

**SUMMER OF LEARNING:
WORKING WITH
INDIVIDUALS WITH
DISABILITIES**

August 30, 2024

AGENDA

Introduction

Importance of Including All People in our Programs

Disabilities Prevalence in NJ

Best practices

Eating behaviors related to disabilities

Activity – breakout rooms

Final thoughts & takeaways

THE IMPORTANCE OF INCLUDING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN OUR PROGRAMS



- Everyone deserves to feel respected, heard, and seen
- People with disabilities have a higher rates of unemployment than able-bodies individuals
- We are bound to the “Justice for All” statement – people with disabilities are no exception
- Just like any community members, we want to do our best to help them in an effective manner to gain access to food resources and other resources as possible



**1,592,077 adults
in New Jersey
have a disability¹**

This is equal to 23% or
about 1 in 4 adults in
New Jersey

DISABILITIES & PREVALENCE IN NJ

- **Any disability** (23.1%)
- **Cognitive** (10.4%)
- **Hearing** (4.8%)
- **Mobility** (10.1%)
- **Vision** (4.9%)
- **Self-care** (3.4%)
- **Independent living** (6.1%)

“NO NEED TO BE AWKWARD”

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TIPS FOR WORKING WITH DISABLED POPULATION

- Always ask!!
- **Vision impairments**
 - Larger text or adjusting lighting for those with low vision
 - Description based on changes in shape, temperature, or texture
 - Auditory cues, normal volume and tone
- **Hearing impairments**
 - Real time captions on screen
 - Note-takers, interpreters (ASL), visual aids
 - Speak facing the person
 - Repeat discussion questions and statements made by other participants

TIPS FOR WORKING WITH DISABLED POPULATION

- Always ask!!
- **Speech impairments**
 - Concentrate, be patient
 - Use technology or writing
 - Ask yes or no questions that just require head nods when appropriate
 - Encourage in group discussion
- **Mobility**
 - Offer help before you just do
 - When talking for a bit of time, sit with them
 - Be aware of language: wheelchair users are not “confined or bound to them”
 - Respect personal space, make clear pathways for movement

TIPS FOR WORKING WITH DISABLED POPULATION

- Always ask!!
- **Intellectual Developmental Disabilities (IDD)**
 - Give clear instruction, set clear expectations and follow through
 - Be aware and respectful of possible sensitivities (i.e. eye contact, other stimuli)
- **Specific learning disabilities**
 - Consistency, patience, communication
 - Teach in different modes (visual, auditory, kinesthetic)
- **Other Health Impaired**
 - Reduce distractions where possible
 - Repeat main points frequently
 - Check-in for understanding throughout interaction



**EDUCATOR SHARE
BACK: WHAT HAS
YOUR EXPERIENCE
BEEN?**

EATING BEHAVIORS AND DISABILITIES

- Why do some adults with disabilities struggle with healthy eating?
 - Sensory issues around taste, texture and smell of food
 - Sensory issues can affect reactions to the mealtime environment
 - Preferences about the color and position of food on the plate or different foods touching on the plate



EATING BEHAVIORS AND DISABILITIES

- Potential solutions:
 - Teaching about the importance of healthy eating is essential
 - Focus on the idea of balance
 - Shy away from classifying foods as healthy/unhealthy
 - Establish mealtime routines
 - Social preferences: eating alone vs eating in a group





BREAKOUT ROOMS

Discuss what you would do in the scenario

SCENARIO 1

You are a nutrition educator leading a JSY class for older adults at a senior center. The participants have cognitive disabilities, such as mild dementia or memory issues. Your objective is to provide them with practical nutrition advice in a way that is clear, engaging, and easy to retain.

1. How would you prepare for the class ahead of time?
2. How would you engage the audience in the presentation?
3. What other needs will be taken into consideration?



SCENARIO 2

You are a nutrition educator conducting a CMK class for a group of children with developmental disabilities at a local after school program. The goal is to teach them about healthy eating habits through interactive activities and engaging, age-appropriate methods.

1. How would you prepare for the class ahead of time?
2. How would you engage the audience in the presentation?
3. What other needs will be taken into consideration?



FINAL THOUGHTS:

- Not all disabilities are visible, such as heart disease, learning disabilities, ADHD, depression, or asthma.
- Many people have temporary disabilities which are equally as limiting as permanent disabilities.
- Not everyone with a disability wishes to discuss their disability or its limitations.
- Be mindful and respectful of others especially in what we say and ask.

RESOURCE FOR THE COMMUNITY

- [New Jersey DHS Disability Programs](#)
- [NJ Resources for Children with Disabilities or Special Needs](#)
- [National Disability Institute Financial Resilience Center](#)
- [usa.gov Disability Services](#)
- [National Council on Disability Government and Community Resources](#)

RESOURCES FOR STAFF

- [Webinar: How to Include People with Disability in Nutrition Services and Programming](#)
- [Webinar: Teaching Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to Plan, Cook and Enjoy Meals](#)
- [Disability & Health Resources for Facilitating Inclusion and Overcoming Barriers](#)
- [Healthy People/Healthy Communities Resources](#)