

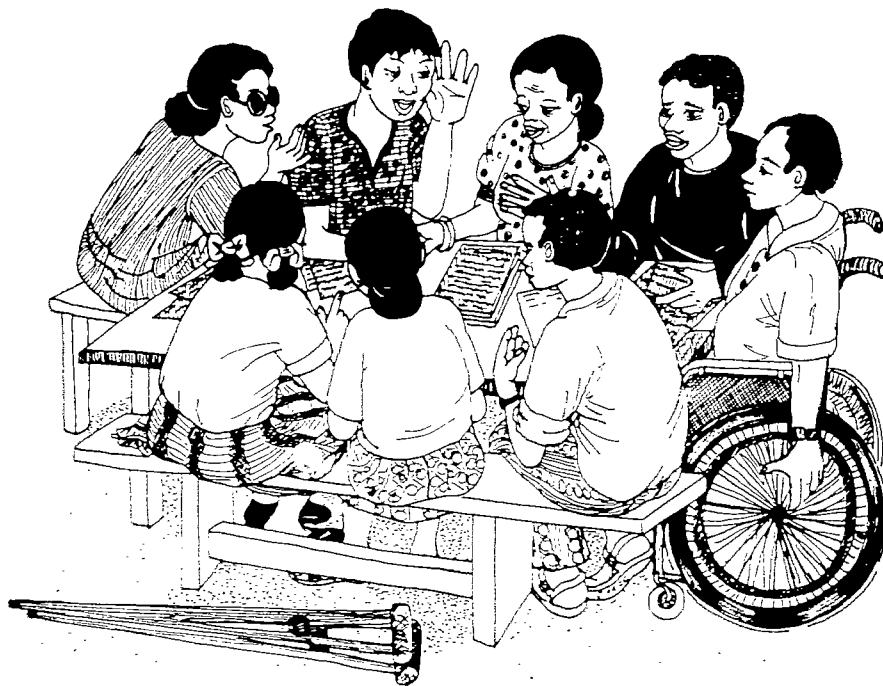
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**TRAINING IN THE COMMUNITY FOR  
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

# **GUIDE FOR**

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# **People with Disabilities**



**World Health Organization  
Geneva, 1989**



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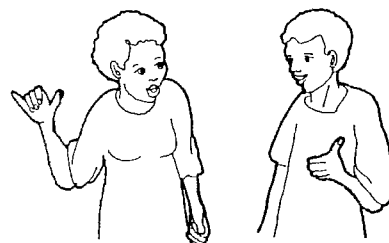
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## What Is This Guide For?

This Guide describes how you, a person with a disability, can help to improve your own life and the lives of other people with disabilities in your community.

## Introduction

■ As a person with a disability you have knowledge and experience that others do not have about what it is like to have a disability. You can share your special knowledge and experience with others. In this way you can help to make a better life for yourself and for others with disabilities and who have difficulties similar to your own.



■ Because of your experience you know that some people will not regard a person with a disability as an equal. The opinions of a person with a disability are often neglected or not even asked for. You may also know how difficult it is to do what is easy for other people. It may be difficult for you to go to school, get married, find a job, and earn an income. There may also be many other things that you have not the opportunity to do. So you ask yourself the question "WHY?"

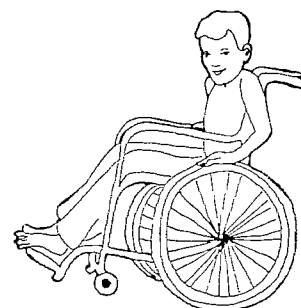


■ There is no answer to the question "WHY?" Why is it difficult for you to live a life like everybody else and to be accepted for what you are? Why is it difficult to be treated like everybody else in daily life? There is no good reason for this, it has just always been like that. Some people think that because you look different, or cannot see or hear or speak or move like they do, that you are not equal to them. All of this is very unjust and unfair.



But it will not help to be angry about it or to feel defeated. You can try to do something to improve the situation.

■ It is best to start with yourself and your own situation. Later on you can try to help others in the same situation. The Community-Based Rehabilitation Programme will help you to do so.



## What you can do for yourself

### Training to do more activities

■ Let us start with your own situation. A person with a disability has many abilities. You need to develop your abilities. This will help you in many ways to live better with your disability and to solve many of your daily problems on your own. It will help you to become more independent. All families teach their children to dress, to eat, to speak, to move around, and to find out about the world around them. Families send their children to school, and help them when they have difficulties. When they grow up, the family advises them on how they can find a job and many other things. But a child with a disability may not have had such help or advice.

■ If you have a disability, you may have difficulty doing one or more of these activities. Perhaps you had such difficulty in the past, or perhaps you still cannot do some activities that you want to do. If someone guides you, you can train yourself to do many things that you cannot do today. When you understand how to do those things, you can train yourself. You should get to know how to use your abilities to overcome the difficulties. Most people with disabilities can learn how to become more independent. The training they receive is called rehabilitation.



■ You may know about some rehabilitation programmes in your country. You may have seen or heard about programmes carried out in a centre or an institution. You may have had rehabilitation services in such a centre. You may think that only specialists in rehabilitation can help you. This is not correct. It is true that some of the things called rehabilitation may be difficult to understand and practise. But many things are simple, and you can learn to do them yourself or with the help of a family member. You will have good results in the end if you keep trying and work hard. Those people with disabilities who have had the opportunity and determination to develop their abilities have shown what can be done by people with disabilities. The lesson to be learned is that people with disabilities can have a good life if they have the opportunity and take the initiative to develop their abilities.

■ Rehabilitation is now available outside centres and institutions. Rehabilitation is made available to you in your home, and in your community. This kind of rehabilitation is called Community-Based Rehabilitation. There might be a person who is helping your community to run a Community-Based Rehabilitation Programme. We call this person the “Local Supervisor”. Find out who your Local Supervisor is. Perhaps your Local Supervisor gave you this Guide.

■ Ask your Local Supervisor to visit you to find out how you can be involved in the Community-Based Rehabilitation Programme. Discuss with your Local Supervisor what you can do. If you cannot do some daily activities, ask your Local Supervisor for Training Packages. These describe how you can train yourself, or how a family member can assist you to do more activities.

■ Rehabilitation programmes can take some time. When you train yourself to use your abilities to overcome some difficulty that is caused by a disability, the training may take several months. You will need strength and determination to get through. Your Local Supervisor will come to you from time to time to support you in carrying out the programme and to encourage you.

## Schooling and finding a job

You may not have gone to school as a child, so you may not have learned to read, write, and count. If so, ask your Local Supervisor how to get schooling. After you have gone through your training you may want to do a job. Think about what job you would like to do. Find out what kinds of jobs are available in your community. Find out what kind of training the jobs require. Then you can decide what job might be good for you. You may need training to learn the job, just like everybody else.



Your Local Supervisor may be able to give you names of people or organizations that can help you to have training or a job.

■ You may want to work in a rehabilitation programme and help other people with disabilities. You can do this in different ways. You may be able to take training and to have a job in rehabilitation. Or you can have another job and do some volunteer work for programmes or organizations in rehabilitation.

■ After you have gone through a rehabilitation programme you will know a lot of things about the programme. You can meet others who have a disability similar to your own and share your experience with them. You can encourage others. You can also find out if you can become directly responsible for the rehabilitation programme in your community. For this you will need some special training to learn about all types of disabilities. You will also need to learn about how to teach others to do community work. You can ask to have training for this work. You may, for example, go to the course for Local Supervisors.

## What you can do for other people with disabilities

■ To help other people with disabilities in your community, you could ask some of them to meet to discuss problems. You could ask others, such as some parents of children with disabilities, to join in. Start discussing common problems. For example, it might be difficult to walk on a particular road or street because of holes or stones which are in the way. Or some community buildings may have many steps, so some people with disabilities cannot go there. Or the school may refuse to take children with disabilities in the classes. Perhaps you can suggest a solution and ask the community leaders to correct what is wrong.



You may also ask your friends with disabilities to come to a meeting with the community leaders to present your problems and ask the leaders to help.

### **Forming a group of people with disabilities**

■ Later on you can form a group of people with disabilities. Since children with disabilities cannot go to meetings, you can ask parents or relatives of these children to join you. You can ask for permission to meet regularly in the local school or community hall.

There might be some people with hearing difficulties among those who want to join. Find out how there can be communication between these people and those who hear well. Maybe there is an interpreter who can help.

■ If you all decide to form a group to represent people with disabilities, you can make it either informal or formal. If you make it formal it might be a good idea to adopt a set of rules which the organization will follow. Some guidelines for forming an organization of people with disabilities are presented in the box on page 7.

■ A group representing people with disabilities can then meet regularly with the community leaders. The group can suggest changes in the community, services, and other measures for the benefit of the members of the group.

■ In your community there should be a committee which has responsibility for the rehabilitation programme. This might be a special committee, or it might be a committee with several other responsibilities. When rehabilitation programmes in your community are discussed, people with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities should be present. You can help with the plans for the programme, and advise on how it should be run.

■ If you want to know more about how to set up a group, you can find out if there is any other voluntary group in your community. There may be, for example, one representing women, or one representing young people, or one representing farmers, or the local merchants. Ask them for a copy of their rules and see what applies to your organization. Ask if you can go to one of their meetings to see how they are run. You do not have to copy them. Find your own way. But you can learn from others with more experience.

■ When you decide to form a group representing people with disabilities, you can find out if there are similar groups outside your community. You can write to them and perhaps meet them to discuss common matters. You may also want to contact a national organization and find out if your group would like to belong to it.

■ Always remember that groups representing many people will have more influence than a single person trying to do things alone.

■ There may be many national organizations for people with disabilities in your country. There may be one organization for people who are blind, another for those who are deaf, another for those who have difficulty moving, and so on. This happens often and you should think about which organization is best for your people to join. Remember that if all of these people come together and speak with one voice to the authorities, what they say will become very important.



## Guidelines for an organization of people with disabilities

When writing the rules, you could think about the following:

- The **name** of the organization.
- The **purpose** of the organization. For example, to improve the situation of people with disabilities in.....(name of community/district/province).
- The **activities** of the organization. For example, to inform the authorities, leaders, decision-makers, political bodies, and others about problems that people with disabilities have; to discuss how such problems can be solved and ask for their active support; to help members to have better opportunities for rehabilitation, including schooling, jobs, and social activities.
- The **membership**. For example, people with disabilities and concerned family members, and other interested people.
- The **structure** of the organization. For example, elect a board, a chairman, a secretary and, if there is any money, a treasurer.
- The **functions** of each officer. For example, the chairman will advertise the meetings, lead the discussions at the meetings, make the conclusions and decisions, represent the organization; the secretary will keep the minutes, reports from meetings, and all correspondence; the treasurer will collect fees and keep the accounts.
- The **term of office** for the officers. For example, 1 or 2 years. (Some organizations as a principle say that no one can have more than 2 periods in the same function. This is to give other people a chance to do the job.)
- The **method of decision-making**. For example, by voting and letting the majority decide; how many members should be present in order to make a decision.
- The **method for checking records and accounts**. For example, the organization appoints two members each year to see that all accounts and records are correct.
- The possibility of your organization becoming a **member** of a **nationwide organization**.
- Any other **specific function** not already covered. For example, you may make contributors honorary members.

■ A group representing people with disabilities can make a lot of difference. Always concentrate on the matters related to your common interests. For example, you may have the following questions. How can the society become more adapted to the needs of people with disabilities? How can programmes and services be improved? How can we promote schooling and jobs and so on?

■ If your country has a one-party political system, arrange to see the party's most influential leaders. If there are many parties, see all their leaders. But your organization should not be political in itself. It is better to remain a group representing the interests of people with disabilities.

■ It is always useful to contact the press, radio, and television for articles or programmes that explain what you and your organization want to do. Remember that there are many ways in which you can help to make people with disabilities more accepted by others, more respected and more influential. You and your friends can work to gain the equality that you may feel is missing now.

### **Taking part in community activities**

■ It is important to try to influence the attitudes of young people. Ask the local head teacher at your school if you can have some time with the children in each class. Explain to the children that people get disabilities through diseases and accidents. Tell them there is nothing to be afraid of. Tell the children that they should talk with people with disabilities in the same way they talk with others. Tell the children that even if some people have disabilities they can do many things that other people do.



Explain to them how people with hearing difficulties use sign language. Show how people with seeing difficulties use Braille. Answer the children's questions. Later on, when you meet these children in the community, stop to talk with them. After some time the children will feel more comfortable being with a person with a disability. They will begin to see that people with disabilities are just like people who do not have disabilities.

■ Also remember that it is important for you and your friends to develop contacts everywhere. It is not enough just to be in your own group of people with disabilities. You will not develop contacts if you do not take part in activities with other people and other groups. Your participation in all community activities will help to change attitudes about people with disabilities. Others will see you as members of the community, not as people with disabilities.

■ So, if you work on a farm, join the group of farmworkers. If you have a shop, join the group of shopkeepers. If you are a woman, join the women's group. If you are young, join the youth group. If you do this, people in your community will see you as one of them more easily. Later, you and your friends with disabilities may also be able to express your views and needs through these groups.

There are many things you can do for yourself, for your family, for other people with disabilities, and for your community. What you can achieve may not always be clear to you from the start. Results may take a long time. But it is always important to continue.



# **Training packages**

## **For family members of people who have difficulty seeing**

1. Information about the disability and what you can do about it
2. How to train the person to take care of himself or herself
3. How to train the person to move around

## **For family members of people who have difficulty speaking and hearing or speaking and moving**

4. Information about the disability and what you can do about it
5. For the child who has difficulty hearing and has not learned to speak — how to train the child to communicate
6. For the adult who has difficulty hearing but can speak — how to train the person to communicate
7. For the child who has difficulty speaking and moving but can hear — how to train the child to communicate

## **For family members of people who have difficulty moving**

8. Information about the disability and what you can do about it
9. How to prevent deformities of the person's arms and legs
10. How to prevent sores from pressure on the skin
11. How to train the person to turn over and sit
12. How to train the person to move from sitting to standing
13. How to train the person to move around
14. How to train the person to take care of himself or herself
15. How to train a person who has aches and pains in the back or the joints to do daily activities
16. Exercises for weak, stiff or painful arms and legs

## **For family members of people who have no feeling in the hands or feet**

17. Information about the disability and what you can do about it
18. How to prevent injuries and deformities of the hands and feet

## **For family members of adults who show strange behaviour**

19. Information about the disability and what you can do about it
20. How to train the person to take care of himself or herself

## **For family members of people who have fits**

21. Information about the disability and what you can do about it

## **For family members of people who have difficulty learning**

22. Information about the disability and what you can do about it
23. How to train a child who has difficulty learning to take care of himself or herself
24. How to train an adult who has difficulty learning to take care of himself or herself

## **General**

25. Breast-feeding a baby who has a disability
26. Play activities for a child who has a disability
27. Schooling
28. Social activities
29. Household activities
30. Job placement