



Erasmus+



Educational materials developed as a part of the project:

**”Against the flowing wave”. Improving the competences of people working with youth with intellectual disabilities in the field of teaching safe use of water (swimming pool, lake, sea, etc.)**

Project implemented by the Apertus Association under the Erasmus + Program

Project duration: 01/09/2019 - 31/03/2020

Financing from the European Union Erasmus + program:  
EUR 9,128.00

**A guide to taming young people with intellectual disabilities with water, breaking the barriers of fear of water and ways to prevent the risk of failure**

The project "Opposite of the flowing wave", implemented at the turn of 2019/2020 by the Apertus Association thanks to the funding of the Erasmus + program, involved the organization of cyclical pool classes for young people with intellectual disabilities. The classes were of a rehabilitative and recreational nature. In the beginning, the basic starting point was getting used to water. For this purpose, 8 persons from ZSS teachers in Słupia near Kępno and members of the Apertus Association went to Reykjavik in Iceland to observe activities at the pool of an experienced partner Íþróttafélagið Ösp. This organization, similar to our association, has been organizing sports activities for many years, including at the pool, in open water reservoirs for intellectually disabled youth.

During the visit, the working methods of Icelandic partners were also discussed, and the problem of overcoming anxiety of contact with water by disabled people and people with different couples was discussed.

During the project, individual cases of people were analyzed and an activity plan was developed for them to become familiar with water as a first step. Our project was primarily aimed at:

- breaking down stereotypical thinking about people with disabilities as such who are not able to overcome the barriers resulting from disability through their sports activation,
- stimulating or maintaining social activity
- raising self-esteem,
- supporting their independence and personal resourcefulness,
- rehabilitation of people with disabilities,
- acquiring, developing and maintaining skills necessary for independent functioning

Classes conducted in water have a very positive effect on the human body. In the conditions of the aquatic environment, the rehabilitation of people with disabilities, and even practicing swimming helps the whole body learn new dexterity techniques that shape specific motor features. In addition, unlike other sports, swimming engages almost all muscle groups. It is a form of activity which, due to its health and recreational qualities, occupies a special place at work with disabled people. Therefore, one of the results of our project is the preparation of a guide containing tips for implementing activities in the water.

Getting used to water can be a difficult challenge for people with intellectual disabilities, especially with autism, Down Syndrome or others. That is why before the first class should be a long talk with the swimmer or his relatives to learn the most important facts from the history of the disease or life. We try to make the first classes take place in a quiet atmosphere, if necessary even in the presence of parents, guardians. We don't care about learning to swim, but about getting used to water, the therapist and our own body in a new environment.

Taming classes last about 30 minutes and are individual for each swimmer, 1: 1 with a therapist. The pool where we work, preferably, be quiet, did not have a direct connection to the slide or other water attractions. The best water temperature is about 30-31 degrees C, because people with moderate and severe disabilities often have limited, slow movements, need more time to make even simple movements. Water temperature is also important because of the different heat perception of such people. Stress, cold water could cause additional shaking off the whole body.

The help of the instructor and the water environment enable the disabled to learn the correct movement patterns impossible to perform on land. After the initial tame with water and the therapist, we should show the principles of balance control, we try to make them reach a level that allows breaking direct contact with the therapist or parent. Then, often for the first time in their lives, such people experience the independence and independence of movement. The presence of a parent, guardian, volunteer is initially a guarantee of safety, and as you practice new skills, it becomes an opportunity to show satisfaction and pride. And this always increases the self-esteem of both sides. The effect is to be free to stay in the water of a guardian with a disabled person next to each other, but still separately.

#### **BASIC RULES OF CONDUCT FOR TAMING WITH WATER**

1. Investigate whether some negative behaviors, such as aggression, resentment or lack of commitment, are not due to fear of water.
2. Mastering of basic tricks by parents, guardians, safe belaying and assistance in case of aspiration
3. Determine the cause of the fear of the person who is about to enter the water. Perhaps the fear results from ignorance of the water (terrain) in which the teaching takes place, unpleasant childhood experiences, awareness of life threateningness, fear of the teacher. Some reluctance may arise from the fear of undressing and ridicule caused by it. Reduce the child's anxiety tension by reducing its causes.
4. Slow down the taming rate. DO NOT RUSH. Remember that each person is an individual and therefore learns at their own pace. We are dealing with a living being, not a robot, ready to carry out all our orders. Do not force anything. Patience always pays, and rush is usually a bad adviser.
5. Try to provide the maximum sense of security.
6. If the fear of water is very strong, do not get into the water. NOTHING BY FORCE! Maybe just have a look. There will come a moment when he decides he wants to try it himself.
7. Familiarize participants with devices facilitating swimming

## **BASIC EXERCISES TAMING WITH WATER IN THE PRELIMINARY STAGE OF SWIMMING LEARNING**

- rinsing the hair with water in the shower;
- entry into shallow water (approximately to the knees);
- lying on your stomach with your hands on the bottom;
- lying on the back with supporting the head of an adult;
- lying on the back with hands up;
- team lying on the back with support, the other person looks that nothing is happening
- lying on the stomach with a buoyancy mattress with protection;
- lying on your back on a displacement mattress with protection;
- lying on your back with the help of a board pressed to the abdomen or to the chest;
- lying on your back with the help of a board held in outstretched hands;
- pushing forward by the legs lying on the back;
- mutual repulsion and lying on the back;
- lying on the chest with the bottom support with one hand;
- dragging a partner lying on his chest;
- rising to the surface of the rainwater;
- "Cork" flowing to the surface of the water in a squatting position;
- lying on the chest with the help of a board held under the belly;
- lying on your chest with the help of a board held in front of you;
- independent clinging to the edge of the pool, the edge of the pool mat or going up the stairs;
- precipitation to sit down water
- Kicking your feet on command keeping to the edge of the pool or mat or guardian
- correct positions and grips on the water surface;
- "Torpedo" - pushing forward lying on the chest - slip;
- bouncing slightly upwards holding the guardian's hands;
- rolling the ball to one another with splashing on the face;
- learning the buoyancy of other aids (pasta, circle, sleeves)
- tame the ears, eyes and mouth with water;
- activating the work of upper and lower limbs in water;
- immersion exercises under the water surface;

- floating exercises, balance exercises;
- body control exercises in water, position change exercises;
- displacement exercises
- conscious breath holding;
- improving breathing control
- moving in water over short distances with the help of a second person
- imitation of movements

Taming with water should, in addition to the exercises indicated above, begin with the play part, for which it is good to use colorful instruments to make fun in the water more attractive. They are also aimed at psychomotor stimulation. In addition, it is good to use simple motor exercises in shallow water, e.g. quadrupling, independent sitting, independent position changes, gait. Then we get used to the unstable conditions of equilibrium in the aquatic environment. We teach independent balance in various vertical positions, on the back, on the stomach.

Below are some examples of fun while taming with water

## **WATER GAMES AND FUN TO BELT**

### **WHO LONGER**

Number of participants: any, preferably even. Utensils: balls. Course of the game: the participants stand in the water to the waist and form two circles. Each team's task is to bounce the ball as long as possible so that it does not fall into the water. If the team ball falls into the water, the opposing team gets a point. The team with the most points wins. For difficulty, two balls in each team can be put into play.

### **Be smart**

Number of participants: any. Utensils: balls. The course of the game: all participants of the game form a circle, inside which there is one of the participants of the fun, designated by the leader, whose task is to intercept the ball. When he touches her, the roles change. The person who "contributed" changes the middle one.

### **Mill wheel**

Number of participants: any. Utensils: string with ring attached at the end. Course of play: the participants line up in a circle in water to the waist. One of the participants of the game is a "miller", stands in the middle of the circle and spins the "mill wheel". To protect themselves from the "mill wheel", the other participants must hide under water. The participant affected by the mill wheel "swaps places with" the miller ". Winners who are not hit by the "mill wheel".

### **Pirates and sailors**

Number of participants: any. Utensils: ball. Game flow: the participants are divided into two teams. One creates a circle - they are "pirates" - and receives the ball, the other team is "sailors" who line up inside this circle. At the signal from the leading "pirates" try to sink "sailors" by hitting them with the ball. "Sailors", to protect themselves from sinking, hide under water or try to intercept the ball. When the team captures the ball, the roles change. The team with the most hits wins.

### **Shark and sardines**

Number of participants: any. Utensils: not needed. Course of the game: all participants of the game - "sardines" - line up. Appointed by the teacher, one participant from the group is a "shark" and takes a place at a distance determined by the teacher behind the "sardines". At the signal of the leader of the "shark" chases "sardines". Caught "sardines" become "sharks". The "sardine" who is the last to catch is the winner.

## **DEEPER GAMES AND FUN**

### **5 PASSES**

Number of participants: any, two equal teams. Equipment: ball, pasta for each participant. Game flow: the participants are divided into two teams. The players stay on the water, having pasta between their legs. One of the teams owns the ball. The task of this team is to make five passes among themselves, for which they receive one point. The opposing team is trying to intercept the ball. After scoring, the ball is passed to the opposing team. Do not tear or knock the ball out of your opponent's hands.

### **Water ringo**

Number of participants: any, two equal teams. Equipment: ringo, pasta for each participant. Game flow: the participants form two teams. The players stay on the water, having pasta between their legs. The game area is divided into two equal fields with a line or net. Players flip over the rope or net ringo. The goal of the game is to make the wheel fall on the opponent's field and score a point.

### **Relay-race**

Number of participants: any, even. Utensils: not needed. Course of play: the leader divides the participants into two teams. Half of the team members are on one side of the track, the other half are on the other. The first of the team starts at the signal, the length of the pool flows; the next competitor starts when he is touched by the hand of the competitor who has just completed the distance. The team whose competitors are the first to cover the entire distance wins.

### **Chase of a macaroni snake**

Number of participants: any, even. Equipment and instruments: pasta for each exerciser. Course of play: the leader divides the participants into two teams. Team exercisers line up one

after the other. Each of them sits on the pasta as on a "horse" and sticks to the front of the pasta.

One of the important topics is also preventing failure of our participants. We should not allow such a situation at all costs. To this end, we try to:

- keep constant observation of participants
- set minimum goals for them
- showing minimal effects
- have good contact with the family home
- stimulate motivation
- differentiate educational requirements tailored to the student's abilities
- lead a clear, fair and understandable way of assessing effects
- properly praise
- show good patterns

It is also important to identify the causes of failure early and take action to remove them:

- talks about the problem
- inclusion of a psychologist
- organizing an additional additional time for classes to compensate for shortcomings
- determining the individual path to achieving the goal

After a dose of numerous negative experiences, people with disabilities come to the conclusion that they are hopeless and the reality around them terrible. This is usually a generalization that strongly demotivates. The task of the instructor, the person working with such a participant is to indicate positive actions, the effort put into the implementation of what plan that brought the smallest effect. In addition, it is worth conducting a conversation, analysis of the failures we encounter. Explain that failures are certainly inscribed in human life. Point out that there are no people in the world who fail to bypass. On the contrary, the most successful were those who first failed. In other words - failures and failures are not our enemies. It is worth treating them as signposts on the route, whose goal is to get the effect. Any involvement in the process of preparing to achieve the set goal is not a lost action. Even when we make many attempts and efforts and success is still not coming. It is worth remembering, because every failure - although sometimes it is very difficult to accept - teaches us something, and every failure is a step on the road to success. Yes, it is difficult to accept failures and go forward bravely, but it is possible and achievable.



## **Obstacle methods**

While working on the project, we created a list of steps to attach yourself to obstacles. Created on the basis of experience of participants. How to deal with obstacles (failures)?

### Step 1

Recognize that failures happen.

### Step 2

Recognize that failures are inscribed in life as well as successes.

### Step 3

Talk to your trusted person about your failure.

### Step 4

Look coldly, without emotions at the event we treat as failure and try to think about what caused me to experience this failure

### Step 5

It is worth asking what is the real goal? Give yourself an answer. Do you really want to learn to swim? Or maybe just getting in touch with peers, leaving the house, good fun?

### Step 6

It is necessary to indicate the strengths of the person who is affected by failure

### Step 7

Motivation. Indication of even the smallest benefits of attending classes, making effort, cooperating in a group, fighting for yourself.

### Step 8

Divide tasks into small and easy ones, and then switch to more difficult ones.

### Step 9

Deselect completed tasks.

### Step 10

Celebrate even a small success

Overcoming your own weaknesses is a great challenge for people with disabilities, but challenges are to implement them. The main thing is not to miss any chance and take advantage of all available opportunities.

"Success is the maximum use of the abilities you have"

/Hilary Hilton "Zig" Ziglar/