



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

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**The Blue School - Pedagogical Innovation Program
Moving in water and water therapy with elements of the
Hallwick method taking into account the needs of children
and adolescents with developmental, sensory, mental,
autism, Down syndrome and other intellectual disabilities**

The Blue School program is used to implement water acceptance learning classes, to move in it both during physical education classes at the pool, during extracurricular classes at indoor swimming pools, during rehabilitation stays, trips, colonies, organized leisure activities at the water. It aims to use water on the human body, and thus use water to improve the functioning of many areas of psychomotor development.

It was developed and modified based on the implementation of the project "Opposing flowing wave" under the Erasmus + program by teachers of the Special Schools Group and members of the Apertus Association together with swimming instructors and members of the Association with a similar nature of activities in Reykjavik in Iceland.

The Halliwick method fits in with the idea of integration and normalization of the lives of children with impaired development, proposing a beneficial for the development, but not the assumption, a therapeutic way of spending free time with a peer group in the environment of non-disabled people. Halliwick classes as well as only its elements are open to everyone, they are a chance to meet with the joint activity of disabled and non-disabled people. At present, many indoor swimming pools are being built in our country, even in small usually poviat towns, which are also the Leading Body for special schools. This increases the possibilities for schools to organize activities in the water or to finance such activities for various NGOs.

In the case of people with intellectual disabilities with limited mobility, this method supports the process of education, revalidation and rehabilitation. We are not only learning how to swim, but first and foremost about learning how to safely and understand how to use fun and relax in water. The most important feature when working with people with disabilities is not only in water, a sense of trust and safety. Only when a person feels safe is it possible to expect results affecting the increase of skills. Obtaining a sense of security and focus on performing an activity probably increases the conduct of classes by an instructor, teacher, guardian who has daily contact with a disabled person. Dissemination of the "Blue School" program in educational facilities, organized care facilities or formalized organizations guarantees the implementation of the program's tasks bypassing the adaptation stage in an unknown environment of people and saving time for getting to know each other in order to achieve trust and a sense of security.

The Blue School program is arranged in a logical pattern, and all its points must be trained so that the participant feels safe and comfortable in the water. Learning the individual points of the Program must be slow, at a pace adapted to the capabilities of the participant, in a set order. During the classes, participants are assisted by trained instructors working with these participants on a daily basis. Each participant uses the individual assistance of an assistant - a second person, and learning takes place in a group, where everyone can share their experience. This concept of the Program teaches our disabled youth to move freely in the water and swim. It also affects all spheres of life from physical, personal, social, cognitive and linguistic development, and has a therapeutic effect.

1. A few more sentences about the Halliwick method

The method is based on known principles of physics, in particular: hydrostatics, hydrodynamics and body mechanics. It is designed for people of all ages, both for the disabled and for healthy. All classes are held in groups, although they can also be conducted individually. Each swimmer has his own individual instructor who accompanies him throughout the whole class.

During these classes, young people learn to achieve so-called the position of safe breathing, as well as how to achieve it while in other positions. They learn how to control the exhalation, even if the face is under water. This method also teaches balance control, specific for each swimmer and dependent among others. on the type and degree of disability. Science leads to the greatest independence and an absolute sense of security. The participant learns how to control his movements freely. Most of the activity in this method is fun. Group classes also motivate participants to act, but individual classes can also be conducted. The main thing is to fulfill therapeutic functions. Group classes are held for a group of 5-6 participants with guardians. Individual classes usually take place with direct water protection and one instructor on land.

2. Improvement assumptions by the Halliwick method

- learning safe behavior in water
- Swimming lesson
- supporting therapy and rehabilitation of people with mobility difficulties (people with physical disabilities)
- supporting therapy and rehabilitation of people with neurological disorders
- speech support through many games increasing breathing skills, improving the work of the speech apparatus
- ability to relax and have fun, among others, for people with an autism spectrum, including Asperger's syndrome
- overcoming fears, not just fear of water
- improvement in sensory integration disorders
- increasing control of your emotions
- overcoming depression
- self esteem improvement

3. The basis of the Halliwick method is a 10-point activity program, which will be an integral part of our Blue School Program

Each time during individual or group classes, we select games and activities that aim to achieve all ten points.

1. Mental adaptation
2. Independence
3. Control of transverse rotation
4. Frontal rotation control
5. Longitudinal rotation control
6. Combined rotation control
7. buoyancy
8. Stillness
9. Turbulence slide
10. Simple movement and basic swimming style

4. Preparation - knowledge of the participant's needs

An important organizational element is compliance with the swimming pool regulations and classes' regulations.

Getting to know the participant's needs and possible problems is a condition for well-planned classes. If the therapist does not know the participant, he must know the basic information about him, which can be supplemented by a more detailed interview, especially in the case of therapeutic classes.

In addition to psychological adaptation to water conditions, control is an important factor here. This is important for ensuring safety and acquiring the skills to behave in water in various conditions and on various levels. All of these elements appear during each meeting, and repetition of exercises (games) and guarding a coherent concept gives you the opportunity to develop the skills necessary for independent and safe swimming or moving in water. Usually, the parent or guardian of the child prepares the participant for the cloakroom lessons in the swimming pool and we meet at the edge of the shallow pool.

5. **Place** - classes usually take place in an indoor swimming pool, in shallow water, with time we go to deeper places. Classes do not have to take place in the swimming pool, they can take place in safe other water reservoirs, but then the person conducting must take into account other factors - salinity of water, waves, changing ground -

which may be easier or difficult during classes. The water temperature should be around 30-32 degrees C.

6. **Group classes** also motivate participants to act, but individual classes can also be conducted. The main thing is to fulfill therapeutic functions. Group classes are held for a group of 5-6 participants with guardians. Individual classes usually take place with direct water protection and one instructor on land.

7. **Individual lessons - Therapeutic Halliwick**

If sometimes, for various reasons and factors, we are not able to offer the participant group classes, then it is equally good and beneficial to conduct therapeutic classes. During such classes, we repeat the games, but with more attention to the possibility of a positive impact of water on the participant's body and changes that occur. It is good in this case to make use of additional knowledge about the impact of water on the human body, support with elements of other therapies.

8. **Course of classes**

An important organizational element is compliance with the swimming pool regulations and classes' regulations

Beginning - welcome at the edge of the pool, joint entry into the water under the care of the leader. The proper entry into the water is already part of the meeting. Each time classes start and end in a similar way. Depending on the day, the participant may react differently, feel the water differently. Therefore, the first point is to say hello to the water, enter the water in a safe way and get wet properly. During this stage, there are sensory or emotional problems to which we must respond appropriately.

Conducting classes in accordance with the topic and purpose planned by the lecturer.

All points of the Halliwick concept are implemented at each meeting. Songs are used, participating people call by name, games are performed. Thanks to various games, the participant has the opportunity to become familiar with the various safety measures, and accepts a temporary change of guardian, which is a step towards gaining independence in the water.

Closing the class and leaving the water - just like entering, leaving the water is part of the whole program.

9. **Frequency and duration of classes**

Classes usually take place once or twice a week, group classes last about 45 minutes, individual therapeutic from 30 to 45 minutes.

10. Organizational activities

The guardian along with the participant takes part in group classes, the guardian (usually a parent, but can also be adult siblings, a close person, volunteer) holds the participant during group classes by following the instructions. Sometimes the lecturer demonstrates that the task has been completed on the participant. During individual classes, the leader maintains the participant and provides support, there is no need for the guardian to attend the classes, but if he wants and it is beneficial his presence is used.

Enjoying the moment, being with another person - during group classes, parents are usually the child's assistants. By playing together, they not only learn to properly support a child in water, but above all, they gain trust in children. Sometimes for the first time they allow a more independent exercise, they notice the potential of the child. It happens that children become better swimmers than parents.

Positive competition - children love competitions, races, obstacle courses and self-observation against the background of the group. Ensuring this while having fun with a sense of success causes more enthusiasm and learning new skills.

11. Skill assessment

Initial skills

Initial skills are noted during the first class. During the classes, participants acquire skills from various levels, it is easy to determine them, and for children and young people with intellectual disabilities an interesting form of assessment is to get a badge and perhaps even participate in competitions. The badges that you earn in this method are a reflection of your skills.

Halliwick badges

Red badge

1. Entrance to the instructor without assistance into the water
2. Blowing a plastic "hat" (with back support if needed) for 10 m
3. Kangaroo jumps over 10 m (normal support)
4. Transition from horizontal to vertical position with minimal help

Yellow badge

1. Entering the water and reaching a stable position without assistance
2. Sit at the bottom of the pool or dive and control the exhalation under water
3. Kangaroo jumping or 10m walk without assistance
4. Combined rotation demonstration - from a vertical position to floating on the back

5. Longitudinal rotation in horizontal position in both directions with minimal help
6. Lifting the object from the bottom of the pool, at least 1m deep
7. Floating in water in the "mushroom" position for 3 seconds.

Green badge

1. Entering the water without assistance from a sitting position - first head
2. Demonstration without help: transverse rotation and combined rotation
3. Floating on water in a horizontal position (10s) or "mushroom" (3s)
4. Walking in place (60s, deep water, without hands)
5. Assumption of the "mushroom" position, the instructor submerges the float to a depth of at least 1.2m or the float is submerged, return to the surface in the "mushroom" position, then moving to a safe position for breathing through longitudinal rotation
6. Swim 10m in any way
7. Going to the edge of the pool without help with water swirls or, if this is not possible due to physical disabilities, taking a safe position and waiting for assistance.

Tests

1. A request to complete a task without providing details on how.
2. The swimmer should initiate the required activity.
3. The swimmer must always show good breathing control.
4. All activities should be demonstrated in a controlled and calm manner.
5. The swimmer should be able to demonstrate all activities from the previous level and demonstrate at least one.

12. Expected effects

Mental adaptation to water conditions and taming with water is the most important factor that allows you to safely use the activities in the water and develop your skills of moving in it. Regardless of whether we want to swim well or whether we are dealing with a physically handicapped person, mental adaptation, tame with water is the first, most important step in water;

Safe behavior in the aquatic environment - that is, understanding the operation of water, which is only possible through experience. To understand this, please ... go to the swimming pool and try to immerse yourself by changing the body position, taking your hands out of the

water or laying freely on the water. Learning how to behave safely in water, not panic, not cause dangerous movements that block us instead of helping us swim or float is necessary to make further progress;

Respiration!!! - i.e. not only taking air, but also releasing it at the right time, in tune with the movement of the whole body, and above all, letting out the air by mouth and nose when we are under water;

Independence, balance, sense of body awareness and movement - due to the completely different consequences associated with moving, we have much more time to avoid falling over, to understand how to move, so that the water helps us move, accelerate it when we want or how stop in agitated water;

Learning to swim in the form of fun - during classes we do not do exercises, we only tell stories, sing songs or play games during which each participant succeeds, which is reflected in time by the ability to swim;

Positive emotions - water causes change, a huge change in our psyche, positive impressions, it is the environment in which we spent the first stage of our development;

Relaxation - there are many people who are unable to rest, relax, put their bodies still and breathe calmly, do not think about problems but enjoy the moment, and this happens imperceptibly during classes;

Higher self-esteem - thanks to the gradual overcoming of increasingly difficult tasks, but also thanks to the support of the leaders and groups and noticing their role and skills;

The ability to move - even for people who do not move independently is a way to get this movement, sometimes even looking in a given direction is enough for movement to appear in the water.