

# **Working with groups with special educational needs**

**Dr. Pat Ealey<sup>1</sup> & Kim Pierpoint<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>The Holly Lodge Centre, Richmond, Surrey, United Kingdom

<sup>2</sup>Thrive, Reading, Berkshire, United Kingdom

## **Objectives**

To give the workshop participants a challenge! To help them learn about different disabilities and encourage them to work with groups who have special needs.

## **Introduction**

A discussion about the definitions of disabilities and the way disabilities present themselves.

Example definition:

A disabled person is someone who has a physical, sensory or mental impairment that makes performing an everyday task more difficult.

The participants will be divided into groups to discuss and carry out a task.

Each group will be given a case study of the following disabilities to focus on.

- Visual impairment
- Learning difficulties
- Behavioural problems
- Physical disabilities
- Mental health problems
- The elderly

How do these disabilities affect peoples lives? How would you teach someone with a particular disability about plant growth and what plants need to grow?

After group discussion each group will do a short presentation about their answers to these questions.

## **Practical task**

Each group will be given some bulbs to plant in layers. They will be given some snow drops and daffodils, compost, pots and trowels. How would they approach this with a person who is disabled? One person in the group could take on the role of that person.

Guidelines and considerations for planting and teaching:

- What is a bulb and what will it grow into?

- The practicalities of planting.
- Understanding timescales.
- Understanding what plants need to grow.

### **Feedback from groups**

One person from each group will be asked to present how they tackled the task above.

### **Conclusion**

A final discussion about the findings of each group, trying to draw some common threads together.

Each workshop participant will be given a list of publications and references. Some publications will be available for them to look at and take away.

### **Biographies**

Dr Pat Ealey: Bsc, PhD, Certificate in Ecology and Conservation, Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Interpretation. Project Manager at the Holly Lodge Centre (*'special needs in a special place'*), Richmond Park.

Kim Pierpoint, Thrive's Training and Education Manager, studied horticulture at Berkshire College of Agriculture. Taught in Further Education Colleges, to young adults with Special Educational needs, and has been working as a teaching professional within the field of Social and Therapeutic Horticulture for 5 years.

## **Appendix**

### **Case studies**

#### **Case study 1**

##### ***Practical exercise***

From the items on the table, consider how you might work with the person described below. When you have decided how you are going to do this exercise, you must then choose somebody to feedback to the group.

Today you are working with Mike (58); he has had a nervous break down and is suffering very low self-esteem and confidence. He has been coming the gardening group for a month now, but is finding it hard to mix and is very self-conscious about working with others. His main fear is getting it wrong. But due to his medication his mood can swing very quickly causing some rather violent verbal outbursts.

#### **Case study 2**

##### ***Practical exercise***

From the items on the table, consider how you might work with the person described below. When you have decided how you are going to do this exercise, you must then choose somebody to feedback to the group.

Today you are working with Sharon(19); she has a mild learning disability. She can communicate but is a selective mute and prefers to use signing (which she makes up). She has good motor skills but cannot cope very well with sequencing. She likes being around others and can working very well in a production line session. She also likes the radio on loud!

#### **Case study 3**

##### ***Practical exercise***

From the items on the table, consider how you might work with the person described below. When you have decided how you are going to do this exercise, you must then choose somebody to feedback to the group.

Today you are working with Edith (72); she has had a mild stroke and cannot use her dominant arm. She has been a volunteer at the gardens before her stroke, and now feels there is no point in her attending. It has been advised that she should get involved with the gardens again, as part o of her rehabilitation She feels this is a waste of time! However, she did get on really well with Harold before her stroke.

## **Case study 4**

### ***Practical exercise***

From the items on the table, consider how you might work with the person described below. When you have decided how you are going to do this exercise, you must then choose somebody to feedback to the group.

You are working a group of young adults with learning disabilities.

Today you are working with Simon(27); who has been blind from birth and has also got a learning disability. He has not done any gardening and has recently joined the team. He can communicate very well and has a guide dog to support him.

## **Case study 5**

### ***Practical exercise***

From the items on the table, consider how you might work with the person described below. When you have decided how you are going to do this exercise, you must then choose somebody to feedback to the group.

Today you are working with Anthony(20); who has got a mild learning disability, however, he also presents challenging behaviour. His behaviour manifests its self more often when he has to work in larger groups. He often runs around, has poor concentration, and is easily upset when his favourite football team lose. He has not done any gardening and has recently joined the school in working at the local botanical gardens. He can communicate very well.

## **Case study 6**

### ***Practical exercise***

From the items on the table, consider how you might work with the person described below. When you have decided how you are going to do this exercise, you must then choose somebody to feedback to the group.

Today you are working with Phil (35); who has recently lost his sight due to an industrial accident. He has not done any gardening and has low self-esteem due to the loss of his sight. His wife has suggested he come to the garden to work along side the gardeners, with a view to becoming a volunteer. He has a guide dog to support him and his wife will come with him initially.

## **Case study 7**

### ***Practical exercise***

From the items on the table, consider how you might work with the person described below. When you have decided how you are going to do this exercise, you must then choose somebody to feedback to the group.

Today you are working with Anita (49). Anita has a debilitating illness; she is in a wheel chair. Her illness also means she has a limited use of her hands, this can cause her to become frustrated when she cannot achieve. She is passionate about carnivorous plants and wants to join the local botanical gardens to work along side the gardeners as a volunteer. She is happy to work anywhere in the garden, and is keen to learn.

## **Case study 8**

### ***Practical exercise***

From the items on the table, consider how you might work with the person described below. When you have decided how you are going to do this exercise, you must then choose somebody to feedback to the group.

Today you are working with Terry (25); he in a wheelchair, but has recently been diagnosed with enduring mental health illness, feeling very depressed and low. He lives alone and has recently come to the gardens with is support group. He has had erratic attendance. He so desperately wants to succeed this can cause him to be over zealous and not listen to instructions.