

Perfect day

Aim

A fun introductory activity that gives participants the chance to reflect on the challenges young disabled people face when trying to make and maintain friendships.

You will need:

- Plain paper or a 'Perfect day' worksheet, which is freely downloadable on the My Organiser page of the website: childrenssociety.org.uk/friendshipforall
- Pens, crayons, pencils (optional: old magazines, newspapers, scissors and glue).

1. Ask participants to imagine their perfect day with a friend. They can think back to when they were a teenager and what they used to do with their friends.
2. Then (after handing out coloured pens, pencils etc) ask them to make notes or draw pictures to illustrate what would be their 'perfect day' with their friends.
3. If you complete a picture reflecting your own perfect day beforehand, you can share this with the group to prompt ideas and encourage people to share their memories.
4. When everyone has finished ask if they would like to share their drawing or description with the group. Go round and give everyone a chance to share their picture.
5. Next, ask people to work with a partner and to think about one of their clients and ask themselves: 'Would your client be able to do what you did as a teenager?' 'Would any adaptations need to be made to venue, transport, activity, supervision, forward planning etc?' 'Who would their chosen friend be?'
6. Ask each pair to feedback from their discussion. Ask people not to use real names to maintain confidentiality.



Tips for the facilitator:

Hopefully this activity and the discussions following it will reveal that your clients do not have the same opportunities for friendship that we all took for granted. Here are some points that you can elaborate on if they don't arise in the conversations:

- Sometimes more planning is needed to enable disabled young people to spend time with their friends when the activities haven't been specifically tailored to meet their needs.
- There is often less opportunity to be spontaneous, take risks and have freedom. Many venues and activities might not be accessible to them or their chosen friend.
- It is important to be creative and think of ways around potential barriers, don't be defeatist otherwise young people end up with fewer opportunities again and again. Allow children to tell their own story to parents/carers when they arrive home.