



View from here

Interactive Educational Resource





Introduction

'View From Here' has been produced to provide a disability awareness educational resource for young people. The purpose of this resource is to raise awareness among students and teachers of the simple steps they can take, the attitudes they can choose and the decisions they can make that will improve how young people with disabilities are treated.

The idea for this resource came from two 14 year old students, Claire and Marie Kenny, who live almost identical lives but are treated very differently by many people. One of the girls has a physical disability which is viewed by many as a major barrier to succeeding in life. The students do not agree with this and want to change people's attitudes by opening up some of the circumstances they experience on a daily basis. There are many ways of rectifying the issues raised in the DVD but we would like you to remember that young people with disabilities are the best people to talk to as they have the expertise to suggest ways to improve the 'View from Here'.

Foreword from Claire & Marie Kenny

We came up with the idea for this resource because we think the way people with disabilities are treated is unfair. We as twins with and without a disability can see this difference maybe more clearly because it is easy for us to compare the different ways we are being treated.

We would like to thank the Office of The Minister For Children and Youth Affairs, Longford County Council and Longford VEC who gave the funding for the project, Robert Carley and Stephen Doyle from The Right Mind Ltd for their hard work and for making sense of our story, the staff and students from Rochfortbridge Community School for their acting and hard work and to all the IWA staff who supported this project in many ways.

We hope that this resource will help students and teachers see what they can improve in their schools and help them to understand the difficulties faced by people with disabilities that may not be blatantly obvious, like how they are actually treated as a person.

And so improve their view from here.

November 2009



Playing the DVD

Did you know you can watch this DVD production on our website? Go to www.iwa.ie/youth and click on the 'View From Here' link.

If you want to order copies of the DVD please contact IWA Information Department on 01 818 6400 or info@iwa.ie for details on ordering it.

Facilitators Resource Guide

This resource is designed to:

- Combat negative attitudes that can create isolation
- Increase knowledge and awareness about equality and inclusion
- Generate discussion about issues that face young people

Equipment Needed

Television, DVD Player, Photocopied handouts, Pens

Hints & Tips

Watch the 'Resource Preparation' section on the DVD as it provides very useful information prior to you using this resource.

Familiarise yourself with the Resource Guide as the information will assist you to facilitate the discussion sessions.

Photocopy the discussion handouts, one for each student. Refer to the answer page during the discussion sessions for points that may not have been brought up by the students.

Time permitting, it may be useful to play the DVD in full for the students so that they have a chance to think about the issues. Give them the handout that includes the questions so they can make some notes. Play the DVD a second time and pause for each of the discussion questions so that the students can talk through the issues.



What is the problem?

Why make such a big deal of this disability thing?

Young people with physical disabilities are constantly isolated and marginalised from society because of fear and a lack of awareness and understanding among service providers, their peers and decision makers in society. This section will help you to facilitate discussion and hopefully by doing so you will promote inclusion and combat isolation. Start small and think big. Good luck!

Definition ~ 'A disability can be defined as any restriction, or lack of ability, to perform an activity in the manner, or within the range considered normal, for a human being'

OR

A disability is a lack of ability to perform any activity.

Why do people have a disability?

There are four different main reasons as to why someone may have a disability.

Congenital: this is when the person has their disability from birth, for example cerebral palsy

As a result of a trauma or injury, for example a stroke or road traffic accident

As a result of an illness, for example Multiple Sclerosis

Inherited, from their family, for example Muscular Dystrophy

What is a Handicap?

A disadvantage or a barrier to performance imposed by society.

What is the relationship between equality and disability?

Disability is an equality issue; everyone should always work towards an inclusive service / society.

WE NEED TO:

Recognise the person as an individual with ability and not a person with a disability.

Understand and recognise the person's disability in terms of their communication methods, if they need medication, assistance to carry out certain tasks or help if something happens, e.g. what people should or should not do during an epileptic seizure.

Remember that it is the environment that disables people, e.g. by not having physical access



to buildings or activities you discriminate against a group of people.

Stereotyping

People with disabilities are often viewed as something other than equal members of society. The media can help to form these stereotypes e.g. a headline that reads "Straight A's for Brave Cripple" instead of just accepting their achievements or down falls despite their disability. An alternative could read; "Straight A's for Longford Junior Cert Student." The emphasis is on a Junior Cert Student from Longford achieving straight A's rather than a brave cripple.

Meeting a person with a disability for the first time

Everyone is nervous meeting new people regardless of who they are or where they are from. This nervousness can be even greater for young people starting a new school or a new year. If a young person with a disability is treated in a way that draws attention to their disability rather than who they are as a person, the nervousness can be even greater again.

Here are some do's & don'ts:

DO:

Talk directly to me

Come down to my eye level if I am in a wheelchair

Allow me the time to communicate my way, by using adapted equipment etc.

DON'T:

Be patronizing

Talk over me or to someone who may be with me

Treat me differently to how you would treat any other person

Fact

A person with a disability in a group has as much to offer as anyone else and can gain in many ways from being involved in their own community.

Something to think about!! Words are powerful ~ Negative language results in labels but positive language can change attitudes. Attitudes are the real disability!



Finally:

While this is an educational and informative exercise it should also be interactive and fun so enjoy.

Thank you for taking the time to use this resource. A lot of thought and preparation went into producing the DVD. In particular, it was the idea of two young people who wanted to improve the lives of people with disabilities in similar situations.

If you would like any further information on any of the issues raised in this programme or on the work of Irish Wheelchair Association, please do not hesitate to contact us through our website or at one of our local centres. Full details are available on **www.iwa.ie/youth**



The View From Here

Student Handout

SCENE 1:

Discuss what Kate's challenges may be?

SCENE 2:

Discuss what was different about Kate's trip to school to that of her class mates?

SCENE 3:

Discuss the corridor jam. In particular highlight what you felt was good and what you thought was not so good about how her friend cleared a path for Kate?



SCENE 4:

Discuss Kate's feelings of being on the outside?

Talk about how the others might have included her more in the conversation?

SCENE 5:

Discuss whether you thought the teacher treated everyone in the class in a fair and equal fashion. Share your thoughts on how we can sometimes over compensate and so isolate the person we are trying to help.

SCENE 6:

Discuss how Kate's class mates treat her in this scene. In particular discuss how they seem to exclude her from the lunch time plans.

SCENE 7:

Discuss this vending machine decision time. In particular think about how Kate's friends listened to her, talked to her and indeed, seemed to make decisions for her.



Discussion Handout for Facilitator/Teacher

Please do not hand this out to the students but use it to help your discussions during the session.

SCENE 1:

Discuss what Kate's challenges may be?

Physical challenges - Access/barriers

Emotional - everyday teen

Other - discrimination, isolation and prejudice.

SCENE 2:

Discuss what was different about Kate's trip to school to that of her class mates?

Had to travel by car as bus not accessible for her chair

Car was parked in front of the bus causing Kate's disability to be highlighted and showed that she could not blend in with the crowd.

No one spoke to Kate, or walked into school with her, everyone went inside and she was left outside because the ramp had been moved.

SCENE 3:

Discuss the corridor jam. In particular highlight what you felt was good and what you thought was not so good about how her friend cleared a path for Kate?

A good point was that Mary did clear a path for Kate, but she did go about it the wrong way.

Mary draws attention to Kate's presence and makes a scene that embarrasses Kate.

Mary's good intentions could cause other students to be hostile towards Kate and it signals that Kate is different to everyone else. This can make 'fitting in' difficult for Kate.

Mary did not listen and ignored Kate when she said that she did not need help.

Singling out Kate in this way can lower her self esteem and confidence which may affect her later on. It could also lead to more serious things like Kate being bullied.



SCENE 4:

Discuss Kate's feelings of being on the outside?

Feeling like an outsider, isolated and lonely

Feeling that her opinion did not matter

Feelings of inadequacy.

Talk about how the others might have included her more in the conversation?

They could have asked questions relating to the movie rather than just asking her about school stuff.

They could have asked her who she liked/fancied in the movie or even if she had seen the movie.

SCENE 5:

Discuss whether you thought the teacher treated everyone in the class in a fair and equal fashion. Share your thoughts on how we can sometimes over compensate and so isolate the person we are trying to help.

The teacher allowed Kate to get away with not doing her homework and then punished another classmate for the same thing. This can lead to other students becoming resentful of Kate. It also highlights the fact that people with disabilities are sometimes treated differently.

Sometimes we make allowances for people with disabilities and do not allow them to learn from their mistakes. We should support them to reach their full potential.

People may be unsure how to react towards someone with a disability and may do something which they think is helpful but in doing so highlights the person's disability and isolates the person without meaning to.

SCENE 6:

Discuss how Kate's class mates treat her in this scene. In particular discuss how they seem to exclude her from the lunch time plans.

Kate is in the circle of students but she is not included in the conversation, the others ignore her and make decisions for her without listening to what she really wants.

Michael talks to her as if she were a baby and would not be able to understand normal teenage conversation.

They all assume that Kate could not possibly go out in the rain '*she might melt.*'



SCENE 7:

Discuss this vending machine decision time. In particular think about how Kate's friends listened to her, talked to her and indeed, seemed to make decisions for her.

They ignore Kate, discuss and decide what she would like amongst themselves.

They did not ask Kate what she wanted and so she ended up with something she did not like.

They assumed they were doing the right thing but ended up doing the opposite because **they did not ask Kate.**

SOMETHING ELSE TO THINK ABOUT:

You could ask students watching and discussing this DVD what Kate could/should have done in each scenario to assert herself and so change the outcome.

How could Kate have taken control of each situation?



Followup Actions

Please use this page to outline any further actions or thoughts you may have.