

Facilitating and Supporting the Social-Emotional Development of Learners Who Experience Deafblindness – Part II

Alaska Deafblind Project
Special Education Service Agency (SESA)
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Presented by: Dr. Susan M. Bashinski

Who is Here?

If you were not able to participate yesterday, but have joined us for this session, please type your first name in the chat and include your primary role / interest in learners who experience deaf-blindness.

EXAMPLE: Megan – mom

Tomas – special ed teacher

THANK YOU!

Supplementary Materials

You should have access to three electronic files in addition to a copy of this slide deck I'll use in the presentation.

I'll refer to each of these handouts as we discuss the pertinent content this evening.

- ▶ Action Plan
- ▶ Nancy Hartshorne article re: "Circle of Friends"
- ▶ Document: Creating Classroom Communities

Action Plan

Please record some thoughts, on the action planning sheet, how you *might* incorporate information from this session in your family life / daily practice.

Please feel free to continue this exercise on the action plan sheet you used in yesterday's webinar.

Thank you!

Learning Targets

- Paraprofessionals' / Interveners' interactions with learners who experience deaf-blindness
- Strategies for teaching peers to interact with learners who experience deaf-blindness
- Strategies for facilitating friendships between peers who do and do not experience deaf-blindness
- Assisting a learner to teach peers about himself
- Circle of Friends – a direct teaching tool for creating “community” for a learner who experiences DB
- Orchestrating effective group work in general educ.

**Legal Considerations related to
Social and Emotional
Development, Specifically
Applied to Education**

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

One of the central tenets of IDEA is the construct, **least restrictive environment (LRE)**.

Though this element of federal special education law does NOT require a learner with disability to spend 100% of his time in general education classrooms, IDEA **does require** the school to provide the support a learner needs in order to **learn in a regular classroom with typical peers, to the greatest extent possible.**

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The strategies we'll examine today *should* provide you with a menu of various instructional methods for facilitating meaningful, productive interactions between the learner who experiences DB and his peers without disabilities.

Socialization Examples

SUSAN M. BRASHINSKI

Communication Aspects Essential to Social Skills Development

- (Remember the **augmented input dictionary** from yesterday's session)
- Partners' use of **personal identifiers**
- Use of **speech generating devices** for interaction—*either as participation OR communication*
- Joint creation of **memory / remnant books**
- Provision of **calendar systems**

Personal Identifiers: Touch or Objects

For **every** learning activity, partners of the learner who experiences DB *must* plan how to:

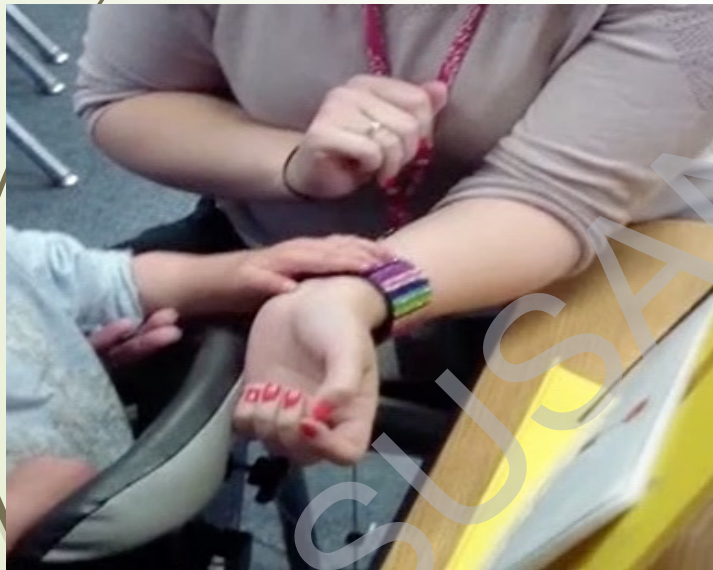
- a. **identify each partner**, and
- b. the partner's **availability** for interacting with the learner

What might *YOU* use as a personal identifier with your learner who experiences deafblindness?

Personal Identifiers

Object cues as personal identifiers let a learner know:

- WHO each partner is and
- WHEN that partner is available
- May be a texture OR an object



Object Cue as a Personal Identifier

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Touch Cues as Personal Identifiers

- Touch cues as personal identifiers let a learner know WHO each partner is

EXAMPLES: Family members kiss in different spots



**Does a Learner's Behavior Constitute
"Communication," "Social
Participation,"—OR BOTH???**



Communication and Social Participation

Some times, “communication” and “social participation” *might look the same* to an uninformed observer....

Appropriate use of even a simple voice output device might, indeed, represent genuine communication—but sometimes, it does NOT!

Communication and Social Participation

Ways in which these are the **SAME**:

- Both can utilize AT / switches
- Neither is AAC device-specific
- **Both can significantly impact the learner's classmates' perception of him / her**
- Both are **social processes**
- One can be a bridge to the second (which one can be the bridge???)

Communication and Social Participation

Ways in which these are **DIFFERENT**:

- One is directly linked to level of intellectual and skill development
- One can be prompted through full physical assistance (or other levels of prompts)
- One signals *some* expectation for future skill use

Which is which???

Participation

SOCIALIZATION EXAMPLES

Using a voice-output communication device:

- Greetings to family members, peers, service providers
- Telling jokes
- Singing "Happy Birthday"
- Offering thanks at mealtime
- Asking peer to read a new book



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What's the difference between a well dressed man on a bike and a poorly dressed man on a unicycle?



Attire.



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REMEMBER:

Communication Reminder #11

“Do with, NOT for...”

That is, require
ACTIVE
participation from
the learner.



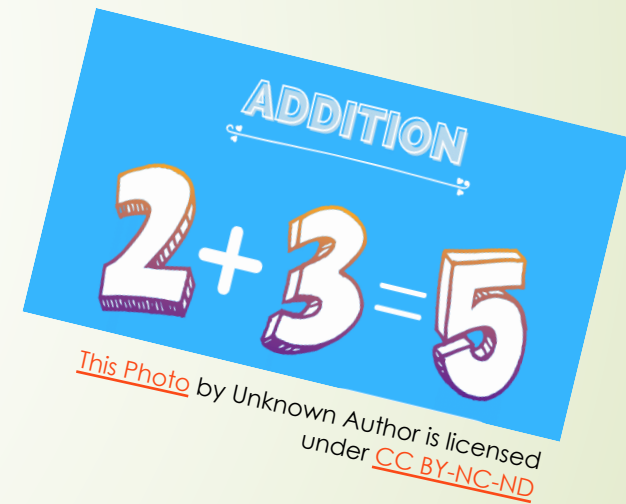
AFTER ONLY TWO MONTHS AS A TEACHER ASSISTANT, GLADYS FINDS HER SPELLING HAS IMPROVED, MATH SKILLS ARE HONED, AND SHE HAS DISCOVERED SHE HAS ARTISTIC ABILITY.

Participation

ACADEMICS EXAMPLES

Using a voice-output communication device:

- Announce words for spelling test
- Drill of addition facts
- Provide directions for peers for opening class meeting
- Assist with lunch count / milk flavor



What questions do you have?



Additional Academics Examples: Remnant / Memory Books Calendar Systems

Remnant / Memory Books

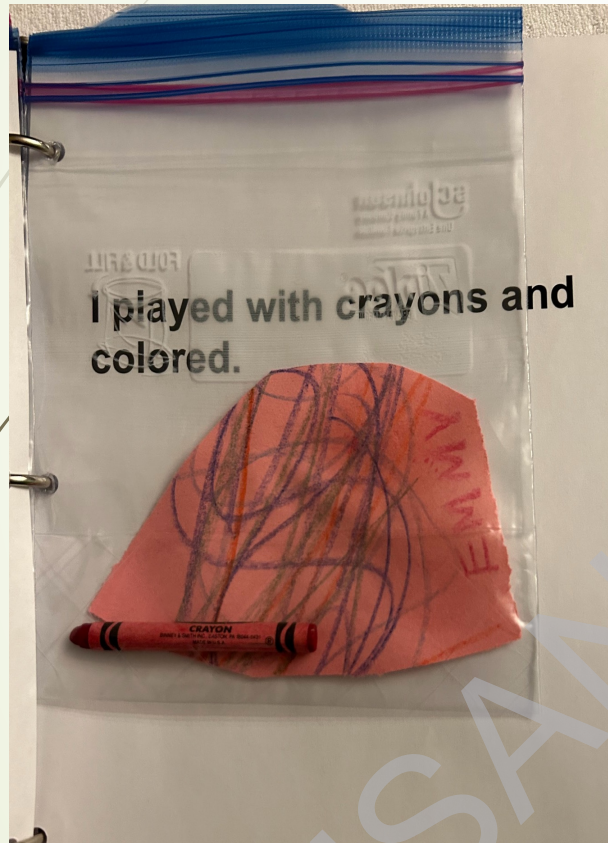
SUSAN M. BRESHINSKI

What is a Remnant Book?

- A specially designed "book" that incorporates a variety of tactile elements, including textures and real objects
- Might also include scents and / or auditory elements
- Relies heavily on touch for full comprehension and recall

A remnant book acts as a tangible record of an event that has transpired in a learner's OWN life.

Example of Remnant Book



Benefits of Using a Remnant Book

- ▶ Provides a concrete reference point for the learner to **initiate communication** and **social interaction** with peers and family members
- ▶ Unquestionably serves to **personalize** literacy materials—attributes **value to the learner's experiences** (i.e., its purpose is to record an event in which the learner has engaged)
- ▶ Consider the learner's visual, auditory, and tactile skills *and* preferences—as well as personal interests

Calendar Systems

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What is a Calendar System?

A calendar system (or “calendar”) is a concrete representation of activities in which the learner *regularly* engages.

It is used, in a general sense, to help the learner who experiences deaf-blindness develop concepts of **sequence** and **predictability, to build trust.**

The use of a calendar system also begins to build emergent literacy skills.

Benefits of Using a Tangible Calendar System?

Provides the learner with an “individualized time piece”

- Provides the learner with the **security** of being able to **anticipate** what is going to happen next (reduces anxiety)
- Helps the learner to begin to perceive the world in an organized, **predictable** way—thereby providing **emotional security**
- Formally introduces one way to teach skills of **emotional regulation**
- Sets the stage for the learner to actively engage in **decision-making** about her activities / day
- Reduces the learner’s resistance to transition / change of activity



What is a Calendar System?

Might also be referred to as:

- ▶ Anticipation shelf
- ▶ Anticipation calendar
- ▶ Object calendar
- ▶ Tactile schedule
- ▶ Sequence box

A calendar system uses tangible and / or tactile representations as a means of documenting a scheduled series of activities.

Example Calendar for a Routine

ACTIVITY: Making Chocolate Milk

<u>STEP in Routine:</u>	<u>REPRESENTATION:</u>
1. Pour milk in blender	Milk carton
2. Pour chocolate syrup in blender	Syrup squeeze bottle
3. Put lid on blender	Lid
4. Blend for ten seconds	Toggle switch
5. Pour milk in glass	Plastic sport bottle

Example Calendar

This example calendar involves sequences from the young lady's week.



Photo from NCDB OHOA module, Calendars

Tangible Elements in a Calendar System

Calendars involve many elements of emotional attachment...

They involve engaging the learner with “things,” to try and entice her to “come out of her body.”

Need:

- The power of **choice**. (i.e., self-empowerment)
- Strong motivation to engage with the world
- Awareness of learner’s likes / dislikes

Capitalizes on self-determination!

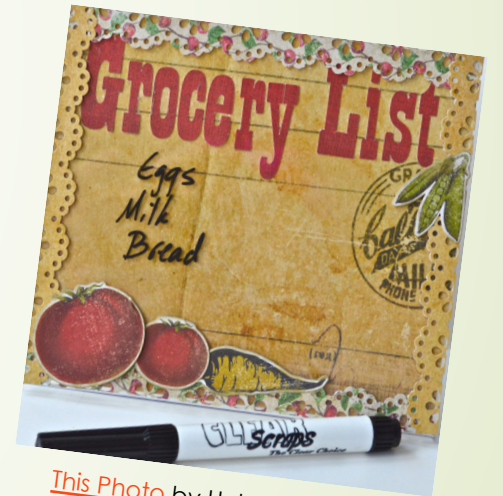
Examples with Families (Functional Life Skills)

Participation

FUNCTIONAL EXAMPLES

Using a voice-output communication device:

- Shopping list for Mom, at Target
- Request to have favorite snack
- Request to watch for siblings to return home from school / work
- Need for assistance (e.g., medication)



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Emotional Development Examples: Personalized Instruction

Personalized Materials

- ▶ Experiences recorded *might* be **positively or negatively charged** with **emotions**—and assist a learner to learn to deal with emotions
- ▶ A book **developed** for—and, preferably, **with**—an individual learner
- ▶ Captures the **aspects** of an experience that were most **salient and meaningful** to the learner who experiences DB

Personalized materials support access to others and social engagement!

Individualizing through Personalizing Instruction

- ▶ Research in the field of deafblindness **documents the social functions** of reading and writing
- ▶ Practitioners in the field of deafblindness have long recognized the **importance of grounding interactions and conversations** in a learner's own experiential world

Conclusion:

Shared experiences provide a necessary base for social development, emotional development, communication development, and literacy development!

General Types of Personalized Instructional Materials

- Name signs, symbols, personal identifiers
- Individualized anticipation shelves—to develop a concept of sequence
- Individualized calendar systems
- Memory books / “remnant books
- Books made together, with a learner
- Retelling / reliving stories about the learner’s personal activities and experiences

General Types of Personalized Instructional Materials

- Experience books
- Social stories
- Interactive home—school journals, in which record a few daily events in which the learner participated (i.e., supports “memory thinking”)
- Story boxes, with objects salient to the learner’s interpretation of the experiences

What questions do you have?



Paraprofessional / Intervener Interactions

Guidelines for Paraprofessionals and Interveners

Classroom support staff and general education teachers can use a number of **strategies to facilitate meaningful interactions**, as well as **facilitate real friendships**, between learners who experience DB and others in their schools / communities.

HOWEVER....

It is critical to remember that a paraprofessional's presence in proximity to a learner with DB **might facilitate an interaction / relationship—or might interfere**. *Minimize adult presence as much as possible.*

Guidelines for Paraprofessionals and Interveners

- The **most important guideline** for a paraprofessional working with a learner who experiences DB is to take advantage of and support **natural social interactions**
- Secondly, the paraprofessional needs to be familiar with the learner's **family and cultural norms**
- Within these parameters, the paraprofessional should look to capitalize on the learner's and peers' shared interests and sharing activities. (OHOA Module-Social Skills and Peer Relationships)

Guidelines for Paraprofessionals and Interveners

It is critically important that the paraprofessional...

- demonstrate acceptance of, and positive interactions with the learner who experiences DB (because other students will typically imitate the behaviors they see modeled by the school staff)
- avoid the use of inappropriately juvenile language when interacting with the learner who experiences DB

Guidelines for Paraprofessionals and Interveners

It is critically important that the paraprofessional...

- present the learner who experiences DB to other learners in a positive manner
- have the learner share her personal interests and / or special talents (*so peers will see a competent peer with her own interests*)
- make adaptations to learning environments that will facilitate full access to instruction *and* peers in a meaningful way (don't sit on the periphery!)
- Respond to challenging behaviors in a manner that teaches peers positive social or coping skills

Peer Interactions

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Maximizing Peer Interactions

Classmates (i.e., learners who do *not* experience disability) **must be taught strategies** for meaningfully interacting with a learner who experiences DB!

Peers cannot “do” this on their own!

Maximizing Peer Interactions

One of the very first things peers, of a learner who experiences DB, need to understand is **how best to communicate with the learner!**

- ▶ Remember the augmented input dictionary from yesterday?
 - How best to approach the learner
 - When, where, how many times to touch the learner OR present an object or texture
- ▶ Also, need to learn about how to respond to the learner...
 - the modes the learner with DB uses to express himself (e.g., sounds, gestures, pictures, manual signs, SGD)
 - what the learner likes and dislikes—in regard to everything!
(OHOA Module re: Establishing and Maintaining Relationships)



Maximizing Effectiveness of Interactions—Vocabulary Strategies

For ALL individuals, the vocabulary chosen for use in any given setting is very much influenced by:

- Environmental context
- Identity / availability of potential partners
- Emotional state / involvement of partners
- Learner's age
- **Culture**

Maximizing Effectiveness of Interactions—Vocabulary Strategies

For learners who experience deafblindness and do use symbolic / conventional words, manual signs, and /or augmentative communication devices....

- Specific words introduced should be modulated by same-age peers' vocabulary
EXAMPLE: Instead of using words you might choose, ask peers what they call a certain object, show, activity; **solicit input from peers!**
- Incorporate vocabulary from current day technologies
EXAMPLE: Incorporate emojis, texting shorthand, etc., in the vocabulary choices for a learner's multi-modal comm. system

Circle of Friends

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What is a “Circle of Friends?”

A Circle of Friends serves as a “circle of **support**” for a person who experiences a disability. This is a deliberate, well-thought out and practiced strategy for facilitating an individual’s meaningful **inclusion in school, neighborhood, and workplace communities.**

Circle of Friends

A Circle of Friends graphic:

- ▶ depicts a **social scan**—it provides a quick picture of who is in a person’s life. *(It ’s kind of like an old-fashioned form of social networking!)*
- ▶ is very useful to gain clarity about who might be **called upon to support** an individual in certain activities
- ▶ The key, *hidden* question is:

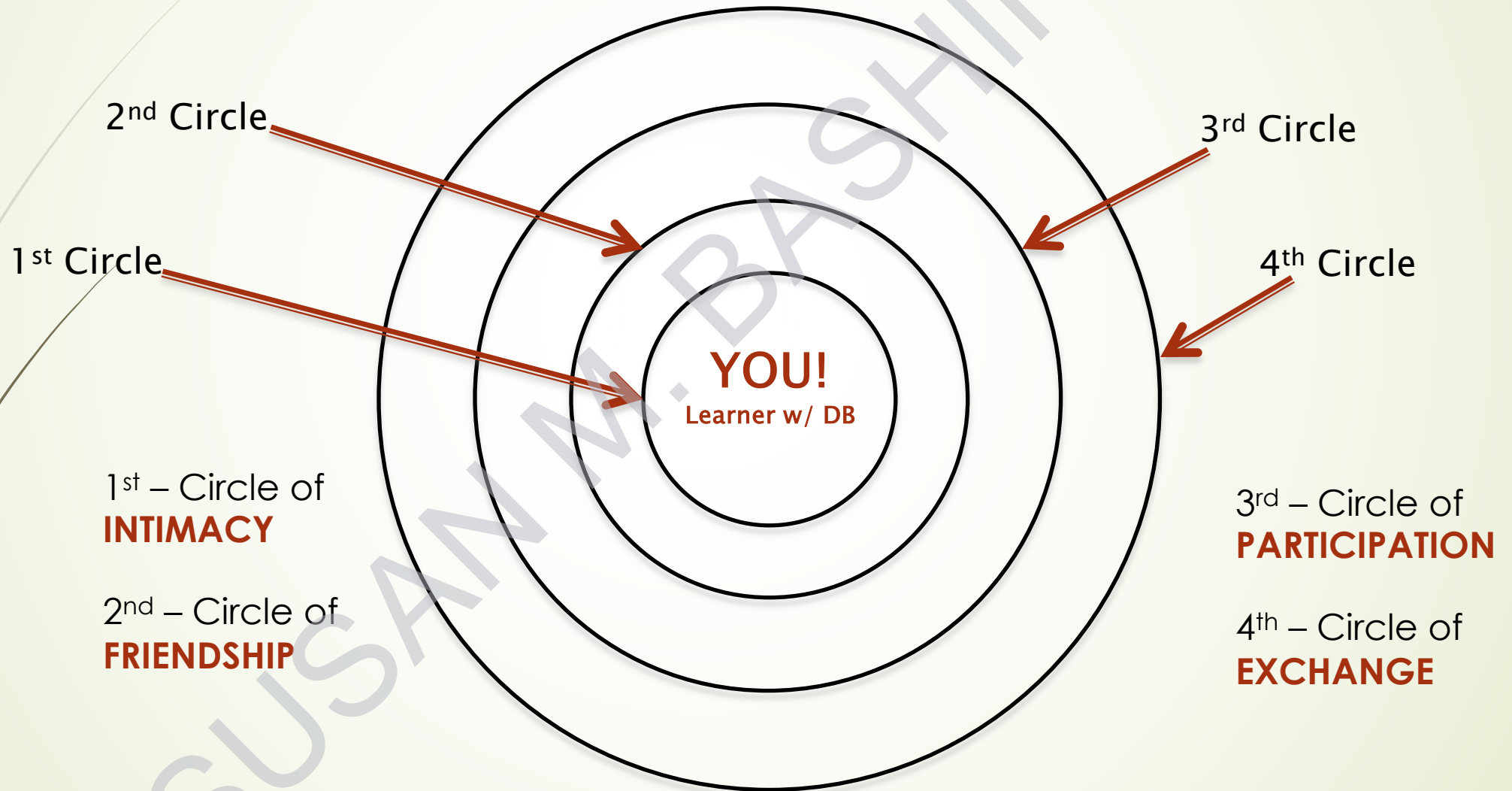
“Who loves this person?”



Circle of Friends

- Circles are an ancient concept!
- Historically, circles have been built around individuals who have been labeled as “disabled” or who have become isolated in some way
- Circles are change tools, applicable to anyone, of any age, who is vulnerable, isolated, or in crisis.
- Circles usually originate around the needs of one person, but over time diminish dependency and foster reciprocal, mutually respectful relationships.

Circle of Friends





Circle of Friends

Steps involved in a Circle of Friends Process:

Put the individual right in the middle!

Take a few minutes & fill in the people in each of the individual's four circles...

1st circle – people most intimate in that individual's life; cannot live without these people
(e.g., parents, older brother, BFF)

2nd circle – good friends—these people *almost* “made” the first circle!



Circle of Friends

Circle of Friends Process Steps (con't.):

3rd circle – people, organizations, and networks with whom the individual is involved

(e.g., colleagues from the work place, soccer team members, cheerleading squad, book club, church choir, classmates, co-riders on special van)

4th circle – people whom the individual *pays* to provide services in her life

(e.g., doctor, teacher, wheelchair repairman, pharmacist, hair dresser)

Circle of Friends

Reviewing a learner's **initial** "Circles" diagram can be very, very revealing!

- Which circle has the most names?
- Which circle has the fewest names?
- What specific things *might* the learner's team do to foster relationships with folks in Circle #3 (Friendships)?
- Compare the number of peers' names that appear in the learner's Circle diagram with the number of adults' / service providers' names.....

Comparing the Circles of a learner with DB with those of peers, or even your own, can be very helpful (and shocking!)

Circle of Friends - SUMMARY

- Circles are NOT a program—but a strategy for building community!
- Circles and community building involves a commitment, over time
- Circles groups have regular meetings, which involve planning time, eating (!), interacting around a “fun activity”
- The learner who experiences DB chooses whom to invite to Circles meetings—unless she needs assistance in determining who these folks might be

Circle of Friends is an on-going strategy for growth, change, and development!

Instructional Arrangements

Instructional Arrangements: Environmental Engineering

EXAMPLES:

- ▶ identify a predictable, preferred activity; present all cues but do not begin
- ▶ delay start of activity and “ignore” learner until she does something to seek attention
- ▶ set up a game but don't begin
- ▶ put desired item out of learner's reach
- ▶ use expectant time delay for activity onset
- ▶ provide only a *partial* prompt
- ▶ simply wait for the learner to initiate some behavior
- ▶ interrupt a turn-taking activity and wait for learner to respond



Using Instructional Arrangements to Maximize Interactions

One **primary** technique, which can have far-reaching effects over time, involves having the learner who experiences deaf-blindness teach his peers about himself—his communication, his preferences, his dislikes, etc.—and how peers can best support him!

Self-Introduction to Kindergarteners (EXAMPLE)

Using Instructional Arrangements to Maximize Interactions

- Use the classroom curriculum to teach all learners about friendships, equality, diversity, inclusion—and tolerance
- Discuss learners' similarities and differences
 - Begin with obvious, physical traits
 - Shift into likes, dislikes
 - Explore personality traits
- Encourage learners to ask questions—and to discuss their potential *fears* about making friends with a learner who experiences deaf-blindness

Using Instructional Arrangements to Maximize Interactions

- Implement cooperative learning groups
 - Assign a valued, meaningful role to the learner who experiences DB
 - Be sure to allow for roles to change over time
- Provide instructional opportunities / assignments that require learners to work in partners or small groups
- Utilize peer partners
- Encourage use of peer partner strategies in special classes and before- / after-school programs, as well



Facilitating & Maintaining Relationships

One of the **key** characteristics of building connections and friendships is people being in **close proximity**, and having **frequent opportunities to interact**, **with one another.**

That is, they must have **frequent access** to one another.



Essential Takeaways

1. Building a **trusting** relationship with a learner is central to her progress, especially in the earliest stages of communication and social - emotional development.
2. Involve learners with **active participation** in functional, socialization, and academic tasks through the implementation of assistive technologies / AAC (...but recognize this participation for what it is—and is **not!**).

Essential Takeaways

- 3. Repeatedly, consistently interpret a learner's behaviors**, over time, to shape meaning and intent.
 - ▶ Make a concerted effort to have all family and educational team members (i.e., ALL communication partners) **respond in a consistent fashion** to a learner's communication attempts



Essential Takeaways

4. Consciously engineer the manner in which *both* adults and peers interact with and around the learner who experiences DB
5. Implement consciously chosen strategies, particularly in educational environments that involve both peers and the learner who experiences DB, to maximize growth—**and facilitate positive perceptions of the learner with deaf-blindness**, by others

Thank You!



What questions do you have—either about this final section, or the entire presentation?

Thank You!

I sincerely appreciate your participation today!
I hope you found this webinar series helpful.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions:

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