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# **MANUAL ON WORKING WITH STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

**FOR TEACHERS OF TECHNICAL  
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND  
TRAINING INSTITUTIONS**

**YEREVAN 2013**



***“Livelihood Improvement through Fostered Employment (LIFE)  
for People with Disabilities” Program***

# **MANUAL**

**FOR TEACHERS WORKING WITH STUDENTS  
WITH DISABILITIES AT TECHNICAL AND  
VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTIONS**

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This manual has been developed within the framework of “Livelihood Improvement through Fostered Employment (LIFE) for People with Disabilities” Program, funded by USAID and implemented by Save the Children in Armenia. It is intended for vocational college teachers and aims at introducing them the peculiarities of working with people with disabilities. The handbook highlights and elaborates on the definition and main principles of inclusive education, the right terminology related to different disabilities and other peculiarities of working with people with disabilities.

The views expressed in the manual do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID, the United States Government and Save the Children.

## Contents

<i>Preface</i> .....	4
<i>Definition and Main Principles of Inclusive Education</i> .....	5
<i>Practical Tips for Removing Barriers to Learning, Development and Participation</i> .....	8
<i>Etiquette of Communicating with People with Disabilities</i> .....	15
<i>General rules and tips for communicating with people with disabilities</i> .....	19
<i>People with a vision impairment</i> .....	21
<i>People with a hearing impairment</i> .....	24
<i>People with a speech impairment</i> .....	26
<i>People with a physical disability</i> .....	28
<i>People with a cognitive impairment</i> .....	29
<i>Mental health</i> .....	31
<i>People with hyperkinesis</i> .....	34
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	35
<i>Bibliography and Useful Resources</i> .....	36
<i>Appendix. Explanatory Version of United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i> .....	38

## *Preface*

Over one billion people in the world live with some form of disability, of whom nearly 200 million experience considerable difficulties in functioning. Across the world, people with disabilities have poorer health outcomes, lower education achievements, less economic participation and higher rates of poverty than people without disabilities. This is partly because people with disabilities do not have sufficient access to health, education, transportation, employment and information services. The factors impeding access include: incomplete standards and procedures, negative attitude, unavailability of services, lack of information and communication, gender discrimination and insufficient participation of people with disabilities in making decisions about matters concerning them.

During the past 20 years Armenia has largely improved its economy, infrastructures and public services. However, according to the National Statistical Services of the Republic of Armenia, the majority of over 180,500 officially registered people with disabilities still faces social stigma and mainly does not know laws and regulations which, sadly, are not properly applied. The majority of vocational colleges do not have the capacities and opportunities to include persons with disabilities into their educational programs. Since there are no jobs or professional development opportunities, people with disabilities have to survive on the the government benefits. They are not informed about their rights and live a very limited life, rejected by the society and discriminated at work.

## ***Definition and Main Principles of Inclusive Education***

Inclusion is a process of addressing and responding to all learners' diverse needs through increasing their participation in learning, cultural and community life, and reducing exclusion with and from education. It has one common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age group and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the public system to educate all children. Therefore, there is a need to do necessary changes and reforms in content, approaches, structures and strategies of education.

Inclusion is concerned with providing appropriate responses to a variety of learning needs in formal and non-formal educational settings. Inclusive education is not trying to integrate learners in mainstream education but rather it aims to transform the education system so that it responds to the diversity of learners' needs. The intention of inclusive education is to establish an atmosphere where teachers and learners feel comfortable with diversity and see it as a challenge and enrichment of the learning environment, rather than a problem. According to the principles of inclusion, people with disabilities (physical, social and/or emotional) must be provided opportunities for equal participation into general education, while leaving open the possibility of personal choice and options for special assistance and facilities for those who need it. When defining the concept of inclusion it is important to emphasize the following key elements which have played a crucial role in the conceptualization of inclusion:

- Inclusion is a process. That is to say, inclusion must be seen as an ongoing search to find better ways of responding to diversity. Inclusion is about learning how

to live with diversity and learning how to learn from diversity. In this way diversity is perceived more positively as a stimulus for fostering children's and adults' learning.

- Inclusion is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers. Therefore, it implies gathering, collating and evaluating information from a variety of sources in order to carry out reforms in education policy and practice. Inclusion is about using all kinds of resources to stimulate learners' creativity and problem-solving abilities.
- Inclusion is about ensuring all learners' presence, participation and achievement. Here, “presence” refers to where and how often learners attend classes; “participation” relates to the quality of their knowledge and, therefore, must incorporate the views of the learners themselves; and “achievement” is about the outcomes of learning across the curriculum, not merely test or examination results.
- Inclusion involves a special focus on groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalization, exclusion or underachievement. This emphasizes the moral obligation to ensure that those groups that are most at risk are monitored, and that, where necessary, steps are taken to ensure their presence, participation and achievement in the education system.

To sum up, inclusion is about improving educational and social frameworks to comply with new trends in educational structures and governance. Inclusion also involves improving inputs, processes and environments to foster learning both at the level of learners in their learning environment as well as at the level of the system which supports the learning experience.

According to the main principle of inclusion, all children, regardless of their disabilities or special educational needs must attend public schools and vocational institutions. The basic principle of inclusive education is that all children must have access to education regardless of difficulties and individual differences. Inclusive educational institutions must be adjusted in accordance with their students' needs and accept their diversity as an enrichment opportunity for education. Activity limitations or refusing students with disabilities means not only disempowering them, but also depriving the institution of further improvement and enrichment opportunities. Given the right support system and necessary assistance, inclusive education claims that children with and without disabilities or special needs learn more effectively. This principle of inclusive education suggests that we allow all learners to have full participation in life and education, regardless of their needs. There are different ways to achieve inclusion; moreover, it can have different forms for different students. In order to ensure effective education in an inclusive learning institution it is necessary to keep the following principles:

- *The methodology, applied for inclusive education, promotes successful learning among students with different possibilities.*
- *Teachers, parents and all those whose intervention can be useful one way or another help the development of inclusive education.*
- *Inclusive education helps to prevent discrimination against students.*
- *All learning materials must be adjusted to all learners' age, needs, interests and preferences.*
- *It is important to be flexible and adjust the curriculum if the learning material is too difficult to understand or apply. However, the main goal of the course must be maintained.*



## *Practical Tips for Removing Barriers to Learning, Development and Participation*

It is essential to create an environment where all children feel equally valued.

- Learners should be allowed enough time to express their thoughts and opinions. Many students with disabilities will need more time than others to express themselves.
- It is preferable for teachers to ask questions to students with disabilities (especially to those who are struggling with academic learning) who they are confident will be able to answer. This will build confidence and motivate students to continue their learning.
- Be generous, genuine and honest with praise. This will help students build confidence and develop a healthy self-esteem.
- Students should be encouraged to state their opinion, and we should try to use their suggestions wherever it is possible.
- It is important to encourage both boys and girls to become involved in all curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- If a student suddenly changes behavior or acts differently from the way they used to, it is necessary to find out the reason. If it turns out that this is caused by abuse (verbal, emotional, physical or sexual), we should seek advice and help from organizations that work with child rights and child protection (e. g. the nearest Save the Children and UNICEF offices).
- It is necessary to evaluate the academic, social, emotional and physical development (progress) of students, instead of just measuring their performance in comparison to others.

- In some cases there is a need to organize the classroom and seat the students to optimize opportunities for communication, interaction and learning for all the students in the classroom – with special focus on those who experience barriers to learning, development and participation.
- Make sure that you let all the students in the class know that you care about them and their needs.

*"In our classrooms we work together in pairs, small groups and clusters. We use a lot of time developing activities and interactive games. Now I do not worry about my lessons as much as I did before. I have students with disabilities in my group. I say that all children can learn, every one of them is talented..."*

*Comments of a teacher*

*Below there are brief notes and tips on different types of disabilities which may also be useful for teachers.*

## **Hearing Impairments**

- The student should sit as close to the teacher as possible (no farther than three meters).
- The teacher should sit or stand facing the student. While reading, the teacher shouldn't turn away from the student and while writing on the board the teacher shouldn't talk.
- It is important to make sure that the teacher's face is well lit and visible and not shadowed or difficult to see. That is why the light shouldn't come from behind the teacher. The classroom should have enough light for the student to see the teacher's face, lips and hands.

- It is preferable to organize the classroom so that the student with hearing impairment can see all other students and the teacher.

## **Visual Impairments**

- It is important to find out from students from which angle of the classroom they can see better.
- If students' eyes are overly sensitive to light, they shouldn't sit by the window. In order to protect their eyes from the sun they should be allowed to wear a special hat or use other protection means while reading and writing.
- It is necessary to find out how well the student knows the surrounding area of the school and the classroom arrangement. Teachers and classmates with good vision should walk next to or slightly ahead of the student with visual impairment so that they can hold onto them, if necessary. It is important to warn the student if there are stairs or narrow doorways.

## **Developmental Impairments**

It is crucial to distinguish people with developmental impairments from those who have mental illnesses.

Teachers working with students who have developmental and intellectual impairments should:

- Not distract the student when they are cleaning the board during the lesson.
- Ask the student to sit by the wall if they seem restless during the lesson. The teacher may also give them a task, this way making their energy more constructive, e. g.

offer them to distribute the handouts, copybooks or books.

- Find time, at least a short break, to work with the student individually. For example, this can be done when other students are working on a task. During this time, the teacher should try to remove all objects from their sight that can distract them and attract their attention, e.g. noise in the classroom or outside.

## **Cerebral Palsy Consequences**

Usually, minimal changes to the classroom setting are adequate to accommodate for children with cerebral palsy; however, when there are more serious consequences of this illness the following should be done:

- Provide special chairs which will support the student's back and head when sitting.
- Provide special school benches which will help the student sit up straight and have good posture.
- Use supplementary means of communication (pictures, signs, etc) which will help teachers and classmates to understand a student with a speech impairment.

## **Other Types of Problems**

Below is a brief description of six other types of disabilities or functional limitations. Any of the following problems can be detrimental to students' education.

### **Asthma**

This word means "suffocation". An asthmatic person may have a hard time breathing due to the narrowed airway

which makes it difficult for the air to move in and out of the lungs. For some people, asthma can be caused by emotional stress, e. g. anger or fears before an exam. During an asthma attack, the majority of people use special aerosol inhalers. At all events, it is important and necessary to remain still and try to calm the person.

## **Autism**

This is quite a controversial term which appeared 40 years ago. Up until now it is difficult to determine whether or not a person (usually during childhood) has autism based on the syndromes. The main indicator is when the person is extremely uncommunicative, avoids communication and lives in their own world. Oftentimes people who have autism focus on one type of activity (e. g. drawing) in which they typically succeed. Autism is not always easy to notice.

## **Diabetes**

This is a serious illness and its cause is often hereditary. During diabetes the person has high blood glucose (blood sugar), either because insulin production is inadequate, or because the body's cells do not respond properly to insulin, or both. The person may feel very bad and even lose consciousness. Some symptoms include weakness, lack of concentration, high level of sweating, and difficulties in reading speaking. Even if the person takes insulin and eats at regular hours, their diet must exclude certain foods. Also, they must avoid heavy physical activity.

## **Emotional/ Behavioral Disorders**

Some adolescents have emotional problems. They can get depressed and panic or behave strangely by laughing or crying with no reason. Such young people can be overactive or indifferent, they can be apathetic and absent-minded. They have difficulty concentrating on one thing. Their emotional troubles may be related to their life circumstances, e. g. a parent's death; or they can be a consequence of a mental development disorder. In such cases it is preferable to consult a psychologist or even a psychiatrist. Their treatment may contain some special therapy. Teachers should do their best to help such students overcome their emotional trauma and encourage their good behavior.

## **Epilepsy**

During epileptic seizures the patient will shake intensely and then lose consciousness. Medicine helps to alleviate the syndromes and reduce the frequency of seizures. Outside epileptic seizures, these people have regular communication with others and lead ordinary lives. Epilepsy prevails amongst children with developmental disorders (one out of eight children with intellectual disabilities has epilepsy), but it does not mean that a child with epilepsy has an intellectual disability.

## **Stuttering**

Many children go through periods when they stutter while learning to talk. They stammer trying to enunciate the word and they repeat the same sound many times. However, as some children grow older this speech disorder turns into a serious problem. Allow more time with these students and do not rush them so that they are able to express themselves. Respect them and be patient.

## ***Etiquette of Communicating with People with Disabilities***

It is common for people to feel uncomfortable around individuals with disabilities since they are unsure of what to do, what is correct and what may offend. The best strategy is to be sensitive and flexible. A lack of sensitivity or flexibility makes situations awkward and it can cause unintentional discrimination. In order to avoid awkwardness we often feel the need to learn more about the etiquette of communicating with people with disabilities. Talking about disability is often difficult, partly because the terminology is unclear and contains connotations. Today the accepted terminology is “a person with a disability” which puts the emphasis on the person, not the limitations or disability. Treat people as people regardless their disabilities. Don't assume you know what the disability is. Many different conditions can present in similar ways. A person may have temporary limitations and yet not have any disabilities. On the other hand, some disabilities can be invisible – they are not immediately obvious when you are speaking to the person but they may still face challenges in communicating with you. Relate to the individual person and respond to their individual needs. Different cultures view disability differently and may not share the common view of disability as a physical or physiological issue. Different stereotypes and lack of knowledge may hinder communication with people with disabilities. So, be respectful, polite, considerate, offer assistance, if necessary, and don't hesitate to ask questions.



***Most importantly, remember that a person with disabilities is first of all a HUMAN-BEING, an INDIVIDUAL , and we should treat all people the same way we would wish to be treated ourselves.***

*Below you will find acceptable and unacceptable ways of addressing people with disabilities.*

<b>Use the following words and expressions which do not create stereotypes.</b>	<b>Do not use the following expressions</b>
Person with a disability, functionally impaired person	Victim, deformed, suffers from
Person without a disability, typical kids	Normal, healthy (as opposed to disabled), atypical kids
Person who uses a wheelchair, person with a physical disability	Wheelchair bound, confined to a wheelchair, crippled, the crippled, crippling, invalid, spastic
Person who has disabilities from birth	Defective, unfortunate
People with cerebral palsy	Afflicted by/with cerebral palsy
Person with polio, disability due to polio	Suffers from polio, is a polio victim, afflicted with/by polio
People with intellectual disabilities (only for adults)	Mentally retarded, retarded people, moron, feeble-minded
Children with developmental disabilities, children with cognitive impairments	Mentally defective
Person (child) with Down syndrome	A Down's kid, a Mongoloid, Mongol
Person with epilepsy	Epileptic, lunatic
Person with a mental illness, person who has an emotional disability, person with a psychiatric illness/disability	Crazy, mentally ill, emotionally disturbed, is insane, demented, psycho, a maniac, lunatic

Person with a vision impairment, person who is blind	Afflicted by/ with, blind, can't see
Person (child) with a hearing impairment, hearing loss or person who is deaf	Deaf
Person who is deaf and cannot speak, person who has a speech disorder, uses a communication device	Deaf and dumb, mute
Accessible parking, accessible toilets	Disabled toilets, handicapped parking

## *General rules and tips for communicating with people with disabilities*

- When talking to a person with a disability, speak directly to that person rather than through a companion or sign language interpreter.
- Ask an individual about the best way to communicate if you are unsure.
- Address an individual with a disability the same way as you would address an individual without a disability. Do not demonstrate excessive attention and do not patronize.
- Offer assistance if it appears necessary, but don't assume the individual needs it or will accept it. Wait for acceptance and instruction before proceeding. Respect people's wishes and don't feel bad when getting a refusal. Remember that people with disabilities, contrary to stereotypes, are able to do many activities on their own without assistance from others.
- Remember that when introduced to a person with disability, it is appropriate to offer to shake hands. People with limited hand use or who wear an artificial limb can usually shake hands. It is acceptable to shake either hand (left or right).
- To facilitate a conversation, place yourself at eye level in front of a person who uses a wheelchair. If possible, take a seat to avoid inconveniences.
- Listen attentively when you are talking with a person who has difficulty communicating and do not interrupt them or finish their sentence. If possible, ask short and clear questions that require short answers. Never pretend to have understood them if you have not.
- To get the attention of a person who is deaf, tap the individual on the shoulder or wave your hand.

Remember to look at the person and speak clearly. Most people with a hearing impairment can lip-read, so when talking to them do not cover your mouth. Avoid chewing gum or smoking.

- When meeting a person with a visual disability, verbally identify yourself and others who may be with you.

Below are some tips to help you effectively communicate and work with people with a particular type of disability.

## *People with a vision impairment*

Vision impairments may take many forms and be of varying degrees. It may be the case that a person cannot see at all or see partially. About 10% of people have total vision loss while others can see partially which means that they can distinguish between light and dark, sometimes colors and outlines of objects. Also, there are people who have peripheral vision. Communication can help to clarify the form and degree of visual impairment.

- Speak and communicate directly to the person with a visual impairment rather than to their companion.
- As mentioned earlier, it is necessary to verbally identify yourself and others who may be with you.
- Address each person in a group by their first name so that the person with a vision impairment knows who is being spoken to.
- If you know the person's first name, address them by their first name so that they know that you are addressing them.
- Offer assistance if it appears necessary, and pay attention to the person's response. Do not presume that the person will necessarily take your offer or need your assistance.
- Be careful and specific with verbal directions to places. Do not use comments like, “over there”, “over here”, etc. Instead, use words like “left”, “right” or “straight”, so that they refer specifically to the person with a visual impairment.
- When offering your help, accompany the person without squeezing their arm. Walk the way you usually do. There is no need to grab the person and drag them with you.

- When accompanying a person with a visual impairment, walk alongside and slightly ahead of the person. Do not hold onto the person's arm, allow them to take your arm if they need assistance.
- Don't leave people who have a vision impairment in an open area if you cannot see them. When you leave, lead the person to a safe place and a landmark so they can get a sense of direction.
- Avoid revolving doors if possible. On the stairs and escalators, assist the person by putting their hand on the railing. It is very important for the person to know whether the stairs go up or down. Always give the person an option when using stairs, escalators or a lift.
- Close or open doors fully. Never leave them ajar.
- When seating a person with a vision impairment, put their hand on the back of the chair so they can sit on their own.
- If you move things around in the room always let the person know. Also, if you are leaving let your conversation partner know it and do not make them guess whether you are still there or not.
- Do not presume that the person can't see anything. If appropriate it is OK to ask what they can see.
- When preparing printed information for a person with a visual impairment, make sure that font size is at least **18 and Bold**. Also, it is always best to ask the person what format they would like the document in.
- Always find out how the person wants to receive certain information: Braille, large print or audio. If you cannot change the format of the information, simply give it to them the way it is. This is better than nothing.
- If you are going to read for a person who does not see, read the whole text and do not omit any parts if you are not asked to do so.

- There is no need to change the format of the text and read it in reported speech. If the person needs to sign a document, read the whole text by all means. Remember that impairment does not absolve the person of responsibilities.
- Ensure good lighting – subdued lighting or very bright lighting makes things particularly difficult for people with vision problems. People with vision impairment have different needs in terms of lighting. Light plays a very important role, e. g. bright light will help many people to discern outlines of objects or their colors.
- Do not distract a guide dog.
- It is acceptable to use terms like “See what I mean?” or “See you later” with people with a vision impairment since these are part of everyday vocabulary. Remember that they use these words and phrases too.
- Ask people with a vision impairment what they need and want, and do not presume their needs and desires.



## *People with a hearing impairment*

There are different types and degrees of hearing impairment. Therefore, ways to communicate with people with a hearing impairment are also different. Feel free to ask the person about it if you are not sure how to act.

- To get a person's attention, sit so that they can see you.
- Make sure that the person is looking at you when you speak to them.
- Be aware of room or window lighting and position yourself to ensure maximum light on your face.
- Look directly at the person and speak clearly, especially if the person wishes to lip-read. When speaking, do not exaggerate lip movements and do not cover your mouth with your hand. Also, do not chew gum or smoke when you speak to them since it can hinder lip-reading. **At the same, always remember that not all people with a hearing impairment can lip-read.**
- Be flexible. If the person doesn't understand something, reword it instead of simply repeating it. You can always use a pad and pencil to communicate if it becomes necessary.
- Reduce unnecessary background noise since it can interfere with hearing aids and make communication difficult.
- Ask whether the person can hear you or not. It is possible that they won't need you to speak any louder.
- Ask the person short clear questions that require only short answers.
- Don't refer to a deaf person as "deaf and dumb." Some people who are deaf can speak, often with the assistance of special equipment, others are "nonverbal" and use sign language.

- If you give the person some precise or technical information which contains an address, technical or difficult terminology, always write it down, send it by fax or email. Whatever means you use it must get to the person accurately.
- Relax and don't be embarrassed if you use terms like "Did you hear about...."
- Make sure the person has understood you. Never pretend to have understood them if you have not.
- Do not change the topic of conversation without letting the person know. You may want to use phrases like "OK, now let's discuss...", etc.
- If there are difficulties in oral communication, ask the person whether writing letters might be easier. Do not say "Well, that is not important". Communication must be clear.
- If there is a sign language interpreter present, face the individual when talking, not the interpreter.
- Position a sign interpreter so that they are near you and visible.
- Not all people with a hearing impairment can lip-read. It is better to find this out when meeting the person for the first time. If your conversation partner can lip-read, it is a good idea to follow a few important rules.

Remember:

1. Only 3 words out of ten can be read well.
2. Look at the person's face and speak clearly and slowly, use ordinary expressions and avoid unnecessary words.
3. Use your face expression and gestures if you want to emphasize or clarify your message.

## *People with a speech impairment*

Some people with a speech impairment may have difficulty understanding speech as well; however, many do not – don't assume.

- Talk in a quiet environment if possible.
- Be patient.
- Do not play with the person's communication aid: it is their personal and private property.
- Do not forget that people with a speech impairment need to express themselves too. Do not rush the speaker and give them time and chance to formulate and express their message.
- Do not assume that a person with a speech impairment will not be able to understand you.
- It is not right to think that having a speech impairment is a sign of poor cognition/knowledge.
- Do not try to speed up the communication. You must be ready and aware that a conversation with a person with a speech impairment may take longer. If you are in a hurry, it is better to apologize and rearrange the meeting for a day when you will have more time.
- Do not interrupt and correct the person who has difficulty speaking. Start speaking only when you are sure that they are done expressing their thoughts.
- Do not be afraid to ask the person to repeat themselves. They are aware that their speech is hard to understand.
- Ask the person to rephrase their message with different words if you can't understand.
- Ask them to say their message word by word if you haven't understood them.
- If the person uses an electronic device as a communication aid, stand in front of them and then begin

speaking. Remember that it is very important for them to see you when you are speaking.

- Do not pretend to have understood them if you have not.
- Ask if there is someone nearby to interpret for you.
- Acknowledge if you have not been successful despite all efforts and ask whether the message was urgent.
- Never assume that people with a speech impairment do not understand your message. They may need special devices to communicate with you; for example, a sound-making device, a whiteboard to draw or write things on, etc.

## *People with a physical disability*

- If possible, be seated so the person doesn't have to look up. Communicate at eye level with the person.
- Speak directly to the individual, not to a person who is assisting them.
- For people who use wheelchairs, **it is not acceptable** to pat them on the head or shoulder.
- Ensure that they have a clear pathway to their intended destination and at meetings. Make a chair-free space at the table for the wheelchair user during meetings.
- If there are potential hazards, warn the person about it so that they can make a decision.
- Don't presume a person in a wheelchair needs your help to push them.
- When assisting in going up or down a curb, ask if they prefer going forward or backward. Never hang or lean on a person's wheelchair - the chair is part of their personal body space and hanging on it can be very offensive.

## *People with a cognitive impairment*

A cognitive impairment is a disability which affects a person's ability to process information. It may be due to an intellectual disability which a person was born with or it may be due to an acquired brain injury like a stroke or injury to the head. People with a cognitive impairment vary greatly in their abilities, so always respond to the individual's needs rather than making assumptions about their abilities and needs.

- Speak directly to the individual with an impairment rather than to their companion.
- BE PATIENT.
- Make instructions as clear and brief as possible, but don't be condescending - they deserve your respect. Don't be frustrated if you have to repeat yourself.
- Don't be afraid to ask the person to repeat something you have not understood.
- Pay attention, particularly if the person has a speech impediment. Do not complete sentences for them.
- Sometimes it may be helpful to write information down or to use pictures for people who have difficulty with memory. Ask if they would like you to write it down, e. g. appointment dates.
- Treat people with a cognitive impairment the way you treat others. During a conversation talk to them about usual topics, such as weekend plans, vacation, weather, current events. Address directly to the person.

- Remember that people with a cognitive impairment can do different activities, and in some cases they have the right to vote, give consent for medical help, etc.
- If necessary, write down your offer or message on a piece of paper and ask your conversation partner to discuss it with their family or friend. Put down your phone number and offer them to discuss it next time you meet.

## *Mental health*

One in five adults will experience a mental health problem at some time in their life. Mental health issues at different times can cause changes to a persons thinking, perception, feeling and emotional state. These changes can lead to behaviors that are out of context and do not match the situation as you would expect. People living with mental illness usually manage these symptoms with medication and support.

Social interaction can often be difficult for a person experiencing a period of illness. In such cases, be non-judgmental and allow time for interaction and decision making. If a person speaks slowly or appears unfocused, it is usually due to the impact of the illness or medication. People living with mental illness may have emotional breakdowns which make their life difficult. They have their own, often changeable, views about the world.

If you are interacting with a person and you notice that the person:

- Is disoriented and responding to events and perceptions that you do not share, this indicates that the person may have lost touch with reality.
- Has becoming highly anxious and frightened to the extent that the belief of threat is governing their behavior, this indicates paranoia.



We recommend:

- Keep calm.
- Read the body language to assess the situation. Non verbal communication can be very helpful in times of confusion. Allow the person their space and initially avoid eye contact and touch.
- Show understanding and compassion. Empathize with their feelings without necessarily agreeing with what is being said, for example, “I understand that you are scared.”
- Ask how you can help. The person may ask you to sit with them; they may have an emergency contact number that you could ring. Respect the person's situation and do not pressure your assistance on them.
- Don't take things personally. Remember that the individual may not have the insight into their behavior and its impact on other people.
- Use short clear direct sentences to minimize confusion and keep your voice tone low and unhurried.
- Do talk to the individual again. Symptoms of a serious episode are successfully managed with medication and support. See the person not the illness.
- Do not assume that people with mental illnesses necessarily need assistance or special treatment.
- People with mental illnesses should be treated as individuals. Do not make assumptions about the person based on your prior experiences with other people with mental illnesses.
- Do not presume that people with mental illnesses tend to be violent. It is a myth. If you are nice and polite, they will behave calmly.

- It is not true that people with mental illnesses cannot sign documents or give their consent for medical help. As a rule, they are considered to be functional.
- It is not true that people with mental illnesses have difficulty understanding, or they have weaker intellects than most other people.
- It is not true that people with mental illnesses are not able to work. They can carry out a variety of responsibilities that require certain skills and abilities.
- Do not assume that people with mental illnesses do not know what is good or bad for them.
- If a person with a mental illness seems frustrated, calmly ask what you can do to help them.
- Do not assume that people with mental illnesses cannot overcome stress.
- Do not speak abruptly to a person with a mental illness, even when you have a reason to do so.

## *People with hyperkinesia*

Hyperkinesia is a state of restlessness defined by fidgeting and involuntary movements, particularly among people with cerebral palsy. People with brain injuries may also display involuntary movements.

- During a conversation, do not get distracted by your partner's involuntary movements. You may miss something important, thus creating an awkward situation for both of you.
- Offer your help without drawing everybody's attention and irritating the person with hyperkinesia.
- Do not be afraid to argue with a person with hyperkinesia, fearing that you may hurt their feelings or excite them. Phrases, such as “Don't worry” or “It's OK”, may be a waste of time and may get on the person's nerves. State your message calmly, even when you see your partner getting irritated.
- Some people with hyperkinesia have a speech impairment. In such cases, refer to tips mentioned in the “People with a speech impairment” section.

## *Conclusion*

By developing this handbook, we hope to create a useful resource for teachers working with students with disabilities at vocational training institutions that try to provide professional education with inclusive principles.

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## ***Appendix. Explanatory Version of United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities***

The convention has 50 articles and is very promising. Within the frames of the Convention, "States Parties" means all those countries who have ratified the Convention.

Armenia ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which came into force on October 22, 2010.

### **Article 1. Purpose**

This article summarizes the main purpose of the Convention which is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities.

### **Article 2. Definitions**

In this article, there are words and phrases which have a special meaning within the framework of the Convention. For example, the word "language" includes spoken and signed languages and other forms of non spoken languages language. "Communication" includes languages, display of text, Braille (when letters and numbers are displayed as raised dots), tactile communication, large print and accessible multimedia (as well as websites and audio).

### **Article 3. Principles**

The main principles of the present Convention are:

- a) Respect for inherent dignity, freedom to make one's own choices and independence of persons;
- b) Non-discrimination (a just attitude towards every individual);

- c) Full participation and inclusion in society (community integration);
- d) Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity;
- e) Equality of opportunity;
- f) Accessibility (having the opportunity to use means of transportation, services, information and not being deprived of these things on the mere basis of disability);
- g) Equality between men and women;
- h) Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities (being respected for your abilities and taking pride in who you are).

#### **Article 4. General obligations**

There shall not be laws that display discrimination towards persons with disabilities. If necessary, States Parties shall develop, implement and put into practice new laws to protect the human rights of persons with disabilities. If the existing laws and regulations constitute discrimination against persons with disabilities, States Parties shall find possible ways to modify them. In the development of new legislation and policies, States Parties shall closely consult with persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities.

#### **Article 5. Equality and non-discrimination**

States Parties recognize that all persons are equal before and under the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law.

#### **Article 6. Women with disabilities**

States Parties recognize that women and girls with disabilities are subject to multiple discrimination. Thus, States Parties



shall take measures to ensure the full enjoyment by them of all human rights and freedoms.

### **Article 7. Children with disabilities**

States Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children. States Parties also have come to an agreement to ensure that children with disabilities have the right to express their views freely on all matters affecting their lives. In all actions concerning children with disabilities, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

### **Article 8. Awareness-raising**

States Parties shall raise and promote awareness throughout society regarding the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. They shall combat stereotypes, prejudices and any harmful practices relating to persons with disabilities. For example, schools shall foster an attitude of respect for persons with disabilities, even among the youngest children.

### **Article 9. Accessibility**

States Parties shall take measures to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate in all aspects of life. All public places, for example, buildings, roads, school and medical facilities must be accessible for persons with disabilities, including children. If you are in a public place and need assistance, there shall be someone there to help you – a guide, reader or professional sign language interpreter.

### **Article 10. Right to life**

Every human being has the inherent right to life. States Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure its effective enjoyment by persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others.

## **Article 11. Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies**

Persons with disabilities have the same right to protection in situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters as those without disabilities. A person with disabilities shall not be refused help, abandoned and left alone while others are shown help, just because this person has disabilities.

## **Article 12. Equal recognition before the law**

Persons with disabilities have the right to recognition everywhere as persons before the law. This means that, for example, they can sign student loans and lease agreements to rent out their apartments. Also, they have the right to have and inherit property.

## **Article 13. Access to justice**

States Parties shall ensure effective access to justice for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others in order to facilitate their effective role as direct and indirect participants, including as witnesses, in all legal proceedings, including at investigative and other preliminary stages.

## **Article 14. Liberty and security of the person**

States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are on an equal basis with others and enjoy the right to liberty and security.

## **Article 15. Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment**

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel or degrading treatment. Every person has the right to refuse from medical or scientific experimentation.

### **Article 16. Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse**

Persons with disabilities shall be protected from all forms of violence and abuse. No one has the right to treat them inappropriately or offend them inside or outside the home. If a person with a disability becomes a victim of violence or abuse, they have the right to receive assistance to stop the violence or recover.

### **Article 17. Protecting the integrity of the person**

Every person with disabilities has the right to respect for their physical and mental integrity on an equal basis with others.

### **Article 18. Liberty of movement and nationality**

Every child has the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared by their parents. Also, a person cannot be prohibited to enter or leave any country arbitrarily or on the basis of disability.

### **Article 19. Living independently and being included in the community**

Persons have the right to choose their place of residence, regardless of their having or not having a disability. Every person has the right to live independently and integrate into the community. If a person with a disability needs assistance, they shall have access to a range of in-home, individual and other community support services.

### **Article 20. Personal mobility**

Persons with disabilities have the right to move from one to another place and be self-reliant. States Parties shall take measures to ensure personal mobility and independence of persons with disabilities.

## **Article 21. Freedom of expression and opinion, and access of information**

People have the right to freedom of expression and opinion, and the freedom to seek, receive and impart information through all forms of communication of their choice.

## **Article 22. Respect for privacy**

No person with or without disabilities shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with their privacy. Upon learning information about others (for example, their health), it shall be kept confidential.

## **Article 23. Respect for home and the family**

People have the right to live with their families. States Parties shall provide financial assistance to the family of the person with disabilities. Help will also be provided in the form of information and services. In no case shall a child be separated from parents on the basis of a disability. If the immediate family or the relatives are unable to care for a child, States Parties shall ensure to provide alternative care within the wider family or a family setting within the community. Young persons with disabilities have the right to marry, found a family and reproductive health information on an equal basis with others.

## **Article 24. Education**

People have the right to go to school. Persons with disabilities shall not be excluded from the general education system on the mere basis of disability. They shall not receive their education in secluded/isolated schools. Persons with disabilities can access education on an equal basis with others in the communities. States Parties shall provide assistance persons with disabilities and ensure that their rights are not violated. For example, States Parties shall ensure appropriate

means and modes of communication for the individual to maximize academic development and teachers' support.

### **Article 25 to 26. Health and rehabilitation**

Persons with disabilities have the right to enjoy the same quality of health and reproductive services without discrimination on the basis of disability.

### **Article 27. Work and employment**

Persons with disabilities have the right to work freely chosen or accepted in a labor market, without any discrimination.

### **Article 28. Adequate standard of living and social protection**

Persons with disabilities have the right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clean water, clothing and housing, without discrimination on the basis of disability.

### **Article 29. Participation in political and public life**

Persons with disabilities have the right to fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others. Upon reaching the age defined by the state, they have the right to perform public functions, vote by secret ballot and stand for elections at all levels of government, regardless of their disabilities.

### **Article 30. Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport**

Persons with disabilities shall fully enjoy the right to participate in all kinds of cultural events, sports, games, movies and other leisure activities on an equal basis with others. Therefore, theaters, museums, playgrounds, and libraries shall be accessible to everybody, including children with disabilities.

### **Article 31. Statistics and data collection**

States Parties collect data to enable them to improve their policies and services. Persons with disabilities who participate in the collection of data have right to be treated with respect and fairness. Any type of information collected shall remain confidential. The compiled statistics shall be available for persons with disabilities, as well as for others.

### **Article 32. International cooperation**

States Parties shall cooperate with each other to realize the articles of the present Convention. This includes countries that have many resources (e. g. scientific information, assistive technologies) and can share them with other countries so that more people are able to make use of the rights defined by the Convention.

### **Article 33-50. Rules on cooperation, monitoring and realization of the Convention**

The Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities contains 50 articles. Articles 33-50 pertain to the importance of cooperation among adults (especially those with disabilities), organizations and governments to ensure the full enjoyment by persons with disabilities of their human rights and freedoms. In order to see the full text of these articles, please visit here [www.un.org/disabilities](http://www.un.org/disabilities).

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