mobility aids, to ensure enough room for safe movement.

II. Inclusive dance & rhythm I: gentle warm-up with music (15 minutes)

The facilitator starts the activity by initially guiding participants with a gentle warm-up using soft music. The sound level should be checked with participants and kept comfortable. Some of the movements can include shoulder rolls and gentle head movements, arm movements in different directions, opening and closing hands, light foot taps or wheel taps, slow side-to-side shifts or foot taps (for those who can stand), breathing in and out with arm movement. At each stage, the facilitator offers alternatives, to ensure that all movements can be done seated or with reduced intensity. For example, if raising arms is uncomfortable, participants can move fingers, wrists or shoulders. If music is too much, rhythm can be created through clapping, tapping, visual cards or silent gestures. The focus is on gradually activating the body and becoming comfortable moving with music.

III. Inclusive dance & rhythm II: rhythm exploration and body percussion (20 minutes)

At this stage, the facilitator introduces simple rhythm patterns using clapping, tapping knees, tapping a chair, using feet, snapping fingers, moving scarves, using percussion objects, or making silent visual rhythm through hand movements.

The facilitator starts with a very simple pattern, for example:

- clap – clap – pause;
- tap – tap – tap – pause;
- slow – slow – fast – pause.

Participants practise repeating short patterns and are then invited to create their own simple rhythms in pairs or small groups. Each pair/group can share their pattern with the others, who repeat it together. Nobody should be forced to lead. Participants who prefer not to produce sound can contribute by showing a movement, holding a visual rhythm card, choosing the speed, or pointing to the next person.

The group can also try “rhythm passing”: one participant starts a small sound or movement, and it travels around the circle. Each person can repeat it, change it slightly, or pass with a gesture if they do not want to perform.

The facilitator keeps the atmosphere calm and playful, making sure the activity does not become too loud or chaotic.

IV. Inclusive dance & rhythm III: mirroring and partner movement (20 minutes)

At this stage, participants are invited to work in pairs or small groups of three. They can form their pairs/groups as they prefer. The facilitator instructs them that in this part of the activity, one participant should introduce a simple movement and the partner mirrors it at their own pace and level. Movements should be slow, clear and respectful.

Examples of movements:

- moving one hand up and down;
- turning palms;
- moving shoulders;
- tapping rhythm;
- moving scarf in the air;
- making a facial expression;
- moving wheelchair or chair slightly forward and back, if safe;
- choosing a gesture that represents an emotion.

After a few minutes, roles are exchanged and participants can experiment with shared leadership. The facilitator supports participants by suggesting adaptations such as focusing on upper-body movement, slowing down actions or remaining seated. He/she then reminds participants that mirroring is not about copying perfectly. It is about attention, connection and respect. If someone does not want to move, they can lead by choosing a rhythm, colour, emotion card or direction.

V. Inclusive dance & rhythm IV: group pattern or simple movement sequence (20 minutes)

The activity upgrades to a whole group movement. The facilitator invites participants to create a short sequence of 3–4 simple movements. The group can build the sequence together by collecting suggestions from participants.

For example:

- open hands;
- tap knees or chair two times;

- move scarf or hand to the side;
- pause and smile or breathe.

The facilitator demonstrates each movement with both seated and standing options. The group repeats the sequence together by using music with a clear rhythm. Participants are encouraged to adjust intensity, simplify, adapt or replace movements or pause whenever needed. The sequence can also include non-physical contributions, such as one participant choosing the rhythm, another holding the visual order of movements, and another giving the start signal.

If the group feels comfortable, they can repeat the sequence in different moods: calm, joyful, slow, strong, silent or playful. This allows creative expression without making anyone perform alone.

VI. Inclusive dance & rhythm V: cool-down, group reflection and discussion (30 minutes)

The activity ends with a gentle cool-down that includes reducing the sound level and facilitator guiding slow movements, such as stretching hands, relaxing shoulders, breathing calmly, or placing hands on the heart or lap. Participants can sit, lie down if appropriate, or simply remain still. After this, participants are invited to reflect on the experience. The facilitator introduces the following questions for reflection and discussion:

- What movement or rhythm did you enjoy most?
- What helped you feel comfortable during the session?
- Was anything too loud, too fast or difficult?
- What helped you participate?
- Did you prefer moving alone, in pairs or as a group?
- What could we change next time to make the activity more inclusive?
- How can dance and rhythm be adapted for different people?

Participants may respond verbally, using cards or symbols or through simple drawings.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, flipchart and flipchart papers, post-its, music player and speakers, playlist with songs of different tempos, optional simple percussion instruments or objects, scarves or light fabric pieces, visual cards for “start”, “stop”, “slow”, “fast”, “pause”, emotion cards, chairs with enough space around them, and a clean, obstacle-free indoor space.

Background documents and further reading

- Les Grands Ballets Canadiens. (2020). Introductory guide to adapted dance. https://grandsballets.com/workspace/uploads/modele-ouvert/cta/grands-ballets_cndt_danse-adapte-e_5_en.pdf

Recommendations for future youth workers multiplying this workshop:

- The facilitator does not need to be a professional dancer. The workshop is about inclusive movement, rhythm and expression, not dance technique.
- It is crucial to meet the following space and accessibility requirements: indoor space with enough room for safe movement wheelchair users, seated movement and participants who need more personal space, clear and

obstacle-free floor, adjustable lighting and sound conditions, accessible layout for participants using mobility aids.

- The facilitator should select some music that is appropriate for the group's cultural context and test sound levels in advance to avoid sensory overload.
- Physical contact should never be assumed. Partner work can be done without touching, through mirroring, visual cues or shared rhythm.
- The facilitator should avoid comments such as "good dancer" or "bad dancer". It is better to appreciate creativity, courage, attention, cooperation and respect.
- It is important to observe participants' reactions and adjust pace or intensity when needed.
- Participants should not be forced to perform in front of the group. Observation, rhythm giving, choosing music or suggesting movements are also meaningful roles.

Adaptation tips for mixed-ability groups

The facilitator should ensure that communication is clear and supported by visual demonstration, and that sensory comfort is respected by adapting sound levels and avoiding unwanted physical contact. Peer support should be encouraged so that all participants can engage in a way that feels safe and meaningful.

- For participants with physical disabilities or reduced mobility: offer seated versions of all movements, allow wheelchair participation, focus on upper body, hands, facial expression or rhythm roles, and avoid activities that require fast movement through space.
- For participants with limited hand function: use scarves, soft objects, wrist movements, shoulder movements, voice, eye gaze, rhythm selection or partner-supported options if agreed.
- For participants with visual impairments: describe movements clearly, use verbal cues, rhythm, tactile exploration of scarves or instruments, and keep the space predictable and safe.
- For participants who are deaf or hard of hearing: use visual cues, gestures, clear demonstrations, vibration from rhythm if possible, and cards for tempo and transitions.
- For participants with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties: use short instructions, demonstrate each movement, repeat the same sequence several times and avoid too many changes at once.
- For autistic participants or participants with sensory sensitivities: check comfort with music, closeness, lights and fabric textures. Offer headphones, quiet roles, predictable sequence and possibility to take a break.
- For participants with anxiety or psychosocial difficulties: allow observation before joining, avoid solo performance, and give participants control over their role and level of visibility.
- For participants with chronic health conditions or low stamina: keep movement rounds short, include seated participation, calm pauses and low-intensity options.
- For mixed groups in general: remind participants that inclusive dance is not about everyone moving in the same way. It is about creating one shared rhythm from many ways of participating.

4. Introductory adaptive yoga for body awareness

Workshop title: Introductory adaptive yoga for body awareness

Duration: 110 minutes

Background: The awareness on mental health and body awareness is increasingly becoming an important aspect in today's life, due to the technology presence, multi-activity and busy lifestyle. Body awareness, calm movement and relaxation are important parts of well-being for young people with different abilities. Many young people experience stress, tension, tiredness, anxiety, sensory overload or lack of confidence in physical activities. As part of supporting mental health and body mobility, we often see many programmes offering yoga, Pilates and other mobility and physical activities/sports. Gentle and yoga-inspired movement can support young people in developing body awareness, balance and relaxation in ways that can be adapted to different abilities. However, many traditional yoga sessions assume full mobility, long periods of silence, difficult balance exercises, floor-based work or complex postures that are not accessible or comfortable for everyone. This can make some young people feel uncomfortable, excluded or afraid of doing something wrong. This workshop does not aim to teach advanced yoga. It offers a simple, low-impact introduction to adaptive yoga, focusing on simple adaptive yoga-inspired movements, breathing and calm sequences that can be performed seated, standing or with support. The emphasis of this workshop is on listening to one's body, respecting individual limits and experiencing relaxation rather than performance or flexibility.

Aim of the workshop: To introduce simple and adaptable yoga-inspired movements that support body awareness, stability and relaxation for young people with different abilities.

Objectives:

- To familiarise participants with basic breathing and grounding techniques;
- To explore simple yoga-inspired movements in seated and/or standing versions;
- To support participants in noticing tension, relaxation and personal comfort;
- To encourage respect for individual body limits and different ways of moving;
- To create a calm and safe space where young people can experience movement without pressure.

Competences addressed:

- Physical and motor competence;
- Body awareness;
- Emotional self-regulation;
- Communication;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence.
- Self-confidence;
- Respect for personal boundaries;

- Well-being competence.

Methodology and methods:

- Input;
- Demonstration;
- Gentle breathing exercises;
- Adaptive yoga-inspired movement;
- Guided relaxation/body scan;
- Individual reflection;
- Group discussion.

Workshop flow:

I. Introduction to the workshop and the activity (15 minutes)

The facilitator welcomes participants and introduces them to the workshop. He/she explains that the workshop focuses on gentle movement, breathing and body awareness rather than performing complex postures. He/she should clearly explain that this is not a sport competition and not a traditional yoga class. Participants do not need previous experience.

Then, the facilitator introduces some basic safety guidelines for the activity such as:

- Everyone can choose seated, standing or supported positions.
- Participants can stop or rest at any moment.
- No movement should be painful.
- Nobody has to close their eyes.
- Nobody has to do a movement exactly like the facilitator.
- Participants can ask for an alternative.
- We respect silence and personal space.
- We do not touch or correct another person's body without permission.

The facilitator asks participants if there are any important health or comfort considerations they want to share privately or through a support person. He/she should not ask participants to share medical information publicly.

After confirming their understanding on the activity, participants choose a comfortable position (seated, standing or alternating), depending on their needs and preferences to get ready for the introductory adaptive yoga for mixed abilities.

II. Introductory adaptive yoga I: breathing and grounding exercises (15 minutes)

The facilitator starts with activity after confirming that all participants are ready. He/she begins with simple breathing and grounding. The atmosphere should be calm, but not too silent if that makes participants uncomfortable. Soft music can be used only if the group agrees and the volume is comfortable.

The facilitator guides participants slowly:

- Notice your position on the chair, mat or floor.
- Feel the contact of your feet, wheels, chair or body with the ground.
- Place your hands on your lap, abdomen, chair or wherever it feels comfortable.
- Breathe in naturally.
- Breathe out slowly.

- Do not force the breath.

Participants can keep eyes open, look at one point in the room, or close their eyes if they want. The facilitator should avoid saying that there is only one “correct” way to breathe.

Simple grounding options:

- gently pressing feet or hands down;
- noticing five things in the room;
- feeling the chair supporting the body;
- slowly opening and closing hands;
- breathing in and out while counting to three, if comfortable.

The facilitator reminds participants that breathing exercises should feel calming. If someone feels dizzy, uncomfortable or anxious, they can stop and return to normal breathing.

III. Introductory adaptive yoga II: simple adaptive postures and stretches (30 minutes)

In the second step, the facilitator introduces a series of simple movements that are demonstrated in both seated and standing versions. Participants are invited to choose the version that fits them.

Possible movements:

- o Shoulder release: Participants slowly lift shoulders up towards the ears and then let them relax down. This can be repeated 3–5 times.
- o Neck awareness: Participants gently look left and right, or simply look with the eyes if moving the neck is uncomfortable. No movement should be forced.
- o Hand and wrist movement: Participants open and close hands, move fingers, rotate wrists or gently press palms together.
- o Side stretch: Participants raise one arm or hand slightly and lean gently to the side. A smaller version can include only moving the hand or shoulder.
- o Gentle twist: Participants turn the upper body slightly to one side and then return to centre. This can also be done by turning only the head or eyes.
- o Mountain position: Participants sit or stand tall in a stable position. The facilitator explains it as “feeling steady like a mountain”, not as a perfect posture.
- o Forward softening: Participants gently relax the head or shoulders forward, only as far as comfortable, and return slowly to centre.

The facilitator gives enough time between movements and observes the group carefully. Participants are encouraged to move at their own pace and notice body sensations without forcing any movement. The facilitator introduces some optional use of simple props, such as towels or straps, to support movement where needed.

IV. Introductory adaptive yoga III: short adaptive movement sequence (15 minutes)

The facilitator continues with the activity by combining a few of the movements into a short and simple sequence that can be repeated several times. The sequence is practised slowly, with clear guidance and pauses between movements. Participants are reminded that they can simplify movements, reduce intensity or rest at any time.

Example sequence:

- Sit or stand tall – inhale naturally.
- Move shoulders up and down – exhale.

- Open arms or hands gently – inhale.
- Side stretch – exhale;
- Returning to centre – pause.
- Gentle twist to one side – breathe naturally.
- Return to centre – rest.

The facilitator demonstrates the seated version first and then the standing version, if appropriate. The sequence can also be done only with hands, face, breathing or imagination, for participants with very limited mobility or low energy.

V. Introductory adaptive yoga IV: guided relaxation or body scan (15 minutes)

The last step is on relaxation and body scan. Participants are invited to sit comfortably or lie down if appropriate, stay in a wheelchair, or stand with support. The facilitator guides a short body awareness exercise, encouraging participants to focus on different parts of the body and release tension gradually. Participants may keep their eyes open if closing them is uncomfortable. Some of the movements guided by the facilitator are:

- On an exhale, softly shrug shoulders up and let them drop.
- Gently press feet into the floor for one breath, then relax.
- Lightly squeeze hands into fists, then release.
- Roll the head slightly side to side (only if safe/comfortable), then return to centre.

VI. Reflection and closing the workshop (20 minutes)

When the activity finishes, participants slowly return attention to the group. The facilitator gives time and avoids rushing. Participants can stretch, drink water or sit quietly for a moment. They return to a seated position and are invited to share a short reflection about how they feel. Participants can answer verbally, use emotion cards, show thumbs up/down, draw, point to symbols or choose one word. The facilitator uses the following questions to guide their reflection and get concrete answers:

- How do you feel now compared to the beginning?
- Which exercise felt (most) comfortable?
- Was any movement difficult or not pleasant?
- What helped you feel safe?
- Did you prefer breathing, movement or relaxation?
- Is there one exercise you could use again at home, school or youth centre?
- What should we change next time?

The facilitator concludes by thanking participants and encouraging them to continue using simple breathing or movement exercises in daily life.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, flipchart and flipchart papers, post-its, chairs with stable backs, mats or soft surfaces, optional simple props (towels, straps, cushions), water, emotion cards, visual cards for “breathe”, “pause”, “stop”, “rest”, “seated option”, quiet indoor space, adjustable lighting and comfortable sound conditions

Background documents and further reading

- Hickman, D. (2021, February 13). Yoga body scan, a 10-minute mindfulness practice. Di Hickman. <https://dihickman.com/yoga-body-scan/>
- REX TV by YouthREX. (2023, February 21). Mindfulness-Based Programs for Youth // Body Scan exercise [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlhb9cdFHIk>
- Materials on sensory-friendly relaxation activities.

Recommendations for future youth workers multiplying this workshop:

- The facilitator does not need to be an advanced yoga teacher, but should prepare carefully and choose only simple, safe and low-intensity movements. If the group has complex health needs, it is useful to consult a trained professional.
- The workshop should be presented as yoga-inspired body awareness, not as therapy or medical treatment. Youth workers should not promise health benefits or correct participants' bodies.
- Movements should be slow, simple and repeated. It is better to do fewer movements with more time than many movements too quickly.
- It is important to keep the sequence simple and repeat key movements rather than introducing too many variations.
- Floor work should always be optional. Some participants may not be able or comfortable to sit or lie on the floor.
- The facilitator should avoid touching participants to "correct" posture. If support is needed, permission must be asked clearly first.
- Silence, closed eyes and relaxation can be uncomfortable for some young people. Always offer alternatives, such as eyes open, looking at a card, sitting near a trusted person or taking a short break.

Adaptation tips for mixed-ability groups

The facilitator should demonstrate movements clearly and offer alternatives, ensure safe support for balance where necessary, and respect individual limits always. Communication should remain simple and calm, and participants should feel free to opt out of any movement without pressure.

- For participants with physical disabilities or reduced mobility: offer seated and wheelchair-based versions of all movements, avoid floor-only exercises, and allow support from a chair, wall or assistant if requested.
- For participants with limited hand function: use shoulder, head, eye, breathing or small finger movements. Props such as scarves or towels can support movement, but only if comfortable.
- For participants with visual impairments: give clear verbal descriptions, explain the space, avoid silent demonstrations only, and describe each movement step by step.
- For participants who are deaf or hard of hearing: use visual demonstration, written or pictorial instructions, and clear visual signals for start, pause and stop.
- For participants with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties: keep instructions short, demonstrate each movement, repeat the same sequence and avoid abstract language.

- For autistic participants or participants with sensory sensitivities: explain the structure in advance, check comfort with music, lighting and touch, allow headphones or quiet breaks, and do not force closing eyes.
- For participants with anxiety or psychosocial difficulties: allow observation first, keep the environment predictable, avoid pressure to share feelings publicly and offer grounding options with eyes open.
- For participants with chronic health conditions or fatigue: keep movements low intensity, include rest moments, allow water breaks and remind participants that stopping is acceptable.
- For mixed groups in general: remind everyone that body awareness looks different for each person. The most important thing is comfort, choice and respect for personal limits.

5. Youth Leadership in Sport: Designing a mini-inclusive activity

Workshop title: Youth Leadership in Sport: Designing a mini-inclusive activity

Duration: 300 minutes

Background: When young people are involved in designing activities, they better understand what makes sport and leisure inclusive and develop a stronger sense of ownership and awareness. They do not only hear that sport and leisure should be accessible; they actually experience how rules, space, equipment, communication and roles can include or exclude someone. This is especially important for mixed groups of young people with and without disabilities, because it helps participants learn from each other and recognise different needs, strengths and ways of participating.

Many sport and leisure activities are designed by adults and then offered to young people. In inclusive youth work, it is important to create space where young people can also become creators, decision-makers and leaders. A young person with a disability may notice a barrier that others do not see. Another participant may suggest a simple rule change that makes the activity more cooperative. Someone who does not want to run or throw may still become a good designer, observer, communicator or safety checker.

This workshop is designed to give participants the opportunity to co-create a simple “mini-inclusive sport activity” or movement activity using available space and equipment in their own context. The activity does not need to be complicated. It can be a target game, movement challenge, adapted relay, rhythm game, ball activity or cooperative task. The focus of the workshop is on the process: identifying barriers, defining clear aims, rules, roles, space and equipment adaptations, testing ideas, receiving feedback and improving the activity, so that young people with different abilities can participate together. In this way, participants develop leadership, cooperation/teamwork and problem-solving skills while reflecting on inclusion.

Aim of the workshop: To strengthen youth leadership and practical understanding of inclusion by engaging participants in designing, testing and improving a simple sport, movement or leisure activity that can include young people with different abilities.

Objectives:

- To support participants' learning in identifying what makes an activity inclusive or exclusive;
- To guide small groups in designing a simple mini-inclusive activity with clear rules, roles and adaptations;
- To encourage young people with disabilities to contribute as designers, decision-makers and leaders;
- To test and improve the designed activities through peer feedback;
- To promote and encourage teamwork, shared responsibility and inclusive leadership in designing inclusive sport and leisure activities.

Competences addressed:

- Physical and motor competence;
- Creative thinking;
- Citizenship competence;
- Entrepreneurship competence;
- Analytical;
- Problem solving;
- Leadership;
- Teamwork;
- Communication;
- Decision-making;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence.
- Empathy and respect for diversity.

Methodology and methods:

- Input;
- Brainstorming;
- Participatory design;
- Small group work;
- Peer support;
- Testing the activities;
- Feedback and improvement;
- Reflection and discussion.

Workshop flow:

I. Welcome and introduction to youth-led inclusive activity design (25 minutes)

The facilitator welcomes participants and explains that during this workshop they will not only take part in an activity, but they will design one. He/she explains that every group will create a simple sport, movement or leisure activity that could be used later with young people with different abilities.

The facilitator introduces the idea that inclusion is not only about inviting someone to join. It also means thinking about how the activity is organised: the rules, space, equipment, pace, communication and roles.

The facilitator explains that there are no perfect ideas at the beginning. The workshop will follow a simple process:

- Think about inclusion and exclusion;
- Create an idea;
- Design the activity;
- Test it with the group;
- Receive feedback;
- Improve it.

The facilitator also reminds participants that everyone can contribute in different ways. Some participants may be more active in movement, some in drawing, speaking, observing, writing rules, checking safety or suggesting adaptations.

II. Brainstorming: What makes an activity inclusive or exclusive? (35 minutes)

The facilitator then facilitates a short brainstorming session to identify elements that can make an activity inclusive or exclusive, such as complexity of rules, speed, physical demands, communication style or accessibility of space. On flipchart paper, he/she writes two headings:

- What helps participation?
- What makes participation difficult?

Participants are invited to give examples from their own experience in sport, outdoor or leisure activities. The facilitator encourages concrete examples. Participants are invited to share their opinions, while the facilitator writes their contributions in the flipchart.

Then, the facilitator summarises key principles of inclusive design, including simple rules, multiple roles, adaptable equipment and space, and options for different levels of participation:

- The activity should have more than one way to participate.
- Rules should be clear and flexible.
- Equipment should be safe and adaptable.
- The space should be accessible and not too crowded.
- Participants should have meaningful roles.
- Success should not depend only on speed, strength or accuracy.
- Young people with disabilities should be asked what works for them.

III. Small group formation and idea selection (35 minutes)

Participants are divided into small mixed-ability groups, with approximately 3–5 participants per group. The facilitator should make sure that groups are balanced and that no participant is isolated. If some participants need a trusted peer, assistant or communication support, this should be respected. They are instructed that their task is to design an inclusive mini-sport activity and test/pilot it the last part of the workshop. Firstly, they should discuss the idea and then on the next part, they have the space to design their idea into a project/activity. Each group receives a simple worksheet (that should use plain language and enough space for writing, drawing or symbols) that contains the following guiding questions for their task:

- What is the aim of your activity?
- What kind of activity do you want to create? Is it a ball game, movement game, target game, rhythm game, outdoor task or cooperative challenge?
- Who can participate in this activity and what abilities should be considered? What could be difficult for some participants?
- What different roles can people have?
- What types of movements will be involved? How can someone participate if they do not want to run, throw, speak loudly or move a lot?
- What equipment do we need?
- How can we make the activity safe?

All groups explore ideas for one or two possible mini-sport activities using available space and materials. Groups can choose one idea from their discussion. It is better to create a small and clear activity than a complicated game that is difficult to explain. They are given 20 minutes for this task and when they finish, they inform the facilitator. They should also inform the facilitator on the duration of their activity, to plan the timing for testing the activities in the group.

The facilitator moves between groups and supports them with questions, not by taking over the design.

IV. Small group work: designing the inclusive mini-sport activity (70 minutes)

After deciding on the idea, the facilitator invites each group to continue working and developing their idea in more detail. The facilitator presents the key elements and section that they should cover when designing their activity:

- Name of the activity;
- Aim and objectives;
- Basic rules (start, progression, scoring or outcome);
- Roles (players and support roles);
- Space setup and possible adaptations
- Equipment and possible modifications;
- Ways to include participants with different abilities;
- Safety rules;
- At least three adaptation options;
- How the activity starts and ends;
- How success is defined.

The facilitator explains that “success” does not need to mean winning. Success can mean that all team members participate, that the group completes a shared mission, that everyone tries one role, or that the team improves communication.

The facilitator supports the groups by asking guiding questions and encouraging them to include at least one or two clear adaptations.

Groups should think about the following adaptation areas:

- o Space: Can the distance be shorter? Can the area be wider? Is there a seated option? Is there enough space for wheelchairs or mobility aids?
- o Task: Can the task be done in different ways? Can someone roll instead of throw, guide instead of run, choose a target instead of playing physically, or work with a peer?
- o Equipment: Can the group use softer, lighter, bigger, colourful or easier-to-grip equipment?
- o People: Can participants work in pairs, small teams or buddy roles? Can roles rotate? Can support be given without over-helping?

The facilitator encourages groups to prepare a short explanation for the others. They can use flipchart paper, drawings, role cards, visual instructions or a small demonstration. Participants who do not want to speak in front of the group can present by showing materials, demonstrating a role, holding a poster or asking another group member to speak.

They have 60 minutes to complete their task and join the plenary afterwards.

V. Break and preparation for testing (20 minutes)

The facilitator gives participants a break. During the break, groups can also prepare their space and materials if they want.

After the break, each group checks its activity using a short checklist:

- Are the rules simple?
- Is the space safe?
- Is there at least one seated or low-movement option?
- Are there different roles?

- Is support based on asking first?
- Is the activity too fast, too loud or too competitive?
- Can the activity be explained visually or through demonstration?

The facilitator helps groups make final adjustments before testing.

VI. Presentations and testing of the inclusive mini-sport activities (95 minutes)

Each group presents their activity to the others, explaining the aim, rules and key adaptations. The group then tests the activity for a certain amount of time. Depending on group size, each activity can be tested for 10–15 minutes, followed by short feedback. If there are many groups, the facilitator can create parallel testing stations. Each group explains:

- the name of the activity;
- the aim;
- the rules;
- the roles;
- the adaptations;
- what kind of support participants can ask for.

The designing group taking the lead and acting as facilitators, while the adult facilitator provides support only if needed, especially for safety, time management and accessibility. During testing, participants are encouraged to choose their level of participation, including active play, a seated role, adapted roles, observation, giving feedback, checking safety, explaining rules, supporting communication or helping with equipment. Nobody should be forced into a role that feels uncomfortable.

The facilitator observes:

- Are the rules understandable?
- Are participants included in different ways?
- Is someone left without a role?
- Is the activity safe?
- Are adaptations really used?
- Does the group support without over-helping?
- Is the activity too competitive or too fast?

After each test, the facilitator gives a short pause before moving to feedback.

VII. Peer feedback and improvement of activities (30 minutes)

After the testing of activities took place, participants provide structured feedback for each one of them. The facilitator should create a constructive atmosphere. Feedback should not be about criticising the group, but about improving the activity.

Suggested feedback questions:

- What worked well in this activity?
- What helped people participate?
- Was anything unclear?
- Was there any barrier for participation?
- Did everyone have a meaningful role?
- What adaptation was useful?
- What could be improved to make the activity more inclusive?

After the group feedback, the facilitator gives constructive feedback as well in order to help groups identify one or two concrete adjustments to improve their activity. If time allows, they may briefly re-test the modified version.

VIII. Final reflection and closing (30 minutes)

Participants gather in a circle or semi-circle. The facilitator leads a final reflection on both the activity design process and the learning about inclusion.

Suggested reflection questions:

- What did you learn about designing inclusive activities?
- Was it easy or difficult to think about different abilities?
- Which adaptation idea was most useful?
- How did your group make decisions?
- Did everyone have a chance to contribute?
- What did you learn from testing the activity with others?
- What would you do differently next time?
- Could this activity be used in your school, youth centre, park or community?

Participants share their key learnings about inclusive activity design and ideas they would apply in future activities. The facilitator concludes by highlighting the importance of inclusive design and encourages participants to reuse and adapt their mini-sport ideas in future sessions.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, flipchart and flipchart papers, post-its, design worksheets, feedback cards or stickers, role cards, visual instruction cards, basic sports and play equipment (balls, cones, ropes, chairs, tape, etc.), space for group work and testing activities.

Background documents and further reading

- Simple guidelines on the STEP model and Inclusion Spectrum (as already used in Part I), can be designated here.
- Scottish Disability Sport. (2016). Quick guide: Inclusive coaching – practical tips on simple rules, clear communication and adapting activities. Retrieved from: <https://scottishdisabilitysport.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Inclusive-Coaching-Quick-Guide.pdf>
- Inclusive Sport design. (2017). Retrieved from: <https://www.inclusivesportdesign.com/blog-posts/how-to-adapt-and-modify-your-sport-activities-to-include-all>

Recommendations for future youth workers multiplying this workshop:

- It is important for the facilitator to focus on the learning process rather than producing perfect activities. Some ideas may be unfinished or need improvement, and this is part of the learning.
- The workshop should be prepared with enough materials, but groups should also be encouraged to use simple low-cost objects creatively.
- The facilitator should not design the activity instead of participants. It is better to ask guiding questions and help them think about inclusion.
- Young people with disabilities should be actively invited to share what would help them participate, but they should not be pressured to speak as representatives of all disabled people.
- Testing should be done in a safe and respectful way. If an activity does not work well, the group should analyse why and improve it, not blame anyone.

- The facilitator should prevent domination by one or two participants. Roles such as time keeper, drawing person, equipment manager, speaker, safety checker and adaptation adviser can help more participants contribute.
- The facilitator should adjust the number of groups and testing rounds according to time and group size. The activity can be shortened also by testing only one part of each activity, but the feedback and improvement phase should not be skipped.

Adaptation tips for mixed-ability groups

The activity should allow flexible participation that enables participants to contribute through different roles such as designing, facilitating, playing or observing. The facilitator should encourage groups to include simple adaptations in their designs, support clear communication using visual or written elements, and ensure that all participants can engage meaningfully regardless of their level of physical participation.

- For participants with physical disabilities or reduced mobility: ensure that design tasks can be done seated, offer accessible testing spaces, and encourage groups to include seated roles, shorter distances and non-running options.
- For participants with limited hand function: provide larger pens, stickers, verbal contribution options, peer note-taking, pointing, drawing support or digital input if useful.
- For participants with visual impairments: read worksheets aloud, describe materials and space clearly, use tactile objects where possible, and ensure that testing areas are safe and predictable.
- For participants who are deaf or hard of hearing: use written instructions, visual role cards, demonstrations and clear group positioning so participants can see faces and gestures.
- For participants with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties: use simple worksheets, concrete examples, step-by-step design questions and repeated explanation of the task.
- For autistic participants or participants with sensory sensitivities: explain the whole process in advance, provide a visual schedule, reduce noise during group work, and allow predictable or quieter roles.
- For participants with anxiety or psychosocial difficulties: allow them to contribute without public speaking, choose a supportive role, work with a trusted peer or present through poster/demonstration.
- For participants with chronic health conditions or low stamina: include breaks, allow seated participation and avoid long testing periods without rest.
- For mixed groups in general: remind participants that leadership can look different. A leader can speak, listen, draw, observe, support, organise materials or notice barriers.

6. Tactile rope and ball challenges

Workshop title: Tactile rope and ball challenges

Duration: 110 minutes

Background: Simple rope and ball activities can be adapted to support young people with different abilities in developing coordination, spatial awareness, communication and teamwork in a safe and low-pressure environment. However, there are cases when young people with different abilities don't feel included or hesitate to join such games due to the nature of the game and competitiveness. In many cases, when games are fast paced, visually complex or highly competitive, some participants may feel excluded or unsafe. Therefore, there is a need to adapt such games and sport activities that are considered fun and attractive, so that everyone can play it at their pace and convenience.

This workshop is designed to address these needs. In this workshop, the organisers and facilitators use soft balls, tactile ropes and simplified space layouts to create cooperative challenges where participants can choose their level of movement and involvement. The focus is mainly on shared problem-solving, safe movement, coordination, communication and adapting the task to the group, while speed or physical strength are rather left out. Participants can roll, pass, guide, follow a rope path, give directions, place objects, observe, count, support a peer or help design a challenge.

The activity is suitable for indoor or outdoor spaces and can be implemented with very simple materials. It shows youth workers how basic equipment can become inclusive when the space, task, equipment and roles are adapted carefully.

Aim of the workshop: To use tactile rope and ball activities to develop coordination, spatial awareness, communication and cooperation in mixed-ability groups.

Objectives:

- To introduce simple rope and ball activities adaptable to different abilities;
- To encourage teamwork among participants through shared roles and communication;
- To support safe exploration of movement, direction and coordination.
- To reduce competitiveness and create cooperative group challenges;
- To show how low-cost materials can be used for inclusive sport and leisure activities.

Competences addressed:

- Physical and motor competence;
- Creative thinking;
- Problem solving
- Communication and teamwork;
- Spatial awareness;
- Coordination;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence.

- Empathy and respect for diversity.

Methodology and methods:

- Short introduction;
- Individual exploration and small group work;
- Cooperative rope and ball activities/games;
- Peer support;
- Reflection and discussion.

Workshop flow:

I. Welcome, introduction and safety rules (15 minutes)

The facilitator welcomes participants and introduces them to the workshop. He/she explains that the workshop will involve simple coordination and teamwork activities using ropes and soft balls. He/she emphasises that the activities are cooperative and can be adapted in different ways.

Then, the facilitator introduces some basic safety rules that the group should have in mind when playing:

- We use only soft balls and safe materials.
- We do not throw hard towards another person.
- We move carefully around ropes and tape.
- We ask before helping or guiding someone.
- Everyone can choose their own role.
- Anyone can stop, rest or observe when needed.
- We follow the stop signal immediately.

The facilitator shows the stop signal, such as the word “STOP”, raised hand, red card or another visual sign. The group practises stopping once before starting.

Participants are introduced to the materials (ropes, tape, balls, cones or markers) and encouraged to explore (touch or observe) them briefly to become familiar with textures, size, weight and handling of the equipment before using it in movement tasks.

II. Warm-up activities with soft ball (15 minutes)

Participants are invited to form a circle or semi-circle, by being seated or standing, using wheelchairs or choosing another comfortable position. The facilitator introduces some simple ball-passing activities that can consist of the following:

- Passing or rolling a ball from hand to hand around the circle;
- Tapping the ball gently instead of catching it;
- Passing the ball using a scarf, towel or tray;
- Saying the name of the person before sending the ball;
- Gently sending the ball to another participant using eye contact, gesture or visual card to show readiness.

The facilitator reminds participants to check if the receiver is ready before sending the ball. If someone does not want to catch, they can stop the ball with hands, feet, chair, basket or another object. Participants can also take roles such as name caller, direction giver or ball collector.

The facilitator asks shortly:

- Which way of sending the ball felt safest?

- Was rolling easier than throwing?
- What helped you know when the ball was coming?
- How can we adapt this for someone who does not want to catch?

III. Rope path and shape activities (30 minutes)

After the warm up activities with soft ball, the facilitator introduces new activities. In this stage, ropes, cloth strips or tape are arranged on the floor to create simple paths or shapes. These can include a straight line, curved path, circle, square, zig-zag or large shape. The space should be clear and safe, with enough room for participants using wheelchairs or mobility aids. The facilitator announces that in this part, participants should create small groups and complete some tasks as a team. The facilitator divides participants into 4-5 small groups of 3-5 people. Each group receives one rope path or shape. Then, he/she introduces the tasks that all groups should complete. The possible tasks are:

- o Task 1: Follow the path - Participants follow the rope path at their own pace. They can walk, roll, move beside the path, guide a peer, or observe and give directions.
- o Task 2: Ball along the line - Participants try to move a soft ball along the rope line by rolling, pushing, tapping or guiding it. The ball does not need to stay perfectly on the line.
- o Task 3: Create a shape - The group uses rope to create a large shape, such as a circle, star, house, road or symbol. Then they place balls or objects inside or around it.
- o Task 4: Guide and describe - One participant describes the path or shape to the group. Others follow, point, move objects or ask questions.

Participants who prefer not to move can take meaningful roles: direction giver, shape designer, safety watcher, object placer, time keeper, photographer if appropriate, or encouragement person. They are given approximately 20 minutes to do the tasks, but the facilitator observes the groups and gives them more time if needed. He/she moves between groups, checks safety and asks:

- Is the path too narrow or too long?
- Can everyone reach or understand the task?
- Do we need to make the shape bigger?
- Does someone need a seated or quieter role?
- How can the group cooperate better?

IV. Combined rope and ball challenges (30 minutes)

At this stage, the facilitator gives more complexity to the activities. He/she instructs participants to stay in their small groups and in the next 20-30 minutes to combine the practices rope and ball activities. Small groups rotate through 2-3 simple stations that combine ropes and balls. The specific instructions for the possible new combined rope and ball challenges are:

- o Station 1 – Target lines: Ropes on the floor mark two or three “lanes”. Participants roll or gently throw balls so they stay in a lane or stop in a marked zone. Distances can be changed for each participant.
- o Station 2 – Cooperative passing: Participants position themselves along a rope shape or path and try to move one or more balls from one end to the other

using only rolling or gentle passes, tapping or guiding (The group can decide the safest method.), without dropping them outside the “path”.

- Station 3 – Colour, texture or sound cues (if available): Different coloured balls, different textured balls or balls with bells are used. The facilitator gives a cue, and participants move or pass the correct ball. For participants who do not use sound cues, visual or tactile cues can be used.
- Station 4: Team shape challenge: The group creates a rope shape and then tries to place balls in specific parts of the shape. For example: one ball inside the circle, one ball outside, one ball on the line.

The facilitator reminds participants that the aim is cooperation. If the challenge is too difficult, the group should adapt it. They can change the distance, ball size, rope shape, number of balls, speed, roles or rules.

The facilitator can use cooperative scoring:

- 1 point if everyone has a role;
- 1 point if the group adapts the task;
- 1 point if the group communicates respectfully;
- 1 point if the group completes the challenge together;
- 1 point if the group supports someone without over-helping.

V. Reflection and discussion (20 minutes)

The facilitator concludes the activity by applauding participants for their involvement in the activity and for their teamwork. Then, participants are invited to join the plenary to reflect on their experience and discuss the activities. The facilitator uses the following questions for this part:

- Which activity did you enjoy the most?
- Which task was easiest for you?
- Which task was difficult?
- What helped your group work well together?
- Did everyone have a role?
- What made the activity easier or more comfortable?
- What adaptation was useful?
- How did the rope or ball help you understand the space?
- What would you change next time?

Participants may respond verbally, through gestures or using simple feedback tools.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, flipchart and flipchart papers, post-its, soft balls of different sizes, colours or textures, balls with bells if available, ropes, cloth strips or tape for marking paths and shapes; cones or markers for zones, scarves, towels or trays for adapted passing, chairs for seated participation, visual cards for “start”, “stop”, “roll”, “pass”, “pause”, emotion cards, a hall or open indoor/outdoor space with a smooth and obstacle-free floor, enough room for small groups to move safely, and access routes suitable for wheelchairs or other mobility aids.

Background documents and further reading

- Adapted Sports. (2021). Best practices in education-based adapted team sports (2nd ed.). Retrieved from: <https://adaptedsports.org/wp->

<content/uploads/2021/03/Best-Practices-in-Adapted-Team-Sports-2nd-Edition.pdf>

- Inclusive Sport design. (2017). Retrieved from: <https://www.inclusivesportdesign.com/blog-posts/how-to-adapt-and-modify-your-sport-activities-to-include-all>

Recommendations for future youth workers multiplying this workshop:

- It is important that the facilitator tests rope layouts and equipment setup in advance. Ropes and tape should not create tripping risks. Paths should be wide enough for wheelchairs and mobility aids.
- The facilitator should introduce only one task at a time. Too many instructions can make the activity confusing.
- The facilitator should use soft and safe balls. Hard balls or heavy equipment should be avoided, especially when participants are beginners or unsure.
- Ropes can be used in different ways: as tactile guides, visual borders, target lines, shapes or team-building tools. They should not be used to restrict movement or force a participant into one path.
- It is important to reduce competition. The facilitator should value cooperation, communication and adaptation more than accuracy or speed.
- Participants should be allowed to choose roles. Some may prefer to move, while others may prefer to guide, design, observe, count or encourage.
- The facilitator should ask before offering physical support. Guiding, touching or positioning a participant should never happen without permission.
- The facilitator should monitor participants' energy and attention levels and adjust accordingly. Timing should be adjusted as well, to not put pressure on participants and give them space to enjoy the activities.
- It is recommended to encourage participants to suggest variations and adaptations of the activities.

Adaptation tips for mixed-ability groups

The facilitator should adjust distance, speed and intensity, use high-contrast or sound-based materials where needed and ensure safe movement around ropes and equipment. Clear communication and peer support should be encouraged so that all participants can engage comfortably and meaningfully.

- For participants with physical disabilities or reduced mobility: create wide paths, allow wheelchair participation, reduce distance, use seated roles and avoid tasks that require stepping over ropes.
- For participants with limited hand function: use larger and softer balls, allow pushing with forearms, feet, tray, towel or assistive device, and include roles such as direction giver or shape designer.
- For participants with visual impairments: use tactile ropes, balls with bells or textured balls, clear verbal descriptions and predictable space layout. Offer a guide if the participant wants one.
- For participants who are deaf or hard of hearing: use visual cards, gestures and demonstrations for start, stop, pass, roll and change. Do not rely only on spoken instructions.
- For participants with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties: keep tasks simple, demonstrate before starting, repeat the same structure and use visual examples of the rope path or station.

- For autistic participants or participants with sensory sensitivities: allow time to explore materials, check comfort with textures and sounds, avoid loud bells if uncomfortable, and provide a calmer role or break option.
- For participants with anxiety or psychosocial difficulties: allow observation before joining, avoid pressure to perform, and offer predictable roles such as safety watcher, scorer or object organiser.
- For participants with chronic health conditions or low stamina: keep rounds short, include sitting breaks, allow low-movement roles and avoid long periods of standing.
- For mixed groups in general: remind participants that everyone can contribute differently. A successful challenge is not the one completed fastest, but the one completed with respect and cooperation.

7. Core control games for functional stability and balance

Workshop title: Core control games for functional stability and balance

Duration: 100 minutes

Background: Core stability and balance are essential for everyday movements, such as sitting upright, reaching for an object, transferring from one place to another, standing or moving with mobility aids. For young people with different abilities, developing body awareness and controlled movement can support confidence, safety and independence in daily life. However, many fitness programmes rely on high-intensity exercises or specialised equipment that may not be accessible or comfortable for all participants. Some activities require floor work, strong abdominal movement, standing without support, or equipment that is not available in youth centres and community spaces. This can make young people feel excluded, unsafe or uncomfortable. It is important to raise awareness on this situation and design inclusive activities that can be adapted by different groups and sport/physical education (PE) institutions as part of their programmes and activities.

This workshop introduces simple and low-impact core control and balance games using everyday objects such as chairs, bottles, towels, light balls, scarves or cushions. The activities are designed to be adaptable for participants who are seated, standing, using wheelchairs, using mobility aids or needing support. The focus in all activities is on learning controlled movement, body awareness, cooperation, safety and respecting personal limits when doing simple activities. While strength and performance are encouraged and celebrated, they are not the focus of these activities.

Aim of the workshop: To support participants in practising body awareness, stability and controlled movement through simple and adaptable balance and core games with everyday objects.

Objectives:

- To introduce basic core and balance activities that can be done seated, standing or with support;
- To encourage participants to explore their own balance and stability limits in a safe and playful way;
- To promote controlled movement, body awareness and confidence;
- To strengthen cooperation and mutual support during simple movement challenges;
- To show how everyday objects can be used for inclusive and low-cost movement activities.

Competences addressed:

- Physical and motor competence;
- Body awareness;
- Health-related competences;
- Communication;
- Teamwork;

- Problem solving;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence.
- Self-confidence;
- Respect for personal limits.

Methodology and methods:

- Short introduction;
- Gentle warm-up;
- A set of seated and standing core control games;
- Supported balance activities;
- Pair and small group tasks;
- Reflection and discussion.

Workshop flow:

I. Introduction to safety and posture awareness (15 minutes)

The facilitator welcomes participants to the workshop and explains that the workshop focuses on small, slow and controlled movements to explore balance and stability. He/she explains that balance is not only about standing on one leg. Balance can also mean sitting with control, reaching safely, shifting weight, holding an object, or returning to a stable position.

Then, the facilitator introduces some basic safety guidelines:

- Move slowly and carefully.
- Stop if something hurts or feels unsafe.
- Use support when needed.
- Ask before helping another person.
- Do not compare your movement with others.
- Resting or observing is also allowed.
- Everyone chooses their own level of challenge.

Participants are invited to notice their current posture and make small adjustments to feel more stable and comfortable. They can sit, stand, use a wheelchair, hold a chair, or choose another stable position. The facilitator should avoid correcting bodies in a strict way. Instead, he/she can suggest small adjustments, such as sitting more comfortably, placing feet on the floor if possible, or using the back of the chair for support.

II. Gentle warm-up with seated and standing options (10 minutes)

To make the process easier and more comprehensive for participants, the facilitator starts with a short warm-up session with seated and standing options, possibly including:

- Shoulder rolls;
- Gentle arm movements forward and to the side;
- Opening and closing hands;
- Light side bends and upper-body rotations within a comfortable range;
- Gentle marching while seated or standing;
- Foot taps or wheel taps;
- breathing in and out with slow arm movement.

The facilitator emphasises that the focus is on activating the body and increasing awareness of movement. Each movement is repeated only a few times. The facilitator reminds participants that they can make movements smaller or skip any movement. The warm-up should help participants become aware of movement, not make them tired.

III. Chair-based core and balance activities (20 minutes)

The facilitator instructs participants remain seated on chairs or in wheelchairs. He/she introduces simple chair-based games that practise stability, reaching and controlled movement consisting of:

- Activity 1: Reach and return - Participants reach gently towards an object placed in front of them, such as a bottle, ball or scarf, and then return to a stable position. The object can be close or further away depending on each participant's ability.
- Activity 2: Side-to-side weight shift - Participants slowly shift weight to one side and then back to the centre. This can be done by moving shoulders, arms, hands or only looking to the side. The movement should stay small and safe.
- Activity 3: Object pass around the body - Participants pass a light object from one hand to the other, across the lap, around the waist area, or from one side of the chair to the other. If this is difficult, the object can be passed with support or moved on a towel or tray.
- Activity 4: Cushion or towel press - Participants gently press a cushion, towel or soft ball between hands, against the lap, or against the side of the chair. The focus is on noticing controlled pressure, not on strength.

Participants are encouraged to move within a comfortable range and use support when needed. The facilitator observes their movement to get an understanding of their capacity for the next level of activities and to check whether they need support on these ones.

IV. Standing or supported balance activities (20 minutes)

The facilitator announces that the next activities are about supporting balance when standing. These activities are optional and only those who feel ready for more challenging activities are invited to join, while others who prefer to remain seated can perform similar upper-body tasks seated, focusing on controlled movement and posture. Participants are invited to try simple balance tasks with support available. Possible activities:

- Activity 1: Stable standing - Participants stand with support from a chair, wall, table, mobility aid or trusted person if needed. They focus on feeling stable for a few seconds. Seated participants can practise sitting tall or holding a stable position.
- Activity 2: Narrow stance - Participants stand with feet closer together for a few seconds, then returning to a wider base. Seated participants can practise sitting with their hands balancing closer - wider.
- Activity 3: Heel-to-toe line - Participants placing one foot slightly in front of the other (as if on a line), holding for a few breaths, then switching sides.
- Activity 4: Object transfer - Participants slowly passing a light object from one hand to the other while maintaining a comfortable stance, possibly adding a

small weight shift from one leg to the other. Seated participants can do the same, without adding a weight shift from leg to leg.

- Activity 5: Weight transfer - Participants gently shift weight from one foot to the other, or from one side of the body to the other. Seated participants can shift weight slightly in the chair.
- Activity 6: Object lift and place - Participants lift a light object from one surface and place it on another. The height and distance should be adjusted. Seated participants can do the same on a table, lap tray or chair.
- Activity 7: Step or tap challenge - Participants tap one foot forward, side or back while holding support. Seated participants can tap feet, wheels, hands or objects instead.
- Activity 8: Slow balance pause - Participants make one small movement and then pause in a stable position. The pause can be one or two seconds. The aim is control, not difficulty.

The facilitator should make sure the floor is non-slippery and that chairs are stable. Nobody should be asked to stand without support. If a participant feels unstable, the facilitator should offer a seated option immediately and without making it look like failure.

V. Pair or small group balance games with everyday objects (20 minutes)

For the last part, the facilitator divides participants into 4-5 small groups or pairs. Then, he/she instructs that in their small groups, they should rotate through 2-3 simple stations that use everyday objects, with clear seated and standing options. The aim is to practise controlled movement and cooperation, not competition.

Possible games:

- Game 1: Pass the balance object - Participants pass a light object, such as a ball, scarf or bottle, slowly around the group. Before passing, they check that the receiver is ready.
- Game 2: Tower of stability - The group builds a small “tower” or arrangement using plastic bottles, cups, cushions or soft objects. Participants can place, guide, choose positions, give directions or support the table area.
- Game 3: Towel teamwork - Two participants hold the ends of a towel and move a soft ball from one side to another. This can be done seated or standing. If holding is difficult, the towel can be placed on a table and moved by pushing.
- Game 4: Slow movement challenge - The group chooses one simple movement and tries to do it slowly and together, for example lifting a scarf, passing a ball, or tapping a rhythm.

The facilitator reminds participants to communicate clearly and ask before helping. If someone cannot or does not want to perform a movement, they can be the direction giver, safety watcher, object chooser, rhythm keeper or encouragement person. Participants choose the level that feels safe and can also take non-moving roles such as counting repetitions or giving encouragement to other members of their group.

VI. Reflection and discussion (15 minutes)

The facilitator ends the workshop by inviting participants to reflect on their experience and share it with the group. Participants can answer verbally, use emotion cards, show thumbs up/down, point to symbols, draw or choose one word. They are invited to share their reflection on the activity by answering the following:

- Which exercise felt useful or comfortable?
- Was any movement too difficult or uncomfortable?
- What did you notice about own balance or posture?
- What helped you feel stable?
- Did you prefer seated, standing or supported activities?
- Which object was easiest to use?
- How can we adapt these exercises for different people?
- Is there one simple movement you could use again in daily life?

The facilitator concludes by encouraging participants to apply simple movements in daily routines while respecting their limits.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, flipchart and flipchart papers, post-its, stable chairs, everyday objects (plastic bottles, cushions, towels, light balls, scarves, cups, trays or soft objects), optional mats or soft surfaces, visual cards for “start”, “stop”, “pause”, “seated option”, “support”, emotion cards, water, indoor space with a flat and non-slippery floor, enough room for small groups to move between stations, and easy access for mobility aids.

Background documents and further reading

- 15 Minute Adaptive Core Workout - National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD). (2025, April 25). National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD). <https://www.nchpad.org/resources/15-minute-adaptive-core-workout/>

Recommendations for future youth workers multiplying this workshop:

- The facilitator should check health information (where available) for participants who may need specific precautions such as joint instability, heart or respiratory conditions, epilepsy, pain, fatigue or balance-related risks.
- Everyday objects should be light, safe and easy to hold. Heavy bottles, hard objects or unstable chairs should be avoided.
- The facilitator should demonstrate each exercise slowly and from different angles (especially seated and standing versions) and invite questions before participants try it. He/she should also emphasise that pain, dizziness or strong discomfort are signal to stop, and that it is acceptable to skip any movement that does not feel right. Participants should never be encouraged to “push through”.
- Standing activities must always have seated or supported alternatives. No participant should feel embarrassed for choosing the safer option.
- The workshop should not be presented as physiotherapy or medical exercise. It is a youth work activity focused on body awareness, safe movement and inclusive participation.
- This workshop can be organised in combination with the adaptive yoga session in a series on body awareness and self-care.

Adaptation tips for mixed-ability groups

The facilitator should encourage participants to move within their own limits, use support where needed and take frequent breaks. Movements should be

demonstrated clearly and adapted to different ranges of motion, while ensuring that all participants can engage safely and comfortably without pressure.

- For participants with physical disabilities or reduced mobility: offer seated versions of all activities, use wheelchair-friendly space, reduce reaching distance and allow support from chairs, tables or mobility aids.
- For participants with limited hand function: use larger or softer objects, towels, trays, Velcro straps if available, or allow pushing, touching, pointing, directing or choosing objects instead of holding them.
- For participants with visual impairments: describe each movement clearly, keep the space predictable, use tactile objects and explain where equipment is placed before starting.
- For participants who are deaf or hard of hearing: use demonstrations, visual cards and clear gestures for start, pause, stop and change. Make sure participants can see the facilitator.
- For participants with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties: use short instructions, one movement at a time, repeated demonstrations and simple examples such as “reach”, “pause”, “return”.
- For autistic participants or participants with sensory sensitivities: explain the sequence in advance, check comfort with textures and closeness, avoid sudden touch, and offer a quiet role or break.
- For participants with anxiety or psychosocial difficulties: allow observation first, avoid public comparison, and offer predictable roles such as object chooser or safety watcher.
- For participants with chronic health conditions or low stamina: keep exercises short, include rest moments, allow water breaks and support low-intensity participation.
- For mixed groups in general: remind participants that stability and balance look different for everyone. The aim is safe control and confidence, not doing the most difficult movement.

8. Boccia-inspired inclusive target games

Workshop title: Boccia-inspired inclusive target games

Duration: 120 minutes

Background: Boccia is a precision ball sport where players try to send their balls as close as possible to a target ball. It is internationally known as a sport accessible for persons with disabilities, especially persons with physical disabilities. In this workshop, we are not using official Boccia competition rules. Instead, we use the idea of Boccia as inspiration for simple and inclusive target games that can be implemented with young people with different abilities in local community settings.

This workshop responds to the needs recognised in the project, especially the lack of adapted sport and leisure activities for young people with disabilities. Many regular sport activities are based on speed, strength, running or fast reactions, which can exclude participants with reduced mobility, lower stamina, coordination difficulties, sensory impairments, intellectual disabilities or anxiety in group settings. Boccia-inspired games offer another way to experience sport: calm, precise, strategic and cooperative.

The activity can be played seated or standing. Participants can throw, roll, push or slide the ball, and they can also use simple support tools such as a cardboard ramp, plastic tube or smooth board. Because of this, young people with different abilities can participate in the same game without being separated into different activities. This workshop gives a practical example of adapting sport methodology through changes in space, equipment, rules and roles.

Aim of the workshop: To provide young people with different abilities with an inclusive sport and leisure experience through Boccia-inspired target games, supporting participation, cooperation, focus and mutual encouragement.

Objectives:

- To introduce participants to a simple target game inspired by Boccia;
- To enable participants to explore different ways of sending a ball towards a target;
- To support participation of young people with different mobility, coordination and communication needs;
- To strengthen teamwork, patience, turn-taking and fair play;
- To encourage participants to experience sport as adaptable, cooperative and accessible.

Competences addressed:

- Physical and motor competence;
- Communication;
- Teamwork;
- Strategic thinking;
- Problem solving;
- Social competence;

- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Empathy and respect for diversity.

Methodology and methods:

- Short introduction;
- Demonstration;
- Experiential learning through inclusive sport activity;
- Individual practice;
- Team-based target games;
- Cooperative learning;
- Peer support;
- Reflection and debriefing.

Workshop flow:

I. Welcome, introduction and safety agreements (15 minutes)

The facilitator welcomes participants and invites them to sit or stand in a semi-circle, depending on what is comfortable for them. The facilitator explains that the group will play target games inspired by Boccia. It is important to immediately create a calm and non-competitive atmosphere. The facilitator can say: "Today the goal is not to be the strongest or fastest. The goal is to try, aim, support each other and find the way of playing that works for each person."

The facilitator explains that Boccia is a target sport where players try to send balls close to a target. Then, he/she asks simple opening questions:

- Have you ever played a game where you aim at a target?
- What makes a game fun for you?
- What can make a game difficult or stressful?

Participants can answer verbally, by raising hands, pointing to cards or simply listening. The facilitator writes key words on flipchart paper, such as: target, ball, aiming, team, patience, help, fair play, focus.

The facilitator introduces basic safety and respect agreements:

- We do not throw hard towards people.
- We wait for our turn.
- We collect balls only when the facilitator says it is safe.
- We respect different ways of playing.
- We ask before helping someone.
- Everyone can choose their own way to participate.

The facilitator explains that in this activity, participants do not all need to play in the same way. One person can throw, another can roll, another can push, and another can use a ramp. All these ways are valid.

II. Trying different ways of playing (20 minutes)

The facilitator prepares one simple target in the playing area. The target can be a coloured ball, cone, bottle, paper circle or any visible object. The space should be flat, safe and without obstacles.

Participants receive different safe objects: soft balls, beanbags, foam balls, rolled socks or fabric balls. It is useful to have objects of different sizes, colours, weights and textures.

The facilitator demonstrates several options:

- throwing with one hand;
- throwing with two hands;
- rolling from the floor;
- pushing with the palm;
- pushing with the foot;
- sliding the ball along the floor;
- using a cardboard ramp, plastic tube or smooth board;
- asking a peer to hold the ramp, while the participant decides the direction.

Participants try the options at their own pace. They should not be rushed. Some young people may need more time to understand the movement, choose the ball or decide how close they want to be to the target. The facilitator encourages exploration, not perfect performance.

After several minutes, the facilitator asks:

- Which way of playing felt easiest?
- Which ball was most comfortable?
- Was the target too close, too far or good?

Participants can answer verbally, with thumbs up/down, by pointing to the ball they preferred, or by choosing simple cards such as “easy”, “difficult”, “fun”, “need help”.

III. First simple target game (25 minutes)

The facilitator explains the first version of the game:

- One target is placed in the playing area.
- Each participant has one or two balls.
- Participants take turns sending the ball towards the target.
- The aim is to get the ball close to the target.
- After everyone has played, the group looks together which balls are closest.

The facilitator demonstrates one round slowly before starting. It is useful to show the sequence with visual cards or words written on paper: “Wait”; “Play”; “Stop”; “Look”; “Collect”.

Participants then play the first round. They can choose how they want to play: seated, standing, rolling, throwing, pushing or using a ramp. If someone does not want to play immediately, they can first observe or take a support role, such as showing the turn card, helping to return balls or encouraging others.

After the first round, the facilitator avoids focusing only on the winner. Instead, he/she asks:

- Which ball came close to the target?
- What helped this ball move well?
- Did someone use a different technique?
- What can we change for the next round?

The group can then adapt one or two elements, for example: move the target closer, use a bigger target, create two starting lines, use softer balls, allow more time, or play in pairs. The second round is played with the agreed adaptations. This helps participants understand that changing rules is normal in inclusive sport.

IV. Team target challenge with inclusive roles (30 minutes)

Participants are divided into small teams of 3–5 people. The facilitator should create mixed teams carefully, making sure that each team has different strengths and that no participant is placed only in the role of “person who needs help”.

Before starting, the facilitator introduces possible team roles:

- Player: sends the ball towards the target;
- Strategy friend: helps the team decide where to aim;
- Ramp helper: holds the ramp if someone wants to use it;
- Measurer: checks which ball is closer;
- Encouragement person: supports the team with positive words or gestures;
- Ball collector: collects balls when it is safe;
- Turn keeper: reminds the team whose turn is next.

Participants choose or rotate roles. A participant can also have more than one role. If one young person does not want to throw the ball, they can still participate as strategy friend, measurer or encouragement person. This should be presented as real participation.

Teams play several short rounds. The facilitator can use a cooperative scoring system:

- 1 point if a ball is close to the target;
- 1 point if every team member had a role;
- 1 point if the team communicated respectfully;
- 1 point if the team made an adaptation that helped someone;
- 1 point if the team encouraged another team.

This scoring helps participants understand that cooperation and inclusion are part of the game. During the activity, the facilitator observes carefully. If someone is left out, he/she can ask: “Would you like to play the next ball, choose the strategy or help with measuring?”

If someone is over-helping another participant, the facilitator can remind the group: “Let us ask first what support is wanted.”

After a few rounds, the facilitator pauses the activity and asks teams:

- Is everyone included?
- Does someone want to change role?
- Do we need another adaptation?

Teams continue after making small changes.

V. Create your own team rule or adaptation (15 minutes)

Participants stay in their teams and receive a simple task: “Create one new rule or one adaptation that will help more people enjoy this game.”

The facilitator can offer examples:

- everyone can choose their own starting line;
- teams get extra points for encouragement;
- one round is played with gestures instead of talking;
- the target becomes bigger;
- each person uses a different way of playing;
- one special role is created for someone who prefers not to play physically.

Teams discuss and test their idea shortly. Each team then presents its rule or adaptation. The facilitator appreciates concrete and realistic ideas.

This part gives young people the opportunity to become co-creators of the activity, not only participants following rules made by adults.

VI. Final reflection and closing (15 minutes)

Participants gather in a circle or semi-circle. The facilitator leads a simple reflection. Participants can answer verbally, use emotion cards, show thumbs up/down, draw or choose one word.

Suggested questions:

- How did you feel during the activity?
- What was fun for you?
- What was difficult?
- Which way of playing did you like most?
- Did someone help you in a good way?
- What rule or adaptation made the game better?
- Would you like to play this again?

The facilitator closes by summarising key learning points in simple language

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, flipchart and flipchart papers, post-its, soft balls, beanbags, rolled socks or foam balls, one target ball or target object, cones or tape for marking the playing area, chairs for seated participation, optional cardboard ramps or plastic tubes, optional measuring string or measuring tape, optional visual cards with simple instructions, optional balls with bells or sound elements, emotion cards or simple feedback cards.

Background documents and further reading

- Boccia International Sports Federation – basic information and rules of Boccia;
- International Paralympic Committee – information on Boccia as a Paralympic sport;

Recommendations for future youth workers multiplying this workshop:

- The facilitator does not need to be an official Boccia coach. This is a Boccia-inspired inclusive youth work activity, not an official competition.
- The space should be checked before the activity. The floor should be flat, not slippery and without obstacles.
- It is better to start with very simple rules. More complexity can be added only after the group understands the basic activity.
- The facilitator should prepare different types of balls or objects, because different participants may need different sizes, textures, colours or weights.
- Peer support should always be based on asking first. A useful sentence is: "Ask first, support second."
- The facilitator should value different roles. Playing physically is not the only form of participation. Measuring, encouraging, choosing strategy or helping with visual cards are also meaningful contributions.

Adaptation tips for mixed-ability groups

- For participants with physical disabilities or reduced mobility: allow seated participation, wheelchair participation or supported standing. Adjust distance and target position. Offer rolling, pushing or ramp use instead of throwing.

- For participants with limited hand function: use larger, softer or textured balls. Allow pushing with the palm, forearm, foot or assistive object. A simple ramp can be made from cardboard, a plastic tube or a smooth board.
- For participants with visual impairments: use high-contrast targets and balls, verbal orientation and sound cues. A facilitator or peer can clap near the target before the participant plays. Balls with bells can also be used.
- For participants who are deaf or hard of hearing: use visual cards, demonstration and clear gestures. Use visible signals for “start”, “stop” and “collect balls”.
- For participants with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties: use short instructions, repeat key rules and demonstrate instead of only explaining. Keep rules visible on flipchart paper or picture cards.
- For autistic participants or participants with sensory sensitivities: avoid loud whistles or sudden shouting. Explain the activity sequence in advance and allow participants to observe one round before joining.
- For participants with anxiety or psychosocial difficulties: do not put pressure on performance. Let them choose whether they want to play, observe first, play in pairs or take another role.
- For participants with chronic health conditions or low stamina: keep rounds short, allow breaks and offer seated roles. Rest should be presented as a normal part of participation.
- For mixed groups in general: use flexible scoring. Besides precision, include points for teamwork, respectful communication, creative adaptation and participation of all team members.

9. Goalball-inspired sound ball teamwork

Workshop title: Goalball-inspired sound ball teamwork

Duration: 120 minutes

Background: Goalball is a team sport originally developed for athletes with visual impairments. In official Goalball, players use a ball with bells inside and rely mostly on hearing, orientation and team communication. In this workshop, we are not using official Goalball rules. We use the idea of Goalball as inspiration for safe and inclusive sound ball activities with young people with different abilities.

Many regular sport activities depend strongly on vision, speed, fast reactions and physical strength. This can exclude young people with visual impairments, reduced mobility, coordination difficulties, intellectual disabilities, sensory sensitivities or anxiety in group settings. Goalball-inspired activities offer a different experience of sport, where listening, communication, patience and teamwork are more important than speed or strength.

The activity also helps participants understand that sport can be organised through different senses. The purpose is to explore how sport can be adapted when sound, trust and clear communication become central. Participants can take different roles: rolling the ball, listening, giving directions, stopping the ball, observing safety or encouraging the team. This workshop brings a practical example of adapting sport methodology through sound-based equipment, clear rules, safe space and team cooperation.

Aim of the workshop: To provide young people with different abilities with an inclusive sound-based sport experience, supporting listening, cooperation, spatial awareness and team communication.

Objectives:

- To introduce participants to safe Goalball-inspired sound ball activities;
- To support participants in using hearing, communication and orientation during play;
- To encourage teamwork, trust and mutual support;
- To create sport experience that is not based only on speed and visual performance;
- To strengthen respect for different ways of perceiving and participating in sport.

Competences addressed:

- Physical and motor competence;
- Communication;
- Teamwork;
- Listening skills;
- Spatial awareness;
- Problem solving;
- Social competence;

- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Empathy and respect for diversity.

Methodology and methods:

- Short introduction;
- Demonstration;
- Experiential learning through adapted sport activity;
- Listening and orientation exercises;
- Team-based sound ball games;
- Cooperative learning;
- Peer support;
- Reflection and debriefing.

Workshop flow:

I. Welcome, introduction and safety agreements (15 minutes)

The facilitator welcomes participants and invites them to sit or stand in a semi-circle. He/she explains that the group will play sound ball activities inspired by Goalball, but adapted for youth work and for mixed-ability groups.

The facilitator can say: "Today we will use a ball that makes sound. We will listen, communicate and support each other. The goal is not to be the fastest or strongest. The goal is to play safely as a team."

The facilitator asks a few simple questions:

- Have you ever played a game where sound helped you?
- What helps you feel safe in a group game?
- What kind of communication do you like when you play with others?

Participants can answer verbally, by raising hands, using cards, gestures or simply listening. The facilitator writes key words on flipchart paper, such as: listening, sound, team, trust, safety, clear words, patience.

The facilitator introduces safety and respect agreements:

- We move carefully and do not run.
- We do not throw the ball hard.
- We stop immediately when we hear or see the stop signal.
- Nobody has to close or cover their eyes.
- We ask before helping someone.
- We do not laugh at mistakes.
- Everyone can choose their own level of participation.

The facilitator should clearly explain that blindfolds or closed eyes are optional. Some participants may feel unsafe or anxious with reduced vision. They can participate with eyes open, as sound guides, team communicators, rollers, safety watchers or observers.

II. Getting familiar with the sound ball and the space (20 minutes)

The facilitator presents the sound ball. Ideally, this is a soft ball with bells inside. If this is not available, a soft ball with safely attached bells, a ball in a plastic bag with small bells, or another safe sound object can be used. The sound should be clear, but not too loud.

Participants first explore the ball. They can hold it, shake it gently, listen to it and notice how the sound changes when the ball is near or far. The facilitator asks:

- Is the sound comfortable?
- Can you hear where the ball is?
- Is the ball easy to hold or roll?

After this, the facilitator introduces the playing space. The space should be flat, clear and without obstacles. Borders can be marked with tape, ropes, cones or soft objects. If possible, tactile borders are useful, so participants can feel the limits of the space.

The facilitator slowly explains:

- where the playing area starts, and ends;
- where participants can safely sit, or stand;
- where the ball will move;
- where the resting area is;
- what signal means “stop”.

The group practises the stop signal. For example, the facilitator says “STOP” clearly and raises a red card or hand. Everyone practises stopping immediately. This is important before any game starts.

III. Listening and orientation warm-up (20 minutes)

The facilitator starts with simple listening activities. Participants can sit or stand in a circle.

- o Activity 1: Where is the sound? - The facilitator gently shakes the sound ball from different places in the circle. Participants point, turn their head, say “left/right/front/back”, or use another way to show where they think the sound is coming from.
- o Activity 2: Pass the sound - Participants pass or roll the sound ball around the circle. Before sending it, the participant says the name of the person who will receive it, for example: “Amina, the ball is coming to you.” The ball is rolled slowly, not thrown.
- o Activity 3: Sound and stop - The facilitator rolls the ball gently in the space. Participants listen to the moving sound. When the facilitator gives the stop signal, everyone freezes or raises hands. This helps the group practise attention and safety.

The atmosphere should stay calm. The aim is not to test participants, but to help them feel comfortable with sound, space and movement.

IV. Team sound ball challenge (30 minutes)

Participants are divided into small teams of 3–5 people. Depending on the group, participants can sit on chairs, sit on mats, kneel, stand or use wheelchairs. For many mixed-ability groups, seated play is the safest starting option.

The basic activity is simple:

- Two teams are placed on opposite sides of the playing area.
- One team rolls the sound ball gently towards the other team.
- The receiving team listens and tries to stop the ball safely.
- After stopping the ball, the receiving team rolls it back.
- The aim is to keep the ball moving safely and cooperatively.

- The ball should always be rolled low and slowly. Participants should not throw hard, dive on the floor or push each other. Safety is more important than scoring.

The facilitator introduces possible roles:

- o Roller: sends the ball;
- o Listener: follows the sound;
- o Stopper: stops the ball safely;
- o Communicator: gives short instructions such as “left”, “right”, “wait”, “near”;
- o Encouragement person: supports the team;
- o Safety watcher: reminds the group to slow down or take a break.

Participants choose or rotate roles. If someone does not want to stop the ball physically, they can be communicator, listener, encouragement person or safety watcher. These roles should be presented as equally valuable.

After several minutes, the facilitator pauses and asks:

- Is the ball too fast or too slow?
- Is the sound clear enough?
- Does everyone have a role?
- Does anyone want to change role?
- Do we need to make the space smaller or bigger?

The group adjusts the activity and continues.

V. Cooperative mission: reach the team target (20 minutes)

In this part, the activity becomes more cooperative. The whole group has one common mission: to move the sound ball safely into a target zone.

The facilitator marks a target zone with tape, cones, a mat or a large paper circle. Participants work together to guide the ball into the target zone by rolling, listening, giving directions or using sound cues.

Possible missions:

- Roll the ball into the target zone using calm voices.
- Move the ball from person to person until it reaches the target.
- Guide the ball with sound cues, such as soft clapping near the target.
- Complete the mission with everyone having one role.
- Repeat the mission with changed roles.

If the activity is too difficult, the facilitator can make the target bigger, shorten the distance or slow down the ball. If the group is confident, the facilitator can add a second target or introduce simple sound signals.

This part reduces pressure of competition and helps participants experience shared success.

VI. Final reflection and closing (15 minutes)

Participants gather in a circle or semi-circle. The facilitator leads a simple reflection. Participants can answer verbally, use emotion cards, show thumbs up/down, point to symbols, draw or choose one word.

Suggested questions:

- How did you feel during the sound ball activities?
- Was it easy or difficult to listen to the ball?
- What helped you feel safe?
- Which role did you like most?

- What was difficult?
- What could make the game better next time?
- Would you like to play this again?

The facilitator should accept all answers. If someone says the sound was too loud, the activity was confusing or they did not like reduced vision, this is important feedback. The facilitator closes with simple learning points.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, flipchart and flipchart papers, post-its, soft sound ball with bells or safe adapted sound ball, cones, tape or ropes for marking borders, chairs or mats for seated participation, optional blindfolds or eye masks only if participants freely choose to use them, visual cards for “start”, “stop”, “left”, “right”, “wait”, “near”, emotion cards or simple feedback cards, quiet and obstacle-free indoor space.

Background documents and further reading

- International Blind Sports Federation – basic information about Goalball;
- Resources related to adapted physical activity, sensory inclusion and inclusive sport communication.

Recommendations for future youth workers multiplying this workshop:

- The facilitator does not need to be a Goalball coach. This is a Goalball-inspired inclusive youth work activity, not official Goalball training.
- The space must be checked before the activity. It should be flat, clear and free from obstacles.
- The activity should start slowly, because participants need time to get used to following the ball by sound.
- Blindfolds should never be forced. Participation with eyes open is fully valid.
- The ball should be soft and not too heavy. The sound should be clear but not overwhelming.
- Roles should be flexible. Rolling, listening, communicating, watching safety and encouraging are all meaningful forms of participation.

Adaptation tips for mixed-ability groups

- For participants with visual impairments: clearly describe the space, use tactile borders, verbal orientation and consistent sound cues.
- For participants with physical disabilities or reduced mobility: allow seated participation, wheelchair participation or supported standing. Use a smaller playing area and slower rolling.
- For participants with limited hand function: allow stopping or guiding the ball with feet, forearms, soft barriers or assistive objects.
- For participants who are deaf or hard of hearing: use visual signals, gestures and cards. They can participate through visual tracking, rolling, target setting or team roles.
- For participants with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties: use short instructions, repeat key rules and demonstrate each step. Keep visual cards visible.
- For autistic participants or participants with sensory sensitivities: check if the bell sound is comfortable. Offer headphones, quieter roles or breaks if needed.

- For participants with anxiety or psychosocial difficulties: allow observation before participation. Do not require eye-covering.
- For participants with chronic health conditions or low stamina: keep rounds short, allow seated participation and offer regular breaks.
- For mixed groups in general: use cooperative goals instead of only competition. Include points for listening, safe movement, respectful communication and inclusion of all team members.

10. Cooperative parachute and scarf movement games

Workshop title: Cooperative parachute and scarf movement games

Duration: 120 minutes

Background: Parachute and scarf games are cooperative movement activities where participants move a large colourful parachute, sheet, scarves or light fabric pieces together. These activities are useful in youth work because they are playful, visual, easy to adapt and not focused on competition. The focus is on shared movement, rhythm, communication and group connection.

Many regular sport activities require running, jumping, speed, quick reactions or strong coordination. This can exclude participants with reduced mobility, low stamina, sensory sensitivities, intellectual disabilities, anxiety or difficulties with motor coordination. Parachute and scarf games offer a different type of physical activity. Participants can join seated or standing, move strongly or gently, hold the fabric with one hand or both hands, or participate through rhythm, colour choices, verbal direction, observation or encouragement.

This workshop gives a practical example of inclusive leisure and movement activity that can be implemented in a youth centre, school hall, sports room, courtyard or outdoor space.

Aim of the workshop: To provide young people with different abilities with a cooperative movement experience through parachute and scarf games, supporting teamwork, rhythm, shared participation and positive group energy.

Objectives:

- To introduce participants to simple cooperative parachute and scarf movement games;
- To support participation of young people with different mobility, coordination and sensory needs;
- To strengthen group cooperation, rhythm, communication and mutual attention;
- To encourage participants to experience movement as playful, inclusive and non-competitive;
- To create a safe space where different levels of physical participation are equally valued.

Competences addressed:

- Physical and motor competence;

- Communication;
- Teamwork;
- Creative expression;
- Rhythm and coordination;
- Social competence;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Empathy and respect for diversity.

Methodology and methods:

- Short introduction;
- Demonstration;
- Cooperative movement games;
- Rhythm and sensory activities;
- Small group work;
- Peer support;
- Reflection and debriefing.

Workshop flow:

I. Welcome, introduction and group agreements (15 minutes)

The facilitator welcomes participants and invites them to sit or stand in a circle. He/she shows the parachute, large sheet or scarves and explains that the group will play cooperative movement games. It should be clear from the beginning that nobody has to move in the same way and that each person can choose their own level of participation.

The facilitator asks simple opening questions:

- What colours do you notice?
- Do you like calm movement or faster movement?
- What helps you feel comfortable in group activities?

Participants can answer verbally, by pointing, using gestures or simply listening. The facilitator introduces basic group agreements:

- We move carefully and do not pull too strongly.
- We listen to the stop signal.
- We respect if someone needs a break.
- We do not force anyone to touch the parachute or scarf.
- We ask before helping someone.
- Every role is important.

The facilitator explains and practises the stop signal. It can be the word “STOP”, a raised hand, a red card or another clear sign.

II. Getting familiar with the material (15 minutes)

Participants explore the material. If a parachute is available, participants sit or stand around it and hold the edge. If there is no parachute, a large sheet, blanket or light fabric can be used. Scarves can be used for participants who prefer individual movement or do not want to hold the group fabric.

The facilitator invites participants to try simple movements:

- lifting the fabric slowly up and down;

- making small waves;
- making big waves;
- moving the fabric left and right;
- shaking it gently;
- freezing the movement when the stop signal is given.

The facilitator starts slowly and observes the group. Some participants may need more time to understand the movement, while others may find strong movement too stimulating.

After several minutes, the facilitator asks:

- Which movement felt nice?
- Was any movement too strong?
- Should we move slower or faster?

The group adjusts the intensity together.

III. Cooperative parachute games (30 minutes)

The facilitator introduces several short games. Each game should be explained and demonstrated before starting.

- o Game 1: Group waves - Participants create waves together. First, they make small waves, then bigger waves, then calm waves again. The facilitator can guide the rhythm by saying: “small waves – big waves – calm sea”. The aim is to move together and notice the group rhythm.
- o Game 2: Colour call - If the parachute has colours, the facilitator calls one colour and participants holding that colour gently lift their part of the parachute. If there is no coloured parachute, coloured scarves or cards can be used. This game supports attention and simple reaction without pressure.
- o Game 3: Ball on the sea - A soft ball, balloon or fabric ball is placed on the parachute. The group tries to move the ball slowly around the parachute without dropping it. The facilitator reminds participants to communicate and move gently. The activity can be easier with a larger soft ball, or more challenging by adding a second ball.
- o Game 4: Mushroom - Participants slowly lift the parachute high together and then lower it gently. If safe and comfortable, some participants may move under the parachute while others hold it up. This should only be done if the group is calm, the space is safe and participants agree. Nobody should be forced to go under the fabric.

After each game, the facilitator briefly asks:

- Was this game easy or difficult?
- Did we move as a team?
- What should we change to make it better?

IV. Scarf movement and creative expression (25 minutes)

Each participant receives one scarf or light fabric piece. This part is useful because some young people may feel more comfortable with personal movement than with holding the big parachute. If someone does not want to hold a scarf, they can choose music, give rhythm, observe patterns or suggest movements.

The facilitator plays calm music or creates rhythm by clapping softly. Participants are invited to try movements:

- moving the scarf up and down;

- making circles;
- moving fast and slow;
- hiding and showing the scarf;
- moving only with fingers, hands, arms, shoulders or whole body;
- moving seated or standing.

Then, the facilitator invites participants to create a “movement word”. For example, one participant shows movement for “wind”, another for “rain”, another for “sun”, and another for “friendship”. Participants who prefer not to perform can show the movement together with a peer or simply choose a word.

The group can create a short collective sequence with 3–4 movements. For example:

- o Wind – scarves move side to side.
- o Sun – scarves go up.
- o Rain – scarves fall slowly down.
- o Friendship – scarves move towards the centre.

The aim is not perfect choreography, but shared creativity and enjoyment.

V. Small group challenge: create your inclusive movement game (20 minutes)

Participants are divided into small groups of 3–5 people. Each group receives a simple task: “Create one short parachute or scarf game that everyone in your group can join.”

The facilitator gives examples if needed: a scarf passing game, a colour movement game, a calm breathing game with fabric, a team wave with a ball, or a game where each person chooses one movement.

Groups have around 10 minutes to prepare and test their idea. The facilitator supports them with simple questions:

- Can everyone participate?
- Is the movement safe?
- Can it be done seated and standing?
- Is the instruction easy to understand?
- What role can someone have if they do not want to move much?

Each group briefly presents or demonstrates its game. The facilitator appreciates concrete inclusive choices.

VI. Final reflection and closing (15 minutes)

Participants gather in a circle or semi-circle. The facilitator leads a short reflection. Participants can answer verbally, use emotion cards, show thumbs up/down, draw, point to symbols or choose one word.

Suggested reflection questions:

- How did you feel during the activity?
- Which game did you like most?
- Was any movement too fast, too strong or too loud?
- What helped the group move together?
- Did you feel included?
- What role did you enjoy?
- Would you like to play these games again?

The facilitator closes with simple learning points.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, flipchart and flipchart papers, post-its, parachute or large light sheet, scarves or light fabric pieces, soft balls or balloons, cones or tape for marking space, chairs or mats for seated participation, optional music player and calm music, visual cards for “start”, “stop”, “slow”, “fast”, emotion cards or simple feedback cards.

Background documents and further reading

- Resources on inclusive physical education and cooperative movement games;
- Adapted physical activity resources using the STEP (Space, Task, Equipment, People) model.

Recommendations for future youth workers multiplying this workshop:

- The facilitator does not need to be a sport coach. This is a cooperative movement activity focused on inclusion, rhythm and group connection.
- The space should be flat, clean and without obstacles, with enough space for wheelchair users and participants using mobility aids.
- The facilitator should start slowly and observe the group. Strong shaking, loud music or too many instructions can create sensory overload.
- A parachute is useful, but not necessary. A large sheet, blanket, scarves, ribbons or light fabric pieces can also be used.
- Participants should never be forced to go under the parachute, hold the fabric, dance or perform in front of others.
- Different roles should be valued. Participants can move, hold fabric, choose colours, give rhythm, suggest movements, observe safety or encourage the group.

Adaptation tips for mixed-ability groups

- For participants with physical disabilities or reduced mobility: allow seated participation, wheelchair participation or supported standing. Adjust the height of the parachute and offer smaller scarf movements.
- For participants with limited hand function: use larger fabric pieces, loops, soft handles or participation through voice, rhythm or choosing movements.
- For participants with visual impairments: describe the space and movements clearly. Use verbal cues, tactile exploration of fabric and consistent rhythm.
- For participants who are deaf or hard of hearing: use visual signals, gesture demonstrations and cards for “start”, “stop”, “slow” and “fast”.
- For participants with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties: give short instructions, demonstrate each movement and repeat the same sequence several times.
- For autistic participants or participants with sensory sensitivities: check comfort with fabric texture, music, noise and group closeness. Offer a quieter role, personal scarf or breaks if needed.
- For participants with anxiety or psychosocial difficulties: allow observation before joining. Do not pressure participants to perform.
- For participants with chronic health conditions or low stamina: keep movement rounds short, offer seated roles and include calm pauses.

- For mixed groups in general: use cooperative goals instead of competition. Appreciate teamwork, gentle communication, creativity and participation of all group members.

11. Adapted relay without speed pressure

Workshop title: Adapted relay without speed pressure

Duration: 120 minutes

Background: Relay games are usually connected with speed, competition and the idea that the fastest team wins. In many regular sport or school activities, this can create pressure and can exclude young people who move differently, need more time, use mobility aids, have lower stamina, have difficulties with coordination, or feel anxious when being watched by others. For this reason, relay activities need to be re-designed if they are used in inclusive youth work.

This workshop uses the idea of relay, but removes the pressure of speed. The focus is not on who finishes first, but on how the team supports each other, completes shared tasks and adapts the activity so everyone can contribute. Participants can move by walking, rolling, using a wheelchair, stepping slowly, passing an object, giving a direction, choosing a movement, or taking a non-physical role. In this way, relay becomes a cooperative activity, not a stressful race.

This workshop is useful because many youth workers already know relay games, but they often use them in a traditional way. This session shows how a familiar activity can be transformed into an inclusive movement game through small changes in rules, time, space, roles and scoring.

This workshop gives a practical example of how to adapt a common sport methodology so that young people with different abilities can participate together in a safe, playful and respectful way.

Aim of the workshop: To provide young people with different abilities with a cooperative relay experience where participation, teamwork and shared success are more important than speed.

Objectives:

- To introduce participants to relay games without speed pressure;
- To support participation of young people with different mobility, stamina and coordination levels;
- To strengthen teamwork, communication and mutual encouragement;
- To show that relay tasks can include different physical and non-physical roles;
- To encourage participants to experience movement activities as adaptable and inclusive.

Competences addressed:

- Physical and motor competence;
- Communication;
- Teamwork;
- Problem solving;
- Cooperation;
- Social competence;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;

- Empathy and respect for diversity.

Methodology and methods:

- Short introduction;
- Demonstration;
- Cooperative movement games;
- Team relay tasks;
- Role-based participation;
- Peer support;
- Reflection and debriefing.

Workshop flow:

I. Welcome, introduction and group agreements (15 minutes)

The facilitator welcomes participants and invites them to sit or stand in a circle or semi-circle. He/she explains that the group will do relay games, but in a different way than usual. The facilitator should clearly say that the activity is not about running or being the fastest.

The facilitator asks a few simple opening questions:

- Have you ever played relay games before?
- What do people usually do in relay games?
- What can make relay games stressful or difficult?
- What can make them more inclusive?

Participants can answer verbally, by raising hands, using cards or simply listening. The facilitator writes key words on flipchart paper, for example: running, waiting, team, speed, stress, cheering, passing, role, support, fairness.

The facilitator introduces basic agreements:

- We do not run unless the group and space are safe for it.
- We do not push or rush anyone.
- We respect different speeds and ways of moving.
- We ask before helping someone.
- Everyone can choose a role.
- The team succeeds when everyone is included.

The facilitator explains the stop signal and practises it once. The stop signal can be the word “STOP”, a raised hand, a red card or another clear sign.

II. Warm-up: many ways to move and participate (20 minutes)

The facilitator marks a short movement area with cones or tape. It should not be too long. For example, 5–8 metres are enough, and it can be shorter if needed. The space should be flat and without obstacles.

Participants are invited to explore different ways of moving from one point to another.

The facilitator demonstrates first:

- walking slowly;
- walking with small steps;
- moving with a wheelchair or mobility aid;
- moving while holding a scarf;
- moving sideways;

- moving with a partner;
- carrying or passing an object;
- giving verbal directions instead of moving;
- choosing the movement for someone else.

Participants try several options at their own pace. Nobody should be forced to move in a way that is uncomfortable. If someone does not want to move physically, they can choose a card, give rhythm, hold the start/finish sign, or encourage the group.

After the warm-up, the facilitator asks:

- Which way of moving felt comfortable?
- Which way was difficult?
- What kind of role can someone have if they do not want to move much?
- How can a team support someone without rushing them?

This short discussion prepares participants for the idea that relay can include many different forms of participation.

III. First cooperative relay: pass the object, not the pressure (25 minutes)

The facilitator divides participants into small teams of 4–6 people. Each team stands or sits in a line or semi-circle. The facilitator gives each team one object to pass: a soft ball, scarf, beanbag, ring, small cone or another safe object.

The task is simple:

- The first participant carries, rolls, passes or moves the object to the next point.
- The object must travel through all team members.
- Each person chooses how to pass or move it.
- The team should finish when everyone has participated.
- There is no race between teams.

The facilitator should avoid saying “start, go, faster”. Instead, he/she can say: “Begin when your team is ready. Your goal is that everyone participates in a safe and comfortable way.”

Examples of participation:

- One participant walks with the object.
- One participant passes it from seated position.
- One participant asks a peer to bring the object closer and then passes it.
- One participant gives the direction: “Now pass it to Sara.”
- One participant holds the finish card.
- One participant counts completed turns.

After the first round, the facilitator asks teams:

- Did everyone have a role?
- Was anyone rushed?
- What can we change to make the relay better?
- Should the distance be shorter?
- Should we use another object?
- Should we add more roles?

Teams make one small adaptation and repeat the relay. This helps participants understand that rules can change when the group needs it.

IV. Team challenge: relay with different stations (30 minutes)

The facilitator prepares 3–4 simple stations. Teams move through the stations, but again without time pressure. Each station should have a task that can be done in different ways.

Example stations:

- Station 1: Colour delivery - Participants move one coloured object from the starting point to a matching coloured circle or paper. They can carry it, roll it, pass it with a peer, or direct someone where to place it.
- Station 2: Team balance object - The team moves a soft ball or scarf together without dropping it. They can use hands, a tray, a towel, or a piece of fabric. The goal is cooperation, not speed.
- Station 3: Movement choice - Each participant chooses one movement for the team to copy: hand wave, shoulder movement, step, roll, clap, scarf movement or seated movement.
- Station 4: Message relay - Instead of moving fast, the team passes a simple positive message from one person to another, such as: “We support each other.” The message can be spoken, shown with a card, drawn, or communicated with gesture.

The facilitator explains each station slowly and demonstrates the task. Teams then rotate through the stations. If the group is large, stations can be done at the same time. If the group needs more structure, all teams can do one station together before moving to the next.

The facilitator observes if participants are included. If one participant is left without a role, the facilitator can ask: “Which role would you like in this station: mover, helper, direction giver, object manager or encourager?”

At the end of the station work, the facilitator brings everyone together and asks:

- Which station was most enjoyable?
- Which station was easiest to adapt?
- Was there a station where someone needed more support?
- What helped your team cooperate?

V. Create your own no-speed relay rule (15 minutes)

Participants stay in their teams and receive a simple task: “Create one relay rule that makes the activity more inclusive and less stressful.”

The facilitator gives examples if needed:

- Everyone chooses their own starting distance.
- The team cannot finish until everyone has a role.
- Extra points are given for encouragement.
- The relay is completed in silence with gestures.
- Participants can choose moving, guiding, counting or cheering.
- The team can pause and change roles at any moment.

Teams discuss for a few minutes and choose one rule. Then each team shares the rule with the group. If there is time, one or two rules can be tested quickly.

The facilitator appreciates realistic and inclusive ideas.

VI. Final reflection and closing (15 minutes)

Participants gather in a circle or semi-circle. The facilitator leads a simple reflection. Participants can answer verbally, use emotion cards, show thumbs up/down, point to symbols, draw or choose one word.

Suggested reflection questions:

- How did you feel during the relay activities?
- Was it easier when there was no speed pressure?
- Which role did you like most?
- Did your team support each other well?
- What was difficult?
- What rule made the game more inclusive?
- Would you like to play this again?

The facilitator closes with simple learning points.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, flipchart and flipchart papers, post-its, cones or tape for marking space, soft balls, scarves, beanbags, rings or other safe objects for passing, coloured papers or circles, chairs or mats for seated participation, optional tray or towel for cooperative carrying, visual cards for “start”, “stop”, “slow”, “pause”, “role”, emotion cards or simple feedback cards.

Background documents and further reading

- Resources on inclusive physical education and cooperative games;
- Adapted physical activity resources using the STEP (Space, Task, Equipment, People) model.

Recommendations for future youth workers multiplying this workshop:

- The facilitator should explain clearly that this is not a race. The word “relay” can create pressure, so it is important to repeat that the goal is participation and teamwork.
- The space should be flat, safe and without obstacles. Distances should be short and adjustable.
- The facilitator should avoid shouting “faster” or comparing teams by speed. Instead, he/she should praise communication, creativity, patience and inclusion.
- It is useful to prepare different objects for passing, because some participants may find one object easier to hold, roll or carry than another.
- Roles should be flexible. Moving physically is only one form of participation. Guiding, counting, choosing colours, holding signs or encouraging are also meaningful roles.
- The facilitator should pause the activity if the group becomes too competitive or if someone is being left out. A short reflection can help the group return to cooperation.

Adaptation tips for mixed-ability groups

- For participants with physical disabilities or reduced mobility: shorten distances, allow wheelchair participation, seated passing, partner movement or non-moving roles such as direction giver, role keeper or encourager.
- For participants with limited hand function: use larger, softer or easier-to-grip objects. Allow passing with forearms, lap, tray, towel, foot or with support from a peer, if the participant agrees.

- For participants with visual impairments: describe the space clearly, use tactile markers or verbal guidance, and keep the route simple and predictable.
- For participants who are deaf or hard of hearing: use visual start/stop signals, role cards and demonstrations. Make sure the facilitator is visible when giving instructions.
- For participants with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties: use short instructions, demonstrate each station and keep the same structure across rounds.
- For autistic participants or participants with sensory sensitivities: explain the sequence in advance, avoid loud cheering or sudden changes, and offer a quieter role or break if needed.
- For participants with anxiety or psychosocial difficulties: remove performance pressure, allow observation before joining, and offer roles that do not require being watched by the whole group.
- For participants with chronic health conditions or low stamina: keep rounds short, offer seated participation, allow pauses and make rest a normal part of the activity.
- For mixed groups in general: use cooperative success criteria, such as “everyone had a role”, “the team communicated respectfully” and “the team adapted the task when needed”.

12. Inclusive obstacle-course co-design

Workshop title: Inclusive obstacle-course co-design

Duration: 120 minutes

Background: Obstacle courses are often used in sport, outdoor and leisure activities because they combine movement, play and problem-solving. However, traditional obstacle courses are often based on running, jumping, crawling, climbing or finishing as fast as possible. This can exclude young people with disabilities, especially participants with reduced mobility, low stamina, coordination difficulties, sensory sensitivities, visual impairments, intellectual disabilities or anxiety in group activities. This workshop changes the usual approach. Instead of the facilitator preparing one fixed obstacle course for everyone, participants co-design the course together. The focus is not speed or difficulty, but choice, safety, creativity and teamwork. Each station can have different participation options: moving, guiding, giving instructions, choosing the route, solving a task, observing safety or supporting the team. This workshop helps participants understand that an obstacle is not only a physical barrier. Sometimes, an obstacle is unclear instruction, lack of rest, narrow space, noise, too much speed, or not having a real choice. The workshop gives a practical example of participatory and inclusive activity design. It can be implemented in a youth centre, school hall, sports room, courtyard, park or other safe space.

Aim of the workshop: To involve young people with different abilities in co-designing and testing an inclusive obstacle course where different ways of participation are equally valued.

Objectives:

- To support participants in creating obstacle-course stations adaptable to different abilities;
- To encourage teamwork, creativity and shared decision-making;
- To practise safe movement, communication and peer support;
- To help participants recognise barriers and propose inclusive solutions;
- To show that sport and leisure activities can be designed together with young people, not only for them.

Competences addressed:

- Physical and motor competence;
- Communication;
- Teamwork;
- Creative thinking;
- Problem solving;
- Decision-making;
- Social competence;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Empathy and respect for diversity.

Methodology and methods:

- Short introduction;
- Group discussion;
- Co-design activity;
- Small group work;
- Experiential learning through movement;
- Peer support;
- Testing and feedback;
- Reflection and debriefing.

Workshop flow:

I. Welcome, introduction and safety agreements (15 minutes)

The facilitator welcomes participants and invites them to sit or stand in a circle or semi-circle. He/she explains that the group will create an obstacle course together, but not as a race.

The facilitator asks simple opening questions:

- What do you imagine when you hear “obstacle course”?
- What can make an obstacle course fun?
- What can make it difficult or stressful?
- How can we make sure everyone can participate?

Participants can answer verbally, by raising hands, using cards, pointing to images or simply listening. The facilitator writes key words on flipchart paper, such as: movement, choice, safety, teamwork, fun, difficulty, support, rest, clear instructions.

The facilitator introduces group agreements:

- We do not run unless the space and group are safe for it.
- We do not push or rush anyone.
- We ask before helping someone.
- We test every station slowly first.
- Everyone can choose a role.
- If something feels unsafe, we stop and change it.
- The course is successful when everyone can participate in some way.

The facilitator explains and practises the stop signal. This can be the word “STOP”, a raised hand, a red card or another clear sign.

II. Exploring the space and possible barriers (20 minutes)

The facilitator invites participants to look at the space together. This can be done by walking, rolling, observing from a seated position, or moving in pairs. The group identifies what is safe and what needs attention.

The facilitator guides the group with simple questions:

- Where is there enough space to move?
- Are there any obstacles that could be dangerous?
- Is the floor slippery or uneven?
- Where can someone rest?
- Can wheelchair users or participants using mobility aids pass easily?
- Is the space too noisy or crowded?
- Where should the start and finish be?

Participants can place coloured papers or sticky notes in the space:

- green for “safe/good place”;
- yellow for “be careful”;
- red for “not safe / do not use”.

This part helps participants understand that inclusive activities start with looking at the environment. The facilitator should take their observations seriously and adjust the space before continuing.

III. Creating station ideas together (20 minutes)

The facilitator explains that the obstacle course will be made of several stations. Each station should have at least two ways to participate, for example one more active option and one calmer or seated option.

The facilitator gives a few examples of possible stations:

- Zig-zag route: participants move around cones by walking, rolling, using a wheelchair, guiding a peer or giving directions.
- Soft target: participants throw, roll or place a beanbag into a circle.
- Balance line: participants follow a tape line, or move an object along the line with a hand, foot or stick.
- Memory station: participants look at 3 objects and place them in the same order.
- Team carry: participants move a ball on a towel, tray or fabric together.
- Choice station: each participant chooses one movement, sound, gesture or role before continuing.

The facilitator divides participants into small groups of 3–5 people. Each group creates one station and receives guiding questions:

- What is the name of our station?
- What should participants do here?
- Can it be done seated and standing?
- Can it be done slowly?
- What role can someone have if they do not want to move much?
- What could be unsafe, and how can we change it?

The facilitator supports groups to keep the station simple, clear and safe.

IV. Building and testing the stations (30 minutes)

Each group builds its station using available materials. The facilitator reminds them to leave enough space between stations, create clear paths and avoid blocking access for participants using wheelchairs or mobility aids. Groups can use cones, chairs, tape, ropes, scarves, balls, beanbags, paper circles, hoops, cardboard signs or other safe objects. Heavy, sharp or unstable objects should not be used. When the stations are ready, each group demonstrates its station slowly. The facilitator asks the whole group to check:

- Is the instruction clear?
- Is the station safe?
- Is there enough space?
- Is there at least one easier option?
- Is there a role for participants who do not want to move physically?

The group then makes quick improvements. For example, the distance can be shortened, the target can be made bigger, the route can be widened, a chair can be added for rest, or a visual instruction card can be placed near the station.

After this, participants test the stations in small groups. Each participant chooses how to complete the station. It is allowed to skip a station, observe first, ask for support or take another role.

The facilitator should remind the group: "This is not a race. The course waits for each person."

And, when needed: "Let us ask first what kind of support is wanted."

V. Completing the inclusive obstacle course as a group (20 minutes)

After testing and improving the stations, the group completes the full obstacle course. The goal is shared success, not speed. The group can complete the course in pairs, small teams or one by one, depending on the space and participants' needs.

The facilitator can introduce cooperative success criteria:

- everyone participated in at least one station or role;
- the group used respectful communication;
- participants helped only after asking;
- the group changed something when it was not inclusive;
- everyone reached the finish in their own way.

Participants can have different roles: completing stations, guiding the route, observing safety, encouraging, reading instructions, helping at a station or taking photos, only if appropriate and with consent.

At the end, the group can celebrate by clapping, choosing a team gesture or placing a "completed together" sign at the finish.

VI. Final reflection and closing (15 minutes)

Participants gather in a circle or semi-circle. The facilitator leads a short reflection. Participants can answer verbally, use emotion cards, show thumbs up/down, draw, point to symbols or choose one word.

Suggested reflection questions:

- How did you feel during the activity?
- Which station did you like most?
- Was any station difficult or unsafe?
- What adaptation helped participation?
- Did you have enough choice?
- Did your team listen to your ideas?
- What would you change next time?

The facilitator closes with simple learning points.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, flipchart and flipchart papers, post-its, cones, tape, ropes, scarves, hoops, soft balls, beanbags, paper circles, chairs, mats, cardboard signs, coloured papers for space marking, visual cards for "start", "stop", "slow", "choice", "rest", emotion cards or simple feedback cards.

Background documents and further reading

- Resources on inclusive physical education and adapted obstacle courses;

- Guidance on participatory activity design with young people with disabilities.

Recommendations for future youth workers multiplying this workshop:

- The facilitator should prepare materials in advance, but should not fully design the course alone. The main value is that young people co-create the course.
- The space should be checked before the workshop. It must be flat, safe and wide enough for wheelchairs and mobility aids.
- The course should stay simple. Too many stations or complicated instructions can create confusion and fatigue.
- Every station should have at least two participation options: active and calm, standing and seated, physical and non-physical.
- Speed-based scoring should be avoided. Success should be based on cooperation, safety, creativity, adaptation and inclusion.
- Rest should be normalised. A resting chair or quiet corner can be part of the course.

Adaptation tips for mixed-ability groups

- For participants with physical disabilities or reduced mobility: ensure wide paths, seated options, short distances and roles such as guide, station helper, route designer or safety watcher.
- For participants with limited hand function: use larger objects, soft materials, trays, fabric or adapted grips. Allow pushing, pointing, verbal direction or partner-supported tasks.
- For participants with visual impairments: describe the space clearly, use tactile markers, verbal guidance and high-contrast materials.
- For participants who are deaf or hard of hearing: use visual instruction cards, demonstrations and clear gestures for start, stop, change and finish.
- For participants with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties: use simple stations, repeat instructions and demonstrate each task.
- For autistic participants or participants with sensory sensitivities: explain the sequence in advance, avoid overcrowding and loud music, and offer quiet roles or breaks.
- For participants with anxiety or psychosocial difficulties: allow observation before joining and avoid pressure to perform in front of everyone.
- For participants with chronic health conditions or low stamina: keep the course short, include pauses and allow participation through design, guidance or seated roles.
- For mixed groups in general: invite participants to suggest adaptations themselves. This strengthens ownership and shows that inclusion is created together.

13. Accessible leisure space audit: mapping barriers and solutions

Workshop title: Accessible leisure space audit: mapping barriers and solutions

Duration: 120 minutes

Background: Leisure spaces such as youth centres, parks, sport halls, playgrounds and community rooms should be places where young people can meet, relax, play and participate. However, for many young people with disabilities, these spaces are not fully accessible. Barriers can be physical, such as stairs, narrow doors, lack of ramps or inaccessible toilets. They can also be sensory, communicational or social, such as loud noise, unclear signs, lack of quiet space, complicated instructions or not being asked what support is needed.

This workshop invites young people with different abilities to explore a leisure space and identify what helps or blocks participation. The activity is based on the idea that young people are experts of their own experience. They can notice barriers that adults sometimes do not see, and they can suggest practical solutions. This workshop connects observation, teamwork, advocacy and problem-solving in a very practical way.

Aim of the workshop: To support young people with different abilities in identifying accessibility barriers and proposing practical solutions for making leisure spaces more inclusive.

Objectives:

- To help participants recognise different types of accessibility barriers;
- To encourage young people to observe leisure spaces from different perspectives;
- To support teamwork and respectful communication;
- To develop practical ideas for improving accessibility and inclusion;
- To strengthen young people's voice in shaping spaces they use.

Competences addressed:

- Communication;
- Teamwork;
- Critical thinking;
- Problem solving;
- Citizenship competence;
- Social competence;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Empathy and respect for diversity;
- Sense of initiative.

Methodology and methods:

- Short introduction;
- Guided space observation;
- Small group work;

- Accessibility mapping;
- Photo, symbol or colour documentation;
- Solution brainstorming;
- Presentation and reflection.

Workshop flow:

I. Welcome, introduction and group agreements (15 minutes)

The facilitator welcomes participants and invites them to sit or stand in a circle or semi-circle. He/she explains that the group will explore a leisure space and look for things that make participation easier or more difficult.

The facilitator asks simple opening questions:

- What helps you feel comfortable in a leisure space?
- What can make a place difficult to use?
- What should a good inclusive space have?

Participants can answer verbally, by using cards, drawing, pointing, gestures or simply listening. The facilitator writes key words on flipchart paper, such as: entrance, toilet, noise, signs, space, help, choice, safety, rest, respect.

The facilitator introduces group agreements:

- We observe carefully and respectfully.
- We do not make fun of anyone's needs.
- We ask before taking photos of people.
- We move safely and stay with the group.
- Everyone can contribute in their own way.
- We look for solutions, not only problems.

II. Introducing types of barriers (15 minutes)

The facilitator briefly introduces different types of barriers, using cards, pictures or flipchart paper.

- o Physical barriers: stairs, narrow doors, slippery floor, inaccessible toilets, lack of seating.
- o Communication barriers: small signs, complicated instructions, lack of pictures or symbols, information only given verbally.
- o Sensory barriers: too much noise, strong lights, crowded rooms, strong smells, lack of quiet space.
- o Social barriers: people staring, not asking what support is needed, speaking only to assistants, not including someone in decisions.
- o Programme barriers: activities that are too fast, no choice of roles, no breaks, rules that cannot be adapted.

The facilitator explains that the same space can feel different for different people. For example, stairs can be a barrier for a wheelchair user, while loud music can be a barrier for someone with sensory sensitivity.

III. Space audit walk: mapping what helps and what blocks participation (30 minutes)

Participants are divided into small mixed groups of 3–5 people. Each group receives a simple audit sheet or cards with three questions:

- What helps participation here?
- What makes participation difficult?
- What could be changed?

Each group also receives coloured stickers or papers:

- green for “accessible / works well”;
- yellow for “partly accessible / needs attention”;
- red for “barrier / difficult to use”.

The facilitator chooses a space to audit. This can be the workshop room, corridor, entrance, toilet area, courtyard, sport hall, park path or another leisure space nearby. The area should be safe and not too large.

Groups move through the space slowly. Participants can walk, roll, observe from a seated position or move with a peer. They look at different elements: entrance, paths, toilets, resting areas, signs, noise, light, activity space, safety and comfort.

Participants can take notes, draw, use symbols, take photos of the space if allowed, or ask one group member to write. The facilitator and assistants support groups when needed, but they should not give all answers. The main point is to listen to what young people notice.

IV. Creating a barrier and solution map (25 minutes)

Groups return to the main room. Each group receives flipchart paper and creates a simple map of the audited space. The map can be a simple sketch with doors, tables, paths, toilets, activity areas or outdoor elements.

Participants place green, yellow and red marks on the map. Next to each mark, they add short notes or symbols. For example:

- o Green: “wide door”, “quiet corner”, “good ramp”.
- o Yellow: “sign is too small”, “toilet is far”, “floor is slippery”.
- o Red: “stairs only”, “no place to rest”, “too narrow”, “too noisy”.

After mapping barriers, each group chooses 2–3 barriers and discusses possible solutions. The facilitator reminds them that solutions can be small and realistic. Examples:

- add a clear sign with picture and large letters;
- move furniture to create a wider path;
- create a quiet corner with chairs;
- place a chair near the entrance for resting;
- use visual instructions for activities;
- mark steps or edges with contrast tape;
- make rules more flexible;
- prepare different roles in activities.

The facilitator supports groups with questions:

- Who is affected by this barrier?
- What could be changed immediately?
- What needs support from the organisation or municipality?
- What solution is low-cost?
- Who should be asked before making this change?

V. Group presentations and shared priority list (20 minutes)

Each group presents its map shortly. They should share:

- one thing that already supports inclusion;

- one important barrier;
- one realistic solution.

The facilitator encourages participants to be specific. Instead of saying “the space is not accessible”, they can say “the door is too narrow” or “the toilet sign is too small and has no picture”.

After all presentations, the facilitator creates a shared priority list with the group. Participants choose 3–5 changes that would make the biggest difference. Voting can be done by stickers, raising hands, placing cards or choosing with a peer.

The priority list can be divided into:

- things we can change now;
- things the organisation can change soon;
- things that need bigger support or budget.

This makes the activity practical and gives participants the feeling that their observations can lead to real change.

VI. Final reflection and closing (15 minutes)

Participants gather in a circle or semi-circle. The facilitator leads a short reflection. Participants can answer verbally, use emotion cards, show thumbs up/down, draw, point to symbols or choose one word.

Suggested reflection questions:

- How did you feel while observing the space?
- Did you notice something new?
- Which barrier was most important for you?
- Which solution seems easiest to do?
- Did your group listen to everyone’s opinion?
- How can young people help improve leisure spaces?

The facilitator closes with simple learning points.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, flipchart and flipchart papers, post-its, coloured stickers or papers in green/yellow/red, simple audit sheets, clipboards or hard writing surfaces, optional mobile phones or camera for documenting space, visual cards for barrier categories, emotion cards or simple feedback cards.

Background documents and further reading

- Resources on universal design and accessibility in sport and leisure spaces;
- Guidance on inclusive youth work spaces;
- Resources on participation of young people with disabilities in community planning;
- Adapted physical activity resources related to inclusive environments and accessibility.

Recommendations for future youth workers multiplying this workshop:

- The facilitator should choose a safe and realistic space to explore. A small space is enough.

- The activity should not become only a technical inspection. It should stay a participatory youth activity where young people share their own experiences and ideas.
- The facilitator should avoid speaking instead of participants with disabilities. Young people should express what they notice and what they need.
- Photos should be taken only when allowed, and people should not be photographed without clear consent.
- The facilitator should prepare simple audit sheets with symbols or short questions.
- After the workshop, it is useful to share the priority list with the organisation, youth centre, school or local decision-makers.

Adaptation tips for mixed-ability groups

- For participants with physical disabilities or reduced mobility: choose a safe audit route. If some areas are inaccessible, this should be documented as an important finding.
- For participants with limited hand function: allow verbal answers, pointing, stickers placed by a peer, voice recording or photo documentation.
- For participants with visual impairments: describe the space clearly, use tactile exploration where appropriate and pair participants with a trusted peer for note-taking.
- For participants who are deaf or hard of hearing: use written instructions, visual cards and gestures. Make sure the facilitator faces the group while speaking.
- For participants with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties: use simple questions, pictures and colour codes. Focus on concrete examples: “Can you enter?”, “Can you find the toilet?”, “Is there a place to rest?”
- For autistic participants or participants with sensory sensitivities: explain the route in advance, avoid crowded areas where possible and offer a quiet role or break if needed.
- For participants with anxiety or psychosocial difficulties: allow them to stay with a trusted peer, observe first or contribute through drawing, photos or choosing colours.
- For participants with chronic health conditions or low stamina: keep the audit route short, include sitting breaks and allow participation from one fixed observation point.
- For mixed groups in general: make sure that solutions come from participants, not only from adults. This strengthens ownership and shows that accessibility is a shared responsibility.

14. Inclusive frisbee and flying-object games

Workshop title: Inclusive frisbee and flying-object games

Duration: 120 minutes

Background: Frisbee and flying-object games are usually connected with running, catching, fast reactions and large outdoor spaces. In regular sport settings, these activities can be difficult for young people with reduced mobility, visual impairments, coordination difficulties, low stamina, intellectual disabilities, sensory sensitivities or anxiety related to fast-moving objects. Because of this, they need to be adapted carefully when used in inclusive youth work.

This workshop uses the idea of frisbee games, but with softer, slower and safer objects such as foam frisbees, fabric discs, scarves, balloons, light rings or paper plates. The focus is not on long throws or perfect catching, but on aiming, passing, choosing distance, teamwork and enjoyment. Participants can throw, slide, roll, pass, guide, choose targets, count points, encourage others or help adapt the rules.

This workshop shows how a popular outdoor activity can become more accessible through simple changes in equipment, speed, distance, rules and roles.

Aim of the workshop: To provide young people with different abilities with an inclusive flying-object activity that supports coordination, teamwork, aiming, communication and shared enjoyment.

Objectives:

- To introduce participants to safe and adapted frisbee and flying-object games;
- To support participation of young people with different mobility, coordination and sensory needs;
- To practise aiming, passing, catching alternatives and team communication;
- To reduce speed and performance pressure in flying-object games;
- To show that sport and leisure activities can be adapted through simple equipment and flexible rules.

Competences addressed:

- Physical and motor competence;
- Communication;
- Teamwork;
- Coordination;
- Strategic thinking;
- Problem solving;
- Social competence;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Empathy and respect for diversity.

Methodology and methods:

- Short introduction;
- Demonstration;

- Individual exploration;
- Pair and small group work;
- Adapted movement games;
- Team-based target games;
- Peer support;
- Reflection and debriefing.

Workshop flow:

I. Welcome, introduction and safety agreements (15 minutes)

The facilitator welcomes participants and invites them to sit or stand in a circle or semi-circle. He/she shows different flying objects, such as soft frisbee, scarf, balloon, light ring or fabric disc, and explains that the group will play adapted flying-object games.

The facilitator can say: “Today we will play with objects that fly, float or move through the air. We will not focus on throwing far or catching perfectly. We will focus on trying different objects, choosing safe ways to play and supporting each other.”

The facilitator asks simple opening questions:

- Have you ever played frisbee or a similar game?
- What can make flying-object games fun?
- What can make them difficult or stressful?
- What do we need to feel safe while playing?

The facilitator introduces safety agreements:

- We use only soft and safe objects.
- We do not throw hard towards someone’s face or body.
- We check if the receiver is ready before sending the object.
- We respect if someone does not want to catch.
- Everyone can choose their own role.
- We stop immediately when the facilitator gives the stop signal.

The stop signal can be the word “STOP”, a raised hand, a red card or another clear sign.

The group practises it once before starting.

II. Exploring different flying objects (20 minutes)

The facilitator places different objects in the middle: soft frisbees, foam discs, scarves, balloons, light rings, paper plates or fabric circles. Participants are invited to explore them safely.

The facilitator demonstrates different ways of using them:

- throwing gently;
- passing from hand to hand;
- sliding along the floor;
- floating a scarf or balloon;
- aiming at a target;
- catching with hands, arms, lap or a basket;
- stopping the object instead of catching it;
- giving directions or choosing the next target.

Participants try different objects at their own pace. Some may prefer balloons because they move slowly. Others may prefer scarves because they are soft and predictable.

Some may not want to throw or catch, but can choose colours, count attempts, or tell a peer where to aim.

The facilitator asks:

- Which object felt safest?
- Which object was easiest to control?
- Which object moved too fast or too slowly?
- What could help someone who does not like catching?

This part helps the group choose the most appropriate objects for the next activities.

III. Pair practice: send, receive and adapt (20 minutes)

Participants work in pairs. Each pair chooses one flying object and decides the distance between them. The distance should be short at first and can be increased only if both participants agree.

The task is to send the object to the partner in a safe way. Participants can choose:

- gentle throw;
- underhand throw;
- sliding on the floor;
- floating a scarf;
- balloon pass;
- passing into a basket or onto a chair;
- giving verbal direction while another person sends the object.

The facilitator reminds participants to ask: "Are you ready?" before sending the object.

The receiver can answer verbally, with a gesture, card or eye contact.

After several minutes, pairs adapt their activity by changing distance, object, position, target or role. For example, they can sit instead of stand, use a target instead of direct catching, catch with a basket, or switch roles. The focus is not perfect technique, but safe communication and adapting to each other.

IV. Target flying games (25 minutes)

The facilitator prepares several target zones using hoops, paper circles, cones, boxes, mats or baskets. Targets can be on the floor, on a chair, against a wall or in another safe position.

Participants are divided into small teams of 3–5 people. Each team chooses one object and sends it towards the target by throwing, floating, sliding or placing it, depending on ability and comfort.

The facilitator can use inclusive scoring:

- o 1 point if the object reaches or touches the target;
- o 1 point if every team member has a role;
- o 1 point if the team communicates respectfully;
- o 1 point if the team adapts the activity to include someone;
- o 1 point if the team encourages another team.

Possible team roles are: sender, target chooser, distance adjuster, score keeper, safety watcher, encouragement person and object collector. Nobody should be forced to throw or catch. A participant can meaningfully participate by choosing the target, giving directions, counting or encouraging.

After one or two rounds, the facilitator pauses and asks:

- Is the target too close or too far?
- Is the object safe and comfortable?

- Does everyone have a role?
- What should we change?

Teams continue after making small adaptations.

V. Cooperative flying-object mission (25 minutes)

In this part, the group works towards a shared mission instead of competing. The facilitator chooses one or two missions depending on the group.

- o Mission 1: Around the circle - Participants pass a balloon, scarf or soft disc around the circle without rushing. The object can be passed by hand, floated, slid or guided. The aim is that everyone participates in some way.
- o Mission 2: Island landing - The group tries to land flying objects on “islands” marked on the floor. Each participant chooses the object and distance that suits them.
- o Mission 3: Team flight path - The group creates a path from one side of the space to the other. The object must travel through several participants or stations before reaching the final target.
- o Mission 4: Creative flight - Each participant suggests one movement or way of sending the object. The group creates a short sequence, for example: scarf float, balloon tap, soft disc slide, ring pass.

The challenge should stay calm and playful. If the activity becomes too loud or fast, the facilitator pauses and invites the group to slow down.

VI. Final reflection and closing (15 minutes)

Participants gather in a circle or semi-circle. The facilitator leads a short reflection. Participants can answer verbally, use emotion cards, show thumbs up/down, draw, point to symbols or choose one word.

Suggested reflection questions:

- How did you feel during the flying-object games?
- Which object did you like most?
- Was anything too fast, difficult or uncomfortable?
- What helped you participate?
- Which role did you enjoy?
- What would you change next time?

The facilitator closes with simple learning points.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, flipchart and flipchart papers, post-its, soft frisbees, foam discs, scarves, balloons, light rings, paper plates or fabric discs, cones, hoops, boxes, baskets, mats or paper circles for targets, chairs for seated participation, tape for marking space, visual cards for “start”, “stop”, “ready”, “slow”, “role”, emotion cards or simple feedback cards.

Background documents and further reading

- Resources on inclusive physical education and adapted flying-disc activities;
- Adapted physical activity resources using the STEP model;
- Guidance on sensory-friendly sport and leisure activities.

Recommendations for future youth workers multiplying this workshop:

- The facilitator should choose soft, light and safe objects. Hard frisbees should be avoided, especially with beginners or mixed-ability groups.
- The space should be checked before the activity. It should be clear, safe and large enough for movement, but distances should stay short and adjustable.
- Catching should always be optional. Participants can stop, guide, slide, aim, count, choose targets or encourage.
- It is useful to start with slower objects, such as scarves or balloons, before using discs or rings.
- The facilitator should avoid strong competition and long-distance throwing. The focus should be on cooperation, safe movement and creative adaptation.
- Non-physical roles should be presented as meaningful, not secondary.

Adaptation tips for mixed-ability groups

- For participants with physical disabilities or reduced mobility: allow seated participation, wheelchair participation, shorter distances, target roles, guiding roles or object selection.
- For participants with limited hand function: use larger, lighter objects, scarves, balloons or baskets. Allow sliding, pushing, dropping into a target or partner-supported sending.
- For participants with visual impairments: use high-contrast objects, verbal orientation, sound cues if possible, and predictable short-distance passing.
- For participants who are deaf or hard of hearing: use visual signals, gestures and cards for “ready”, “send”, “stop” and “change”.
- For participants with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties: use simple instructions, demonstrate each task and repeat the same structure before adding new rules.
- For autistic participants or participants with sensory sensitivities: avoid crowded play, sudden throws and loud shouting. Offer predictable turns, quiet roles or breaks.
- For participants with anxiety or psychosocial difficulties: allow observation before joining and avoid pressure related to catching or performing.
- For participants with chronic health conditions or low stamina: keep rounds short, allow seated roles and include calm pauses.
- For mixed groups in general: use flexible scoring based on teamwork, safety, communication and participation, not only on accuracy or points.

15. Peer buddy sport lab: supporting participation without over-helping

Workshop title: Peer buddy sport lab: supporting participation without over-helping

Duration: 120 minutes

Background: In inclusive sport, outdoor and leisure activities, peer support can be very important. A peer buddy can help another participant understand the activity, move through the space, communicate with the group, feel safer or take part with more confidence. However, support can sometimes become “over-helping”. This happens when one person does too much for another person, makes decisions instead of them, speaks instead of them, or gives help that was not asked for.

Young people with disabilities are often placed in passive roles, where others decide what is best for them. In inclusive youth work, this should be avoided. Support should increase autonomy, not reduce it. A good peer buddy does not take control. A good peer buddy asks, listens, respects choices and supports only in the way that is wanted. This workshop focuses on the social side of inclusive sport: how young people support each other, communicate respectfully and participate as equal team members.

Aim of the workshop: To help young people with different abilities understand and practise peer support in sport and leisure activities, with focus on supporting participation without over-helping.

Objectives:

- To explore the difference between useful support and over-helping;
- To practise asking before helping and respecting personal choices;
- To strengthen communication, trust and cooperation in mixed-ability pairs and teams;
- To encourage young people with disabilities to express what kind of support they want or do not want;
- To promote peer buddy roles that support autonomy, dignity and equal participation.

Competences addressed:

- Communication;
- Teamwork;
- Empathy;
- Social competence;
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence;
- Problem solving;
- Respect for diversity;
- Citizenship competence;
- Sense of initiative.

Methodology and methods:

- Short introduction;

- Group discussion;
- Role-play;
- Pair work;
- Peer buddy sport stations;
- Cooperative learning;
- Reflection and debriefing.

Workshop flow:

I. Welcome, introduction and group agreements (15 minutes)

The facilitator welcomes participants and invites them to sit or stand in a circle or semi-circle. He/she explains that the workshop will focus on how young people can support each other during sport and leisure activities, but in a respectful way.

The facilitator can say: "Today we will explore how to be a good peer buddy. A peer buddy is someone who supports another person, but does not take control. We will practise how to ask, listen and support only in the way that is wanted."

The facilitator asks simple opening questions:

- When do you like someone to help you?
- When can help feel uncomfortable?
- How can we know if someone wants help?
- What does respectful support look like?

Participants can answer verbally, by using cards, gestures, drawing or simply listening. The facilitator writes key words on flipchart paper, such as: ask, listen, choice, respect, patience, support, independence, teamwork.

The facilitator introduces group agreements:

- We ask before helping.
- We respect "yes", "no" and "not now".
- We do not speak instead of another person.
- We do not touch mobility aids or personal items without permission.
- We give people time to answer or decide.
- Everyone can choose their level of participation.

II. Useful support or over-helping? (20 minutes)

The facilitator introduces the difference between useful support and over-helping. He/she can give simple examples.

Useful support:

- "Would you like me to hold the ball closer?"
- "Do you want me to explain the rule again?"
- "Should I walk next to you or behind you?"
- "You decide where we aim, and I can help hold the ramp."

Over-helping:

- taking the ball from someone's hand without asking;
- pushing a wheelchair without permission;
- answering for another participant;
- deciding that someone cannot try;
- doing the task instead of giving support.

The facilitator places two signs on the floor or wall: “Useful support” and “Over-helping”. He/she reads short situations and participants decide where they belong. Participants can move to the sign, point, raise a card, or answer verbally.

Example situations:

- A peer asks: “Do you want help, or do you want to try alone first?”
- A peer says: “You cannot do this, I will do it for you.”
- A peer waits while another participant takes more time to throw the ball.
- A peer pushes someone’s wheelchair to the starting line without asking.
- A peer explains the rules using simple words and checks if the person understood.
- A peer speaks to the assistant instead of speaking directly to the participant.

After each situation, the facilitator asks shortly:

- Why is this useful support or over-helping?
- What could be said differently?
- What should the buddy ask first?

III. The three-step buddy rule: ask, listen, support (15 minutes)

The facilitator introduces one simple rule for peer support:

- o Ask – “Do you want support?”
- o Listen – respect the answer.
- o Support – support only in the agreed way.

The facilitator writes this on flipchart paper and uses gestures for each step. Participants practise the sentence in pairs:

- “Would you like support?”
- “What kind of support would be useful?”
- “Do you want me to stay close, explain, guide, or just wait?”

The facilitator explains that support can be different. It can be physical support, verbal explanation, visual reminder, encouragement, space protection, or simply being nearby. It is also important that “no” is a valid answer. A participant may want to try alone, observe first, or ask for support later.

IV. Peer buddy sport stations (35 minutes)

The facilitator prepares 3–4 simple sport or leisure stations. Participants work in pairs or small groups. Each pair/group practises the three-step buddy rule before starting each station.

Example stations:

- o Station 1: Target throw or roll - Participants throw, roll or place a soft ball or beanbag into a target. The buddy may help by adjusting distance, holding a ramp, reading the rule or encouraging, but only after asking.
- o Station 2: Movement path - Participants move through a short path with cones or tape. They can walk, roll, use a wheelchair, guide a peer, give directions or choose the route. The buddy asks what kind of support is wanted.
- o Station 3: Balance or object carry - Participants move a soft object from one place to another, alone or together. Support can include holding one side of a towel, slowing down the rhythm or suggesting a rest.
- o Station 4: Communication challenge - One participant explains a simple movement or target to another participant using words, gestures, cards or demonstration. The aim is clear communication, not speed.

At each station, participants rotate roles: one person is participant, one person is buddy, and one person can be observer if the group has three members. After a few minutes, they switch roles.

The facilitator observes carefully and gives gentle reminders.

He/She should also encourage young people with disabilities to say clearly what they prefer: “I want help”, “I want to try alone”, “Please explain again”, “Stand next to me”, “Do not touch my chair”, “I need more time”.

V. Team buddy challenge: inclusive mission (20 minutes)

Participants form small teams of 4–6 people. Each team receives one cooperative mission that can only be completed if they use respectful peer support.

Possible missions:

- Move a ball from one side of the space to a target, with each person choosing their role.
- Create a short movement sequence where everyone contributes one movement or gesture.
- Complete a mini target game where every person decides how they want to participate.
- Create one team rule that prevents over-helping.

Before starting, teams must agree on how they will support each other. The facilitator gives them three guiding questions:

- How will we ask before helping?
- How will we make sure everyone has a choice?
- What will we do if someone says “no” or “not now”?

Teams complete the mission without speed pressure. The facilitator observes cooperation, not performance. At the end, each team shares one example of good peer support they used.

VI. Final reflection and closing (15 minutes)

Participants gather in a circle or semi-circle. The facilitator leads a short reflection. Participants can answer verbally, use emotion cards, show thumbs up/down, draw, point to symbols or choose one word.

Suggested reflection questions:

- How did you feel when someone supported you?
- Did anyone ask you before helping?
- What kind of support felt good?
- What kind of help can feel too much?
- Was it easy or difficult to say what you need?
- What makes a good peer buddy?
- What will you remember for next time?

The facilitator closes with simple learning points.

Materials needed: A4 and A3 papers, pens, pencils, markers, flipchart and flipchart papers, post-its, signs “Useful support” and “Over-helping”, soft balls, beanbags, cones, tape, scarves, small targets, chairs or mats for seated participation, visual cards with “ask”, “listen”, “support”, emotion cards or simple feedback cards.

Background documents and further reading

- Resources on inclusive youth work and peer support;
- Guidance on supported participation and autonomy of persons with disabilities;
- Adapted physical activity resources using peer buddy approaches;
- Resources on communication, consent and dignity in disability inclusion.

Recommendations for future youth workers multiplying this workshop:

- The facilitator should be careful that the workshop does not become a lesson about “helping disabled people”. The message should be about mutual support, respect and choice.
- Participants with disabilities should not be used as examples without consent. The group should discuss situations generally and respectfully.
- The facilitator should model good behaviour during the whole workshop: ask before supporting, speak directly to participants, give time for answers and respect refusal.
- Physical assistance should never be practised without clear permission. This includes touching someone, moving mobility aids or changing someone’s position.
- The sport stations should be simple. The aim is to practise peer support, not to learn complicated sport techniques.
- The facilitator should value all roles. Being a buddy, observer, encourager, direction giver or rule keeper is also active participation.

Adaptation tips for mixed-ability groups

- For participants with physical disabilities or reduced mobility: ask what kind of support is useful before offering physical help. Do not move wheelchairs, walkers or mobility aids without permission.
- For participants with limited hand function: offer choices such as adapted objects, bigger balls, partner-supported tasks or non-physical roles, but let the participant decide.
- For participants with visual impairments: use clear verbal orientation and ask how guidance should be given. Do not pull or guide someone without agreement.
- For participants who are deaf or hard of hearing: use visual cards, gestures and written instructions. Make sure the buddy faces the participant when communicating.
- For participants with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties: use simple sentences, repeat the three-step rule and demonstrate situations with clear examples.
- For autistic participants or participants with sensory sensitivities: ask about comfort with touch, noise and closeness. Offer predictable roles and avoid sudden support.
- For participants with anxiety or psychosocial difficulties: allow observation before participation and do not pressure them to ask for or give support publicly.
- For participants with chronic health conditions or low stamina: normalise rest and allow participants to choose when they need a pause or a calmer role.

- For mixed groups in general: remind everyone that support is not one-directional. Every young person can sometimes give support and sometimes receive it.

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