

# Making Camps & Programs Accessible

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# MontroseAccess

- Provides a range of services to children and young adults living with physical disabilities across Queensland.
- Services include –
  - Physical Therapies – Physio & Occupational Therapy
  - Social Work & Psychology
  - Speech Pathology
  - Respite
  - Recreation

# *Recreation Department*

- Offer our clients the opportunity to participate in some of the recreation activities that their able bodied peers take for granted.
- Work with community based service providers to adapt programs to suit their needs and enabling them to participate in these activities alongside their peers and members of the community.

- Frequently asked to assist to help by providing information and ideas about how to make school camp programs accessible to our clients.
- Majority of our clients attend mainstream schools and can be the only or one of small number of students with a disability.
- They often miss out on camps because their school, the camp or both feel that they can't meet their needs in a camp environment.

# What's the aim?

- Provide you with a few ideas that can help you open your camps and programs to people who have a physical disability.
- The information and ideas will be focused around the barriers faced by people with physical disability, some of it will be applicable to people with intellectual disability, sight or hearing impairment and some won't be

‘We just don’t think we can meet  
their needs’

- What are the needs –
  - Equipment
  - Accommodation
  - Activity concern

# How can we help?

## Equipment

- This is an idea of the extra equipment needed by a person who uses a power wheelchair –
  - Hoist & Sling
  - Shower Chair
  - Beach / All terrain Wheelchair
  - Here-to-There Chair

# How can we help?

- Transporting all of this equipment, the person, their power chair and the rest of their gear can be quite difficult.
- There are companies in most areas that hire these items and will deliver them.
- If you can develop a relationship with such a company in your area the task of locating and transporting this equipment can be reduced to a section on the booking form and a phone call or email.
- The hire cost can be added to the camp cost or charged directly to the school or group.

# What can we do?

## Transport

- Regularly we work with groups to help ensure that our clients are included in their camp program only to see them transport to and from the camp in a separate vehicle.

Immediately isolating them from the rest of the group.

# Your thinking 'Transport is the school's issue'

- And you're right, in most cases, transport to and from camp is the school's issue and we only need worry about what happens after they arrive.
- Segregated transport can impact on the group dynamic, and reduce the successfulness of the programs delivered by your staff.

# What can we do?

- There are a number of coach and bus charter companies that have vehicles that can accommodate a number of people in wheelchairs as well as passengers in 'normal' seats.
- If you can provide the details of these companies to schools and groups that have a member that uses a wheelchair, hopefully the group 'forming' process can start earlier and the flow on effect for the rest of the program can only be positive.

# What can we do?

## Activities

- Program needs to be inclusive from the start.
- Often not only physical mobility that is compromised, but also reduced movement and strength in their hands, arms and body in general.
- Need to make sure that we can adapt activities to meet these needs as well.

- We often see activities like Thumb Wrestling, Psychic Handshake and games where participants may have to throw a ball, sit down and up or just bob down to avoid the 'zap' of a ray gun.
- Can be great ways of breaking the ice, getting a group moving and interacting but a 14 or 15 yr old with Muscular Dystrophy would be left out.
- Instead use activities that require, those participants that can, to be active but can be equally as effective if one or two of the participants can't.

- Games like 'Imaginary Toss a Name Game
- Or Paired Shares
- Not only meet the desired outcomes but allow all of the group to be involved.
- Ice breakers are probably the easiest part of the program to adapt, but they are the foundation of programs not the peak experience we are hoping to achieve
- For this reason we need to ensure that program accessibility doesn't stop here.

# Adventurous activities

- Accessing sites
- Easiest option is some form of a beach or all terrain wheelchair.

# TrailRider



# Program elements

- Now that we can get to the activity we will look at a few of the program elements that we are most regularly asked about.
- The first is the Flying Fox, Arial Runway – whatever it is your centre calls it!!

- Participant wears a harness.
- Here-to-There chair with over head rigging.
- Attached to a Gri Gri descending device.
- Participants can be hauled up to the launch platform by other group members
- For people that require greater head and neck support we have used parasailing harness in place of the Here-to-There chair.

# Abseiling

- Can use same Here-to-There chair and rigging as used for Flying Fox.
- But participant just tends to dangle and is dragged down or thumps into the tower.
- There is an abseiling chair, basically a chair mounted on a frame that extends out at the front with wheels to roll down the face of the tower.

# Canoeing

- Maybe as easy as getting the person into the canoe.
- But for others no matter how many adaptations we make they will still not be able to paddle a canoe, but they can be involved.

- Some areas that need some consideration are –
  - If the individual can support themselves while seated
  - Can the individual roll themselves in the water
  - Will they be able to re enter the canoe from in the water
- Adaptations can include –
  - A seat that can be placed in the floor of the canoe
  - Outriggers or rafting up
  - Altering the activity to stay close to shore.

# Orienteering

- Usually quite easy to adapt by simply having a course that allows movement from one check point to the next along formed paths and flat and even ground.
- Other options include –
  - The use of an all terrain wheelchair like the TrailRider
    - Down side is that the participant is no long independently mobile.
  - If participant can't manipulate the dial of a compass use a digital compass or GPS

# Archery

- Not having the strength to hold the bow and draw back the string.
- For some simply moving the firing line closer to the target may be enough – obviously not while others are firing!!!
- Have someone else hold the bow and arrow while the participant lines up the shot and tells them how far to pull back on the string and when to fire.

# The Biggest Barrier

- Isn't so much the activities but the mindset of the school staff, camp staff and the general population.
- People aren't discriminatory or exclusive on purpose or by nature, they just don't know how or don't think they can.
- More an issue with disability awareness and education than anything else.

- Just as you can't judge a book by its cover, you can't judge a person's ability by their appearance.
- Wheelchairs, walkers, scooters and the like are mobility aids, they don't define the person or what their dreams and aspirations are or what they can and can't do.
- They simply help an individual move from one location to the next.

# Other areas

- Two other areas where we regularly run into issues are –
  - Bathrooms and toilets
  - Bedrooms / Dorms

# Dorms

- Built with a purpose and that is to accommodate as many people as possible in the smallest amount of space
- The best way to do this is
- **BUNKS!!!!**

- Bunks on the whole are great, until you need to be hoisted into and out of bed.
- You see the hoist doesn't fit under the top bunk
- So next time you are thinking about what bedding to put into dorms consider putting in bunks that can be separated into two single beds.
- The other issue we run into in dorms is the lack of free room.

# Bathrooms

- Accessible bathrooms are huge, taking up about as much space as two non accessible bathrooms.
- So why use the same space for half the facilities?
- Quite simply because everyone can use an accessible bathroom, you don't have to use a wheelchair!!

- In 2004 1 in 5 Australians were reported to have a disability and a 2003 survey found that 1 in 17 (5.9%) people had a profound or severe level of core activity limitation, that's 6 out of every hundred people requiring a significant amount of assistance with personal care tasks, mobility, communication or a combination of these.

[http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability\\_rights/health/physical.doc](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/health/physical.doc)

The number of people with a disability that access your facilities and programs is probably far less than this and we need to ask, why? Is it that they don't want to – probably the answer for some, or is it some other reason and can we do something to help

In a perfect world accessibility won't be a selling point, an extra or add on. It will be the norm. Accessibility should be unnoticed be those that don't require it and readily available for those that do, it shouldn't impact those that don't need it and should have an unbelievable impact for those that do