

Presenter's Notes

Inclusion – The Key to Disabilities Awareness

A presentation slide with a blue header and a white body. The header features the text 'A PRESENTATION FROM THE NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE' and 'ABILITIES AWARENESS' in large white letters. A keyhole is cut into the letter 'A' of 'ABILITIES', and a key is inserted into it. The key is silver and black. The body of the slide contains the title 'Inclusion – The Key to Disabilities Awareness' in bold black text. Below the title is a box with an expiration date and a URL. The footer contains the Boy Scouts of America logo and the slogan 'Prepared. For Life.'

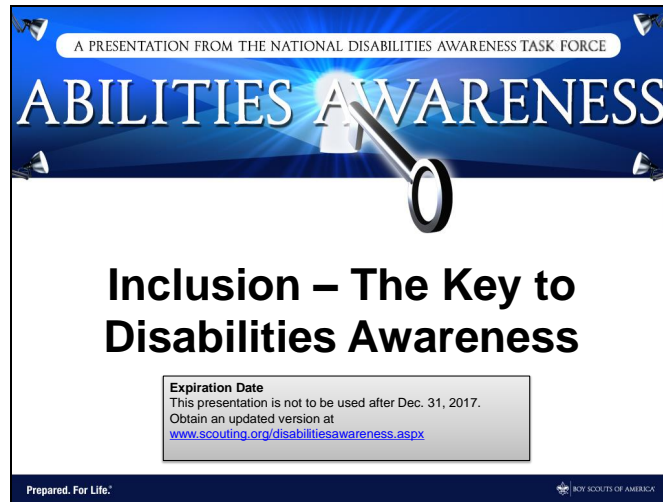
A PRESENTATION FROM THE NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE

ABILITIES AWARENESS

Inclusion – The Key to Disabilities Awareness

Expiration Date
This presentation is not to be used after Dec. 31, 2017.
Obtain an updated version at
www.scouting.org/disabilitiesawareness.aspx

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Presenter Notes: Begin with a simple opening ceremony using the Pledge of Allegiance and the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Then state: *“Virtually every Scouting unit at one time or another will have the opportunity to serve youth with special needs. In fact, in a recent study in the Midwest, we found that 15 percent of the membership has some sort of disability requiring special attention or consideration from leaders.”*

Welcome and thank everyone for attending. State their presence here speaks of their dedication. [Presenter should limit the number of questions asked and control discussions.]

This presentation provides leaders and parents with an introduction to inclusion, an important process needed to work with ALL youth, those who have special needs among them. We hope it will inspire participants to learn more about inclusion and its ability to impact ALL Scouts in a positive way. The session takes under 60 minutes depending on experience level, and has an expiration date, after which it is not to be used. Upon that date a replacement session will be available at the URL shown above.

Presenters may want to have a flip chart, and should have at least one copy of the following publications for use during the presentation:

- *Guide to Working with Scouts with Special Needs and Disabilities*, No. 510-071,
- *Scouting with Youth with Disabilities* manual, No.34059
- *Guide To Advancement*, No. 33088
- Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges, No. 512-730),
- Individual Scout Advancement Plan (ISAP) No. 512-936
- Request for Registration Beyond the Age of Eligibility , No. 512-935

The National Disabilities Awareness Task Force welcomes any and all feedback at disabilities.awareness@scouting.org, but would ask that questions and concerns first be shared with local district and council volunteers or professional administrators.

The slide features a dark blue header with the text "NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE" in white. Below the header, the title "Presentation Objective" is centered in a large, bold, black font. Underneath the title, a quote is displayed in a smaller, italicized black font: "1 in 10 children in the USA have a disability or condition that limits their functional skills." –Centers for Disease Control 2010. The main body of the slide contains the objective text: "To encourage positive, inclusive experiences for all youth in Scouting, especially those with different abilities or challenges." At the bottom of the slide, there is a dark blue footer containing the slogan "Prepared. For Life." on the left and the Boy Scouts of America logo on the right.

For many years, youth with disabilities have had positive experiences in traditional Scouting programs, due in large part to dedicated volunteers and council staffs. The Boy Scouts of America has made a concerted effort to offer reasonable accommodations enabling individuals with permanent and severe disabilities to advance to the best of their abilities.

Since the 1970s, mainstreaming or integrating individuals different from the majority population has been an important approach in special education schools and organizations. In Scouting, mainstreaming has driven much of the programs of emphasis, i.e., Scouting for the Handicapped, Hispanic Emphasis program, Scoutreach, Soccer and Scouting, and so forth. The idea behind mainstreaming is in the use of extra adaptations/accommodations or services to help youth fit in.

Today's preferred approach is inclusion, which focuses on building positive relationships with everyone. Inclusion in Scouting supports the idea that all Scouting youth are unique individuals with unique abilities, all capable of advancing and having gratifying outdoor experiences.

In general, this educational presentation's main thrust is to show how inclusion benefits All youth and adults, and explain the process in an easy-to-understand approach. Let's begin by sharing inclusion's important place in Scouting.


NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE

Why is Inclusion Important?

It's consistent with the **Scout Oath and Law**

"...to help other people at all times"

"A Scout is kind..."

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The sixth point of the Scout Law is, "A Scout is kind." He treats others as he wants to be treated, and understands there is strength in being gentle. He does no harm nor kill any living things without good reason.

As one recites the Scout Oath, ponder for a moment the line that reads, "to help other people at all times." A Scout cares about other people, and offers his help with no expectation of a reward.

The concept of inclusion could have been conceived as though the Scout Oath and Law drove the author's thought process. There are several definitions of inclusion, but the one that truly resonates the spirit behind the word is the one offered in the publication *Paths to Inclusion: A Resource Guide for Fully Including Youth of ALL Abilities in Community Life*:

"An attitude and approach that seeks to ensure every person, regardless of ability or background, can meaningfully participate in all aspects of life."

Let's take a closer look of what inclusion entails.

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Mainstreaming vs. Inclusion

Mainstreaming:

- Benefits mostly Scouts who have special needs
- Focus on Scouts with disabilities overcoming obstacles
- Accommodations are emphasized

Inclusion:

- Benefits all Scouts in the unit
- Ensures ALL members succeed in Scouting
- Welcomes adaptive approaches to improve units

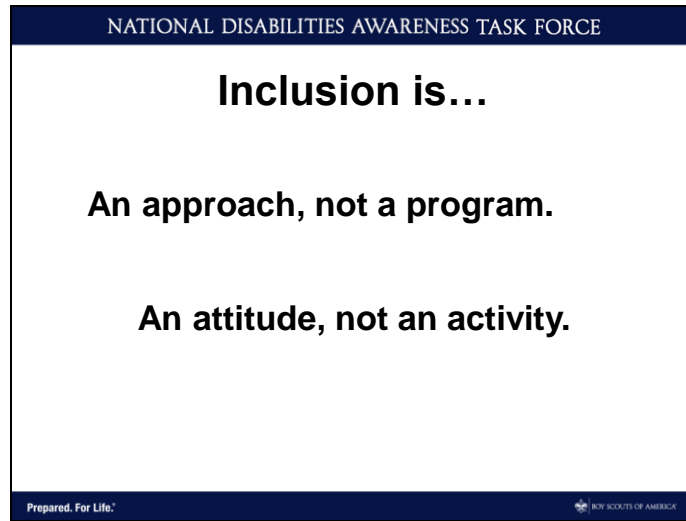
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Mainstreaming and Inclusion are not the same. The former concept's basic premise is youth with disabilities succeed in Scouting as long as they're able to keep up with the program through reasonable accommodations. A Scouting unit comprised mostly of Scouts who are deaf for example, may use special hearing aids to help them complete requirements for a specific merit badge. Likewise, a unit comprised of many Scouts who are blind would use Scouting literature made available in Braille or large print.

This approach by no means should be viewed as counter-productive. In fact, there are parents who prefer their sons with Down syndrome join a Cub Pack comprised mostly of children with Down syndrome. But perhaps one of the disadvantages of such units is youth who don't have the disability but wishes to join their friend's unit may feel left out during den meetings, and eventually leave the unit.

Inclusion, on the other hand, focuses on building positive relationships with everyone in the unit so that ALL Scouts learn from each other and work together. In doing so, everyone advances in the program to the best of their abilities.

Unit leaders who include a youth with a disability into the unit will learn about the disability by talking to the parents, and find out what adaptations are needed to make the program successful for that Scout. Scouts work together by reading instructions aloud or holding up pictures for each other or using other similar adaptations. The Scout with disabilities can communicate what works best for him. It is team work at its best!



A **positive attitude** is important in everyday life because it transforms not only the person who practices and uses this approach, but the people he or she comes in contact with whose outlook in life may not be as bright. Let's consider other examples.

Example #1

When a new youth member with Asperger's syndrome joins an inclusive Venturing crew, advisors focus on what the youth **can do**, not on the things she can't do. Both adults and other youth understand just how powerful words are, and when communicating with the new member, they consciously put the person first, stressing her unique abilities. They call her by her name, instead of referring to her as "that girl with Asperger's." The Crew Advisor sees her participation as a learning opportunity for everyone.


Example #2

An inclusive Varsity team welcomes a new member with ADHD (Attention-Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder.) After talking to the youth's parents, the Varsity coach and his assistants learn he pays close attention when visuals are used during instructional sessions. So, a concerted effort is made by the team's youth leaders to always have a visual aid (poster, IPAD, paper & pencil) handy during merit badge instruction. A youth who may have sketching abilities may be chosen as a buddy, and when he sees his friend is not paying attention, he draws a table with symbols to explain the first aid procedure being taught. Another suggestion is for leaders to have visual aids already available and use them as regular practice when instructing to all the Scouts.

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Inclusion is a Process that...

- Begins with “I”
- Promotes working together
- Makes Scouting accessible to ALL members

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[Note to the presenter: read the following out loud: “Inclusion begins with the letter ‘I.’ One chooses to foster an inclusive Scouting unit where all are welcomed, but the choice must begin from within each one of us.”]

Inclusion is a process that requires a conscious personal decision to treat everyone with dignity and respect. These values are important in creating and sustaining an environment in which everyone feels included, valued, and appreciated. Sometimes it’s the small things, like a warm smile, that has the biggest impact on a Scout who has a disability.

People who live by the Scout Oath and Law place inclusion at the core of what they do every day. Inclusion does indeed begin with “I.”


Slide 7

NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE

Benefits of Inclusion

Scouts who have disabilities:

- Develop strong bonds with fellow Scouts
- Learn from their peers
- Improves Advancement
- Increased willingness to take on difficult tasks
- Self esteem and confidence increases

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[Note to the presenter: the benefits of practicing inclusion are many, and this slide identifies some of the key outcomes. Encourage participants to share other benefits they've observed.]

For the most part, individuals with disabilities learn good social and life skills when they're able to bond with peers their age. Their friends become role models of good behaviors. Their self-esteem and confidence begins to build when they feel a sense of belonging. Tasks they once felt were difficult or impossible become manageable.

In Scouting, positive results can be seen as a youth with a disability starts to advance in rank and take on leadership positions. Genuine praise given to a Scout who has a disability can be very powerful.

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Benefits of Inclusion

- Build strong bonds with fellow Scouts who have disabilities
- Gain appreciation and acceptance for people with special needs
- Work with Scouts who have varying skills and abilities
- Learn mentoring skills at an early age

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[Note to the presenter: the benefits of practicing inclusion are many, and this slide identifies some of the key outcomes. Encourage participants to share other benefits they've observed. **Read:** By now one should be noticing hardly any reference given to “normal or non-disabled” Scouts. The reason: most of us has some form of disability, perhaps not as severe as the individual with a permanent, diagnosable special need.]


In an inclusive Scouting unit, all Scouts stand to benefit from interacting with fellow Scouts with special needs. Strong friendships develop when a spirit of empathy abides. Scouts gain a deeper understanding and acceptance for people different from themselves.

This introduction early on in life gives young people a sense of appreciation not only for the work they do with fellow Scouts, but it also prepares them to become a responsible adult, parent, corporate leader, and so forth.

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“What can I do to make my unit, district, or council more Inclusive?”

- Start with the INDIVIDUAL
- Determine the youth’s needs and strengths
- Balance his needs
- Utilize his strengths
- Create a quality experience for ALL Scouts

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Let’s now consider this next example:

Before a youth with cerebral palsy joins, the unit leader will have spoken to the youth’s parents to determine his needs and strengths. The leader may want to find out what other resources the parent can provide to help the leader work with this Scout (A specific contact with the CP foundation that the family may be familiar with, school personnel that can help with ideas of how to assist the Scout and/or program.)

The new Scout’s biggest need is the opportunity for full inclusion in society and optimal independent living. Not surprising, this also happens to be every other Scouts’ main need.

The unit leader’s willingness to create a quality experience for all members of the unit becomes a priority. With this being said, a concerted effort to balance the Scout with cerebral palsy’s needs and utilize the talents he brings to the unit will be important.

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Commitment at Every Level of Scouting

Commitment from Council Leadership is Essential

- Chief Executive Officer
- Council Strategic plan
- Capital campaigns for facilities/program
- Staff and Volunteers

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The Scout executive is a local council's chief executive officer, and commands great influential power. He or she can, for example, persuade the council president to make inclusion part of the council's strategic plan. Once the council executive board approves the plan, the council executive works with his senior cabinet to develop a good execution model.

Example:

The camping property's shower houses and dining hall need significant improvements for better accessibility. If it's part of the council's strategic plan, this helps to motivate both staffs and volunteers to do something about it. The finance director develops a top notch capital campaign, and through buy-in from the entire staff and volunteers, the dollars are generated to make the camp accessible.


Once parents of youth with disabilities learn a council has accessible outdoor programs, they will want to get involved in Scouting along with their sons and daughters. Their contribution to the council's Special Needs Scouting committee could be enormous not only as prospective volunteers, but donors of significant gifts.

Speaker note: After sharing the above example, brainstorm with your group on other ways that program can be positively impacted by Inclusion.

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Path towards Inclusion

- Value all members
- Involve the group in making decisions
- Praise good work
- Plan group activities based on individual skills and contribution
- Utilize the Buddy System and a Peer Buddy

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When people know they are valued, they are more likely to attain the unit's goals. In an inclusive Scout troop, all youth and adult leaders help develop solutions to meet real needs, with each individual becoming vested in the unit's decision making process. A positive spirit of cooperation builds over time.

A unit leader that sees the value of inclusion sets all youth members up for success. As Scouts with disabilities assume their unit responsibilities, recognizing them for their contributions when using their abilities becomes increasingly important.


The BSA Buddy system is essential in an inclusive environment. Scouts with disabilities are more prone to participate in outdoor activities and have fun when paired with a Scout with compatible individual strengths. You can also utilize a Peer Buddy which is different from the Buddy system as the Peer Buddy is an ongoing supportive relationship between Scouts. The Peer Buddy may have different strengths that are not necessarily compatible although they learn from each other.

Inclusion really is the key to disabilities awareness!

NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE

Summary

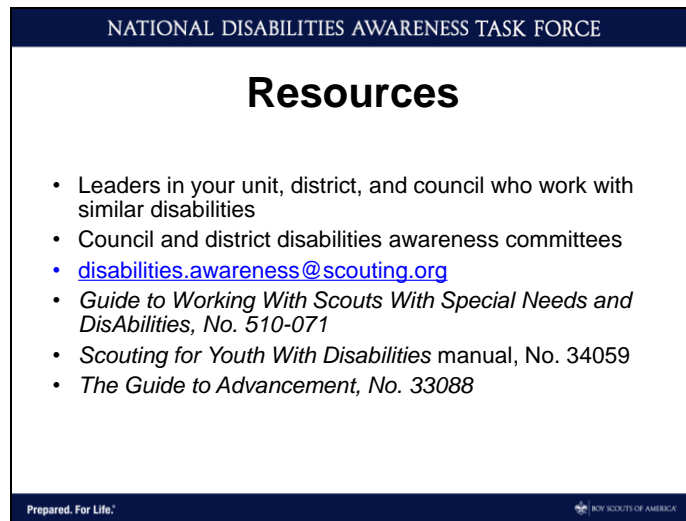
- LOYAL – Have faith in what youth can become.
- HELPFUL – Look for positive solutions.
- FRIENDLY – A Scout is a person not a diagnosis.
- COURTEOUS – Show and expect respect.
- KIND – Model caring behavior.

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At this time, you may want to conclude the session with reading two of the points of the Scout Law, for example:

A Scout is Helpful: A Scout cares about other people. He helps others without expecting payment or reward. He fulfills his duties to his family by helping at home.

A Scout is Friendly: A Scout is a friend to all. He is a brother to other Scouts. He offers his friendship to people of all races, religions, and nations, and respects them even if their beliefs and customs are different from his own.



The slide features a dark blue header with the text "NATIONAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS TASK FORCE" in white. Below the header, the word "Resources" is centered in a large, bold, black font. A bulleted list follows, containing five items: "Leaders in your unit, district, and council who work with similar disabilities", "Council and district disabilities awareness committees", "disabilities.awareness@scouting.org", "*Guide to Working With Scouts With Special Needs and DisAbilities*, No. 510-071", "*Scouting for Youth With Disabilities* manual, No. 34059", and "*The Guide to Advancement*, No. 33088". At the bottom of the slide, there is a dark blue footer with the text "Prepared. For Life." on the left and the BSA logo and "BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA" on the right.

BSA publications on Scouts with disabilities can be accessed online at: www.scouting.org/disabilitiesawareness.aspx. Additional information can be accessed at: www.wswd.org/.

Not all councils have disabilities awareness advisory committees, so let your audience know to direct questions to: disabilities.awareness@scouting.org. Volunteers from the National Disabilities Awareness Task Force will help provide advice and support.